QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING – November, 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
- But also DO MORE

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Learn

What have we learned in the last two years?

Successes and Challenges

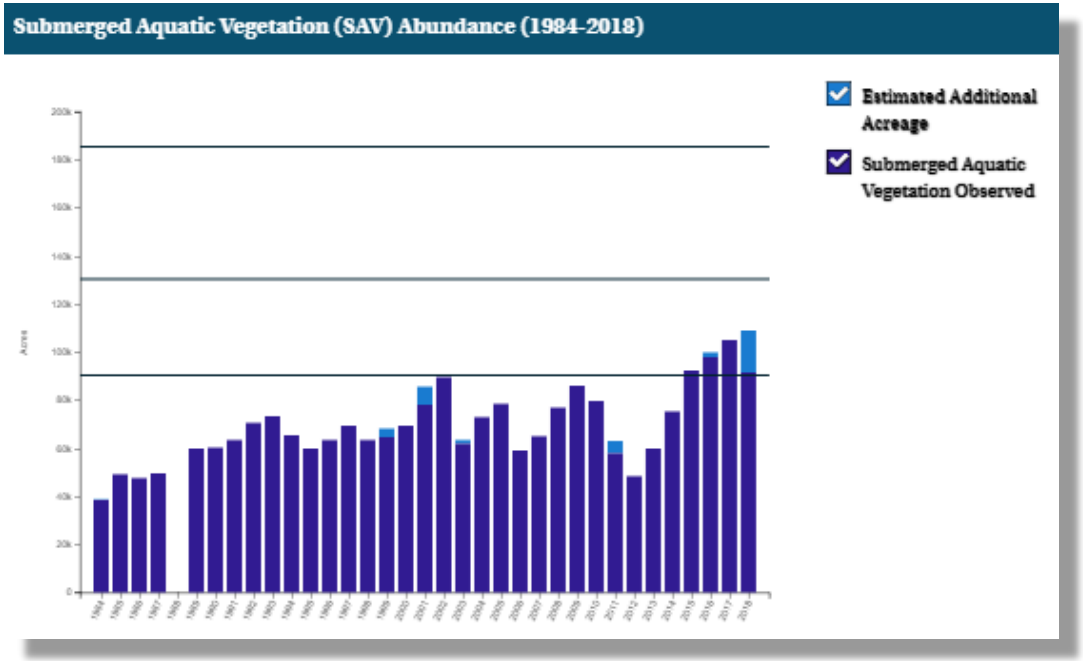
Successes

- Progress toward nearly all actions!
- SAV Acreage expansion linked to Management Actions
- SAV Monitoring Program Funding Gap CLOSED!
  - MDE contributed an additional $50,000
  - VA has dedicated additional funding*
  - Satellite data integration?

Challenges

- Work plan barrier
  - time
- Restoration Goal barrier
  - water clarity
  - climate change impacts
  - shallow water use conflicts (aquaculture, shellfish harvesting, living shorelines, maintenance dredging, SAV harvesting / removal for navigation)

What is our Expected and Actual Progress?



- 2017 Target (90,000 acres) reached!
- On track to achieve 130,000 acres by 2025*
- Management actions to reduce N and P facilitated recovery (Lefcheck et al. 2018)
- *2019 will be a bad year for SAV due to the extreme and prolonged precipitation and resultant nutrient and sediment pollution in 2018 and 2019. There was a near total loss of eelgrass in 2019 and a substantial decline in widgeongrass in the poly and lower mesohaline

On the Horizon

- **Integration of Satellite Data into CBP SAV Monitoring Program** (STAC Workshop) – will hopefully reduce costs
- **SAV Restoration Protocol and Technical Guidance Document**
- **SAV Watchers Monitoring and Certification Program**
  - Recruit additional organizations and volunteers
  - Certify additional trainers
- **SAV Regulatory Review**
  - Review report
  - Consider recs by CLA

On the Horizon, part II

- **Update and Prioritize Research Agenda**
  - Impact of shallow water use conflicts
  - Update habitat requirements
  - Widgeongrass v. eelgrass ES
  - Freshwater species research
- **CB SAV Sentinel Sites**
- **SAV Communications Strategy**
- **SAV Finance Strategy**

https://www.chesapeakelegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Existing-Chesapeake-Bay-Watershed-Statutes-and-Regulations-Affecting-SAV-1.pdf

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Adapt

How does all of this impact our work?

Based on what we learned, we plan to …

- **Scale back work plan**
- **Emphasize implementation of completed projects**

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 staff time availability; 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.

Help

How can the Management Board lead the Program to adapt?

Help Needed

- **Review summary report and consider recommendations made in the SAV Regulatory Review**
- **Support efforts to Water Quality Goals**
- **Consider the implications of competing goals related to shallow water uses**
  - Aquaculture
  - Living shorelines
  - Maintenance dredging
  - SAV harvesting for navigation

Discussion