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Environmental Group & Local Developer Unveil River Friendly Home—

Developers and environmentalists have a long track record of competition. Much as the mighty Bluefin Tuna and the mackerel compete for the next meal of sardines, developers usually win the fight against environmentalists in the realm of land management. Yet the St. Mary's River Watershed Association is claiming a win by going against tradition—they have teamed up with developers and are working on development designs that foster economic development and protect the environment.



Last month, Marrick Homes hosted a ribbon cutting and tour of St. Mary's newest green home nestled in the Elizabeth Hills subdivision on Indian Bridge Road.

"We've always made it our mission to work with developers and this project shows to young people that effective things can

be done to protect our environment," Joe Anderson, president of the St. Mary's River Watershed Association, told those gathered to tour the new model home. Pointing, Anderson noted that the river was just across the field and that this project was important "not only because it minimizes runoff into the St. Mary's River but also because it increases the [new home's] value."

The Association teamed up with regional consultant Ridge to Reefs in this National Fish & Wildlife Foundation-funded project to install low-impact development practices at new subdivision model homes. Initial outreach to developers quickly led to formal partnerships with Marrick Homes and Stanley Martin Homes Wildewood.



“Working with these developers has been enjoyable and rewarding. We all want the same thing – a healthy environment,” said Association Director Bob Lewis. “Selling homes is their mission; building those homes so that they do not negatively impact our river is our mission. We can have both.”

The tour around the model home in the recent snowfall was led by landscape designer Anne Guillette of Low Impact Design Studio. Guillette explained how the site design was altered to capture storm run-off from more than 75% of the rooftop and driveway sending it into rain gardens, which cleanse the water as it sinks into the ground. Water harvesting was also featured as another way to minimize run-off into local streams.

“Native plants provide a relatively low maintenance garden that is attractive and replaces the landscaping normally found in residential subdivisions,” Guillette noted.

“For many years, Marrick Homes has been doing things in an environmentally sensitive way,” reflected Jay Webster who serves as Vice President for Sales and Marketing for Marrick. “Times have changed. Working with these [environmental] folks is a natural next step for us.”



The two model homes, featuring low impact development practices, are open normal business hours at both Elizabeth Hills and Wildewood.

With the environmentalist forming the pillars which held a red ribbon, Webster and Commissioner Cindy Jones snipped the ceremonial ribbon. Folks then wandered back inside into the warmth to

talk more and dine together in harmony, unlike the Bluefin Tuna and Bluefish.

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PHOTO CAPTION Representatives from the St. Mary’s River Watershed Association and Marrick Homes join county commissioner Cindy Jones in a formal ribbon cutting ceremony unveiling a green model home at Elizabeth Hills on Indian Bridge Road.