



Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy Annual Report 2014–2015



A Note from Suzanne...

"If we each do a little, together we can do a lot."

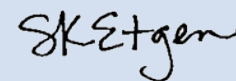
In one simple slogan, a group of Stewards has encapsulated the spirit of the Watershed Stewards Academy (WSA) as they encouraged members of their Galesville community to install rain barrels. One rain barrel captures only a small quantity of rain water; yet an entire community of rain barrels significantly lessens the amount of stormwater flowing into our waterways. Phrased in more precise terms, this community-wide effort means that each time it rains, about 3,000 gallons of polluted runoff are prevented from flowing into the West River.

And, so it is with the Watershed Stewards. In existence since 2008, the WSA has trained more than 170 Master Watershed Stewards who live throughout Anne Arundel County. Their knowledge, efforts and ability to spur others to action feed directly into the second half of our proverbial slogan: Together we can do a lot.

On any weekend through the seasons, Stewards are installing rain barrels, planting native trees, shrubs and perennials, maintaining rain gardens, and showing neighbors how they, too, can reduce stormwater pollutants through simple behavioral changes that include pet waste disposal and more effective lawn care practices. These individual actions compound exponentially, creating a ripple effect of change within the communities.

The current crop of Stewards, on the cusp of graduation, includes those who are part of the Riverwise Congregations Program. This partnership program engages faith-based congregations in the county and reaches out to a population that, traditionally, has not been formally involved in Bay and tributary restoration efforts. Ultimately, the program will reach over 12,000 people of faith to craft stormwater projects on their congregations' lands.

I am immensely proud that over the last year, Stewards have installed 19 conservation landscapes, 20 rain gardens, more than 100 tree projects, 65 rain barrels, and 3 living shorelines while working on 25 other projects to remove invasive plants and engage thousands of citizens in clean water actions. I am also profoundly grateful for the work of each Watershed Steward as well as the time and generosity of WSA Consortium members, donors and partners.



Suzanne Etgen
Executive Director

Photos from top to bottom: Steward Erin Duffy revels in a Hillsmere rain garden; Steward MaryBeth Austin gives a WSA demo; County Executive Schuh with Steward Stephanie Siemek and Suzanne Etgen at WSA graduation; Steward Tara Mairs working on her capstone project in Gingerville; Butterfly attracted to a WSA conservation planting area; three generations of Watershed Stewards — Chase Bergeson, Lisa Bender and Mel Bender.

And from our Board Chair...

The Watershed Stewards Academy is at the forefront of change. Through our growing network of trained Stewards, we are engaging citizens across Anne Arundel County to learn about stormwater issues and do more to control the runoff from their community properties.

This report highlights our impacts through the varied and ever-growing number of projects that have minimized the detrimental effects of stormwater. Rain barrels, rain gardens and conservation landscapes of native plants are a few of our most effective tools. The number of installed projects is impressive — and increasing.

But the real measure of our success lies in the personal stories that you will read in these pages. Through innovative projects such as RiverWise Congregations, we are reaching hundreds of parishioners and connecting with wonderful community leaders like Rev. Johnny Calhoun. Through the efforts of committed Stewards like Sandy Hartzell and Brenda Schwaab in Linthicum, we are enlisting thousands of people through their neighborhoods, schools, businesses and houses of worship.

People often say, "If I only knew what to do to help restore local waters, I would do a lot more." And truly, our local waters will become healthy again only through the individual actions of tens of thousands of people all across our county. The key ingredient in WSA's model is galvanizing that behavior change; our success comes from bringing about this change on a large scale. WSA Stewards form the link connecting members of their community to the restoration actions that make a difference in their own backyards.

Each year our impact — and our reach across the county — grow. Please join us.



Steve Raabe, Board Chair

New Strategic Direction for WSA

In 2014, with help and input from Stewards, Consortium Members and Partners, the WSA Board adopted a 5-year strategic plan to focus our organization's work in ways that advance *our mission — inspiring and facilitating change to improve the quality of waterways in Anne Arundel County and beyond*. Ambitious goals, with measurable metrics, will help WSA grow in a way that contributes to our mission. Over the next 5 years, WSA will work strategically to advance our organization as:

A Laboratory of Innovation

We developed our curriculum with the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center of Anne Arundel County's public school system. Steward candidates learn about stormwater

management, plant selection, site assessment and more. They are also trained in social science so they can skillfully communicate and engage with their communities. We constantly innovate and update our curriculum as we reach out to different segments of the population and integrate the latest thinking in water restoration.

A Hub of Connections

The WSA forms a hub for anyone interested in working on water protection in the county. First-time volunteers can connect with their local Stewards. Our Consortium of technical experts supports the Stewards and shares best practices. Our annual conference brings together the entire network, as do frequent informal gatherings. Throughout the

year, WSA provides a venue to plug in, interact and collaborate.

