



Marylanders Grow Oysters

Join the Team

Application Form Attached

Launched in September 2008, *Marylanders Grow Oysters* is a program designed to foster stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and create living oyster reefs in sanctuaries.

Through this fun educational program, citizen volunteers tend young oysters growing in wire mesh cages suspended from their piers for their first year of life. The oyster spat and cages are provided by DNR at no charge to the volunteer oyster growers. The oysters require minimal care – mostly rinsing the cages every week or two, or perhaps a scrubbing now and then.

Growers enjoy the personal rewards of stewardship while contributing to the enhancement of an oyster reef. After about nine months, the oysters are collected and planted in an oyster sanctuary and a new group of young oysters are distributed to the growers to start the process again.

In 2008, waterfront property owners along the Tred Avon River began growing oysters in over 850 oyster cages in the first phase of the program. Currently there are 32 rivers and creeks in the program with approximately 7,500 cages growing oysters. The program for 2015 is set and ready to go, so the next opportunity for joining will be the Spring of 2016.

Join the 2016 Oyster Growing Team

Marylanders Grow Oysters will expand in 2016 and DNR is looking for new rivers, creeks or similar Bay areas to join the program, lead by a local coordinator to manage the program for the area. A local coordinator could be a community association, a non-profit organization, a RiverKeeper or similar group who will recruit waterfront property owners for the program, organize the delivery of oyster cages to the growers, and develop a collection plan for the oysters after they have grown. DNR will assist the coordinator with planning and implementation.

The identifying features of the Marylanders Grow Oysters program are: (a) Tributary Focus – growers are sought for a concentrated effort in a creek or river, (b) Ecological Purpose – oysters are grown to enhance the ecology of the sanctuary, they are not grown to be eaten, (c) Cages & Oysters – are provided at no cost to the grower, (d) Local Sponsor – the program needs your local commitment to implement the program in 2016.

Through the efforts of the local coordinator and all the growers, an oyster sanctuary will be enhanced both with oysters and the abundance of living creatures associated with an oyster reef.

Following is additional information on how the program operates, its goals, and how you can be involved in 2016 and beyond.



Responsibilities

DNR and its program partners will:

- provide and deliver the cages and oyster spat to a central location between June and September (date and location to be determined with the coordinator)
- provide guidance and advice to assist the coordinator with program implementation
- select the sanctuary for planting the oysters
- guide the planting of the oysters in the sanctuary

The Local Group and Coordinator will:

- identify oyster growers and assemble an address list
- coordinate and implement the delivery of cages and spat to growers
- warehouse any extra cages containing spat at a pier location suitable for holding cages for a few months pending additional growers
- maintain monthly contact with the growers and DNR
- collect the oysters after 9 months and count oysters from select cages to assess growth and survival results
- coordinate the planting of oysters in the sanctuary, with DNR guidance
- restock the growers with spat

For data collection to track results, DNR will provide training and forms.

Application Process

An application form is attached. DNR wants your application to be successful and will help by providing advice and guidance. Feel free to contact us as you prepare this form.

Completed applications are due to DNR by **March 31**. The application package must:

- address the responsibilities listed above and explain how the local group will accomplish them
- provide documentation on the group's ability to implement the project in terms of staff, volunteers, logistics and any funding that is needed by the applicant (DNR is not able to provide funding for tasks to be completed by the applicant)

- include a map of the tributary and the geographic area to be covered
- estimate the number of piers within the project area and the number of potential growers
- name the location of the in-the-water "warehouse" site (pier or beach) for holding cages if such a site is needed. (If all the cages can be distributed in one day, there is no need for a "warehouse" site).

Please mail, email, or FAX your application package by **March 31** to:

Christopher Judy
Fisheries Service, B-2
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis MD 21401

Phone: 410-260-8259
FAX: 410-260-8279
email: chris.judy@maryland.gov

Tributary Selection

A tributary or area for Marylanders Grow Oysters must have salinities that support oyster survival and growth (see attached map showing the range of suitable environments), enough piers to support at least 100 cages with a target of 4 cages per pier, and a local organization able to implement the program tasks. Preference will be given to tributaries/groups that are able to identify substantial numbers of interested participants and use this project to further engage participants in other Bay related activities.

Timeline

MARCH	DNR receives application forms
APRIL	DNR selects the tribs/groups for the Program
JUNE-JULY	Local Group assembles growers
JULY/AUGUST	Local Group distributes cages/oysters and warehouses extras until growers are found
SEPTEMBER	Local group wraps up cage distribution
DECEMBER	Local Group submits progress report to DNR
2015-2016	Growers tend oysters
JUNE 2016	Oysters are collected and planted in a sanctuary
SUMMER 2016	Oyster cages sit empty
DECEMBER 2016	Local Group submits final report to DNR

Marylanders Grow Oysters Partners

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

– project oversight and coordination

Oyster Recovery Partnership – cage distribution and spat production

University of MD Center for Estuarine and Environmental Studies – spat production

