SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION

HABITAT GIT/ SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION WORKGROUP

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT OUTCOME LANGUAGE

PROPOSED DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Sustain and increase the habitat and ecosystem benefits of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) in the Chesapeake Bay. Achieve and sustain the ultimate outcome of 196,000 acres of SAV Bay-wide necessary for a restored Bay.

EXISTING 2014 OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Sustain and increase the habitat benefits of submerged aquatic vegetation (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.

PROPOSED TARGET	**New Target / Update of Existing Target**	**Date estimate for target being developed**
Progress toward this ultimate outcome will be measured against a target of 90,000 acres by 2030 and 95,000 acres by 2035.	Update of existing	May 2025
Progress will also be measured against the following targets for each salinity zone: • Tidal Fresh: 21,330 acres • Oligohaline: 13,094 acres • Mesohaline: 126,032 acres • Polyhaline: 35,790 acres	New	May 2025

*Detailed activities will be included in an updated work plan

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Rationale and context for proposed draft outcome language:

- Increasing the ultimate SAV goal to 196,000 acres will align the outcome with water clarity standards and will result in a more accurate reflection of potential SAV extent in each Bay segment.
- Interim SAV acreage targets were determined by running a simple linear regression on the Bay-wide totals and assuming steady growth. Forecasting to 2030 resulted in 90,387 acres of SAV and forecasting to 2035 resulted in 94,258 acres of SAV. The forecasted numbers are based on an **average** 1.1% growth exhibited per year. With that, achievable interim goals are 90,000 acres for 2030 and 95,000 acres by 2035.
- Including specific SAV acreage targets for each salinity zone accommodates the variability in SAV community trends in different parts of the Bay. There is a freshwater community that inhabits

the tidal fresh and oligohaline zones (lowest salinity), a mesohaline community that inhabits the mesohaline zone (mixing of freshwater and saltwater is more pronounced leading to a moderate salt concentration), and a polyhaline community that inhabits the polyhaline zone (highest salinity within an estuary, but lower than the average ocean salinity). Each SAV community responds to changes in water quality uniquely and to varying degrees, and challenges or improvements that affect one part of the Bay may not affect the other.

Topics/challenges for Management Board guidance (Optional):

None identified.

Methodology for data collection and tracking of each Target (Optional):

Bay-wide SAV acreage is determined annually by the SAV aerial survey conducted by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Links to documentation that provide Target justification/context and/or rationale (Optional):

Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Dissolved Oxygen, Water Clarity and Chlorophyll a for the Chesapeake Bay and Its Tidal Tributaries April 2003. This document shows the original SAV acres for water clarity assessment in each Bay segment.

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://cdn.ioos.noaa.gov/media/2017/12/ambient_water_quality_criteria.pdf

2017 Technical Addendum Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Dissolved Oxygen, Water Clarity and Chla. This document shows the amended SAV acres for water clarity assessment in each bay segment.

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/publications/2017-technical-addendum-ambient-water-quality-criteria-for-dissolved-oxygen

Virginia Regulatory Town Hall, Virginia Administrative Code 9VAC25-260-185.: Criteria to protect designated uses from the impacts of nutrients and sediment in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries. This document shows the original, crossed-out acres and the proposed acres for water clarity assessment in Virginia's bay segments.

https://townhall.virginia.gov/l/ViewXML.cfm?textid=15572

Virginia Administrative Code 9VAC25-260-185.: Criteria to protect designated uses from the impacts of nutrients and sediment in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries. This document shows the amended, final acres for water clarity assessment in Virginia's bay segments.

https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title9/agency25/chapter260/section185/