

MES Reef Ball Project First Production Pour Tilghman Island – March 2004



The Maryland Environmental Service (MES) conducted Reef Ball production pour training on Tilghman Island as an matching component for the first phase of an artificial reef development and restoration project being funded by the Abell Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Trust, and FishAmerica Foundation. Reef Innovations, Inc., a Florida based Reef Ball contractor, was hired by MES to provide training and technical support.

The production pour was specifically designed to prepare the MES artificial reef staff for medium-scale demonstration pours with cement trucks. It was also designed to support supplemental production of Reef Balls to support the MES artificial fishing reef project as well as similar projects by the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center and Magothy River Association with grant support from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and FishAmerica Foundation.

Reef Ball molds for the production pour were obtained with grant support from the Exxon-Mobil Foundation and Reef Ball Foundation and program research and development support from MES. The Oyster Recovery Partnership also made its molds systems available to MES to support the event. A volunteer from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation also participated in the production training pour to develop additional insight that could be applied to volunteer-based oyster restoration activities.

MES has several projects underway that are scheduled to deploy over 300 Reef Balls at various artificial fishing reef sites. In addition to grant support, partnering support is being provided by the Maryland Charter Boat Association, Solomons Charter Captains Association, and MSSA's Southern Maryland Chapter and others. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Is providing fisheries management, policy and technical guidance and coordination support for actual reef development.

The Reef Balls used in these projects can weigh up to 1,600 pounds apiece and are up to 3 feet in height. Each Reef Ball provides complex reef structure for attachment by marine organisms including filter feeders and vegetation. The modules will be placed in clusters to magnify their biological effectiveness relative to use by fish populations. The Reef Balls will be checked several times a year for at three years to assess colonization by marine organisms.

Check the MES website at www.menv.com for additional information about the Maryland Environmental Service and the agency's environmental restoration work involving oyster recovery, the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project, Hart-Miller Island South Cell Habitat Development and artificial fishing reefs. Information about Reef Balls can be found at www.reefball.com.

Production Pour – Reef Ball Mold Setup and Pour



Production Pour – Reef Ball “Hatching”

