

USGS Chesapeake Science, 2020-2025 Work Plans:

Studies to assess land-use change and BMP effects on stream health, fish habitat, and aquatic conditions

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Science to understand and predict the response of streams to management actions

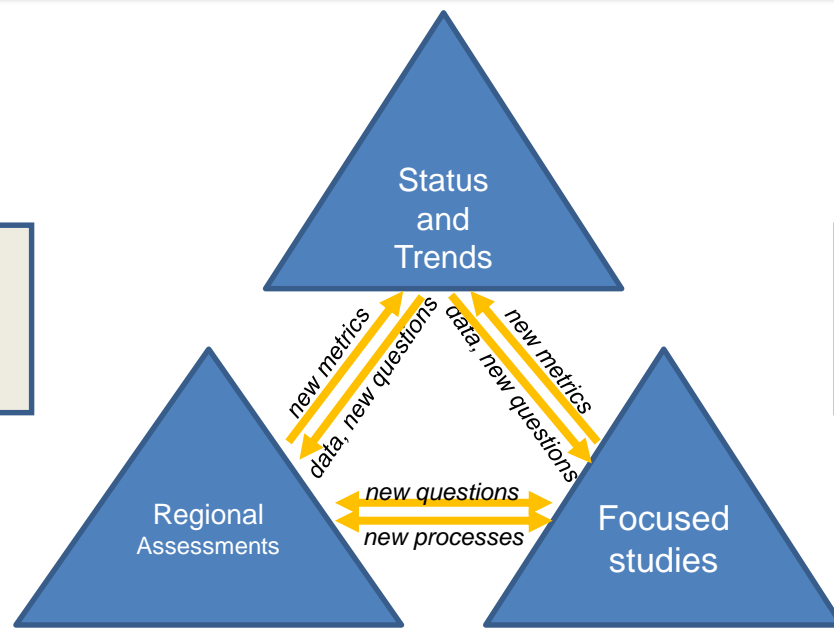
What are the effects of watershed BMPs and land use change on downstream:



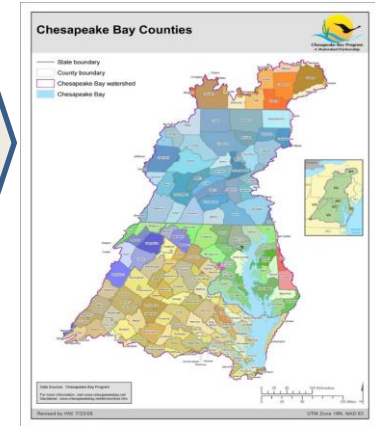
Stream health
Fish habitat
Aquatic conditions

Theme 1: Provide an integrated understanding of the factors affecting stream health, fish habitat, and aquatic conditions

state of the science



stakeholders



scientific continuum

Larger extent

Correlative

Space

Organismal endpoints

Assess condition

Existing data

Smaller extent

Mechanistic/Process

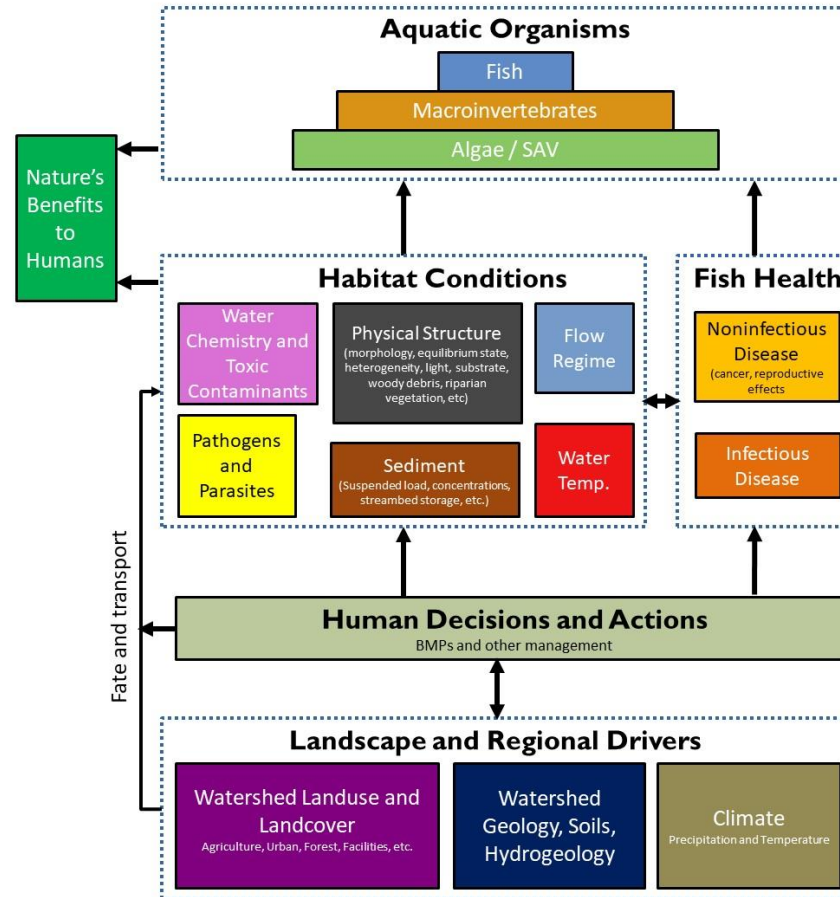
Time

Multiple endpoints

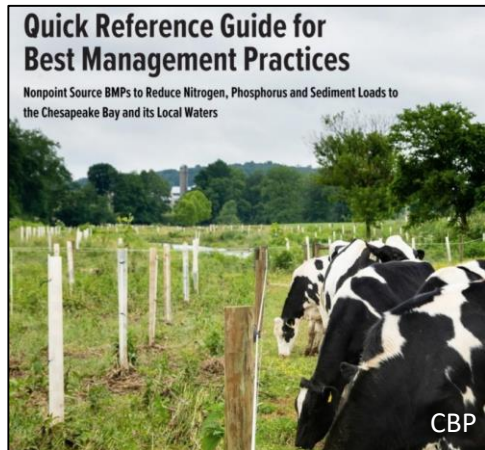
R&D

Some new data

Conceptual model for explaining change of fish habitat, fish health, and aquatic conditions in relation to stressors and management activities



In other words...



