



WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO Box 94

St. Mary's City, MD 20686

March 27, 2014

CALL TO ACTION!

1. Request Public Meeting

2. Send in testimony

Comments, written requests for public informational meetings, and/or Petitions of Protest must be received by the Department of Natural Resources Aquaculture Division, 580 Taylor Avenue C-2, Annapolis, MD 21401 by **April 21st, 2014**.

For questions please contact Rebecca Thur at the DNR Aquaculture Division at rthur@dnr.state.md.us or 410-260-8252.

[Learn more at DNR's website](#)

[Trossbach Leases](#)

[Map 1](#)

[Map 2](#)

[Lashley Lease](#)

[Map](#)

State Notices Public Comment Period

Aquaculture in St. Mary's Sanctuary Moves Forward

On March 21, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) published notice in the legal section of The Enterprise opening a 30-day comment period on three applications for aquaculture leases in the St. Mary's River oyster "sanctuary." [we will be placing DNR's use of sanctuary in quotes because we define sanctuary as an area with no harvest].

In April of 2011, House Bill 208 flew through the Maryland legislature with many of our representatives unaware that it would allow for aquaculture in Maryland's oyster sanctuaries. The St. Mary's River Watershed Association became aware soon after when DNR took proposed regulatory language to public scoping—a process of soliciting public input on a measure. At that time the Association took the unwavering position that aquaculture was not compatible with a sanctuary designation. (No quotes means no harvest area). Furthermore, we argued that the St. Mary's River was undergoing a widespread process of natural restoration due to the fact that no adult oysters had been harvested since March 2010. The water was clearer, the oysters were growing everywhere. A clause in HB208 provided ample justification for our claim: "aquaculture must be compatible with restoration"

The Association was successful in persuading DNR to set up additional criteria for the protection of thriving oyster bars in the St. Mary's. Of eleven applications, only three are moving forward at this time. DNR argues that these applications are on river bottom that has very few oysters, and so they say aquaculture is an appropriate land use.

TAKE ACTION - Request Public Meeting - Send in Testimony

Following are the points the Association has consistently provided to DNR and public officials:

- The St. Mary's River is a very special place, one of two areas in Maryland with an annual recruitment of wild oysters over the past 30 years.
- The St. Mary's River has on its banks an institution of higher learning that can, and will, monitor the sanctuary over many years thus providing valuable insight into the value and need for no-harvest areas.
- The St. Mary's River is unique in that its waters are deep and oysters grow only along the shorelines-and much of the shoreline has thriving oyster populations.
- The oyster density survey DNR conducted in October 2012 is outdated. Furthermore, documentation of restoration areas, as required under the legislation, should be done over several years so as to note change on an any patch of river bottom.
- Proposed criteria does not provide adequate protection from illegal harvests or for regulatory oversight. Setbacks from thriving oyster bars must be increased substantially.
- A sanctuary is not the place for aquaculture.
- A public meeting is requested to learn more about the specific proposals and to hear the concerns of the public, the stakeholders, and how DNR plans to address the concerns raised.

[Join or Renew Today!](#)



Want to help your Watershed?

Your membership dues and donations enable us to carry out projects that help the environment. Come volunteer and help us do the work that needs to be done. Attend the events throughout the year, and bring your family and friends. This helps to spread the word about the work we are doing! Thank you so much for your continued support.

[Join or Renew Today!](#)

Upcoming Events:

- **Chancellor's Run Park Clean Up**
Thursday, April 3, 2014 - after school
Call to register to volunteer at info@stmarysriver.org
- Join us for the 6th Annual **RIVER CLEAN UP**
Saturday, April 5, 2014 - 9 am to noon
Call to register to volunteer at info@stmarysriver.org
- **Earth Day on the Leonardtown Square**
Sunday, April 13, 2014, 12:30 to 4 pm



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



- **Potomac River Swim**
Saturday, May 31, 2014
Point Lookout State Park
Bring a dish to share - lunch begins at 10 am
More info 301-737-2903.

- **SAVE THE DATE**

A River Affair

Sunday, June 8, 2014, 1 to 4 pm
The Inn at Broome-Howard
Historic St. Mary's City
More info 301-737-2903.

- **LEAD Teen Oyster Planting**

Tuesday, June 24, 2014, 9 am to noon
College Waterfront

- **SAVE THE DATE**

RiverFest
2014

Saturday, September 27, 2014, 11 am to 4 pm
State House, Historic St. Mary's City
More info 301-737-2903.

TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM THIS E-NEWSBRIEF, REPLY TO THIS EMAIL AND TYPE INTO THE SUBJECT LINE - UNSUBSCRIBE.
OR EMAIL US AT INFO@STMARYSRIVER.ORG AND REQUEST TO BE REMOVED FROM THIS E-NEWSLETTER LISTSERV.