

WATERSHED WATCH

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

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR—

Greeting Members and Friends—

September is the season for perennial plants to send their energy into their roots, while annuals burst forth with a last show of color before dispersing their seeds for next year. Animals fatten up for the winter and many, such as frogs and toads, take refuge for a long rest. Meanwhile baby oysters, threatened by rays and crabs, develop hard shells making it harder for predators to eat them.

The St. Mary's River Watershed Association is following nature's example—this month marks the annual RiverFest, a Celebration of the St. Mary's River on Sunday Sept. 27. RiverFest is a bursting forth of color—a grand celebration of our fifth year working to restore the St. Mary's River. It is an opportunity to share successes and failures, to learn about conservation practices, to commune with nature, and to enjoy good food and great music. Bring the kids; they'll love the many activities—kayaking, tonging, seining, clowns, balloons, face painting, and pumpkin painting. Did I mention the birds of prey demonstrations? Come to RiverFest for a truly enjoyable day.

Following nature's example, next week we will sow the seeds of more than one million oysters, protecting them in cages from the hungry rays and crabs. More than ninety volunteers will mother these vulnerable babies through their first winter. Next summer we will release them onto a sanctuary in the St. Mary's River.

The economic downturn is our

winter, and it's looking to be a long winter ahead. Grant making foundations are cutting total annual giving by 60%, while they are receiving 50% more applications. Locally, our corporate donors are deluged with requests and so they give less to each organization.

In response, SMRWA will take refuge when appropriate and make cuts wherever possible. We hope to move into rent-free headquarters in November. Staff hours have been cut in half. Likewise, programming will have to be trimmed a bit. Priorities will be maintained and volunteers will become our platform for sustainability.

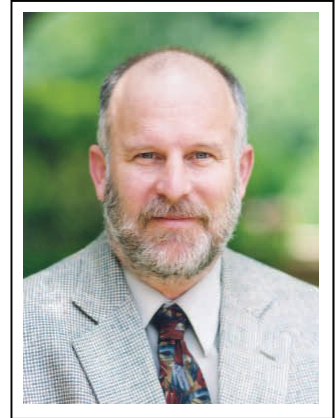
We need you! While we have developed a team of program volunteers, we still lack help with operations, advocacy, and RiverFest. We need writers, researchers, and community liaisons. We need more help to host RiverFest, to design and build rain gardens for Habitat homes, and to recruit willing property owners for restoration projects.

On Sept. 27, we need volunteers for kayaking support, tee shirt and drink sales, site set-up and strike, trash and recycling detail, clowns and painting support, logistics, sign placement, and lots more . . .

Will you help?

See you on the river,

Bob Lewis



Bob Lewis

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *RiverFest—Save the date!*
Noon to 6 PM, Sept. 27 at
Historic St. Mary's City
- *Join the SMRWA discussion group!* Check us out at
www.SMRWA.org

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Volunteers Needed Sept. 27th

If you are interested in volunteering at **RiverFest**, please contact us at 301-737-2903 or email info@stmarysriver.org We need your help to do:

- 7 AM—10 AM - Set up tents, tables, chairs; hang banners; place signs, trash cans, and recycling bins; assign exhibitors; and set up SMRWA exhibits. (Strike too, at 6 PM)
- Noon—6 PM - Tabling for tee shirt & hat sales, rain barrels, welcome booth, and drink sales; site policing and parking lot attendants; kayaking, seining, and oyster tonging support; kids' programming support (painting);



Discovering a Sense of Place

Starting September 22: 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The Good Earth, 41675 Park Avenue, Leonardtown

If you don't know WHERE you are, you don't know WHO you are. With a sense of place, your identity is defined—to a significant extent—by the natural features of the place where you live. Without a sense of place, what will fill the void? Join us to discover our common identity as residents of this magical Chesapeake Bay region.

A course by Northwest Earth Institute consisting of seven classes. The course is free and optional study guide is \$20.

For more info and to register contact Elizabeth Ayres, epa@creativewritingcenter.com or 301-737-7945

Chesapeake Watershed Forum 2009

October 9 to 11 in Shepherdstown, WV

The Chesapeake Watershed Forum is an annual conference for watershed organizations and local government officials from around the multi-state Chesapeake Bay region. It is an opportunity to learn the latest scientific techniques in Bay restoration and protection, address specific organizational capacity building needs, focus on regional and watershed-wide needs, network with other watershed organizations, and enjoy the beauty of the watershed. For more information visit: <http://www.alliancechesbay.org/>

RiverFest Schedule

9:00-Noon Paddle In to RiverFest (fee required)

Noon Kick Off with Live Music by **Geezer**

1:00 Skipjack Rides (first come first served)

1:10 Daughter's of Veda Mid-Eastern Dance

1:30 Live music with **Indian Summer**

2:00 Wade In with Senator Bernie Fowler

2:30 Skipjack Rides

3:00 Daughter's of Veda Mid-Eastern Dance

3:30 Live Music with **Byzantine Top 40**

4:00 Skipjack Rides

4:30 Southern Maryland Traditional Dance

5:00 Happy Hour—kick back with **Swingtime**

All Day - Kayaking, Clowns, Face Painting, Pumpkin Painting, Touch Tanks, Seining, Oyster Tonging, Conservation Exhibits, Green Building Exhibits, Rain Barrels, Vendor Sales, Food and Drinks, and Birds of Prey Demonstrations.

RiverFest will take place at Historic St. Mary's City Museum—Admission if Free!



Trib Team Tours St. Mary's River

The Lower Potomac Tributary Team enjoyed an August evening sail on the St. Mary's River. SMRWA's Bob Lewis, pictured here in the straw hat, networked with Team members asking for their support for stricter storm water regulations on development. SMRWA Vice President Bob Paul and several of our members also attended the event.

Staff Attend River Rally

Nothing makes the point better than a shoreline filled with dead fish stinking up the whole neighborhood—our waterways are polluted!

Mother nature provided this scene of thousands of dead and decaying fish for the tenth annual National River Rally. Held in an urban setting for the first time, river lovers from all over North America descended on Baltimore to witness one of the city’s many seasonal fish kills.

SMRWA staff attended more than a dozen workshops on conservation, advocacy, organizational logistics, and the Clean Water Act. Bob Lewis joined with other presenters to enlighten conference goers in two workshops—*Communications via the Watershed Network* and *Water Organizing Around Environmental Justice Themes*. Lindsay Tempinson showed her skills by placing in the *All Things Water Quiz Bowl*.



SMRWA at the River Concert Series



SMRWA at the Juneteenth Festival

Update: Marylanders Grow Oysters

Ninety St. Mary’s River pier owners have signed up for the Governor’s signature program, Marylanders Grow Oyster. More than a million baby oysters or “spat” will be ushered through their first year of life in the secure hands of these volunteers. Next summer, the young oysters will be relocated to a sanctuary in the St. Mary’s River.

Oysters in cages will be distributed to the dock owners this coming Saturday, assisted by the St. Mary’s College Sustainability Committee, faculty, staff, and students.

Cages without live oysters will also be placed in strategic locations in order to monitor the natural oyster reproduction. Other nearby rivers involved in the program are the Wicomico, Patuxent, and South Rivers. For more information, visit:

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



Donate
Online!
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.



Sunday September 27

Noon to 6 p.m.

Historic St. Mary's City

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