Focused studies of habitat settings

Integration Topic 1A: Explain factors and changes in stream health, fish habitats, and aquatic conditions

1. Summarize what is known about the stressors and drivers that are affecting stream health in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
2. Determine the effect of BMPs and other aquatic condition drivers on temporal and spatial water-quality responses in four showcase watersheds
3. Land-use change and BMPs effects on stream health and aquatic habitat response in select small watersheds with intensive BMP implementation
 - a. Analyze relationships between management actions, drivers, stressors, aquatic habitat, and macroinvertebrates and fish
 - b. Initiate studies on the effects of land-use change and BMPs on stream health, aquatic conditions (WQ), physical habitat, and aquatic organisms
 - c. Planning of whole-system models of stream health, fish habitat and aquatic conditions response to management actions
4. Assessing the relation of toxic contaminants to stream health and BMPs to reduce impacts in urban areas

Focused studies of habitat settings

Integration Topic 1A: Factors affecting cold headwaters streams and implication for management decisions

1. Identify relationships between drivers, stressors, and macroinvertebrate and fish response in Shenandoah National Park, with a focus on climate change and changes in atmospheric acid deposition
2. Identify effects of non-native species removal on brook trout
3. Forecast thermal habitat suitability for brook trout at management relevant scale
4. Evaluate and coordinate science and monitoring needs to support Brook Trout Outcome

Focused studies of habitat settings

Integration Topic 1A: Factors affecting rivers and implication for management decisions

1. Complete synthesis and communication of the effects of contaminants on fish health in agricultural watersheds
2. Develop a bio-surveillance metric(s) as an indicator of declining fish health
3. Develop studies to examine BMP effects and stressors affecting habitat conditions and fish health
4. Fish health and water quality response to BMP implementation in agricultural watersheds
 - a. Fish health response to BMP implementation
 - b. Quantify effects of BMPs on load reduction of nutrients from agriculture to surface waters

Focused studies of habitat settings

Integration Topic 1A: Factors affecting tidal freshwater estuary aquatic conditions and implication for management decisions

1. Complete synthesis of drivers and changes in estuary water quality
2. Relate watershed inputs to aquatic condition response
3. Conduct co-designed 'test bed' study with MD DNR on invasive blue catfish in the Patuxent River

Integration Topic 1B: Quantitative Stream Condition, Fish Habitat and Fish Health Assessments

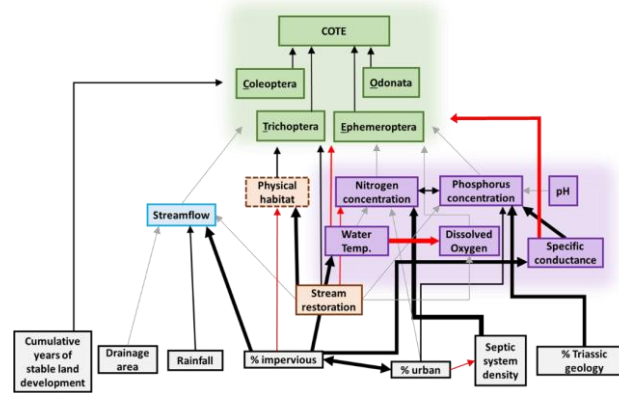
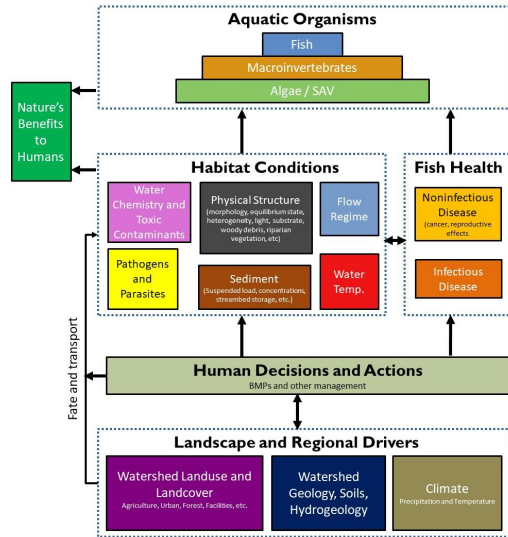
1. Assess relationships and identify stressors affecting stream health and freshwater fish habitats
 - a. Improve predictive modeling of stream conditions using the Chessie BIBI
2. Plan and conduct assessment of fish habitats and fish health
 - a. Improve predictive modeling of stream conditions using the Chessie BIBI
 - b. Evaluate 1:100,000 data availability and application for watershed-wide assessment
 - c. Evaluate technical approaches and refine assessment methodology in test areas
 - d. Joint Planning with NOAA
3. Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to better understand science needs related to invasive and pre-listing species and species of listing concern.

Integration Topic 1C: Data compilation, integrated monitoring networks and monitoring and computation of status and trends for relevant topics

1. Conduct data inventories and compilation
 - a. Aquatic Communities
 - b. Flow and Water Temperature
 - c. Water Quality: Nutrients and Suspended Sediment
 - d. Toxic Contaminants
 - e. Conductivity and associated ions
2. Conduct Status and Trends Analyses
 - a. Conduct monitoring to support the CBP nontidal network
 - b. Migration of the Chesapeake Bay nontidal network and total flow to the bay web pages to Drupal and subsequent content update
 - c. Compute status and trends for key drivers and measures of fish habitat and health
3. Design and implement integrated monitoring network

Factors affecting streams and implications for management decisions

Conceptual model for explaining change of fish habitat, fish health, and aquatic conditions in relation to stressors and management activities



