

WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
PO Box 94, St. Mary's City, MD 20686

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1
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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT—OUR RIVER

Dear Friends of Our River,

The thought occurred to me that it's a rare thing indeed that can claim so many diverse and interdependent partners as owners. The kingfisher that I watch busily spearing creek chubs from his perch on a waterside walnut tree; the hooded mergansers that all seem dive below the water at the same time in a synchronized water-ballet like dance in pursuit of small minnows; the crabs and oysters that we're so desperately trying to save; the otters that I saw playfully blasting through a thin coat of ice on Schoolhouse Branch on a winter dawn; kayakers, fishermen, sailors, and swimmers alike all lay equal claim to our St. Mary's River.

The crabs and critters will keep on doing what they've done for millennia, living in balance with the river and forces of nature. They make no demands on us as silent witnesses to what we allow their river to become. Though they hold up their end of the bargain, providing us with endless opportunities for recreation, sustenance, and the opportunity to simply delight in their beauty and very existence, we must do a much better job of holding up our share of the partnership.

Doing what it takes to assure unrelenting, forward thinking, and active stewardship of the St. Mary's River is our end of the deal. The St. Mary's River Watershed Association is undertaking a Watershed Restoration

Action Strategy for the St. Mary's River. Over the past nine months we have walked and surveyed 173 miles of stream and river, have analyzed the quality of the river's waters, noted the types and variety of the insects and fish that inhabit them, and have noted problem areas that exist. Together with partners from county government, private industry, education, and community organizations we are now compiling a final report that will provide a systems-based appraisal of the St. Mary's River, and will make recommendations on how to correct problems that have been noted.

Thankfully, what we have seen so far is that our river is in relatively good condition. Our challenge, and the benchmark that future generations will judge us by is that we not only maintain the current quality of the river, but that we do all that we can to improve it.

St. Mary's County is a vibrant, growing community. Much of it is new, and that is a good thing. Much of St. Mary's County, such as the St. Mary's River, our River, is timeless and irreplaceable – eternal.

Let's join hands and do whatever it takes to keep it that way.

Sincerely,
Joe Anderson,
President



Joe Anderson

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *RiverFest—Save the date!*
Noon to 5 PM, Sept. 27 at
Historic St. Mary's City
- *Join the SMRWA discussion group!* Check us out at
www.SMRWA.org
- *WRAS Program Updates—go to*
www.StMarysRiver.org

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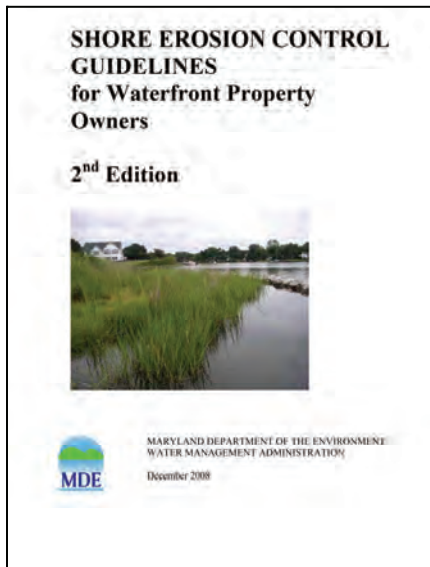
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Shoreline Erosion



Jesuit property in St. Inigoes recently purchased by the State of Maryland. Photo courtesy of Maryland DNR.



Protecting land from erosion not only saves your property, but reduces pollution that enters waterways and that can threaten plants, fish, and wildlife. Shoreline erosion can threaten structures, such as homes and businesses, and can increase the risk of damage during storms. In addition, eroded sediments can negatively impact aquatic resources and water quality, and can fill navigation channels.

Of the 6,659 miles of shoreline in the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Coastal Bays, and their tidal tributaries, approximately 4,579 miles are eroding. A small percentage (3 %) of the eroding shoreline is considered moderate to high (more than 4 feet/year) according to MDE.

Erosion is a natural process caused by wind, water, and ice. Human alteration of landscapes can also increase erosion rates. The Maryland Department of Environment states that erosion and sedimentation (the deposition of sediment) “often are in conflict with our use of the shoreline” and that “[s]hore erosion is caused primarily by wind driven waves and to a minor extent by wakes from passing boats.” Runoff from rainfall also contributes to erosion. Natural defenses against erosion include gently sloping shorelines, beaches, and marshes.

