

QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING – November, 2021  
*Chesapeake Bay Program*



# Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

*Brooke Landry  
Maryland DNR and  
Chair, SAV Workgroup*

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



## Goal: *Vital Habitats*

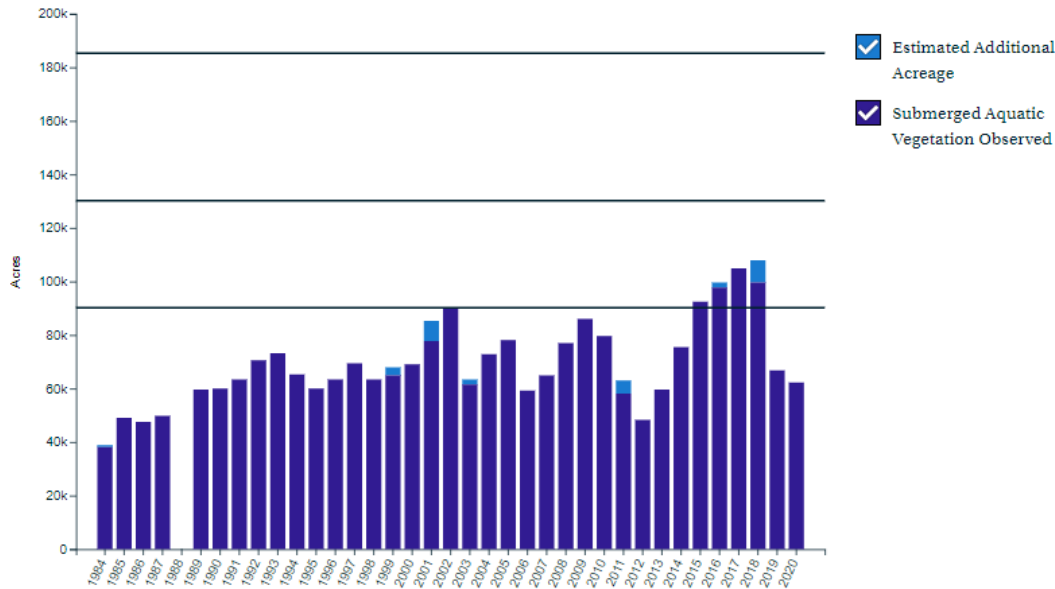
### Outcome:

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.

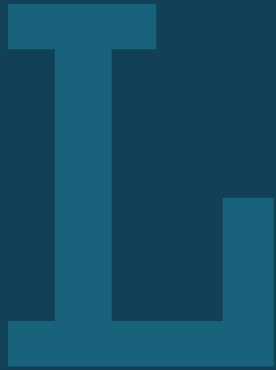


## What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

### Chesapeake Bay SAV Abundance 1984-2020



- 2017 Target (90,000 acres) *momentarily* reached!
- NOT on track to achieve 130,000 acres by 2025\*
- \*After six years of consistent expansion, Chesapeake Bay SAV declined dramatically in 2019 and 2020. Prior to this loss, we were on track to meet our 2025 SAV restoration target of 130,000 acres. With the loss of over a third of the Bay's SAV, reaching the Bay-wide 2025 goal on-time is **highly unlikely**. Segment-specific goal attainment is still possible and likely in some areas.