- Land use and BMP characterization
- Flow and Temp
- Geomorph and riparian/floodplain condition
 - Fine sediment storage and embeddedness and particle size distribution on stream bed
 - Channel morphology, complexity, coarse wood distribution, slope
 - Channel stability metrics
 - Bank characteristics (roots, veg, shape) and erosion (short-term and long-term)
 - Riparian vegetation (near bank) characteristics: shading, cover, basal area, coarse wood, invasives
 - Active floodplain width and deposition (short-term and long-term)
- WQ and contaminants
- Organisms: community response, DELT, and targeted species for health
- Whole system response using statistical approach

Chesapeake and Delaware Floodplain Network: network design

**Bank and floodplain
sediment characteristics and fluxes
measured at 68 reaches
across mid-Atlantic,
representing variability in watershed
drainage area, geology, and land use**

Site selection:

- Chesapeake USGS NTN load gages, mix in Delaware, ungaged BR
- 'Unmanaged' floodplain land use (with woody vegetation)
- Unchannelized
- Landowner permission



EXPLANATION

Field Site

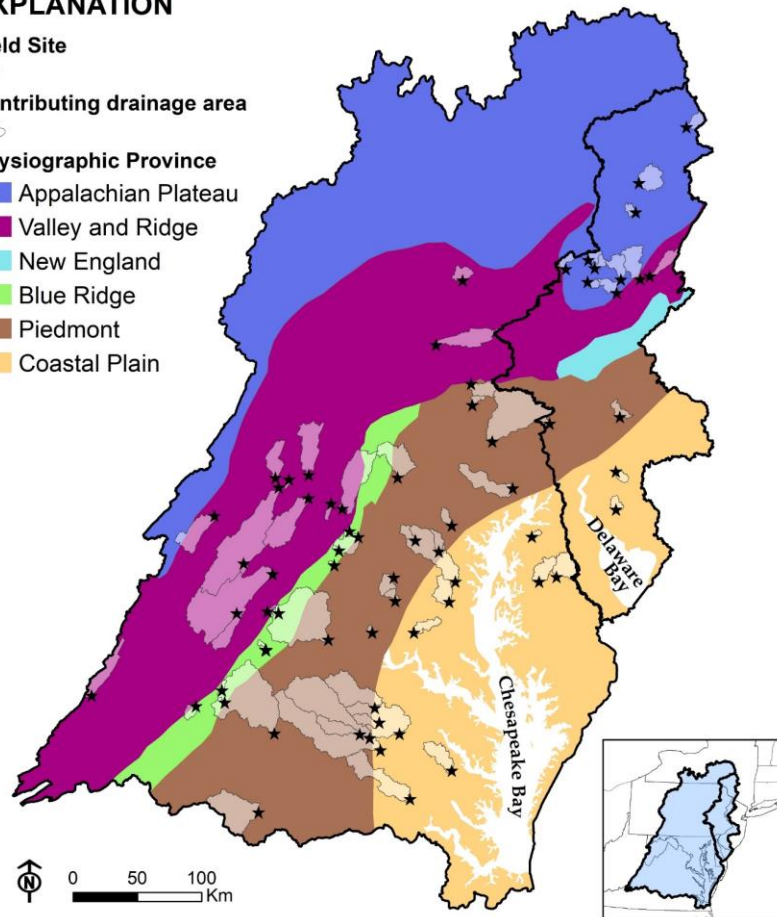


Contributing drainage area

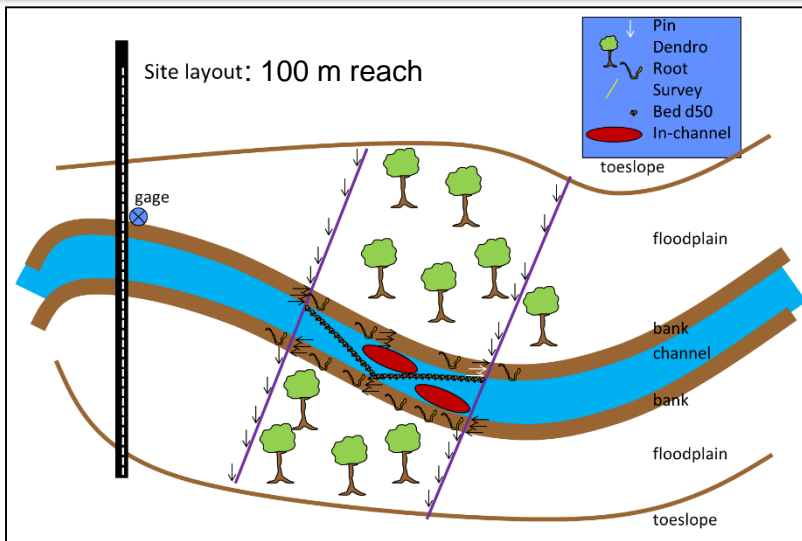


Physiographic Province

- Appalachian Plateau
- Valley and Ridge
- New England
- Blue Ridge
- Piedmont
- Coastal Plain



Chesapeake and Delaware Floodplain Network: measurements at 68 reaches



Stream valley x-section surveying:

136 x-sections

Floodplain tree coring:

650 floodplain tree cores

Bank root:

492 bank root samples

Floodplain sed coring

(5 cm deep):

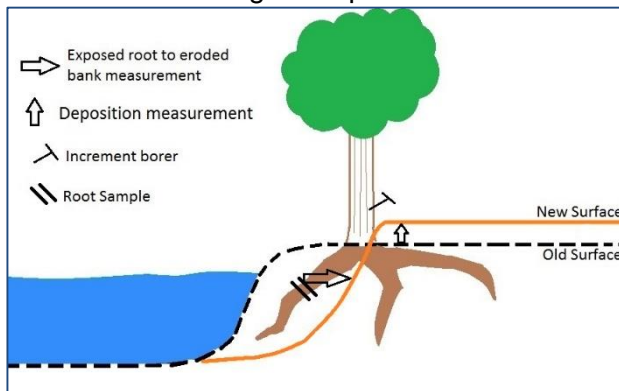
296 floodplain samples

Bank sed coring

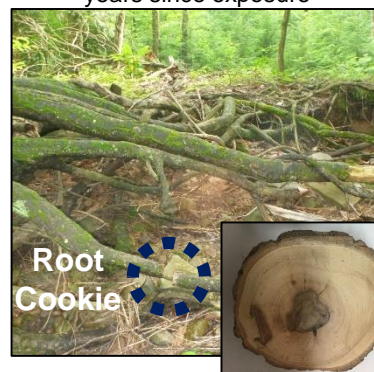
(5 cm deep):

