

Chesapeake WILD: Opportunities and Partnerships in Virginia



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

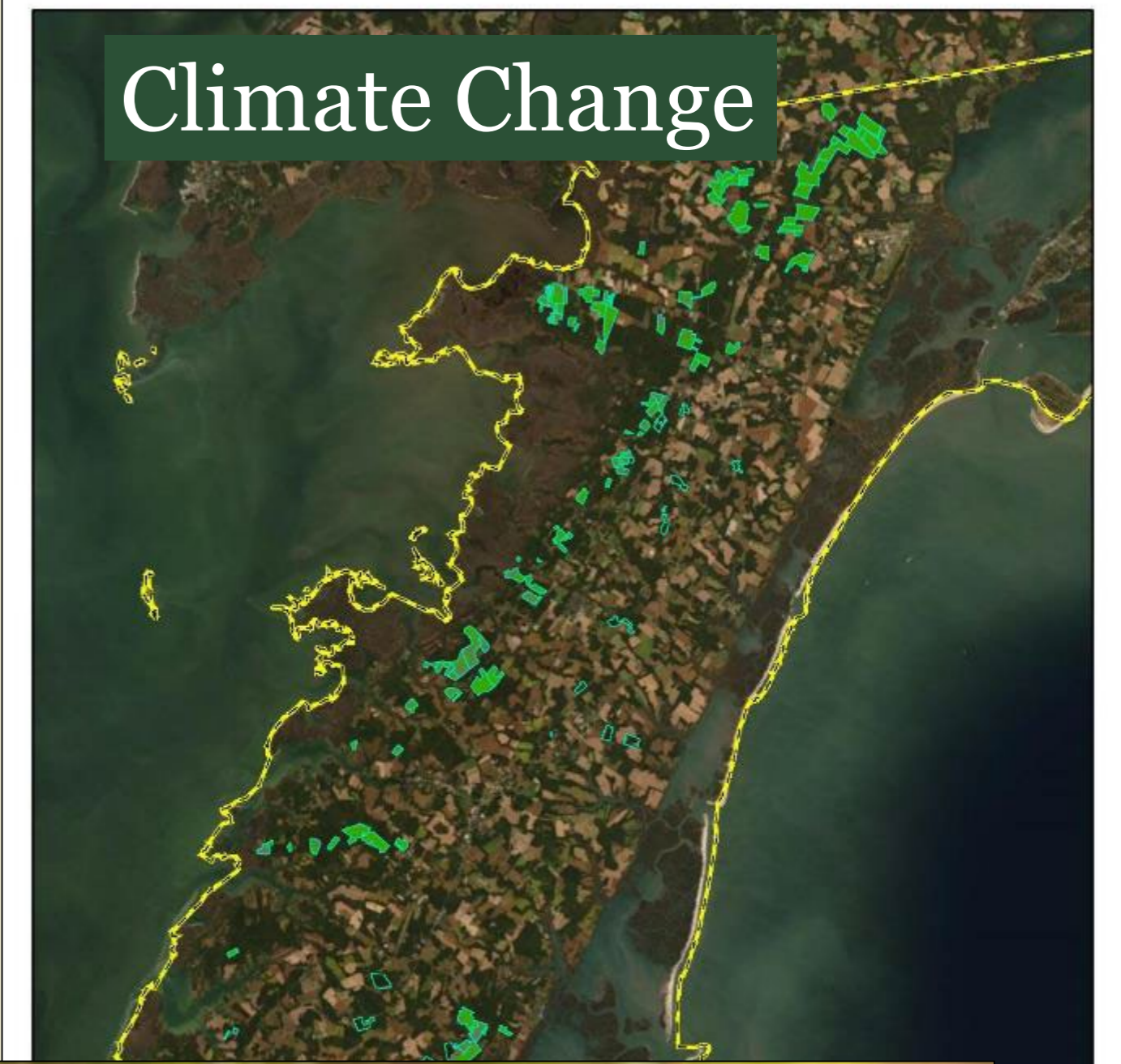
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Water Quality



