Fish Habitat Outcome

Presentation for Management Board
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Sustainable Fisheries GIT Chair

Riparian restoration planting site in Pennsylvania

Goal: *Sustainable Fisheries*

Outcome:

Continually improve effectiveness *of fish habitat conservation and restoration efforts by identifying and characterizing critical spawning, nursery and forage areas within the Bay and tributaries for important fish and shellfish, and* ***use existing and new tools*** *to integrate* **information** *and conduct* **assessments** *to inform restoration and conservation efforts.*

How You Can Help

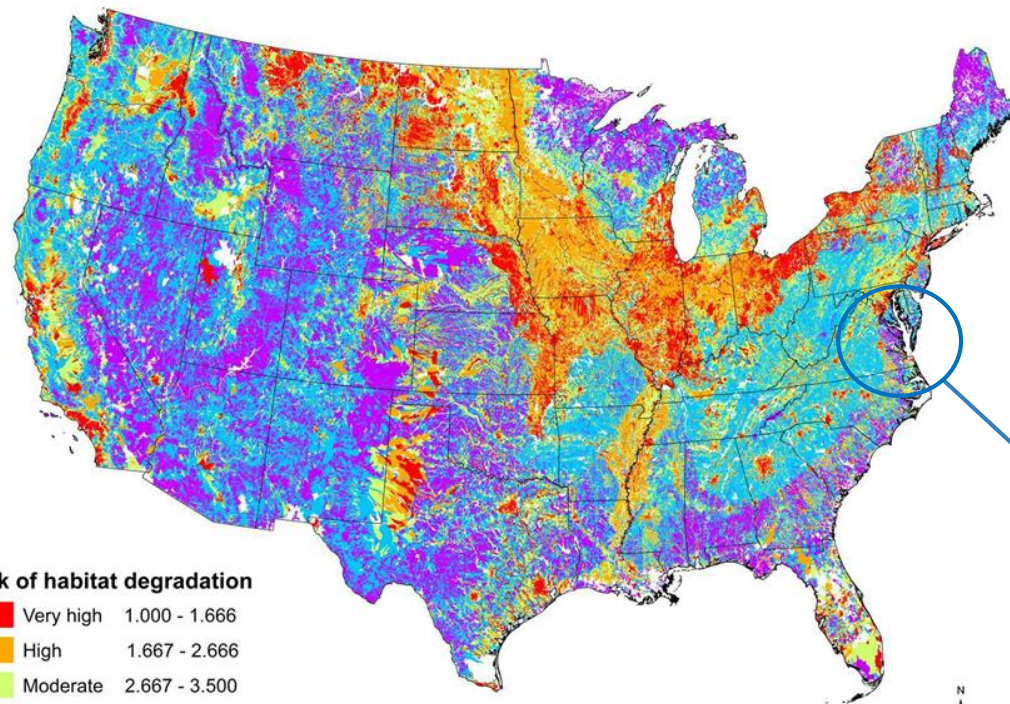*Alewife swim against the current in Cecil County, MD*
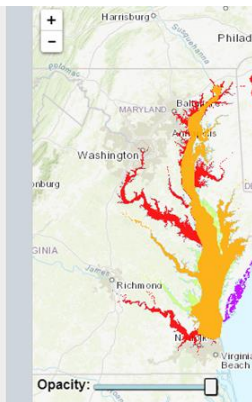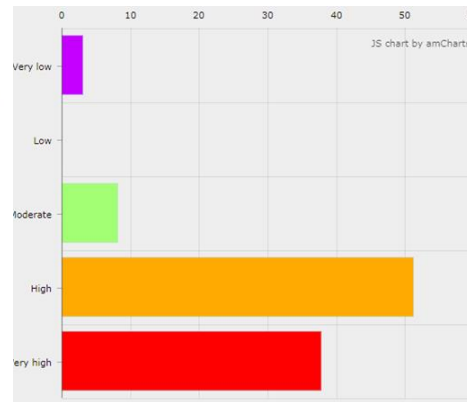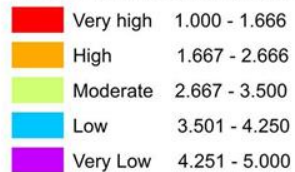*Photo by Will Parson*