A Strong Partnership

Born in 2008 as a partnership of the county's public schools and its Department of Public Works, WSA is a bonified public-private partnership. Our focus rests on the two-thirds of county land that is privately owned. We are organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3), raising private-sector funds while continuing to partner with the county and encouraging public awareness of our individual responsibility to manage stormwater runoff.

“ While the challenges are great, the opportunities to conserve and preserve this precious gift of water are even greater. It takes each person doing their part. — Kirvin Bonner ”



Watershed Steward Highlights and Successes

St. Lukes Gets a Little Love

Watershed Steward Betsy Love has taken on a project that would have intimidated a lot of people. Betsy is proposing a set of bioswales on three acres of undeveloped land owned by St. Luke's Episcopal Church and Watergate Pointe with a regenerative stormwater conveyance system to treat runoff from more than 27 acres of intensely developed land in Eastport.

She has procured over \$1.3 million from the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources and many private donors in partnership with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Federal, state and local officials, and community members are collaborating on the design of this project.

Without Betsy's efforts to bring about this remediation, the runoff from acres of impervious surfaces in Eastport would continue to wash into Back Creek. Her bioswales will intercept hundreds of thousands of gallons of stormwater, allowing it to slow down, settle out and infiltrate — the three tenets of stormwater management drilled into the heads of new Stewards.

Betsy is also collaborating with two other RiverWise Congregations Stewards at St Luke's — Sandie Kirkland and Dawn Moorehead — to engage the surrounding Eastport community in invasive plant management and stormwater education.



Transforming Communities

Teamwork — a concept universally embraced and tough to pull off, but incredibly effective when done well. Teamwork has transformed the community of Herald Harbor due to the efforts of two individuals.

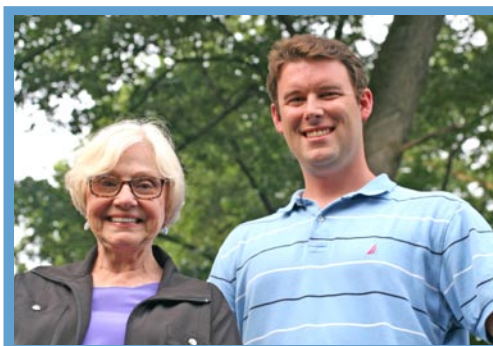
Steward Charlotte Lubbert, a lifelong resident of Herald Harbor was troubled by the polluted stormwaters scouring the creeks in her community. She met with like-minded WSA Consortium Member Matt Rhoderick, also a resident of Herald Harbor. Together, they became the seed pair in a team that eventually grew to include other community members, local businesses, corporations and WSA Stewards.

After working on several unsuccessful grant applications, the pair took an alternate approach to address the community's problems. Matt, a landscape architect, designed a large bioretention area to prevent polluted runoff from entering a badly eroded stream. Charlotte took on the role of convincing the community to contribute both funds and assistance to complete the project, raising \$5,000 to construct the expansive rain garden.

Matt trained six Certified Stewards to conduct a community assessment

of Herald Harbor. Over several weekends, they systematically studied the drainage areas of the neighborhood to identify hot spots for restoration.

They settled on a project that includes 800 feet of swales to slow and capture stormwater, a coastal plain outfall (to alleviate problems associated with stormwater-eroded streams) along with 6,000 sq. ft. of restored marsh.



Working in concert, these installations will treat more than six acres of drainage area, preventing thousands of gallons of polluted runoff from entering the Severn River.

Matt and Charlotte have raised over \$55,000 towards the total cost of \$88,000. They will approach both private and corporate entities to raise the remaining funds.

As a dedicated WSA Consortium member, Matt not only trained Stewards to perform an effective and thorough advanced community assessment, but also donated the funds that he would have been paid to carry out this project to the Watersheds Stewards Academy. His generosity means that these funds can be used for the completion of other remediation projects.

“ WSA is the only Chesapeake advocacy organization that takes people with leadership skills, and empowers them to transform water quality and native habitat. — Betsy Love ”



Clean Water Communities

What better way to get communities enthused about stormwater management than by assisting homeowners in solving the water issues that plague their homes and properties? The Clean Water Communities program helps

neighborhoods change old habits by taking collective action to clean our waterways. Chris Moore, Kevin Green and Sue King, Stewards from Hillsmere, engaged neighbors to install projects that prevent more than 200,000 gallons of stormwater from reaching Duvall Creek each year.

In 2015, Stewards Sandy Hartzell and Brenda Schwaab piloted the same program in Linthicum, resulting in eight conservation landscapes, two rain gardens, two cisterns, three bioswales, one dry well, more than 25 rain barrels and the planting of dozens of native canopy trees. Together, these fixes prevent almost 100,000 gallons of runoff from entering Marley Creek each year.