Partnerships



Climate Change



Public Access



Fish & Wildlife Habitat



Freshwater Mussel Conservation and Restoration



Freshwater Mussels in Virginia

- 67 of Virginia's 80 species of freshwater mussels are designated as endangered, threatened or are species of greatest conservation need
- Indicators of water quality
- Important role in aquatic systems
- Collaboration with Chesapeake Bay Foundation, James River Association, The Nature Conservancy and other partners to develop a Freshwater Mussel Restoration Plan for Virginia and a James River Basin-specific plan (WILD funded)





Virginia Fisheries and Aquatic Wildlife Center Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery Charles City County, Virginia

- Cooperative between Virginia DWR and US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Working throughout the Atlantic Slope, including all of Chesapeake Bay
- Worked with 19+ freshwater mussel species
 - 4 federally listed 2 state-listed species
 - 14 species of greatest conservation need
- Produced over 14 million juvenile mussels
- Nearly 350,000 animals released into 25 streams and rivers across central and eastern Virginia
- 2,400 Brook Floater, believed to be extirpated from Virginia
- ~432,000 animals provided to state and federal partners to support restoration and recovery across the Bay watershed

James Spiny-mussels to the James River: Historic and Milestone in Recovery



Wetlands and Marsh Restoration and Enhancement



Virginia Wetlands Action Plan

Wetlands Tracking

- Effective reporting and accounting system
- Define activities that count towards outcome
- Jurisdiction-specific targets for tidal and non-tidal wetlands

Strategic Planning

- DWR to lead diverse partnership focused on wetlands outcome
- Guided by existing plans and tools
- Acknowledge climate change and focus on at-risk areas
- Seek to restore/enhance habitat for SCGN species
- Implement on both private and public lands with emphasis on private lands

Capacity Building

- Build on existing diverse regional partnerships
- Increase staff focused on wetland restoration
- Low barrier applications for voluntary efforts
- Expand native nursery / other restoration capacity

Outreach

- Landowner interest is critical
- Identify and promote demonstration sites
- Target grant funding focal areas
- Coordinate with PDCs and SWCDs

