

**PETITION IN OPPOSITION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FEDERAL OYSTER  
SANCTUARY AND FEDERAL RESTORATION PROGRAM IN THE MANOKIN AND  
NANTICOKE RIVERS**

WE, the residents of Smith Island, are opposed to the anticipated federal oyster sanctuary/  
restoration project in the Manokin and Nanticoke Rivers for the following reasons:

- The use of granite and other non-indigenous materials to establish oyster reefs is not cost effective; furthermore, the use of those materials does not allow machinery to rotate oyster bottoms, which is crucial for healthier oyster beds to exist.
- Appropriation of these areas by the federal government may prohibit any future leasing and/or use of the bottoms of cultivation by the public. It also may inhibit development of a possible seed area, which could be used to propagate oysters within the Chesapeake Bay.
- The creation of such a sanctuary curtails the area even more so for local watermen, adding additional economic hardship. Also, such a project risks permanently harming the prolific wild oyster bars and disrupts water quality.

WE propose:

- The use of Chesapeake Bay oyster shells only (as for the possible proposed use of the Man-of-War Shoal). In the winter 2017 issue of *Nantucket Today* (page 44), Leah Cabral is quoted as saying, "Oyster larvae is chemically attracted to the oyster shell, so they need that suitable substrate to attach to in order to metamorphosize into adults."
- To allow local county government and the local county watermen to co-manage the development of a sanctuary/restoration project. This collaboration could establish a sizable seed area that would eventually lead to a possible rotation system and/or an equitable leasing system, such as managed reserves or lottery-based leases for local watermen/TFL holders.
- Funding allocated for any sanctuary/restoration project should be evenly distributed among all organizations that wish to be involved. This includes reestablishing the seed program, which WE believe works.
- Hosting a meeting on the island.

WE request:

- That a public hearing be held for the residents of the counties that bank along the Manokin and Nanticoke Rivers before any decision about a possible sanctuary/restoration project occurs.

WE, the residents of Smith Island, respectfully submit this petition for your consideration and wish you a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year!