



THE SEVERN RIVER ASSOCIATION

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OYSTER NEWS - MAY

Your young oysters should be easily seen and growing, assuming you raised them up in April to enjoy the nutrients in the upper 18" of the water column. This portion of the water has the most tidal movement, bringing the most food source to them so they can feast and grow.

We recently surveyed spat at 11 of our oyster growing locations, measuring their size and viability, along with salinity. The good news is viable spat were found at all locations (survival rates were 60% and higher for every sampled site except Olde Severna Park), and that salinity levels are high enough to grow oysters except at the upper reaches of creeks near their fresh-water sources. Most spat sizes ranged from 0.4 to 1.0 cm. I say good news, because we were fearful our spat had died due to last fall's tropical storms; this survey showed we have viable spat to add to the SRA oyster reef. Thanks to Valeria Culotta, Sally Hornor, and Don Cepulski for gathering data from these sites and conducting this first spring survey of Severn spat in cages.

This year's planting will be on Saturday June 2nd, on the same reef where we've planted our spat the last two years. Those with access to small boats (with less than 3' draft) are encouraged to bring their oysters and join us that afternoon, between 2 and 3:30pm for the planting. Please plant your oysters in a row about 20' wide along the channel side of the 3 markers. We'll be taking pictures and will be there to welcome oyster growers who have nursed oyster spat to add to the SRA oyster sanctuary.

Chris Judy of DNR marked the SRA oyster sanctuary reef, which is just south of the Route 50 bridge, near the entrance to Crouchs Pond (aka Winchester Pond). He placed three orange-flagged stick markers along the east edge of the reef, beginning at GPS coordinates N39.00.470 and W76.29.950 extending in a 150 degree direction southward (see attached picture).

Don't worry if you can't make it on June 2nd, as you may plant your oysters anytime during June. You should work with your Oyster Coordinator (email me your street address, and I'll put you in touch with your Coordinator) as to when he/she can arrange for pickup of your oysters, as there will be subsequent pickups. Your cages will be left on your dock, and you should clean and store them out of the water until new spat is available next September.

Bob Whitcomb
Chair, SRA Oyster Committee