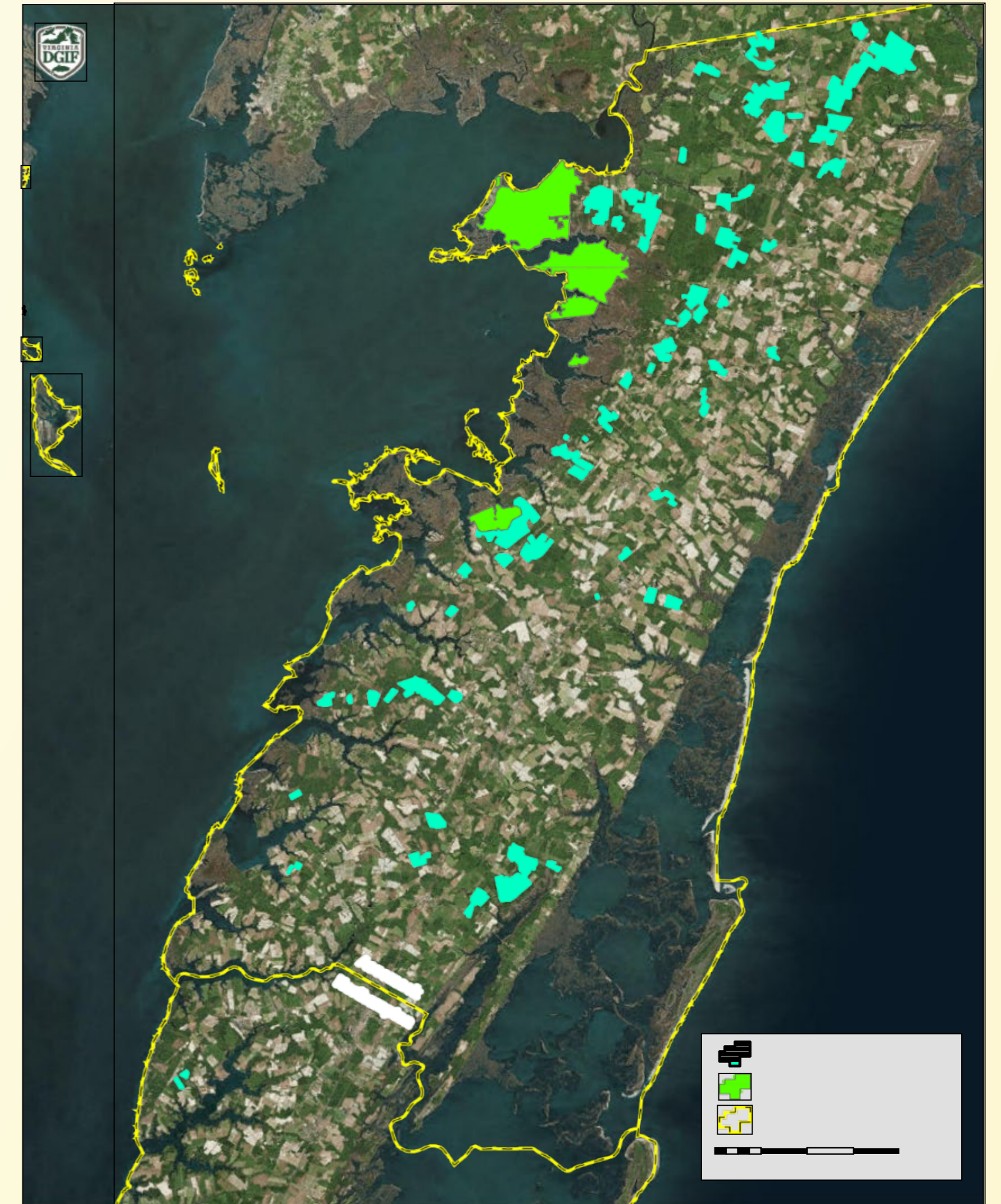
Sustainable Funding

- Current funding increases for private and public
- Match is limiting factor
- Need to establish dedicated funding source



