



# WATERSHED WATCH

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

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2  
MAY 2009

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT— ATTORNEY GENERAL VISITS ST. MARY'S

**O**n behalf of the St. Mary's River Watershed Association, I'd like to thank Maryland Attorney General Doug Gansler and his staff for their recent visit to St Mary's County to conduct a "River Audit" for the St. Mary's River.

Attorney General Gansler has made it a priority of his time in office to identify problems contributing to the continued degradation of the Chesapeake Bay and her tributaries and to then take action to remedy them. The St. Mary's River audit was the fifth in a series of such events.

Doug's day in the county was well spent listening to input from locally elected officials, experts on the St. Mary's River from St. Mary's College, and environmental leaders from county agencies and civic groups. The day ended with an informative town hall meeting where community members voiced their concerns. Doug and his staff got a chance to see the St. Mary's River first hand on a tour of the river aboard the skipjack The Dee of St. Mary's.

While we are pleased that the condition of the St. Mary's River is "better than most Bay tributaries", unfortunately the comparison is only relative. Indeed, the health of the St. Mary's River has been designated "degraded" by the Environmental Protection Agency, as required under section 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. This is far from encouraging.

Attorney General Doug Gansler and SMRWA President Joe Anderson discuss the St. Mary's River onboard The Dee of St. Mary's.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, via the index of biological integrity, has identified just six short segments, or about 10 ½ miles of the non-tidal St. Mary's River's and its tributaries, as "high quality." Another 14 miles of segments is rated "poor quality." Most of the stream miles fall in between high quality and poor quality. Revealing is the trend over the past ten years, 2000-2009; generally, our St. Mary's River tributaries are becoming more degraded over time, and, as we may expect, the streams closest to Rte. 235 are suffering the most from the negative impacts of poorly designed land development.

As we all know St. Mary's County is the second fastest growing jurisdiction in Maryland, and that will most likely remain the case for the foreseeable future. With growth comes many opportunities, but many challenges as well. [cont. on page 4]



### 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](http://www.SMRWA.org)
- *WRAS Program Updates—go to*  
[www.StMarysRiver.org](http://www.StMarysRiver.org)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

TREE PLANTING	2
MEMORIAL FUND	2
RIVER CLEANUP	3
STUDENT FIELD TRIP	3
ANNUAL MTG RECAP	4
NEW BOARD MEMBERS	4
PROGRAM UPDATES	5
UPCOMING EVENTS	6
MD GROW OYSTERS	7



## Stewards Convene to Plant 250 Trees

**M**ore prevalent than the ubiquitous mud, the enthusiasm of twenty-eight dedicated naturalists eclipsed the dark clouds and misty rain on March 28. More than 215 trees were planted in cold and soggy conditions.

*Thank You  
Indian Bridge  
Farms!*

Due to the rain volunteers convened at the site again on April 25 to plant the remaining trees.

"I'm sixty-six and I just planted 33 trees," boasted Patricia Dunlap.



Dunlap, a graduate of the University of Maryland Master Gardeners program, served as one of the consultants for the Association-led reforestation project on newly acquired St. Mary's College of Maryland land in St. Mary's City.

The idea for a reforestation project came to Association Executive Director Bob Lewis as he attended one of the college's Capital Design Advisory committee meetings this past fall.

Lewis approached officials at the college with plans to plant 250 native trees on a lot that was left bare after the abandoned mobile home and outbuildings were razed.

Master gardeners gave advice on how best to restore the site to its natural state. Local nursery Indian Bridge Farms donated trees. The Maryland Conservation Corps provided additional expertise and labor during the planting. College students and community members filled out the ranks. The Boeing Company provided additional support.

## SMRWA Launches the Lindsey Paul Rudolph Memorial Fund

The Association has taken the first steps to create a memorial fund in honor of member and volunteer Lindsey Rudolph.

The Paul and Rudolph families requested that donations be given to the Association (and the St. Mary's County Memorial Library) in Lindsey's honor.

Support has been enormous, and we thank everyone for their kindness. The Memorial Fund Committee will recommend to the

Board in June that the funds be used to support a student intern or scholarship fund.

If you would still like to make a donation, visit our web site at <http://www.SMRWA.org>.



*In Memory of Lindsey Paul Rudolph,  
a white dogwood tree was planted at the  
front of the reforestation site.*

## St. Mary's River Cleanup Huge Success

**B**lue skies and empty bags greeted the nearly 70 volunteers that participated in the first annual St. Mary's River Cleanup on April 4. Within a few hours volunteers filled 36 bags with non-recyclable trash and 35 bags with recyclables from the St. Mary's College of Maryland campus, including the site of a recent reforestation project, and the St. Mary's River Water Trail.

More than 500 cigarette butts and 125 plastic bags were collected. Also collected were 9 tires and approximately a half ton of loose trash, including a kitchen sink, car battery, and 19th century typewriter.

Members of the community, SMRWA, St. Mary's College of Maryland students, including Tri-beta, St. Mary's River Project, and Student Environmental Action Coalition, and the American Chestnut Land Trust participated in the event. The St. Mary's River Cleanup was part of the Alice Ferguson Foundation 21st Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. The Boeing Company provided additional funding and support. To view results visit <http://www.PotomacCleanup.org>.