461 bank samples

Dendrogeomorphic fluxes



Root analysis to determine years since exposure



Geomorphic measurements:

Active floodplain width

Bank height

Channel width

Lateral and vertical change (cm/yr)

% eroding bank

Adjusted lateral erosion (cm/yr)

Sediment characteristics:

Bulk density (g/cm³)

Bulk density <2 mm (g/cm³)

Bulk density <1 mm (g/cm³)

% organic

% mineral

% carbonate

Total OC (%)

Total N (%)

Total P (%)

Total Ca (mg/g)

Total Na (mg/g)

Total Mg (mg/g)

Total K (mg/g)

Total Al (mg/g)

Total Fe (mg/g)

Total Ti (mg/g)

Particle size: mean (um)

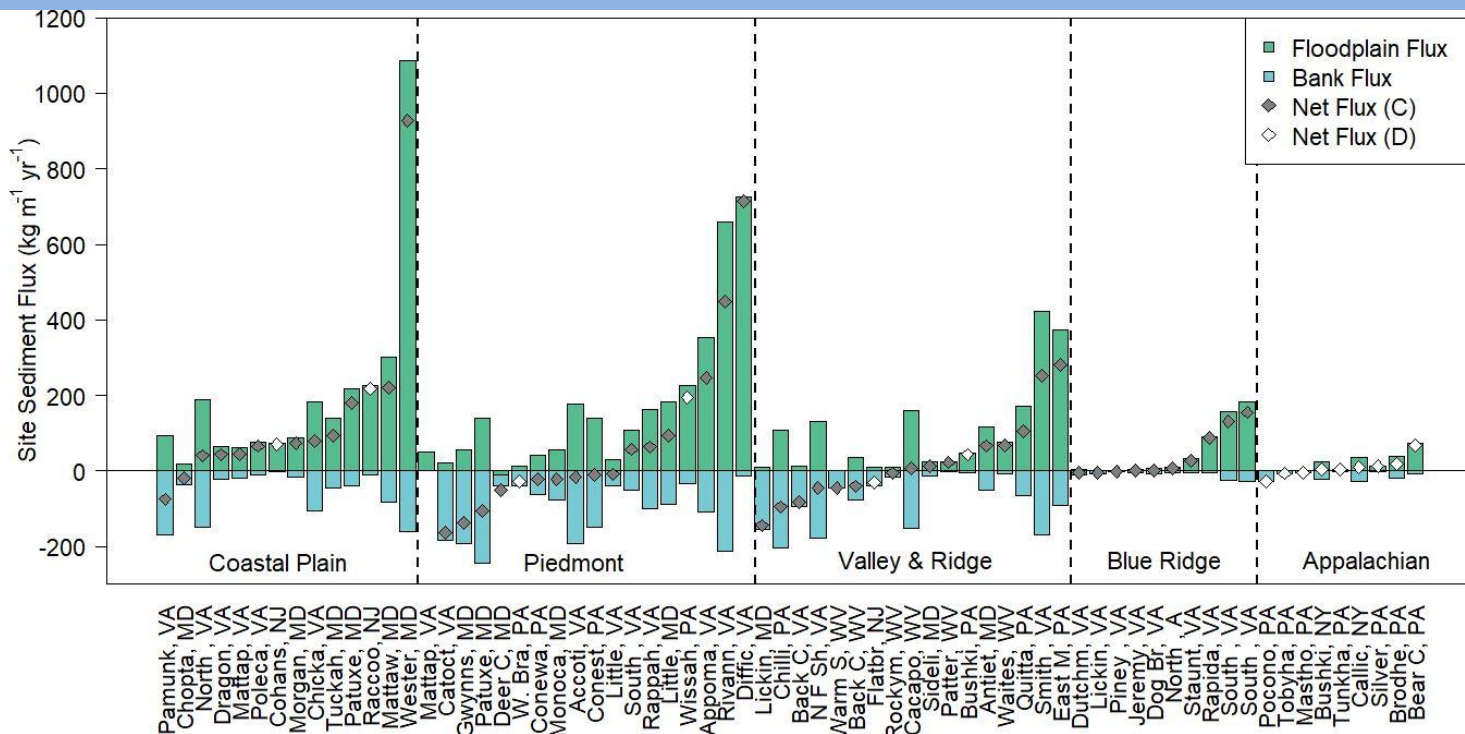
Particle size: d50 (um)