Coastal Forest Wildlife Management Area

Goal: Secure 8,654 acres on Virginia's Eastern Shore



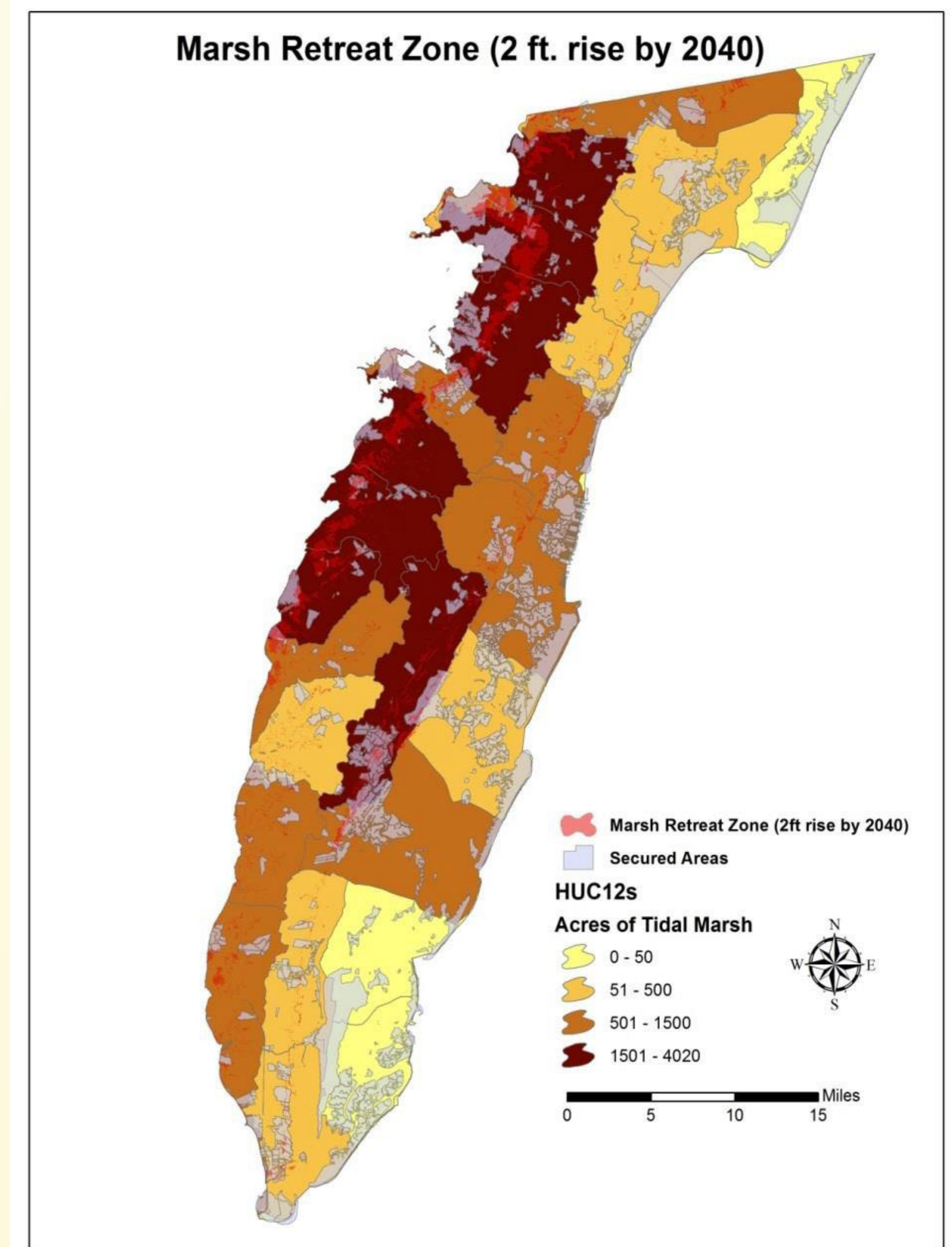
Coastal Forest Wildlife Management Area

- Dramatically improve sustainable habitat for migratory birds in an area of hemispheric importance
- Public access, especially for hunting and wildlife viewing, which is nearly non-existent on the Eastern Shore
- Significant wetlands restoration; derivative water quality benefits to Chesapeake Bay
- Facilitation of natural marsh migration
- Targeted habitat development for at-risk species (e.g., black rail, American black duck, saltmarsh sparrow)



Coastal Forest Wildlife Management Area

- 6,400 acres high-value forest
- 2,600+ acres of flooding resilience
- 6,800 acres of protected landscape resilience
- Opportunity for “boutique” forest and wetlands restoration

