On-the-Ground Projects

Spotlight on Restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in the freshwater and mesohaline region of the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland

Project Partners

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Anne Arundel Community College

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

In addition to providing food, oxygen, and habitat for a variety of organisms, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) improves water quality by filtering phosphorus and nitrogen, reduces erosion, and stabilizes sediments. Unfortunately, since the 1950's, SAV acreage has declined significantly in the Chesapeake Bay due to degraded water quality; storms; and physical disturbance from dredging, boating activities, and fishing and aquaculture practices.

For this project, Maryland Department of Natural Resources is working with partners to collect, process, disperse, and monitor four species of SAV to restore beds in freshwater and mesohaline sections of the Chesapeake Bay. It a cost-effective restoration method that has been successful in previous Bay projects.
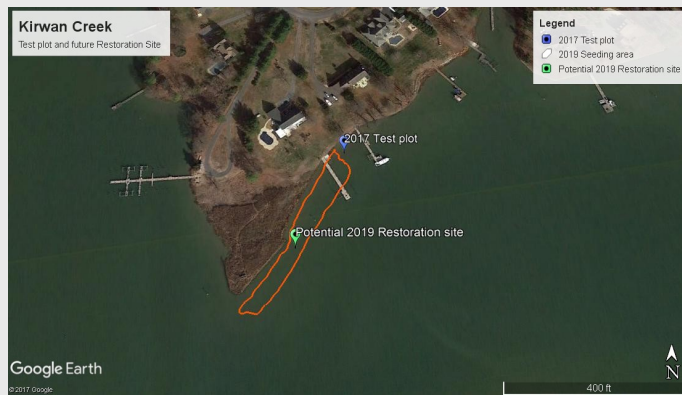

Aerial view of the project site

Between ten and twenty acres of widgeon grass (*Ruppia maritima*), redhead grass (*Potamogeton perfoliatus*), sago pondweed (*Stuckenia pectinata*), and wild celery (*Vallisneria americana*) will be planted to help the Chesapeake Bay Program acheive their goal of restoring 185,000 acres of SAV by 2025. The SAV will benefit species such as blue crab, juvenile striped bass, and spotted sea trout.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership with conservation dollars to partially fund the restoration, monitoring, and outreach portions of the project. Pre- and post-project monitoring will rely on the Virginia Institute of Marine Science's aerial surveys and site visits to quanitfy germination success.

Project text and photos provided by Maryland DNR.

For more information on the Partnership visit us at: www.atlanticfishhabitat.org