Particle size: %<63 um

Chesapeake and Delaware Floodplain Network : long-term bank and floodplain flux

provisional results

Mean ages of trees:
floodplain = 51 yr,
bank = 17 yr exposed



Bank flux =
lateral change rate * bulk density *
bank height * 2 * %eroding

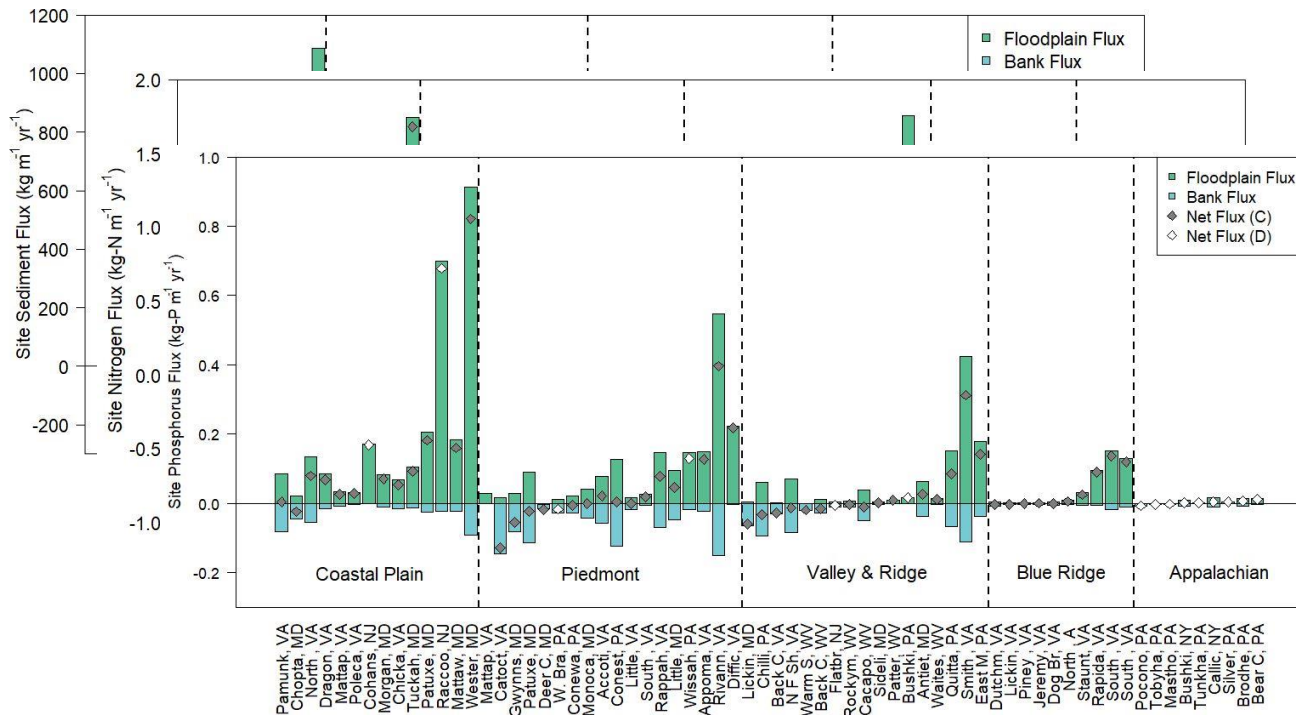
Floodplain flux =
vertical change rate * bulk density *
total floodplain width



Chesapeake Floodplain Network: modeling of fluxes

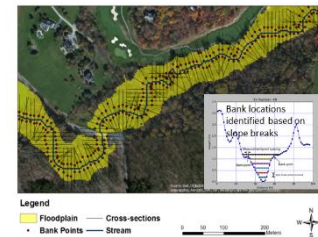
provisional results

Sediment, Sediment < 63 um, Sediment-N, Sediment-P, Sediment-C



GIS FACET toolkit

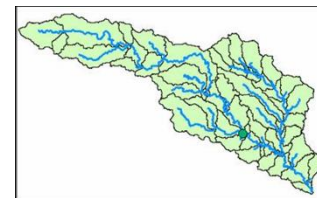
Floodplain width, bank height, channel width, ...



Boosted Regression Trees

GIS Watershed Attributes

Land use, hydrology, soils, topography, upland erosion



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Flood

provis

CBW: LiDAR
HUC10, 06/

Hydro
Clagge

100

Meters

EXPLANATION

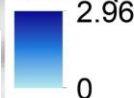
Channel Width (m)

- 3 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 15
- 15 - 20
- 20 - 25
- 25 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 80

Cross Sections

Floodplain

HAND (m)



<https://www.usgs.gov/software/floodplain-and-channel-evaluation-tool-facet>

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etrics

ange
plain,

for the U.S.

provisional results



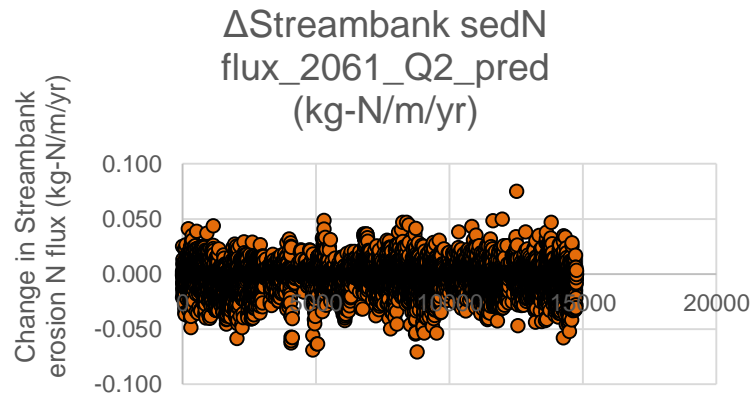
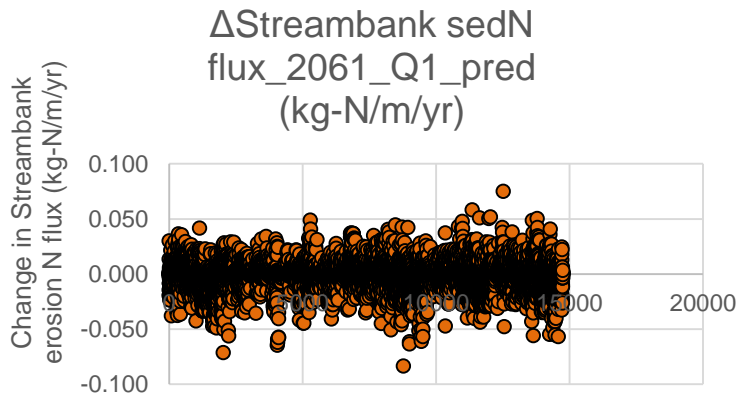
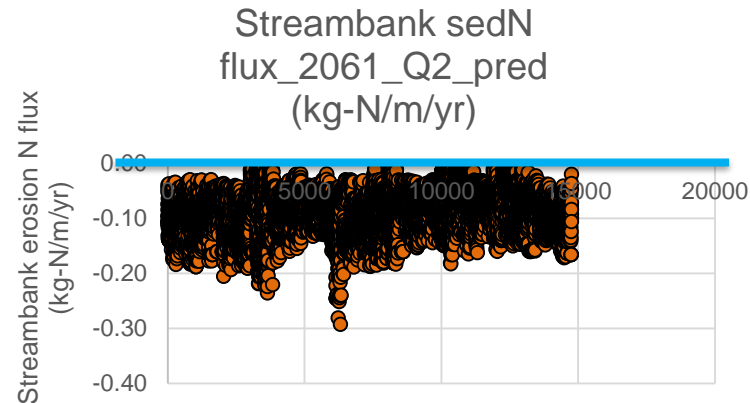
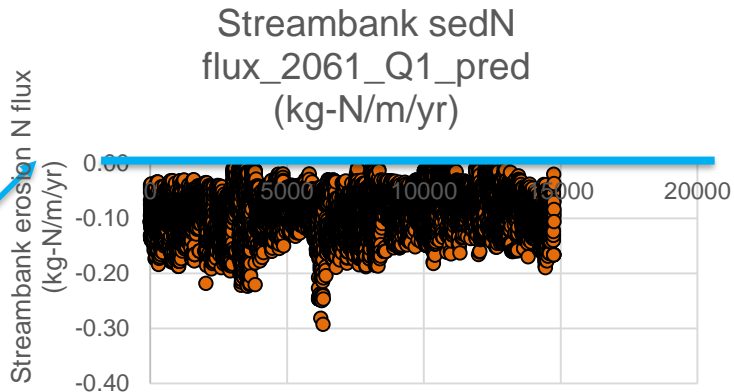
provisional results