If you are a waterfront property owner, there are steps you can take to reduce erosion. To assist property owners in understanding and selecting the most appropriate shore erosion control method, the Maryland Department of the Environment recently published the 2nd edition of *Shore Erosion Control Guidelines for Waterfront Property Owners*. The document can be found on the St. Mary’s River Watershed Association web site, <http://SMRWA.org>

Remember that even if you are not a shoreline property owner, there are a number of actions you can take on your property to reduce runoff and erosion. These include wooded buffers, rain gardens, rain barrels, and more.

There are a variety of shore erosion control methods, and waterfront property owners should take into consideration the amount of erosion control needed, environmental impacts, and cost.

Maryland Department of the Environment’s Order of Preference for Erosion Control:

1. **No Action** - Sometimes the best action is actually no action, because erosion control methods are expensive and some can be harmful to aquatic and wildlife species. Deciding to take no action may depend on the severity of the erosion and several other variables.

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RESOURCES:

- DNR’s web site, Conservation and Restoration Services: A Funding and Technical Services Guide, <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/services/summaries.html>
- Maryland Department of the Environment recently published the 2nd edition of *Shore Erosion Control Guidelines for Waterfront Property Owners*, <http://www.smrwa.org/publications.html>

Dr. Gerald Winegrad - What Needs to Be Done to Restore The Bay?

Bay Scholar to Speak at St. Mary's River Watershed Association Annual Meeting March 7

Gerald W. Winegrad will present *What Needs to Be Done to Restore the Bay? The Inconvenient Truths of Bay Restoration* at the St. Mary's River Watershed Association Annual Members Meeting March 7, 2009, 11a.m. to 1p.m., at St. Mary's Parish Hall in St. Mary's City.

The former state senator and current adjunct professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy will discuss the decline of the Chesapeake Bay and what needs to be done to restore it. Winegrad was called the "environmental conscience" of the Senate by the Washington Post and Tom Horton wrote that "he is the person who more than any other set Maryland's environmental agenda over the last 16 years."

His presentation will outline why the Bay is in serious trouble after 25 years of recovery efforts under the Bay Program and the expenditure of billions of dollars. Winegrad will detail necessary actions for improvement, such as regulatory controls for agricultural pollutions (the Bay's greatest source of nutrient and sediment pollution) and the increasing problems of storm-water runoff from development. He will also present

startling data on the impacts of growth and agricultural pollution on the Bay's decline.

Come learn of the bold, decisive actions that can be taken now to turn the tide at the St. Mary's River Watershed Association Annual Members Meeting.

Winegrad is a former state senator and for 16 years was the leading environmentalist in the Legislature. He was responsible for many Bay initiatives including the phosphate detergent ban. He chaired the Senate Environment and Chesapeake Bay Subcommittee and also served on the Chesapeake Bay Commission for 12 years. In 2002 he was presented the prestigious Life Time Achievement Award by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Winegrad is an adjunct professor at the graduate School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, where he teaches courses on Bay restoration and wildlife management.

Co-sponsored by the St. Mary's College of Maryland Center for the Study of Democracy, The St. Mary's Parish Outreach Committee, and The Boeing Company. Lunch will be served.



Please RSVP to
301-737-2903 or email
Lindsay@StMarysRiver.org



 **CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY**
... a joint project of St. Mary's College of Maryland and Historic St. Mary's City.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
Saturday, March 7 at 11:00 AM
St. Mary's Parish Hall in St. Mary's City
For more information or to RSVP call 301-737-2903
or email Lindsay@StMarysRiver.org



Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting

March 7: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

St. Mary's Parish Hall, St. Mary's City

Arrive 15 minutes prior to meeting to enter to win door prizes and catch up with friends! Sponsored by St. Mary's River Watershed Association, St. Mary's College of Maryland Center for the Study of Democracy, The St. Mary's Parish Outreach Committee, and The Boeing Company. Lunch will be served. For more information 301-737-2903.

Maryland Stream Waders Training

March 4: 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Room 132, Schaefer Hall, St. Mary's College

Registration Required—To register or for more information, email streamwaders@dnr.state.md.us or call 1-877-620-8DNR (x8623).

Come learn about the Maryland Stream Waders Program, some of the invertebrates that live in Maryland's freshwater streams, what invertebrates can tell us about the health of the stream, and sampling techniques. Bring your waders, and be prepared for a demonstration in a nearby stream! A program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



Tree Planting (tentative)

March 28: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

17761 Point Lookout Rd., St. Mary's City

Assist in planting 250 tree seedlings on a section of cleared land recently acquired by St. Mary's College. Project is a collaboration of the St. Mary's River Watershed Association, St. Mary's College of Maryland, college students, 4-H, and Masters Gardeners.

St. Mary's River Clean-Up

April 4: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch to Adkins Rd. and shore side location. Bring your canoe or kayak!

