QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING – October, 2019
Chesapeake Bay Program

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

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Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to…*

Goal: *Vital Habitats*

Outcome:

Sustain and increase the habitat benefits of SAV in the Chesapeake Bay. Achieve and sustain the ultimate outcome of 185,000 acres of SAV Bay-wide necessary for a restored Bay. Progress toward this ultimate outcome will be measured against a target of 90,000 acres by 2017 and 130,000 acres by 2025.

How You Can Help

The SAV Workgroup:

- Is ON-Track!
- But we've hit a few snags along the way (logistically and environmentally)
- So we need to scale back and make our work plan more manageable and meaningful

L

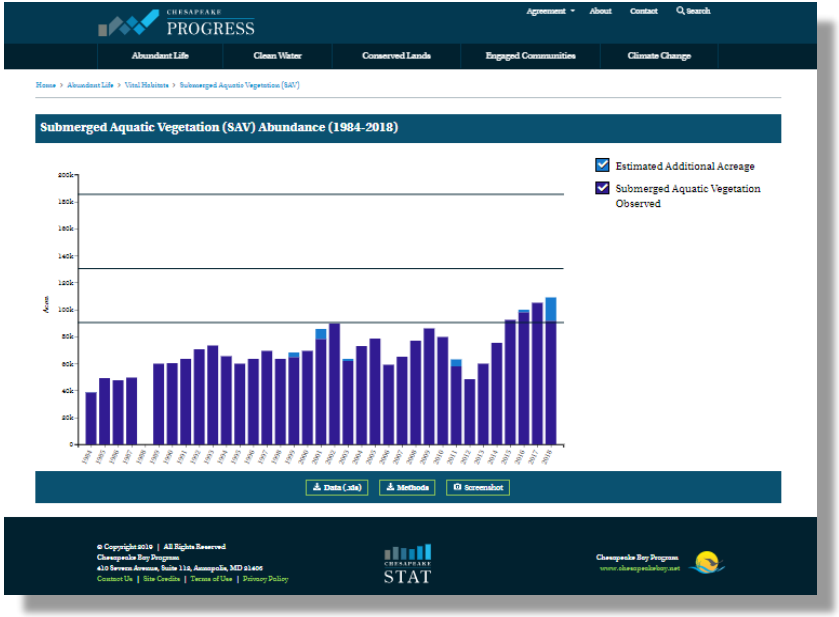
is for Landry

Successes and Challenges

- *THE SAV WORKGROUP HAS MADE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS TOWARD COMPLETING NEARLY ALL ACTIONS DEFINED IN THE 2018-2019 ACTION PLAN.*
- *SEVERAL ACTIONS ARE CONSIDERED ON-GOING OR CONTINUOUS, SO WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT ITERATION OF THE SAV WORKGROUP'S ACTION PLAN.*
- *THE PRIMARY BARRIER TO COMPLETING ALL WORK PLAN ACTIONS IS TIME AVAILABILITY.*
- *THE PRIMARY BARRIER TO MEETING OUR RESTORATION TARGET IS WATER CLARITY.*
- *ADDITIONAL BARRIERS TO MEETING OUR RESTORATION TARGET WILL BE SHALLOW WATER USE CONFLICTS, INCLUDING AQUACULTURE, LIVING SHORELINES, MAINTENANCE DREDGING, AND SAV HARVESTING/REMOVAL FOR NAVIGATION*

What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

- ***THE 2017 SAV RESTORATION TARGET (90,000 ACRES) WAS EXCEEDED TWO YEARS EARLY AND HAS EXCEEDED THE TARGET FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS*.***
- ***WE ARE ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE OUR NEXT SAV RESTORATION TARGET OF 130,000 ACRES BY 2025 IF WE CONTINUE ON THE CURRENT OVERALL TRAJECTORY.***
- ***MANAGEMENT ACTIONS TO REDUCE N AND P HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO FACILITATE THIS SAV RECOVERY (LEFCHECK ET AL. 2018).***
- ***EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS WILL BE THE PRIMARY CULPRIT IF THE TARGET IS NOT REACHED (IE. 2019 WILL BE A BAD YEAR FOR SAV DUE TO THE EXTREME AND PROLONGED PRECIPITATION AND RESULTANT NUTRIENT AND SEDIMENT POLLUTION IN 2018).***



LESSON: TO COMBAT THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND A GROWING HUMAN AND ANIMAL POPULATION IN THE WATERSHED, WE NEED TO DO MORE.

****IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT 2019 ACREAGE WILL EXCEED 2017, 90,000 ACRE TARGET. THERE WAS EXTENSIVE EELGRASS AND WIDGEONGRASS LOSS IN 2019***

On the Horizon

The SAV Workgroup has completed or is on track to complete the majority of the actions established in the 2018-2019 work plan. The primary obstacle to completing all actions was time and manpower; the work plan was admittedly overly ambitious although most tasks were completed regardless. The next iteration of the work plan (2020-2021) will focus on implementing the programs developed in the 2018-2019 work plan and completing other projects recently begun.

1. STAC-funded Workshop on Integration of Satellite Data into CBP SAV Monitoring Program

2. Develop SAV Restoration Protocol and Technical Guidance Document

3. Implement Chesapeake Bay SAV Watchers Monitoring and Certification Program. Recruit additional watershed organizations and volunteers

4. Continue work to establish CB SAV Sentinel Sites

5. Continue work on SAV Communications Strategy

6. Continue work to develop and establish SAV restoration finance strategy

7. Review recent report on statutes and regulations impacting SAV in the Bay. Consider recommendations provided by CLA and move forward accordingly.

8. Prioritize research agenda and update/define science needs.

***To reach our SAV restoration goal, the most important thing is to continue implementation of BMPs that reduce N/P/TSS to the Bay. Any fiscal or policy-related developments that impact our capacity for load reduction will impact SAV recovery, especially in a Bay that's more and more influenced by climate change impacts such as extreme storms, increased precipitation and cloud cover. With improved water clarity, all other efforts, such as active restoration, will serve to accelerate recovery. Without improved water quality and clarity, other direct restoration efforts will help but have reduced rates of success. The growing aquaculture industry and other shallow water use conflicts may also impact SAV recovery, regardless of regulations meant to limit them.**

A

is for
Aquaculture

Adapt

How does all of this impact our work?

Based on what we learned, we plan to …

Scale back!

The SAV Workgroup needs to scale back and develop a more realistic work plan. Although most actions were accomplished in the previous iteration, some were delayed and are just moving into the completion or implementation phase now.

Redefine!

One of our Actions: "Enhance research, education, and outreach" will be separated into two separate key actions. "Enhance research" will be our fourth action and "Enhance education and outreach" will be our fifth action.

Emphasize!

In this iteration of the work plan, we will emphasize the implementation of recently completed projects rather than initiating many new ones.

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is for Heteranthera

Help

How can the Management Board lead the Program to adapt?

Help Needed

- *The SAV Workgroup recently funded (via GIT funding) a review of policies, statutes, and regulations that protect SAV in the Chesapeake Bay. The review was completed by Chesapeake Legal Alliance, who also made recommendations on how to improve SAV protection in the Bay. The SAV Workgroup will provide a summary of the review and its recommendations for the MB to consider.*

- *Continue to support efforts to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution to the Bay. The effects of climate change combined with the impacts of a growing human and animal population in the watershed will make it necessary to UP OUR GAME in order to restore SAV to historic levels!*

- *Consider the implications of competing goals related to shallow water uses.* ***Aquaculture*** *is expanding throughout the poly- and mesohaline regions of the Bay, primarily in shallow water where SAV would otherwise have the opportunity to recover.* ***Living shorelines*** *are also being promoted as a perfect option to riprap and bulk heads. Additionally,* ***maintenance dredging*** *and* ***SAV harvesting*** *for navigation impact SAV recovery potential.*

Discussion