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Land use change leads to hotspots of greater N pollution

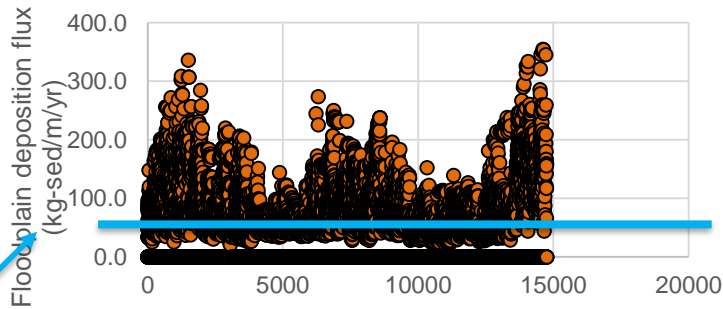
Current
average
rate



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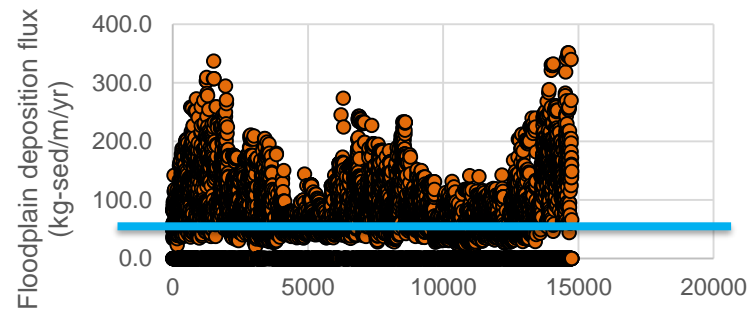
Floodplains respond by trapping more sediment, but that is bad for habitat quality

Floodplain sed flux_2061_Q1_pred
(kg-sed/m/yr)

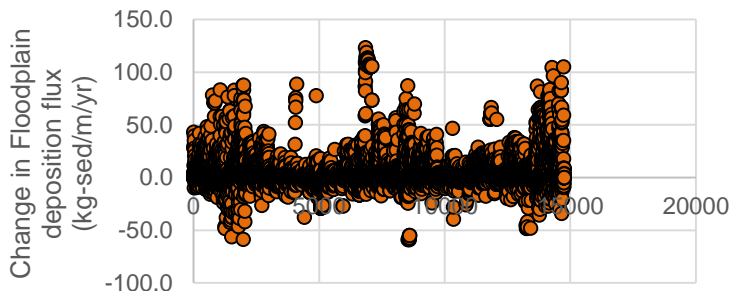


Current
average
rate

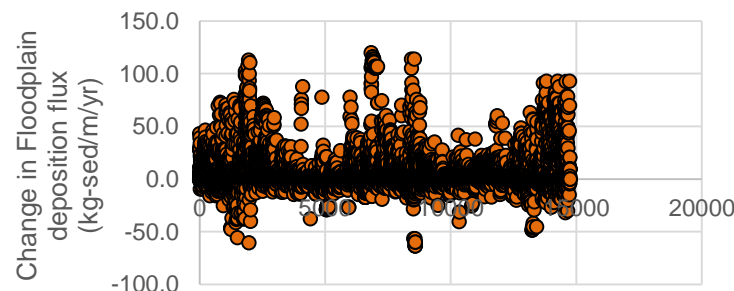
Floodplain sed flux_2061_Q2_pred
(kg-sed/m/yr)



Δ Floodplain sed flux_2061_Q1_pred
(kg-sed/m/yr)



Δ Floodplain sed flux_2061_Q2_pred
(kg-sed/m/yr)



Fluxes extrapolated to 14,754 NHDPlusV2 digital stream reaches

Sum of whole Changing Landscapes Initiative watersheds

Sediment Budget (megagrams/yr)

