



Oyster Gardening: Creating a Constituency for Clean Water

Presented to the 2012 Virginia
Coastal Partners Workshop

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Dec 5, 2012



Presentation Outline

- Our Mission
- Span of Membership
- Master Oyster Gardeners (MOGs)
- Outreach Events
- Research projects
- Devices we build for members
- Summary of what we do



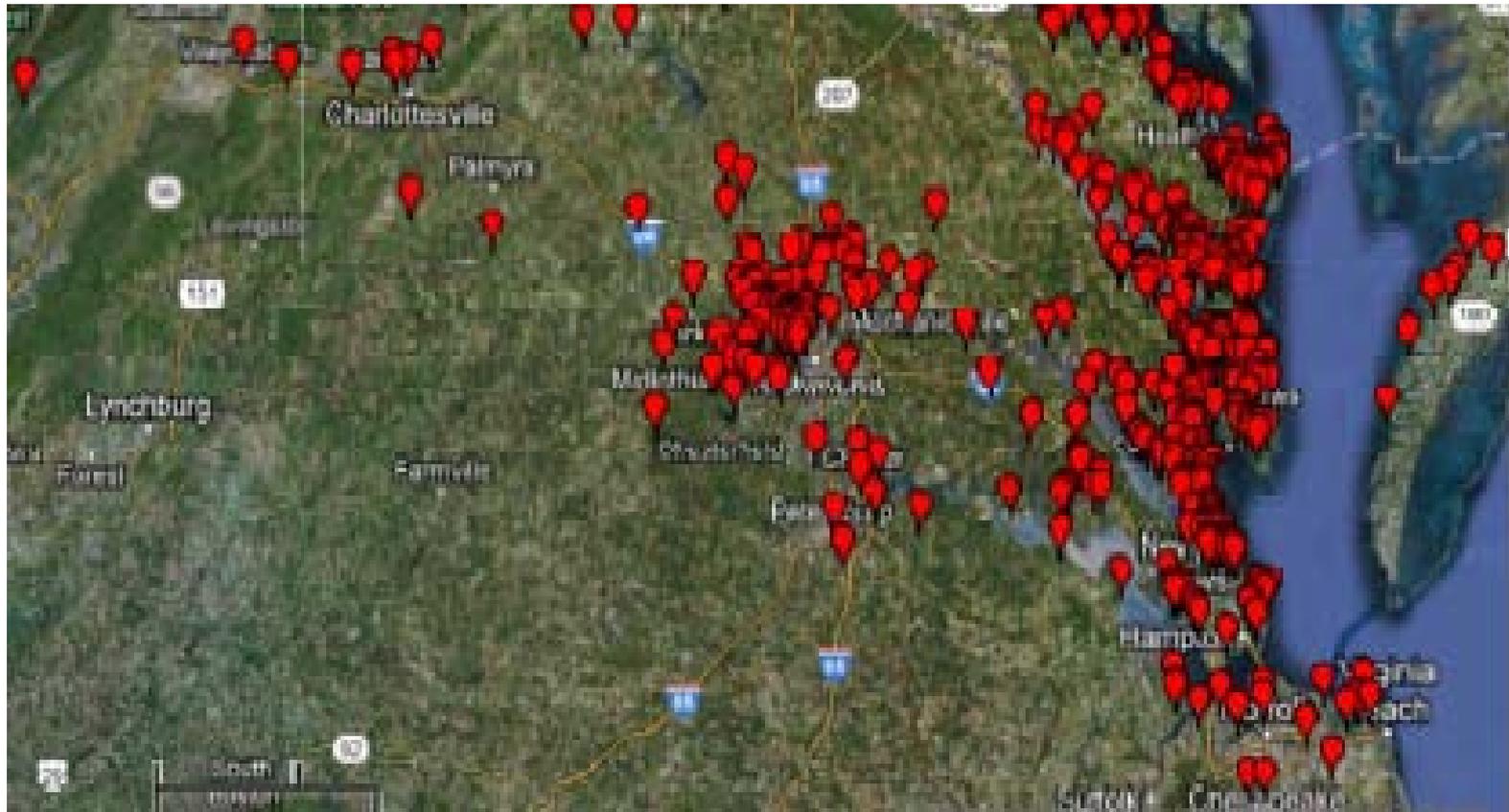
Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association

A 501(c)(3) established in 1997 to...

- *Educate interested citizens in oyster aquaculture methods*
- *Promote oyster gardening and commercial aquaculture in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries*
- *Promote the environmental health of the Chesapeake Bay through oyster cultivation and other means*



Membership Residences, from Nov. 2012 mailing list, 676 total.



