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Spring Cleaning of St. Mary's River Nets a Dozen Tires

Fourteen volunteers paddled the St. Mary's River Water Trail from Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch to St. Mary's College of Maryland on Saturday, April 9, 2010 collecting trash during the 2nd Annual St. Mary's River Cleanup. Volunteers collected 12 tires, 20 bags of trash and recyclables, and 300 lbs of loose trash.

"It was beautiful", says Elaine Szymkowiak who had never paddled the portion of the river between Great Mills and Adkins Road. She was surprised by the presence of small rapids adding, "It is really impressive how many tires you can put in one canoe."

The St. Mary's River Cleanup is hosted by the St. Mary's River Watershed Association (<http://www.smrwa.org>), and is part of the Alice Ferguson Foundation 22nd Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, http://www.fergusonfoundation.org/trash_initiative/trash_cleanup.shtml. There were nearly 500 cleanup sites in Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. As of 4 p.m., with 107 sites reporting, volunteers had collected 10,558 cigarette butts, 599 tires, 14,073 plastic bags, 61.4 tons of loose trash, and 63,555 recyclable beverage containers from the Potomac River Watershed.

Trash and litter has negative effects in many areas of life in the region:

- It harms wildlife;
- costs taxpayers precious funds for cleanup and removal;
- is a public health threat by increasing breeding grounds for virus carrying insects and rodents;
- decreases property values;
- and hurts businesses, recreation and tourism.

Photo 1 Caption: Volunteers paddle the St. Mary's River collecting trash during the 2nd Annual St. Mary's River Cleanup.

Photo 2 Caption: Lindsay Tempinson (left) and Tricia Samford (right) paddle towards a piece of trash near the bank of the St. Mary's River during the 2nd Annual St. Mary's River Cleanup.