## Students Discover St. Mary's River Watershed

**S**tudents from the Chesapeake Public Charter School peered over white trays and through discovery scopes filled with aquatic invertebrates on April 28 at the Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch.

Nearly 60 second and fifth-grade students participated in the environmental field trip hosted by the St. Mary's River Watershed Association, with help from high school students from the Dr. Forrest Career and Technology Center Natural Resources Management Program and from the St. Mary's College of Maryland St. Mary's River Project Education Group.



The field trip gave students the opportunity to see the St. Mary's River and the species that live within it first-hand. Through various hands-on demonstration stations, students learned about the watershed, life cycles, food webs, and the methods for sampling water and the species within.

"Interaction with the natural world is stimulating for young people. They quickly become attracted to the beauty and the serene atmosphere. This triggers the imagination and students learn to be more creative and expressive. The calming effect of the field trip persists into the classroom where attention span lengthens and learning is enhanced. Appreciation for the natural world can only be achieved through awareness," said Lewis.

April is Environmental Education Month throughout the state of Maryland. This project was supported by the Chesapeake Bay Trust and The Boeing Company.



*"Appreciation for the natural world can only be achieved through awareness."*



## Dr. Winegrad Speaks at Annual Meeting

# T

hirty Watershed Association members as well as several St. Mary's College students and faculty attended our Annual Meeting in March. This event was co-sponsored by St. Mary's College of Maryland, The Center for the Study of Democracy, St. Mary's Parish Outreach Committee, and The Boeing Company. Key note speaker Gerald Winegrad, former state senator and University of Maryland public policy professor, informed us of the threats facing the Chesapeake Bay and gave us tips on how to curb our negative influences on our river.

We thank all those who came out to celebrate the Watershed Association's progress over the past year and look forward to another year of stewardship!

## Welcome New Board Members

Welcome new Board members Patricia Samford, George Fiackos, and John Giusti. Tricia, George and John live in the watershed and are compassionate about our river's health. Each brings to our organization their interests and expertises in support of our mission to protect, improve, and promote the well-being of the St. Mary's River.

### Winegrad's Tips

1. Conserve energy and water
2. Reduce, re-use, recycle
3. GREEN your home
  - plant forested buffers, retrofit storm water systems, green roof, rain gardens, limit use of pesticides, use flow restrictors on all faucets and showerheads
4. Educate yourself
5. Support legislation at the county and state level to protect your water body

You can access Winegrad's presentation on the web at:  
<http://www.smrwa.org/winegrad.html>

## Letter from the President continued

Much of the St. Mary's River and her tributaries flow directly through the Lexington Park Development District, where we are directing the majority of our future growth. Without the proper safeguards in place to guide this development, the future health of the St. Mary's River is in significant jeopardy.

However, the good news is that we can really do much to assure that the St. Mary's River is degraded no further, and is in fact restored in quality to the time when she was one of the leading oyster hatcheries in the Chesapeake.

Remember that the St. Mary's River is the only river system in the state of Maryland that is located entirely

within one jurisdiction – St. Mary's County - and her future truly does lie in our hands. One of the most beautiful and historic rivers in the country, along whose banks was founded St. Mary's City, the fourth permanent settlement in English America. The St. Mary's is not only a great symbol of our county, it is truly Maryland's river as well.



We can do nothing else but to assure her future, in honor of the generations of Marylanders who have enjoyed her beauty and bounty for thousands of

years, and for the benefit of the many people who will continue to join us here in the Land of Pleasant Living.

Sincerely,

Joe Anderson, President

## SMRWA Graduates

St. Mary's River Watershed Association President Joe Anderson and Executive Director Bob Lewis attended the Institute for Conservation Leadership's nine-month training, *Executive Director Leadership Program*.

This program assists participants in developing the leadership, knowledge, skills, and support needed to manage organizational change and growth, increase leadership confidence and capacity, motivate and empower staff and volunteers, integrate Board Members in operations, and raise funds and oversee finances.

The program was very rewarding and has moved SMRWA forward in a number of different areas. We have developed a wide network of working partners and peer advisors from the participants. The training was funded by an anonymous donor.

## Earth Day Celebration on the Square

**M**isty rains held off until after Earth Day festivities allowing for the best event ever! Thanks go out to the Leonardtown Business Association for holding this important and fun event!

At the St. Mary's River Watershed Association booth, Rain Barrel sales (\$10 Off One-Day-Member-Only) punctuated an afternoon filled with activities and informative displays relating to our natural world.

Our bull frog was quite the hit (especially when he "hit" the pavement and made a run for it)! Eels, crayfish, dragonflies, little fishes, and lots of bugs (insects) rounded out our display. Kids were encouraged to dip fingers into the tanks and get-to-know some critters in our natural environment.

