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WATERSHED WATCH

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

November 25, 2014

Happy
Thanksgiving!

SMRWA awarded grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

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St. Mary's River Watershed Association has been awarded a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Association to promote its "River Friendly" neighborhood rewards program.

A certification program similar to Baywise but on a neighborhood-scale, our neighborhood rewards program recognizes communities and homeowners for making significant contributions in reducing their impact on the St. Mary's River. Storm water runoff mitigation through rain gardens is one way to achieve recognition, as well as an assortment of other practices such as growing oysters, reducing energy use, planting buffers and canopy trees, and upgrading septic systems. Participants will be credited for their improvements and pledges and tracking online will afford the county credit toward its Bay clean-up goals.

The NFWF grant provides as much as 50-50 match funding for the installation of rain gardens and similar practices, for those who have property in the St. Mary's River watershed. Interested homeowners should contact us.

For more information on this program and how you can participate, please call 301-737-2903 or visit www.smrwa.org/rewards.html.



Rain Gardens Capture Stormwater



This is a rain garden project that St. Mary's River Watershed Association completed in the summer of 2014. The rainwater that falls on the roof of the house is directed into the rain garden where it is absorbed into the ground thereby filtering out excessive nutrients and other pollutants. During a one-inch rainstorm, more than 750 gallons of water fall on 1,200 square feet (about half the area of the average American house). All of that water moves rapidly into storm drains, runs off lawns into the street drain, and heads for the Bay and its tributaries.

Rain gardens are gaining popularity as a way to control storm water runoff on residential properties. A rain garden is more than just a bed of

pretty plants. Properly sized and installed, it can collect and filter large quantities of water keeping pollutants such as fertilizers, motor oil, and heavy metals out of our streams. And it saves time and money that may otherwise be spent watering a lawn or flowers.

The difference between a traditional garden and a rain garden lies underground and in the plant selection. A rain garden is positioned slightly down slope of a gutter in order to catch the rainwater. The ground is dug to a depth of about 6-12 inches and refilled about halfway with a mixture of topsoil and organic material, compost, or shredded leaves and sand. If heavy clay soils are present, other techniques (such as vertical cores of gravel) may be needed.

More Aquaculture Applications in Sanctuary



Three more applications for bottom leases moved into the public vetting phase this month. These three pending oyster aquaculture permits are located in the St. Mary's River oyster sanctuary - one just east of Horseshoe Point and the other two along the western side across from Horseshoe Point. All three are quite small and add up to

a little more than seven acres. The St. Mary's River Watershed Association has requested that a public information meeting be held so that everyone can become informed about these applications.

The Association remains opposed to aquaculture in the sanctuary since it is unknown what impacts it may have on the tremendous natural restoration currently underway. Legislation in 2012 authorized aquaculture in all of Maryland's oyster sanctuaries, and our efforts to change this failed in the legislative sessions in 2013 and 2014. The Association was able to win significant changes in regulations that allow where and how much bottom can be converted to aquaculture. These new stricter criteria are only applicable in the St. Mary's River.

A formal petition process is underway with more than 40 signatories who hope to modify or stop the approval of permits. The Association chose not to be a signatory in this legal process after much discussion and ongoing action throughout the past two and a half years.



Thank You!

St. Mary's River Watershed Association cannot begin to thank all the volunteers who helped out at all our events this year, beginning with the Chancellor's Park Clean Up, The River Clean Up, A River Affair, RiverFest, oyster restoration including Marylanders Grow Oysters, and so much more!

The St. Mary's River Watershed Association's mission is to protect, improve, and promote the sustainability of the St. Mary's River watershed through the collaborative efforts of economic, agricultural, environmental, social, cultural, and political stakeholders in the community. The Association is registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization and our federal identification number is 20-2518203. Your donation to us is tax deductible!

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OUR MISSION

To protect, improve, and promote the sustainability 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



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