

FACTS ABOUT OYSTERS

- **Oysters are vegetarians.**
They eat algae—microscopic plants that are rich in nutrients. The algae is filtered from the water by their gills. Mucous on the gills trap the algae. Special cilia on the gills move the trapped algae to the oyster's mouth.
- **Oysters reproduce in the summer.**
Oyster larvae float in the water for about 10-18 days, then they settle to the bottom where they attach to a hard clean surface. After attaching, they grow into oysters and never move again.
- **Newly attached oysters are called spat.**
Spat are oysters less than 1 year old. Oyster spat require a hard clean surface on which to attach. While oyster shells are preferred for spat settlement, spat can attach to other types of shells, stone, and other hard surfaces. Larvae that settle on mud or sand will die.



- **Oysters change sex.**
Young oysters are mostly male. At 2 years old, most have changed to females. Older oysters are mostly females.
- **An oyster bar is a rich, diverse ecosystem.**
Oysters provide habitat to many other creatures, making an oyster bar a living reef. Numerous attached organisms grow on the outside of oysters, such as mussels, barnacles, sponges, hydroids, amphipods, worms, and bryozoans. These organisms attract fish and crabs.
- **Oysters grow about an inch a year.**
They grow slower in lower salinity (about 1/2 an inch per year), and faster in higher salinity, sometimes reaching market size in 2 years.
- **A large oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water per day during warm months!**
The small oysters in a cage can filter over 100 gallons per day. A restoration site with 10 million large oysters can filter about 500 million gallons per day.



BECOME AN OYSTER GROWER!

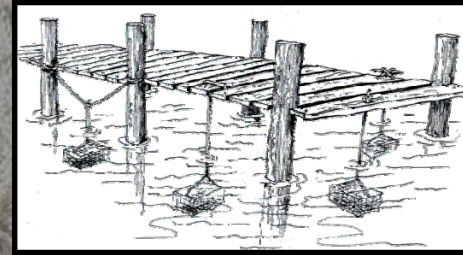
If you are interested in participating in the program or would like more information, please contact:

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Marylanders GROW OYSTERS Program

SAN DOMINGO CREEK and LA TRAPPE CREEK



Citizens working to restore the Chesapeake Bay



ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN INC.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS



1. Cages with spat are delivered to or picked up by growers.



2. Cages are installed on the grower's pier. The line can be tied to a piling, plank, or cleat. The cage must be low enough in the water column to be underwater during extreme low winter tides in order to keep the oysters from freezing in the frigid air.



3. Growers maintain the oysters for the first year of their life. Heavy algae growth on the cage wire can restrict water flow needed by the oysters, and silt on the shells can smother the young spat. Cleaning the cages every two weeks is suggested by simply pulling the cages up and down in the water a few times, like dunking a tea bag, or scrubbing them with a brush.

4. At the end of the 9 to 12 month growing period, the cages will be removed and the oysters will be placed on a reef sanctuary in the tributary. At that time, growers will be given the opportunity to obtain new stock and continue to be a part of the program.



Marylanders GROW OYSTERS Program SAN DOMINGO CREEK and LA TRAPPE CREEK

Citizens working to restore the Chesapeake Bay



THE PROJECT



Marylanders Grow Oysters is a program designed to foster stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and create living oyster reef populations in sanctuaries. Through the cooperative efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and numerous partners, 177 waterfront property owners began growing oysters in 854 oyster cages along the Tred Avon River in the first phase of the program last Fall. In 2009, the program will expand to San Domingo Creek and La Trappe Creek, as well as other specified tributaries.

LOCATION



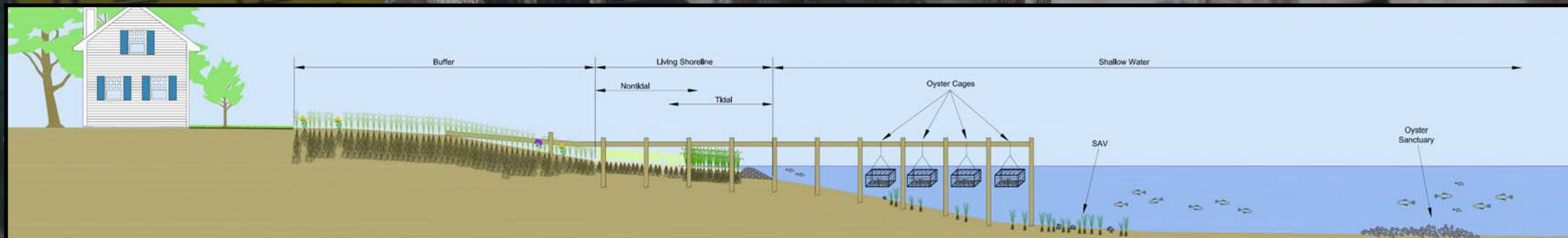
San Domingo Creek
107 Piers



La Trappe Creek
46 Piers

BECOME AN OYSTER GROWER!

Through this fun, educational program, citizen volunteers tend to the 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 and Environmental Concern at no charge to the volunteers. The oysters require minimal care—mostly rinsing the cages every two weeks. Citizen volunteers enjoy the personal rewards of stewardship while contributing to the enhancement of an oyster reef in their tributary. After about 12 months, the year-old oysters are collected and planted in a local oyster sanctuary, and a new group of young oysters are distributed to participating growers to start the process again.



The *Marylanders Grow Oysters* Program is a cooperative effort among the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Talbot County, the Oyster Recovery Partnership, Environmental Concern Inc., and concerned citizens like you. The oyster cages are being produced at the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