Houses of Faith Go RiverWise

Over the past year, the RiverWise Congregations Program — a partnership of WSA, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake — kicked into high gear. Faith organizations own significant swaths of land within the watershed. As custodians of this land, they recognize their responsibility in caring for it in a way that minimizes runoff to waterways.

Over the past year, 26 interfaith Stewards enrolled in the WSA program. They are learning how to coordinate and care for stormwater projects on congregation land, and are reaching out to faith congregations throughout the county. These new



Stewards will ultimately reach 12,000 people. They are planning the installation of 18 rain gardens, 18 conservation landscapes, 200 trees, and 40 rain barrels, along with the removal of two large areas of impervious surface and the remediation of one stormwater pond — a total of 23 acres of impervious surface treated.

“ Every church has a creek and every creek deserves a church. — Rev. Johnny Calhoun ”

This Year's Facts and Figures

- 38 newly certified Stewards
- 25 enrolled candidate Stewards
- 26 faith-based Stewards will ultimately reach over 12,000 people from congregations
- 3,000 volunteer hours worked by Stewards to reduce pollutants in their communities
- 8,500 native plants and trees planted
- Over 95,000 sq. ft. of rainscaping and forested buffers created — equivalent to the size of 2 NFL football fields
- 65 rain barrels installed
- 180 presentations engaged over 8,000 citizens in Anne Arundel County
- Over 80 professionals volunteered assistance to Stewards through the WSA Consortium

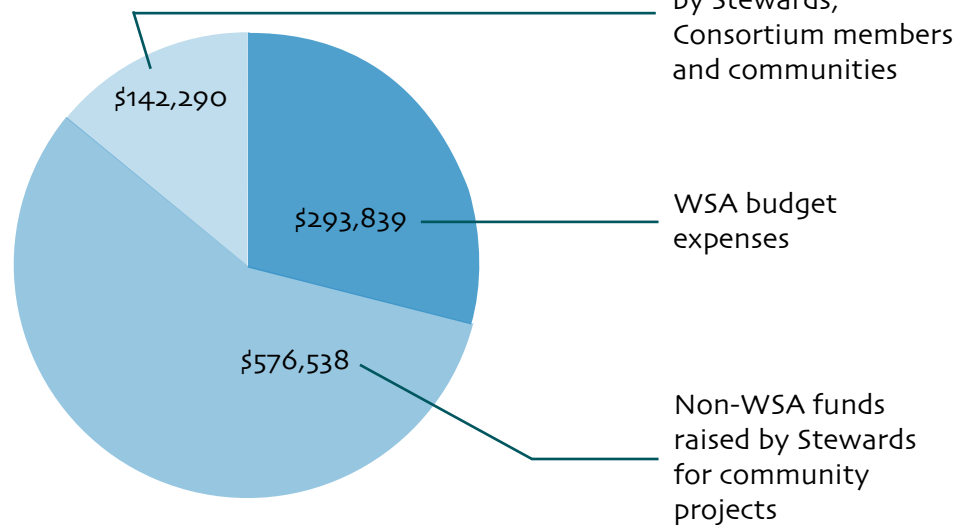


2014 WSA Budget

Income	
Programs	\$23,816
Grants	\$160,747
Contributions	\$113,124
Total	\$297,707
Expenses	
Program Expenses	\$66,060
Staff Expenses	\$195,348
Operations Expenses	\$32,431
Total	\$293,839
Income over Expenses	\$3,868
Reserve Fund	\$14,606

Every dollar spent by the Watershed Stewards Academy is matched by almost 3.5 dollars in grants, contributions and in-kind services raised by Watershed Stewards for projects in their communities.

In-Kind and Cash-Matching Funds for WSA



“Becoming part of WSA moved me from talk to action and gave me a source of experts and support people to assist with the action.”
– Ann Jackson

Your Dollars Matter

- \$4,000** Certifies a new Master Watershed Steward
- \$2,000** Sponsors creation of a rain garden
- \$1,000** Converts 300 sq. ft. of turf to a native plant conservation landscape
- \$600** Installs 10 rain barrels
- \$500** Supports a certified Master Watershed Steward for 1 year
- \$250** Plants 10 trees

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We are grateful for the generosity of our Board members, all of whom support WSA with their time and financial contributions.

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“Engaging our congregation in the care of creation has sparked a feeling of excitement in our youth as they cared for the rain gardens placed around our church.”
– Betty Thompson



Join the Action!

www.aawsa.org

Become a Watershed Steward

Classes will prepare you to become a positive force in your community.

Support our work financially

As a non-profit organization, WSA's work is made possible through the financial support of people like you.

Host a Project on your Property

Does your property have water issues that you'd like to address? Stewards can perform a residential assessment and propose ways to reduce stormwater runoff.

Volunteer with a Steward

Sign up to help with a project or make a donation of materials or services.

Sponsor our Annual Conference

"Spring into Action" on Saturday, February 27, 2016, will bring together over 200 community leaders and restoration professionals.



Many properties • Small actions • Big impacts

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