Enjoy a wonderful paddle while picking up trash along the St. Mary's River Water Trail. Or walk the shores of St. Mary's College collecting trash. Help cleanup the St. Mary's River watershed! The cleanup is part of the Alice Ferguson Foundation 21st Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. Release required. Please RSVP—301-737-2903.



For more information and other cleanup locations visit http://www.potomaccleanup.org/trash_initiative/trash_cleanup.html

Earth Day on the Square

April 19: 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Leonardtwn

Join the St. Mary's River Watershed Association and hundreds of others for an Earth Day celebration. Music, games, food, entertainment, conservation information and environmental demonstrations, plants for sale, and more!

For more information on these events or to signup to volunteer at our booth, please contact Lindsay Tempinson at 301-737-2903 or Lindsay@StMarysRiver.org

We Need Your Help!

Are there areas in the watershed where you have observed potential problems, such as erosion, trash, etc.? If you are interested in a project that you would like the St. Mary's River Watershed Association to become involved in, please contact us at 301-737-2903 or email BobLewis@StMarysRiver.org

We're on the web!

www.smrwa.org

Shoreline Erosion—continued

[continued from page 2]

2. Relocation of threatened structures -

Sometimes moving structures, such as buildings, that are threatened may be less expensive than other erosion control methods. This may not always be a feasible option.

3. Non-structural stabilization -

Non-structural practices, such as the creation of living shorelines, are another option. To create a living shoreline, natural materials are used such as sand and plants to reduce erosion. Replacing sand along an eroding beach or beach nourishment, reducing the steepness of the slope by grading, and establishing marshes can help protect the shoreline and reduce erosion. Marshes also provide valuable habitat for a variety of plant and animal species as well as filter pollution entering the Bay.

4. Shoreline revetments -

To protect the bank or shore from waves, shoreline revetments can be built. Revetments are stone, concrete, or other material placed on a bank to protect it from eroding.

5. Offshore breakwaters -

Another type of structure, breakwaters, can be placed offshore to reduce wave energy or reflect it from shore. Composed of various materials, breakwater structures can protect existing beaches and shorelines from erosion.

6. Groins -

Groins are narrow structures built perpendicular to the shore, trapping sand and slowing shore erosion.

To learn more about the advantages and disadvantages of each method refer to *Shore Erosion Control Guidelines for Waterfront Property Owners*, which can be found on our web site. [see text box on page 2]

Protecting your shoreline from excess erosion can not only benefit a variety of plant, wildlife, and aquatic species by reducing pollution and improving habitat, but can benefit the property owner as well by saving property and increases property values.



Donate
Online!
www.SMRWA.org

Do you have a shore erosion problem?

The Maryland Department of the Environment suggests you consider the following questions:

- Has your shoreline noticeably receded during the last two years?
- If you have marsh along your shoreline, has it been disappearing?
- Do you have to step down to walk on your beach?
- Are trees along your shoreline falling into the water?
- Is your beach submerged at high tide?
- Have your neighbors installed shore erosion control measures?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you should check out the *Shore Erosion Control Guidelines for Waterfront Property Owner* or contact MDE's Tidal Wetlands Division at (410) 537-3745, DNR's Shore Erosion Control Program at (410) 260-8909 or (410) 260-8926, or the St. Mary's Soil Conservation District Office at (301) 475-8402 for advice on how to proceed.

I would like to become a member of the SMRWA

Annual Membership Options	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Limited Income	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate <i>suggested</i>	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____

Total: _____

Yes, I would like to become an active member/volunteer

Please make checks payable to:
St. Mary's River Watershed
Association and mail this form
along with your check to the
address below:

PO Box 94
St. Mary's City, MD 20686

Name

Address

Email Address

Phone



OUR MISSION

To protect, improve, and promote the well-being of the St. Mary's River Watershed through the collaborative efforts of economic, agricultural, environmental, social, cultural, and political stakeholders in the community.

We're on the web!
www.smrwa.org

Watershed Restoration Action Strategy Update

Work continues on the WRAS characterization document through the generous contributions of more than 35 volunteers—many supported by local businesses and government agencies.

The process is entirely open and public, and we welcome your comments and considerations. Access the working draft documents at <http://stmarysriver.org/documents.html>. Send your comments to BobLewis@StMarysRiver.org.

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

Times are tough and money is tight—we know. We also know that this is no time to turn our backs on the environment. SMRWA is launching new programs and outreach in 2009, which will foster greater sensitivity and pride in stewardship among St. Mary's County's 100,000 residents.

We need your help to get the job done!

More than ever before, we need your financial support—be it a \$50 membership or just the \$10 that you can spare this month. Please renew right away! And you can renew online at <http://www.SMRWA.org>.