Master Oyster Gardener's (MOG's) are paramount to TOGA's success.



Since 1998 we have graduated over 100 MOGs, taught biennially at VIMS. Instruction includes detailed oyster biology; oyster diseases, predators, pests found in oyster gardens; shellfish regulations; permitting; oyster restoration; selective breeding programs; hatchery operations and seed production; and grow-out gear construction, deployment, maintenance, and harvesting.



We attend ~ 30 outreach events per year; shown are Northumberland Land Conservancy, Stratford Hall, Urbanna Education Day



2011 Annual Meeting

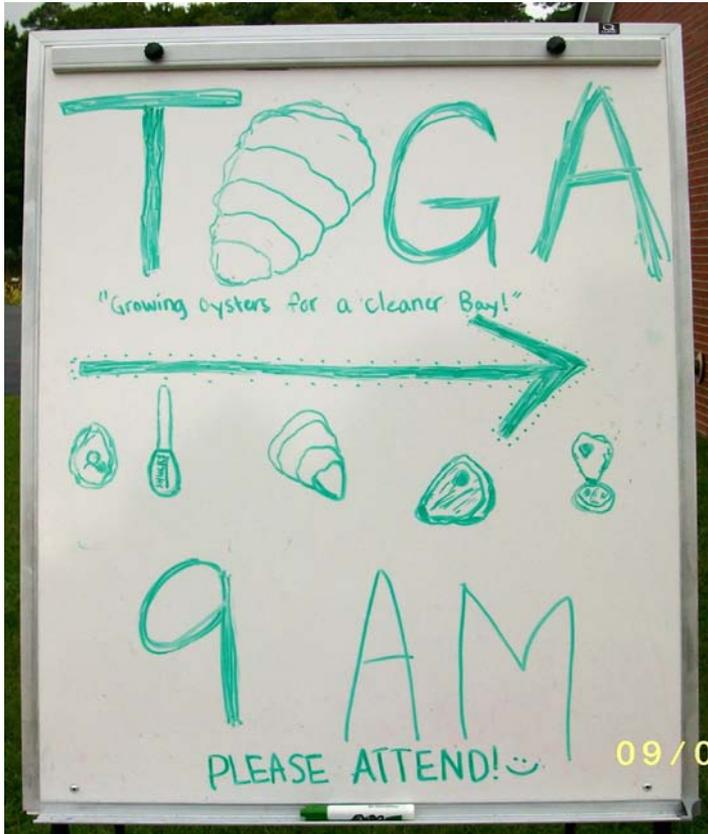


Shucking Training for OTE 2012



Oyster Tasting Event (OTE) 2012

Master
shucking
class



Tonguing with Northumberland
6th graders



Oyster Growth and Longevity Study

(one of TOGA's current research projects)

- Three year study of 4 strains of specially bred oysters
 - 2 Delaware Bay high salinity – 1 fertile, 1 sterile
 - 2 Louisiana low salinity – 1 fertile, 1 sterile
- 41 volunteers from Hampton Roads to Colonial Beach
- Uses Aussie cages hung 8-12 inches off bottom
- Oysters remain anonymous to volunteers until end of study
- Average size, live vs. dead, number greater than 3 inches reported 3 times per year
- VIMS will do the data analysis
- Data thus far indicates a strange year...



Sammie Joplin's Oyster G&L Study site in Poquoson in March. This is the first confirmed site that at least one oyster strain has averaged over 3 inches. Three inch oysters in seven months! With July's measurements his oyster are still leading the pack at an overall average of all strains at 3.2 inches.



Some devices we make for oyster gardeners



TOGA/VIMS Fellowship Endowment

- Established in June 2011 to support VIMS graduate students researching oysters, shellfish, and Bay ecology.
- In honor of Mike Oesterling and Jackie Partin, two exceptional contributors to TOGA.
- All donations tax deductible.
- Best deal: Join TOGA for \$10 a year; includes 3 newsletters and much more.



- Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay
- Assist novice and experienced oyster gardeners
 - Oyster Fairs on NN and MP
 - Community events (~30/year)
 - Float-building workshop at VIMS
 - Annual meeting with programs of interest
 - Support on request
 - Info on resources and supplies
 - An exceptional website @ WWW.oystergardener.org
- With VIMS, train Master Oyster Gardeners (who can help you)
- Support VIMS research - provide volunteer grow-out and data collection
- Survey oyster gardens (location and salinity)
- Collect helpful data on oyster longevity, wild strikes etc.
- 600+ members
- Newsletters
- TOGA/VIMS Fellowship Endowment



A special thanks to the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee for their generous grants throughout the years

Backup Charts



