

SAV Working Group September 9, 2020 Meeting

Meeting Objectives – all objects met

The objectives of this meeting were:

- Formalize framework for working group
- Create list of meeting ideas and topics to discuss
- Create list of potential partners to include in the group and/or present at a workshop

Attendees

Alicia Eichinger (Salt Ponds Coalition)
Wenley Ferguson (Save the Bay)
Dave Prescott (Save the Bay)
Kenny Raposa (NBNERR)

Caitlin Chaffee (RICRMC)
Suzanne Paton (USFWS)
Mike Bradley (URI)
Mike Gerel (NBEP)
Courtney Schmidt (NBEP)

Notes

Courtney introduced that NBEP would convene and facilitate a working group around subaquatic vegetation (SAV). This group is not meant to supplant the RI Eelgrass Task Force, which convenes to discuss, coordinate, and ground-truth aerial SAV photography. This group will work to augment that effort and expand the topics, knowledge, and research on SAV in the Narragansett Bay region. At a February 2020 meeting, members of this group discussed research gaps, and assessments needed to understand SAV in the region. This group also discussed new partners needed, and were looking for ways to find them, such as through EPA's Zosterapalooza meeting (usually held March of every year in Boston).

We spent time during this meeting formalizing the SAV Working group by discussing three things: the process, the schedule, and the people. We began with the process which includes purpose of the working group, the deliverables (fulfilling the purpose), communication, and re-evaluation. Courtney provide a PowerPoint presentation (attached) documenting a list of purposes, deliverables, a draft schedule, and additional meeting participants. The following is the result of discussing the presentation and a consensus of the purpose, deliverables, schedule, and potential partners/presenters to invite.

SAV Working Group Framework

Purpose:

Provide cross-state collaboration and coordination, advise state and federal management and research SAV in Narragansett Bay, Salt Ponds, and Little Narragansett Bay.

Cross-state collaboration and coordination will be specifically for Tier 1 aerial photography mapping, and workshops. Advising management will include informing management agencies of the latest research, providing outreach on specific topics and advocacy when necessary.

Deliverables:

The Working Group will provide documentation of its efforts (i.e. white papers, presentations, studies, lessons learned, etc.) and update the 2009 [Mapping Protocol](#). Deliverables also include workshop proceedings and digital outputs, such as story maps or websites.

Schedule

The group decided to meet **2-4 times a year**, starting with more frequent meetings in the beginning. We decided to be mindful of field season, with a pre-field season meeting to coordinate efforts, followed by a debrief at the end of the field season. We will incorporate one workshop per year, most likely in the “off” season to accommodate schedules. All meetings (with the exception of workshops) will be limited to **1.5-2 hours** per meeting.

Partners

This original meeting had a few local partners who are involved with SAV research or monitoring. The group discussed additional members, and those people we would like to hear from in a workshop setting.

Potential partners include and attendee to reach out to partners:

Potential Partner	Attendee to Reach Out
A. Randall Hughes (Northeastern)	Courtney Schmidt
Jamie Vaudrey (UConn)	
Jeff Gaeckle (UNH Jackson Lab)	
Tay Evans (MADMF)	
Phil Colarusso (EPA R1)	
MA CZM	Caitlin Chaffee
Fred Short	Kenny Raposa
Hilary Neckles	
Dave Burdick	
Chantel Collier (TNC)	Suzanne Paton
Peter August	Dave Prescott
Fisher Island Seagrass Group	Dave Prescott & Suzanne Paton
NY Seagrass Working Group	????

Courtney will create an email containing a purpose statement about the group, and a request to be included on an email list. I will include them on the invitation for the next meeting. When we have our first workshop idea, I will use this email list to generate presentations and attendants.

Story Map

NBEP offered its staff and time to create a story map on SAV extent throughout the watershed. NBEP will use the aerial photography and GIS files available on RIGIS (and through NBEP’s [data hub](#)) to describe the value of SAV, the loss over the years, and mechanisms for preservation and restoration. The group also discussed other story maps which could focus on specific places or focus

on the people who are doing the work and what technology they use. NBEP did not provide a timeline for the story map at this time, pending staff discussion.

Bike Rack (Topics to be addressed later)

- Monitor transplant beds; and
- Expand SeagrassNET protocol usage to different sites
- Create study sites for new quantitative techniques to understand the health of the SAV beds (both existing and transplant beds) (one that doesn't need divers, or requires fewer divers)
- Data management – what data do we have and where should the data live
- “Grasses for the masses” program where people grow grasses in their homes and plant them in restoration areas