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

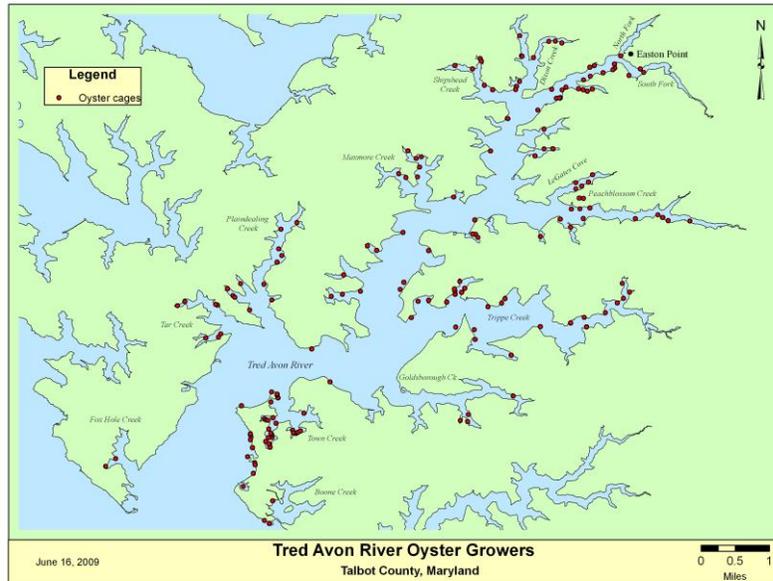
– cage construction

Tributary Teams – local outreach and coordination

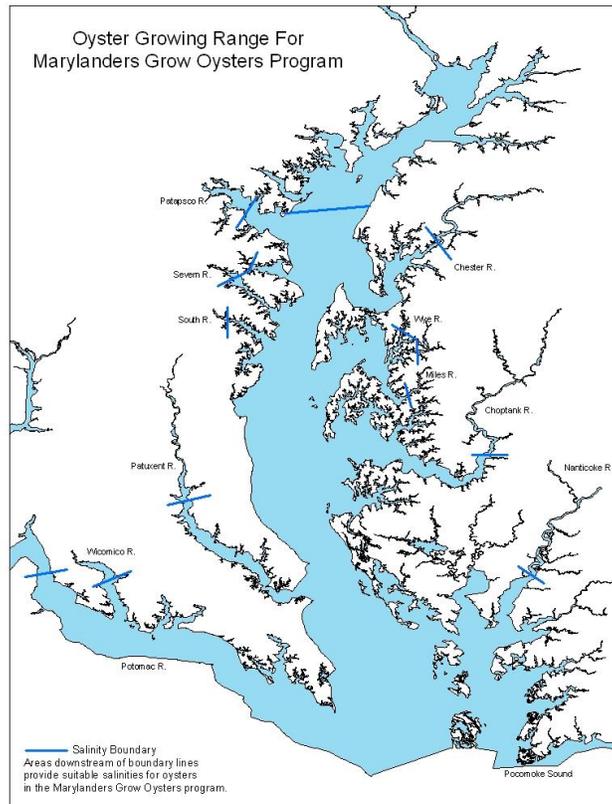
Local Groups and Coordinators – implement the program in their area

Growers – the waterfront property owners

Tred Avon River Oysters Growers – an example of one river



Oyster Growing Range for Marylanders Grow Oysters





Marylanders Grow Oysters

Application Form

Complete the application, attaching additional pages as needed.
Submit the application form no later than March 31, 2016 to:

Christopher Judy
Fisheries Service
580 Taylor Avenue B-2
Annapolis MD 21401
Phone: 410-260-8259
FAX: 410-260-8279
Email: chris.judy@maryland.gov

1. Applicant Information

Date: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Mission of Organization: _____

Tax Status (i.e., 501c3, local government, public school, etc.) – if applicable.
It is not required that your group have any special tax status.

Executive Officer of Requesting Organization

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

County: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____

Project Officer

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

County: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____

Original Signature required

Original Signature required



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application form - page 2

2. Project Location Information

In which river, creek, or area will the project be located? Please provide a map.
In which county or counties will the project be located?

3. Project Implementation Information

Respond to each question below. Brief responses are suitable.

A) Project Abstract: In 2 or 3 sentences, provide a brief description of your Marylanders Grow Oysters project and the main methods of implementation. How will your project implement and support the goals for oyster growing and citizen involvement? What are the specific objectives of the project?

B) Project Description: Address these questions as they apply to your project:

- What are the steps that will be taken to complete the project (methodology)? Please respond to each of your specific responsibilities listed on page 2 of this packet. Your application will be evaluated largely on your response to these items.
- Is this project an extension of an on-going or recently completed oyster project?
- If your organization is already growing oysters through another gardening or growing program? Please provide a brief description of the project in your tributary (source of oysters, type of equipment used, number of growers in the program).
- If you are applying for a grant to another organization to assist you in implementing Marylanders Grow Oysters in your area, please provide the name of the grant, the agency, and a contact person. DNR would like to assist with any needed coordination with such an effort.
- Describe your organization's experience in completing similar oyster restoration and/or environmental Bay related projects.
- List your project partners and describe what specific roles each partner will play in completing the project.
- How many piers are in your project area? An estimate is suitable, if the exact number isn't known.
- How many oyster cages do you anticipate distributing?
- How many members are in your community/volunteer group?
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C) Project Timeline: Outline the project schedule. Include the start date, end date, and major milestones for you as you implement Marylanders Grow Oysters in your area.