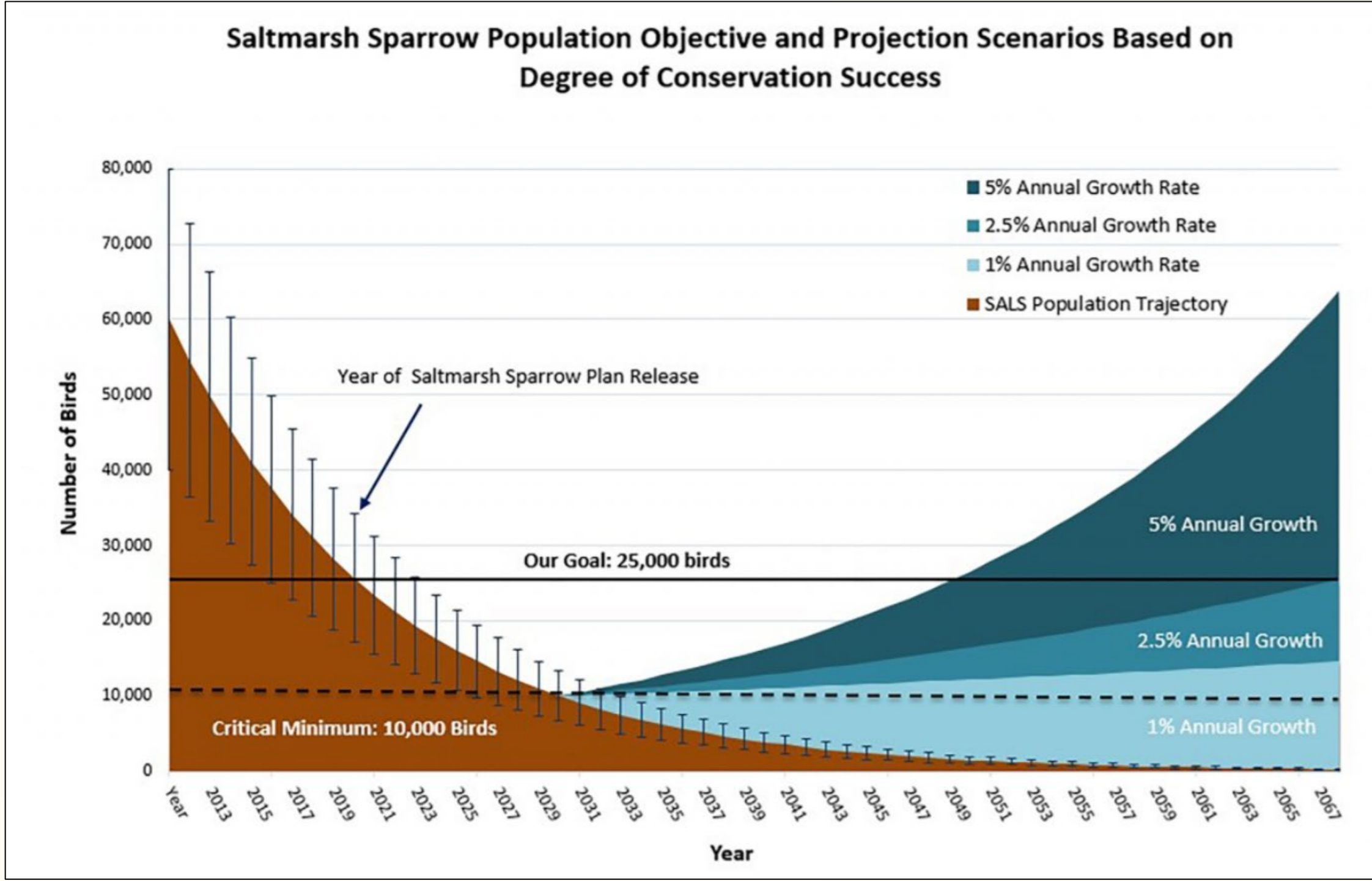