**Upland + gully erosion
delivered to streams (residual)**
 $-8.2 \times 10^6 \text{ Mg/yr}$

Bank erosion
 $-5.6 \times 10^6 \text{ Mg/yr}$

Floodplain deposition
 $+5.7 \times 10^6 \text{ Mg/yr}$

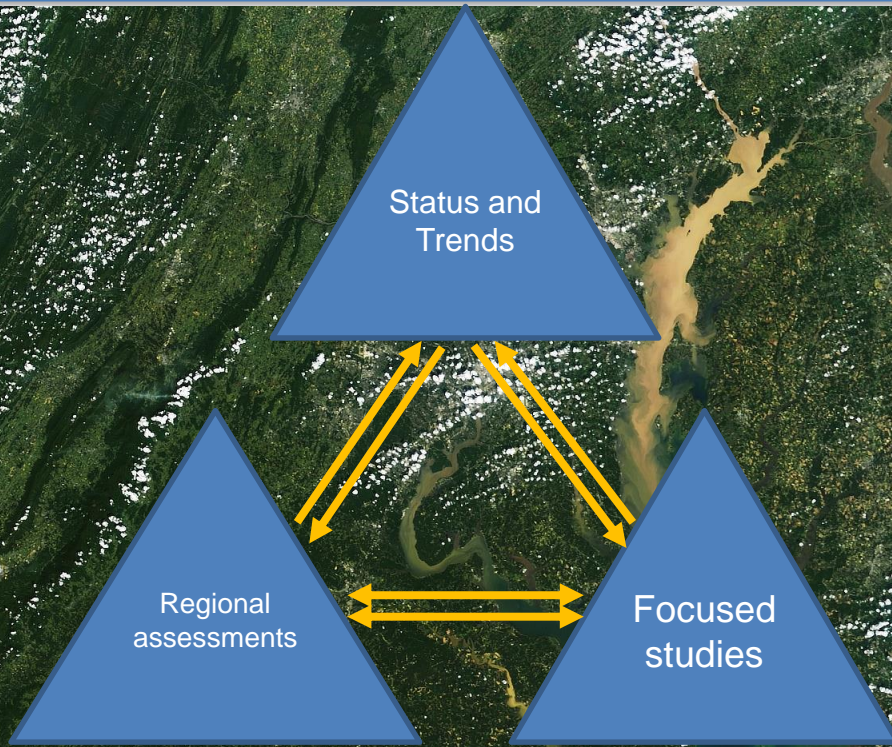
**Downstream load
(SPARROW)**

$-8.1 \times 10^6 \text{ Mg/yr}$
sediment



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Holistic system science to address management needs



Factors affecting streams and implications for management decisions

Engage stakeholders

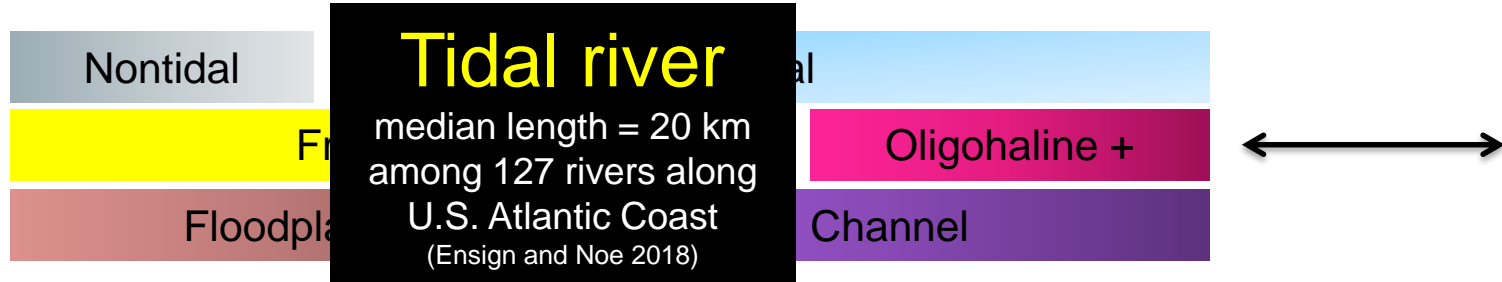
We will communicate, coordinate, and collaborate with CBP
to ensure we do relevant science and to ensure communicate new knowledge



How do watersheds and estuaries control TFW ecosystems? and their ecogeomorphic responses to SLR?

