

PROJECT SUMMARY

NAME: Restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) on the Seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore

LOCATION: Northampton County, Virginia

ACRES/RIVER MILES: 60 acres

NON-FEDERAL SPONSORS:

Commonwealth of Virginia

Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The goal of this project is to restore submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) in seaside lagoons of Virginia's eastern shore. Eel grass (*Zostera marina*) seeds will be planted near Wreck and Gull Marsh Islands. Seed planting has been shown to be more cost-effective than planting vegetative parts. A SAV restoration program was initiated on the seaside eastern shore of Virginia in 1998 when VIMS first planted eelgrass test plots. Since that time, over 50 acres of eelgrass have been planted and over 90% of the plots have been successful. Despite a sharp die-off of SAV in the Chesapeake Bay in 2003, restored SAV beds on the seaside of the eastern shore continue to thrive. The proposed project would allow for rapid expansion of this restoration effort into additional areas of the seaside lagoons not yet planted. Seeding will take place within a 400 acre polygon. With current success estimates, seeding will result in projected restoration of 40 acres of SAV habitat

EXPECTED BENEFITS:

This project will improve habitat for interjurisdictional fish and migratory birds. It will provide habitat for the biotic community that depends on submerged aquatic vegetation for various life history requirements. It will also improve water quality by removing nutrients, stabilizing sediments, and buffering wave energy. SAV restoration could protect oyster reefs from excessive sedimentation and ameliorate siltation of navigation channels, thereby reducing the necessity of dredging existing channels.

STATUS: Completed