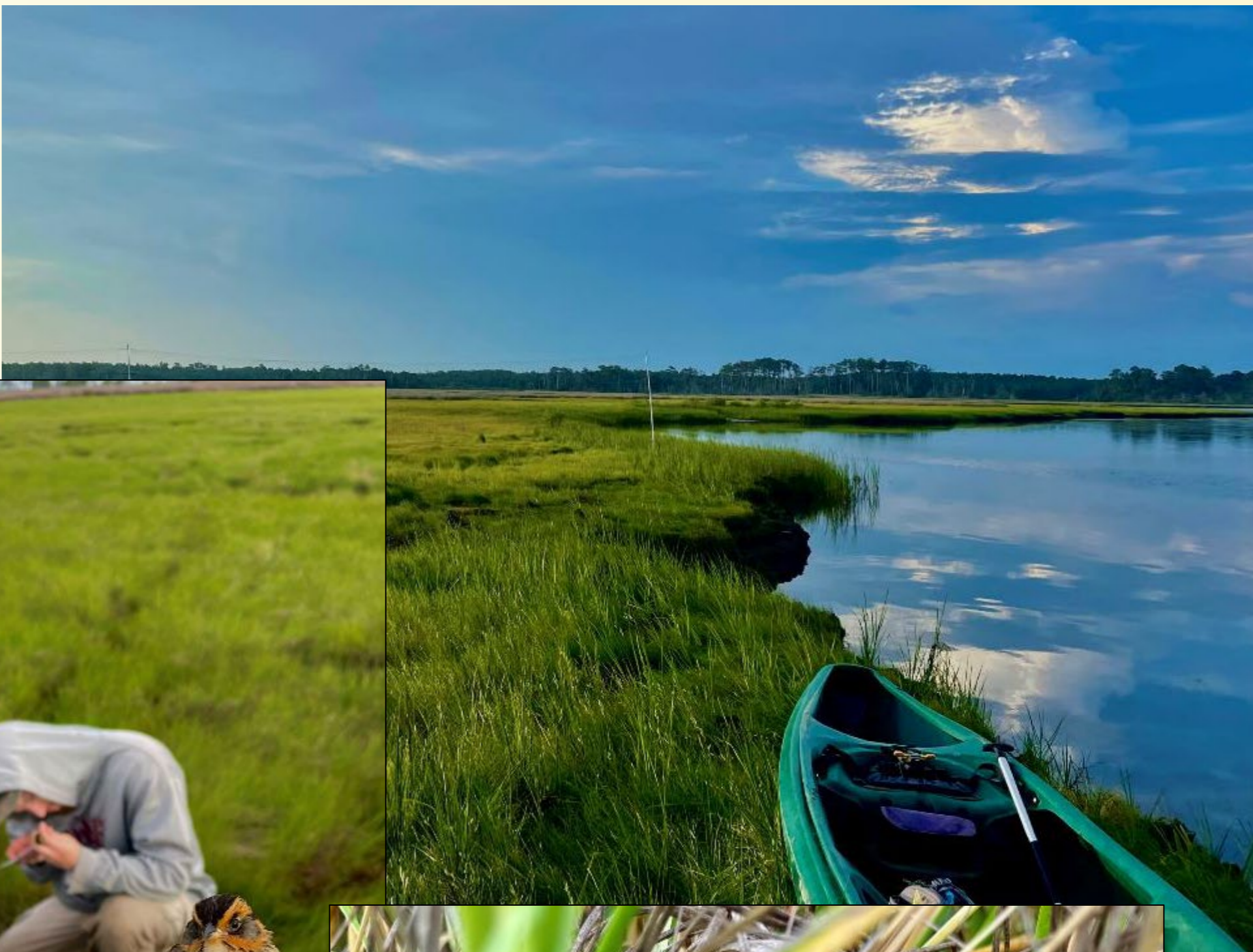


