



THE SEVERN RIVER ASSOCIATION

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MARCH OYSTER NEWS

What an easy winter – few really cold spells and no snow above the water -- the surviving oysters should have done well down near the bottom at your piers. You may discover fewer spat than past years, as all the rainfall last fall reduced the salinity in the water to a level that many spat could not survive. Spring arrives this week, and the water is warming up - now above 48 degrees at the mouth of the Severn. It's just about time to bring them up to their summer level 12" or 18" below low tide. They must also be cleaned of their winter accumulation of sediment so lift them up and "tea bag" the cages while you're raising them to their summer home. You also need to redistribute the shells in the cages, they are going to enjoy a growth "spurt" in early spring. Bring the cages up on the deck and roll them over a couple of times to prevent any growth around holes in the mesh. This all should not take more than 3 or 4 minutes per cage.

This week DNR and a videographer from The Capital are visiting one of our distribution points to learn about the MGO Program and film the cages and spat. We'll also demonstrate the "tea-bagging" techniques for cleaning sediment from the cages. Keep checking <http://www.hometownannapolis.com/> for the film clip.

CBF increased their oyster planting activity on the Severn last year, especially with the creation of a new oyster reef under the fishing pier at Jonas Green Park. They plan to add new spat to four reefs in 2012. They are seeking a volunteer "Reef Watcher" to help monitor these reefs with tongs to retrieve samples, so if you're interested, let me know.

Circle June 2nd on your calendar for the oyster planting day, and start thinking about how your local group will organize to gather the oysters from the cages for this planting. We'll provide details in subsequent Oyster News.

Please see the attached announcement about the annual creek cleanups that SRA is sponsoring on March 31st, and consider learning more about SRA by attending our regular monthly meetings – see <http://www.severnriver.org/> for details on times and locations.

Bob Whitcomb, Chair, SRA Oyster Committee