Watershed

Estuary

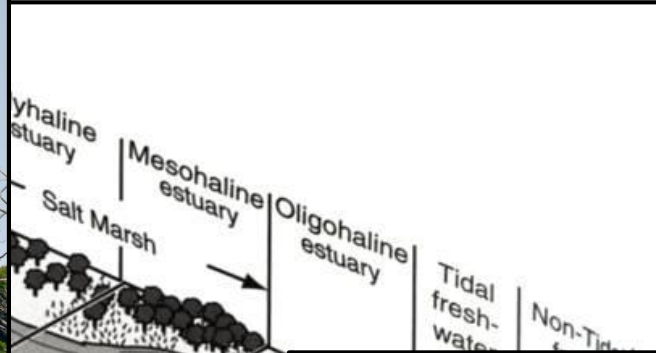


USGS



Dynamic salinity zones of upper estuary with SLR and drought

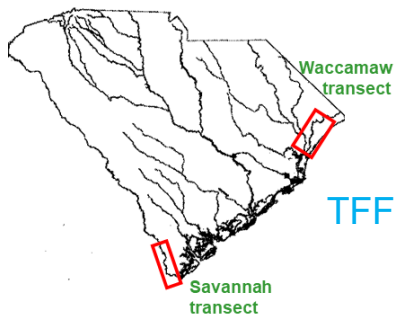
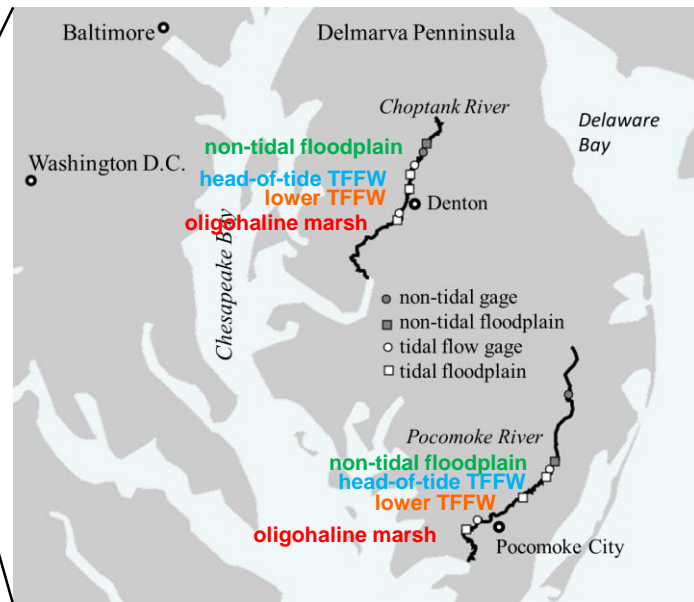
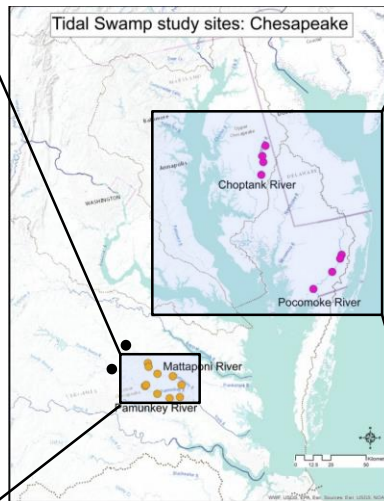
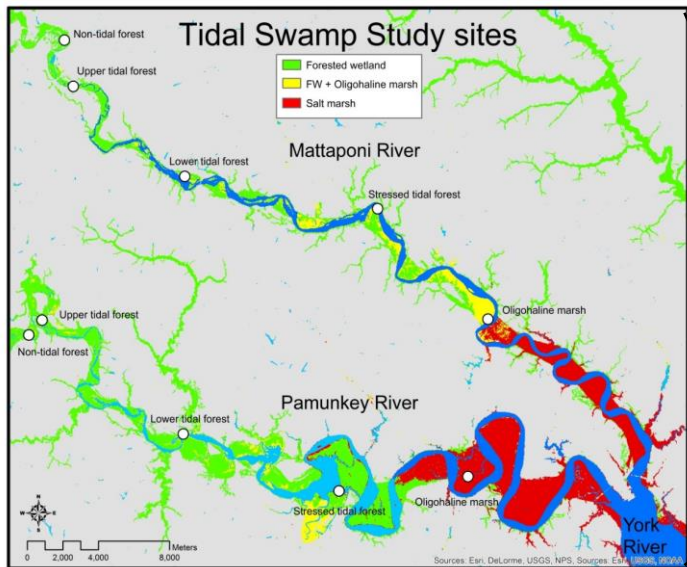
William Conner



Average annual
salinity, ppt
5.0
<5.0
<0.5

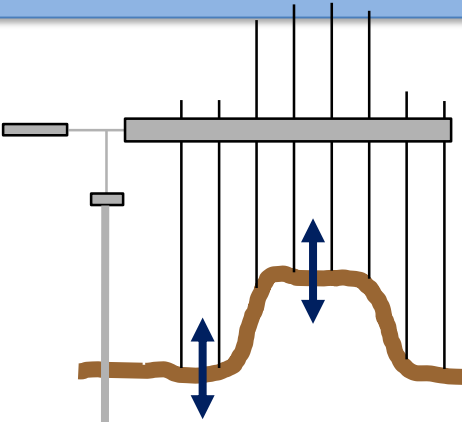


Landscape gradients: nontidal → TFFW → oligohaline measuring ecosystem processes

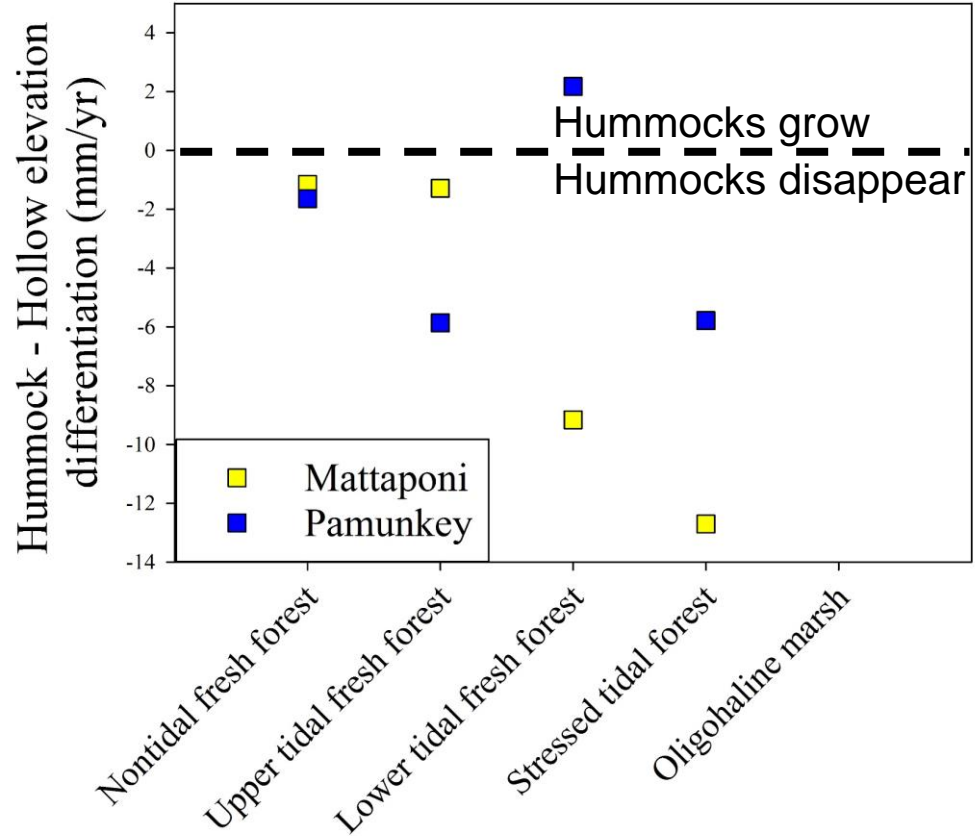


TFFW → oligohaline

Soil surface elevation change: hummocks are disappearing



April 2015 to September 2017
n=2 deep rod SET per site



What is the Sediment Shadow?

Minimal sediment availability in
lower tidal freshwater rivers
and wetlands,

either in-channel suspended
sediment concentration or tidal
wetland sedimentation