Wetland Enhancement Doe Creek WMA

- Managed impoundment system, wintering waterfowl use
- Water level control challenging
- Chesapeake WILD grant supporting enhancement of water management capabilities to provide highest quality habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species.

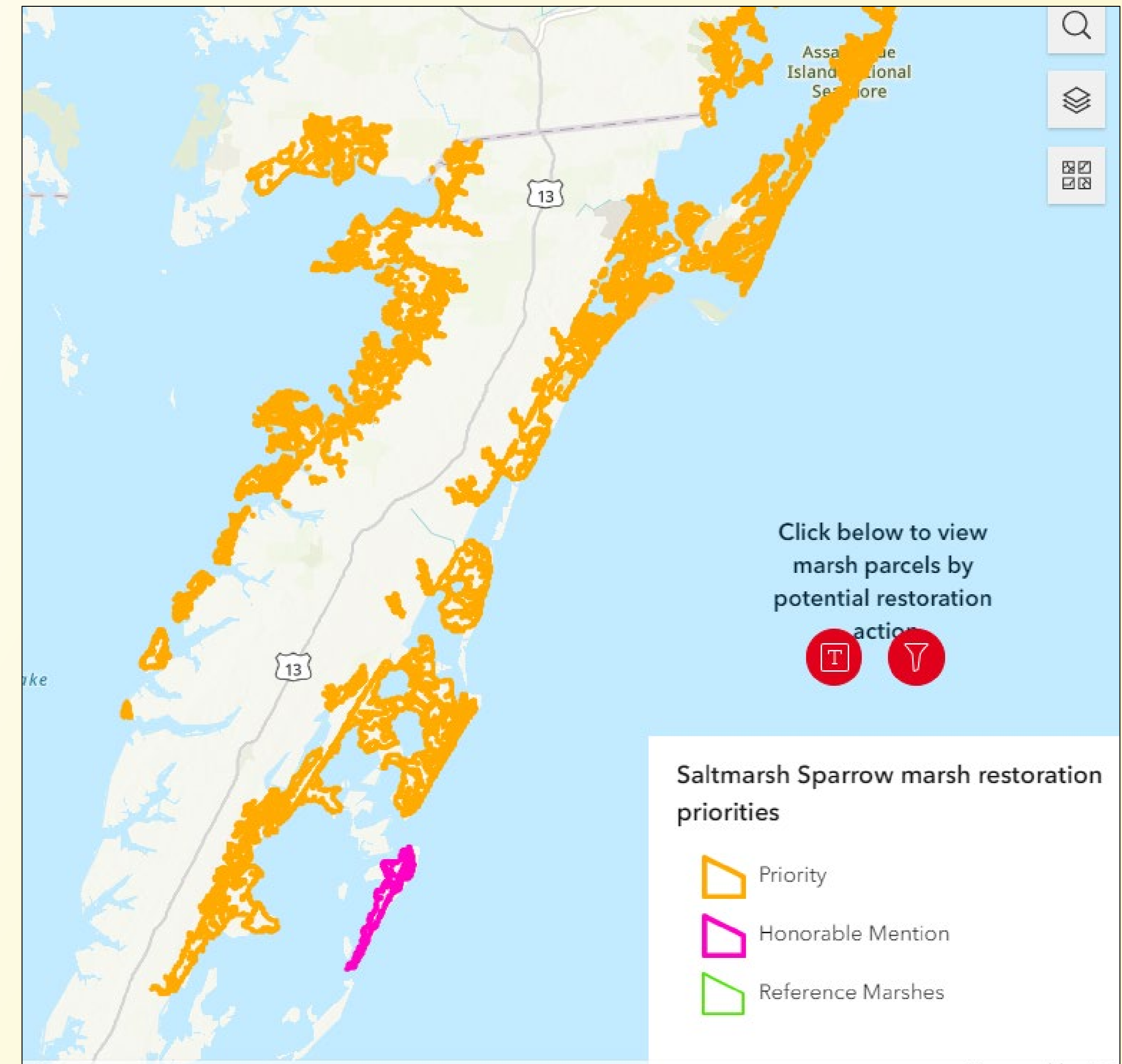


Saltmarsh Habitat Restoration



Saltmarsh Habitat Restoration

- Need to restore, create or enhance 30,875 acres of high marsh to achieve the 2069 goal.
- Bayside Eastern Shore and new DWR lands ripe opportunity for this work.





Nutria
White Muzzle
White Whiskers
Orange Teeth
15 lbs



Invasive Species Surveillance and Control

- Nutria Surveillance and Eradication
 - In the past 2 years, eradicated nutria at 3 known sites north of James River
 - Eradication at one remaining site in Chickahominy in planning
 - Partners & public reporting key!
- Plants & Insects
 - Annually treating ~1,000 acres of *Phragmites* in coastal properties
 - Verified eradication of water chestnut in Pohick Bay, accomplished by hand harvesting
 - Annually treating ~150 acres for emerald ash borer



Questions?

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