Achievements:
- Completed STAC workshop to identify stressors of fish habitat
- Assessment efforts ongoing with metadata inventory

Future Direction:
- Greater focus on communications moving forward

Risk of habitat degradation
- Very high 1.000 - 1.666
- High 1.667 - 2.666
- Moderate 2.667 - 3.500
- Low 3.501 - 4.250
- Very Low 4.251 - 5.000

Source: 2015 Assessment of Stream Fish Habitats for the Conterminous United States

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP
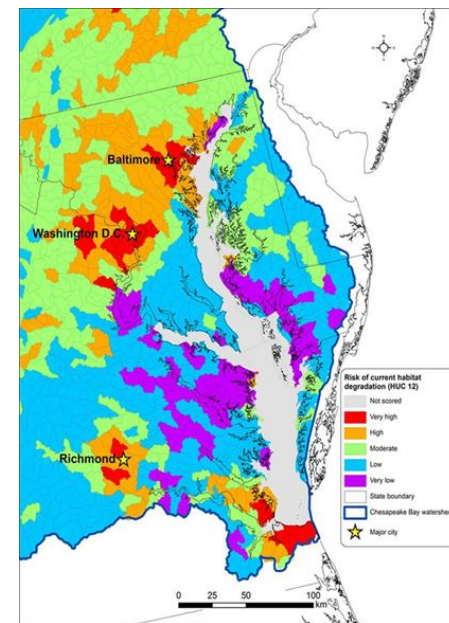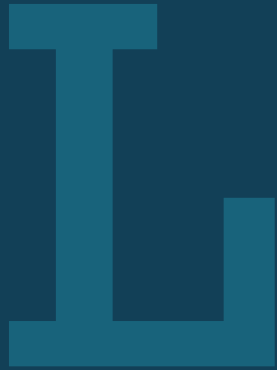
Learn

What have we learned in the last two years?

Successes and Challenges

*Graphic from STAC workshop report
"Factors Influencing Fish Habitat"*

Success

- Fish Habitat Workshop and Report
  - ➤ Identified and refined understanding of critical stressors
  - ➤ Identified science and research needs
  - ➤ Stakeholder-informed user needs survey

- Coordination with other fish habitat assessments

- Six NOAA funded fish habitat focused studies
- Completed the shoreline condition threshold study

Challenges

▪ Action 3.1 overlay assessment datasets in geospatial context to prioritize habitat areas - long term goal, still building datasets

▪ Challenge to include habitat considerations in fisheries management, local planning, and WIP BMP actions

What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

Develop metrics or indicators to evaluate progress

- Regional assessment could serve as baseline for fish habitat condition to recommend habitat conservation and/or restoration targets
- Priority stressors could be monitored over time
- Use project milestones to demonstrate progress Example: pilot assessments

On the Horizon

- GIT-funded projects
  - ➢ Shorelines communication to coastal landowners
  - ➢ Striped bass nursery habitat
- Metadata inventory & analysis to inform regional assessment
- Conduct pilot assessments
- Complete communications strategy

Shoreline image from Southern Environmental Law Center

Photo by Steve Droter

Adapt

How does all of this impact our work?

Based on what we learned, we plan to …

- Develop a communications strategy for stakeholder engagement, message focused on priority stressors
  - ➤ Impervious surfaces
  - ➤ Shoreline hardening
  - ➤ Loss of forest buffers

- Communicate economic impacts of fisheries on local level
- Consider metrics to monitor progress
- Use datasets to prioritize habitat areas & co-benefits

Help

How can the Management Board lead the Program to adapt?

Help Needed

1) WIP Engagement
- Last SRS review, we asked for improved use of BMPs beneficial to fish habitat in WIPs
- We need MB support in evaluating what changed as a result of previous ask and identifying clear engagement opportunities

2) Setting Shoreline Hardening Limits
- Use shoreline threshold results to recommend shoreline hardening limits, and provide guidance to planning and policy

QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING
Chesapeake Bay Program

Tree Planting at stream restoration site in Annapolis, MD

Discussion

Reedville VA living shoreline site
Photo: Northern Neck Master Gardeners

Presentation template by SlidesCarnival