

WATERSHED STEWARDS ACADEMY- AN ARMY OF STORMWATER STEWARDS

Amanda Rockler and Jennifer Dindinger, University of Maryland, Sea Grant Extension

Urban Stormwater is the only sector of pollution that is still growing in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. In order to address this growing pollution sector, it is critical that residents implement small residential stormwater BMPs on their properties. For years, outreach professionals have been giving lectures and providing power point presentations on the state of the Chesapeake Bay without really empowering people to take action or creating behavior change. We need to think of new approaches for designing innovative programs that move citizens to action around the issues of improving water quality and reducing water quantity, and begin to foster and promote small scale best management practice (BMP) implementation on a wider scale.

In this session participants will learn about the Watershed Stewards Academy (WSA), a train-the-trainer program developed to build an army of citizen stewards capable of identifying stormwater pollution sources and solutions. To become Certified, Stewards must complete an intensive, research-based, hands-on training, and implement a community stormwater project. Once trained, Stewards work with their communities to assess watersheds, educate other community members, reduce pollutants, and take action. To date, this program has trained over 300 Stewards who have installed hundreds of small-scale stormwater projects, interacted with over 20,000 people, and leveraged over \$250,000 in funding.