# Learn

*What have we learned in the last two years?*







## Successes and Challenges

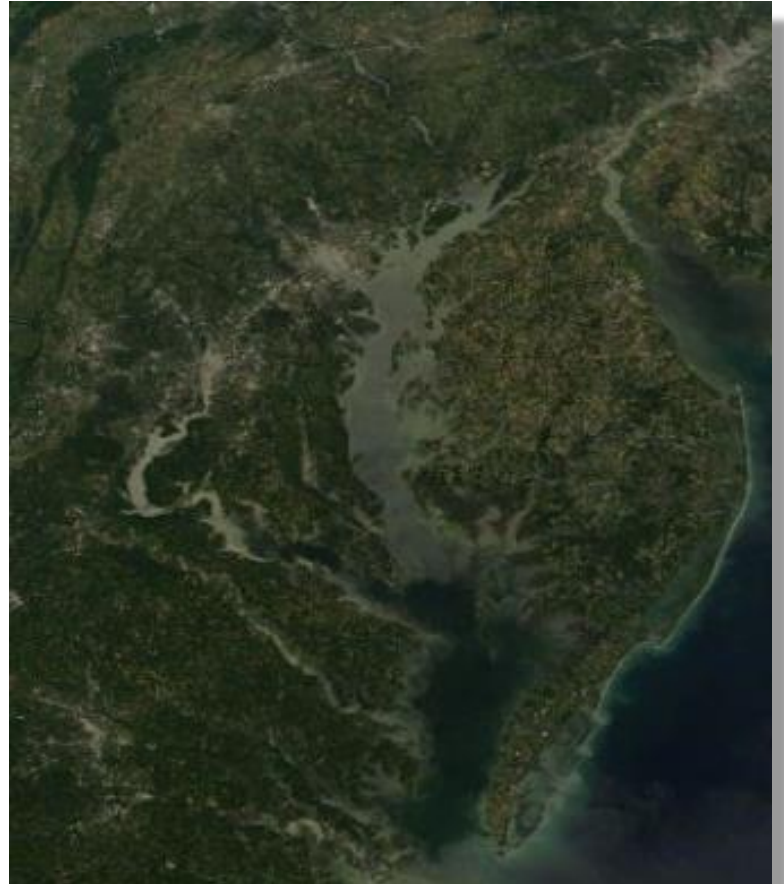


- Small-scale SAV restoration protocol complete; restoration is successful in expansion years, but fails in years of SAV decline
- CB SAV Watcher Program is a successful means of crowd-sourcing SAV data and engaging the public, but needs more resources and staff support
- CBSM project showed that waterfront property owners have a mixed response to SAV
- To withstand climate change impacts, SAV restoration will require dramatic improvements in WQ
- Need more conversations surrounding shallow-water use conflicts with SAV (recreation, aquaculture, living shorelines)



## On the Horizon

- Climate-related increased precipitation and runoff negated six years of SAV expansion in 2019-2020; the region will only get wetter and stormier.
- Local jurisdictions must increase their efforts to reduce stormwater runoff and implement other nutrient and sediment reducing BMPs to mitigate/accommodate climate change impacts.
- Significant federal funding will be required to implement BMPs sufficient to reduce nutrient and sediment loading to the Bay to the extent necessary to offset further stress from climate change.



A

# Adapt

*How does all of this impact our work?*



## Based on what we learned, we plan to ...

- Advocate for the Bay Program to focus on climate adaptation to increase resilience against “extreme climate” years, and a greater improvement of WQ
- Re-evaluate how the small-scale restoration guidance should be used in years of SAV decline
- Collaborate with the CRWG and outside partners to engage more in the Blue Carbon Market
- Remove some actions from our workplan that the workgroup members do not have the capacity to complete





## Equitable and inclusive restoration ...

- No steps are currently being taken – one challenge is that SAV is naturally found in shallow near-shore areas and along waterfront property, which is typically owned by more affluent populations
- The SAV WG intends to engage more underrepresented people and communities in SAV research, monitoring and outreach efforts
- Consider siting SAV restoration projects in areas that are more traditionally used by underserved communities?
- Will engage the Stewardship and Diversity Workgroups, as well as the Public Access team to discuss how to engage underserved communities in our work.



# Help

*How can the Management Board  
lead the Program to adapt?*





## Help Needed

- N, P, and TSS loads to the Bay need to be reduced to the extent necessary to accommodate the changing climatic and weather patterns. Significantly improving water quality and clarity in the polyhaline portion of the Bay is the only hope in saving the Bay's eelgrass populations.
- Each workgroup needs a dedicated staffer.

QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING  
*Chesapeake Bay Program*



# Discussion