

SAV All-Hands Meeting

Roanoke/Cashie River Center

Windsor, NC

December 8, 2005

Minutes

Dean Carpenter, Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program Science Coordinator and facilitator for the group, called the meeting to order at 1:05pm. He thanked those present for attending, called for self-introduction of attendees, and stated the purpose of the meeting was to bring involved parties up-to-date on SAV project activities and to map out plans for the future.

Dr. Carpenter gave a brief overview of the October 2004 draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed between the Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and numerous signatories stating that he would like to see it finalized in January 2006. During discussion, it was suggested that Dr. Pete Peterson (UNC- Institute of Marine Sciences) be included in the SAV workgroup and that the Institute be considered as an additional signatory. Dr. Carpenter mentioned that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) were prohibited from actually signing the MOU, but were working in total support of it. Preparatory to MOU completion, Dr. Carpenter agreed to arrange for electronic signatures for all MOU signatories.

Liz Noble, Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), reported that funding for her June 2005 proposal from the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) had been received. She expressed thanks for their support, as well as that of the NC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC). Not everything is done (i.e., photo-interpretation of Pea Island photos) because not all funding for ECSU's GIS specialist has been received. DOT expressed intent and ability to produce additional funding for completion of work (Ms. Noble is talking to DOT staff).

Ms. Noble then gave an overview of project progress to date: aerial photography, digitizing of aerial photography, field surveys, development of a GIS database and SAV polygons for the north shore of Albemarle Sound, Back Bay, Kitty Hawk Bay, and Currituck, Core and Bogue Sounds. She is going to distribute new maps of Albemarle Sound, Back Bay, and Currituck Sound to anyone interested. NOAA will

be sponsoring flights from Drum Inlet to Bogue Inlet this coming spring. They have employed Pinnacle Mapping (digital imagery) for the task - this should fit well into the bay scallop fishery management plan currently in development.

Much discussion ensued pertaining to SAV bed photography being done by other entities, such as NC State University. This autumn Dave Eggleston (NCSU) had sponsored flights of the southern shore of Albemarle Sound for SAV coverage, from Bulls Bay to East Lake. WRC mentioned some interest in mapping Lake Mattamuskeet. Ms. Noble mentioned an opportunity to map SAV beds in Topsail Sound and south, in cooperation with DMF. The ECSU team took no photography of Albemarle Sound in 2005 - they are hoping for funds by autumn 2006. They are redoing transect work done by the Sincock study in the late 1950's and early 1960's. NOAA is also using sidescan sonar to detect SAV beds.

Ms. Noble closed by mentioning that her project could be viewed at ECSU's website.

(<http://www.ecsu.edu/ECSU/AcadDept/Geology/GEMSNewHomePageS05/index.htm>)

Scott Chappell, NC-DMF, provided an update on some miscellaneous work: (1) the timing of existing CAMA aerial photography does not overlap well with period of maximum freshwater SAV abundance. From October to December, freshwater SAV goes from maximum abundance to near absence in the Chesapeake Bay. (2) Aerial reconnaissance flight by DMF in late July witnessed extensive growth of SAV in areas of the Neuse and Tar/Pamlico for which existing maps show no SAV present (i.e. Pungo River). The overflights also demonstrated the limits of aerial mapping, because some SAV areas visible on the ground (2005 data from DWQ) were not visible from the air, even at very low altitude. The type of areas missed were generally narrow fringes of SAV, and beds whose leaves did not reach the surface. Alternative methods are needed to determine the relationship between depth, water quality and amount of SAV missed by aerial photography (Joe Luczkovich's ECU team could be a candidate for this work).

During the group discussion, it was decided to focus limited money on aerial mapping first. Mr. Chappell, however, believed it would be helpful to spatially model the variable effectiveness of aerial mapping.

Bob Glennon, USFWS, mentioned that the northeast and southeast regions (Regions 4 & 5) of the USFWS had requested \$25K each, for the next fiscal year for SAV work.

It was decided during the Assessment discussion portion of the agenda to form an ad hoc committee to focus on historical SAV Surveys. Committee objectives will be to 1) inventory and cite the type of data available, 2) combine this information into a framework of historical SAV research (e.g., anecdotal, documented, aerial, groundtruthing) in the study area and then link that to the current studies and 3) create a mosaic of GIS layers of available research for a visual of these studies and their contributions. Mr. Chapell, Kevin Dockendorf, John Gallegos, and David Knowles agreed to serve on this new committee. Products of the ad-hoc committee should be made readily available on the internet. Dr. Carpenter will work on establishing a web area on the APNEP website to support SAV Group activities.

During the Restoration discussion portion of the agenda, Rob Breeding mentioned the possibility of Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP) mitigation options that include (pilot) SAV restoration projects. Dr. Luczkovich cited several recent papers on the subject of SAV restoration at the Estuarine Research Federation (ERF) mid-October meeting in Norfolk, Virginia. Mr. Chappell noted that most SAV restoration work is done as mitigation for physical destruction, while SAV restoration in North Carolina could also encompass SAV habitat restoration as mitigation for water quality degradation. Restoration efforts in these areas would require coupling with watershed restoration efforts. Others stated the possibility of accelerating SAV colonization in areas where SAV has trouble getting a foothold, but where water quality is generally good when SAV is established. Someone recalled a figure of 90% for the importance of site selection in the success of SAV restoration - implies further research required.

It was suggested during the Policy/Outreach discussion portion of the agenda that given their outreach networks, Sea Grant and the National Estuarine Research Reserve be invited to participate in the SAV partnership. Dr. Carpenter agreed to follow-up with possible recruits from these organizations. Gloria Putnam volunteered to lead subcommittee on SAV outreach. Other members will be announced at a later date. The role of the outreach subcommittee is to identify funding sources, guide site selection for development, and sell the natural beauty.

The meeting date and location for the next SAV meeting is to be arranged. It was agreed that the group should meet quarterly, with the next meeting in mid-March. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.