

Status of Ongoing Efforts to Address the Shortfall in Funding the 2013 Chesapeake Bay SAV Aerial Survey

Background

- The Chesapeake Bay SAV Aerial Survey has been an integral data source to support science based management products and outcomes.
- The annual survey provides an annual comprehensive assessment of SAV distribution and abundance in the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, and the coastal bays, leading to annual SAV reports, maps, and data made publically available on the VIMS website.
- Funding for the aerial SAV survey comes from multiple resource agencies with a significant match from VIMS.
- There is a long funding history including, in the past, a diversity of funding agencies; however, the federal agency partners and their funding contributions have declined significantly over time.
- EPA has become the sole federal funding agency even though multiple federal agencies utilize and require the data of this survey in supporting resource management and regulatory decisions.
- Although 2013 funding commitments have been received from EPA, VIMS, Virginia, and Maryland, the partnership is in need of \$163,000 to ensure successful completion the 2013 survey.

Current Status

- The Partnership's Federal Office Directors, Water Quality Goal Implementation, Habitat Goal Implementation Team, SAV Workgroup, Scientific, Technical, Assessment and Report Team, and Management Board have all been briefed on the 2013 SAV Aerial Survey funding shortfall.

EPA

- The Chesapeake Bay Program Office is in the process of determining if it can fully fund the SAV aerial survey at the level of funding, \$240,000, it has provided since 2008.
- EPA has committed \$200,000 in FY2013 given the great uncertainty, until just recently, so to what its final 2013 Chesapeake Bay Program total funding level was.

NOAA

- Peyton Robertson, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office Director, has communicated to the partners that NOAA has committed \$20,000 in funds to support the 2013 SAV aerial survey.

Corps of Engineers

- The Corps of Engineers, under Heather Cisar's leadership, is actively working with the U.S. Army Aberdeen Proving Grounds on a Department of Defense proposal seeking funding from DoD's Legacy Resource Management Program.

- The proposal, if funded, would provide funding to VIMS for mapping SAV distribution and abundance around the more than 28 DoD facilities located along tidal shorelines around the Bay.

USFWS

- Mike Slattery and Jennifer Greiner are currently looking into possible sources of funding within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Next Steps

- Confirm EPA's ability to fully fund its past contribution to the SAV aerial survey and award the additional funding to VIMS through the existing, competed cooperative agreement.
- Move forward with NOAA's award of their funding commitment to VIMS.
- Finalize the proposal to the Department of Defense's Legacy Resource Management Program and await a funding decision.
- EPA staff to continue to work with USFWS colleagues to seeking out a USFWS funding source for FY2013 or FY2014 funds to apply to work on the 2013 survey (which will be completed by March 2014).