## Board Development Workshop

Three members of SMRWA attended a three-day Board Development workshop in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The program, funded by the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network, was open only to the select group of 23 watershed organizations in the Capacity Building Initiative grant program. Areas covered at this training event included the new IRS reporting requirements, legal responsibilities of non-profit board members, and principles of shared governance. Those from SMRWA who attended were Secretary Todd Rudolph, President Joe Anderson, and Director Bob Lewis.

## Executive Director is River Hero

In February, Governor Martin O'Malley recognized Association Executive Director Bob Lewis as the Lower Potomac River Hero. This annual award is given to outstanding leaders and conservationists in Maryland's ten Tributary Strategy regions. At the ceremony the Bernie Fowler White Sneaker Award was presented to Dr. Peter Bergstrom, who has worked extensively in the southern Maryland region.



## Upcoming Events

### Potomac River Swim

May 30

Point Lookout State Park

Swimmers will cross the 7.5 mile mouth of the Potomac River between the northern neck of Virginia and St. Mary's County in order to raise money to support local environmental efforts, including SMRWA in the 16th annual Potomac River Swim for the Environment. For more information visit <http://artemis.crosslink.net/~cherylw/pr2009i.htm>.



**Volunteers are needed the day of the event** to greet swimmers, hydrate them, and feed them. If you are able to help for a few hours, please contact us at [info@StMarysRiver.org](mailto:info@StMarysRiver.org) or 301-737-2903.

### National Trails Day®

June 6

Explore the St. Mary's River Watershed by foot during National Trails Day.®

Run or walk along a trail that winds through woods and fields with wonderful views of the St. Mary's River during the **5K Fun Run and Walk** sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Running Club and Historic St. Mary's City.



Go to <http://www.stmaryscity.org> for more information and to download a registration form.

Or explore the St. Mary's River Watershed at your own pace on one of the many trails within St. Mary's State Park or St. Mary's County parks. Visit <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/sm Maryland.html> or <http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/facilities/index.asp> to find a trail near you!

For more information on National Trails Day® visit <http://www.americanhiking.org/ntd.aspx>.

### Rain Barrel & Rain Garden Workshop

June 13: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Wildewood Neighborhood I Community Center

Please join us to learn about the benefits of rain barrels and gardens, and their installation. Workshop attendees will receive a coupon for \$10 off the purchase of a rain barrel. If you wish to attend please RSVP to [info@StMarysRiver.org](mailto:info@StMarysRiver.org) or 301-737-2903.

If you are not able to attend the workshop, you may still purchase a rain barrel by contacting us. Rain barrels are \$50 for SMRWA members and \$75 for nonmembers.

**Directions:** Take MD-235

To MD-4 South

Right on Wildewood Parkway

Community Center is across from White Oak Parkway

### SMRWA Featured at River Concert

July 17: 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Stop by the Association's booth and learn six simple steps to reduce your impact on the St. Mary's River. The concert begins at 7 p.m. and features principal players from the Maryland Youth Symphony.

The River Concert Series 2009 will run from June 19th to July 31st. Enjoy an evening of free outdoor entertainment. To view the schedule visit <http://www.smcm.edu/rcs/>.

### 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](mailto:BobLewis@StMarysRiver.org)



## Marylanders Grow Oysters

The Marylanders Grow Oysters Program is expanding and the Association has applied to become a local sponsor, in partnership with the Coastal Conservation Association Maryland, Historic St. Mary's City Museum, and St. Mary's College of Maryland. Local sponsors help organize volunteer growers and distribute cages and oysters in the Chesapeake Bay tributaries. Yearling oysters will be placed in a sanctuary in the St. Mary's River.

Oysters are important because they filter water, are a vital part of the food web, and create living reefs that attract fish and other aquatic species.

Interested parties met on Friday, May 15 to learn about the proposed project and the oyster float tax credit, <http://individuals.marylandtaxes.com/incometax/gtpitc/acqaculture.asp>.

If you are a waterfront property owner and would be interested in acting as a caretaker for several thousand oysters their first year of life, please let us know.



Photo courtesy of the Marylanders Grow Oysters Project

<http://www.oysters.maryland.gov/>

*A Celebration of the St. Mary's River*

Sunday September 27  
Noon to 5 p.m.  
Historic St. Mary's City

This free event will have fun for the whole family, featuring live music, shipjack rides, exhibits, and much more! **If you are interested in helping** with the event please contact us at [info@StMarysRiver.org](mailto:info@StMarysRiver.org) or 301-737-2903.



Donate Online!  
[www.SMRWA.org](http://www.SMRWA.org)

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**

**Marylanders Plant Trees**

**Help Maryland reach its goal of planting 1 million trees by 2011!**

The State of Maryland is offering **\$25 coupons** for the purchase of various trees from participating vendors. It's easy, visit the Marylanders Plant Trees web site at <http://www.trees.maryland.gov> to print your coupon, determine which trees qualify for the discount, and find a participating vender near you.

Trees help reduce erosion and improve water quality, as well as provide valuable wildlife habitat, reduce energy costs, clean the air, provide wind and sound barriers, and improve property values.

More than 6,500 trees have been planted through the program as of the beginning of May.



**Get your coupon today at**

<http://www.trees.maryland.gov>

