

HELP US STUDY WIDGEON GRASS IN BETHANY CANALS

A Collaborative Research Project by DNREC, Delaware Sea Grant, and the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays

WHAT IS SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION (SAV)?

SAV are rooted, underwater plants that play a vital role in aquatic ecosystems supporting clean waters. South Bethany Canals currently host an unusual widgeon grass (*Ruppia maritima*) bed, growing in conditions that research suggests should not support it. Understanding why could help guide future restoration efforts.



Our Project Goals

1. Investigate why widgeon grass is thriving in South Bethany Canals
2. Use findings to support restoration efforts in other areas
3. Harvest flowering and seed shoots when seeds are mature for restoration projects in other areas of Delaware Inland Bays and to reduce boating obstacles

Rather than altering or expanding the existing widgeon grass beds, our goal is to study and utilize this naturally occurring population while it persists.

By leveraging this unique ecological opportunity, we can gain valuable insights into SAV growth conditions and collect seeds to support restoration efforts in other areas.



HOW WILL WE STUDY THE SAV BEDS?

- ◆ **Water Quality Monitoring:** Deploying HOBO data loggers at 5 locations not currently being monitored to track light, temperature, and salinity/conductivity
- ◆ **Long-Term Monitoring:** Quarterly field visits in January, April, July and October by scientists to assess plant density, water quality, and ecological impacts

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

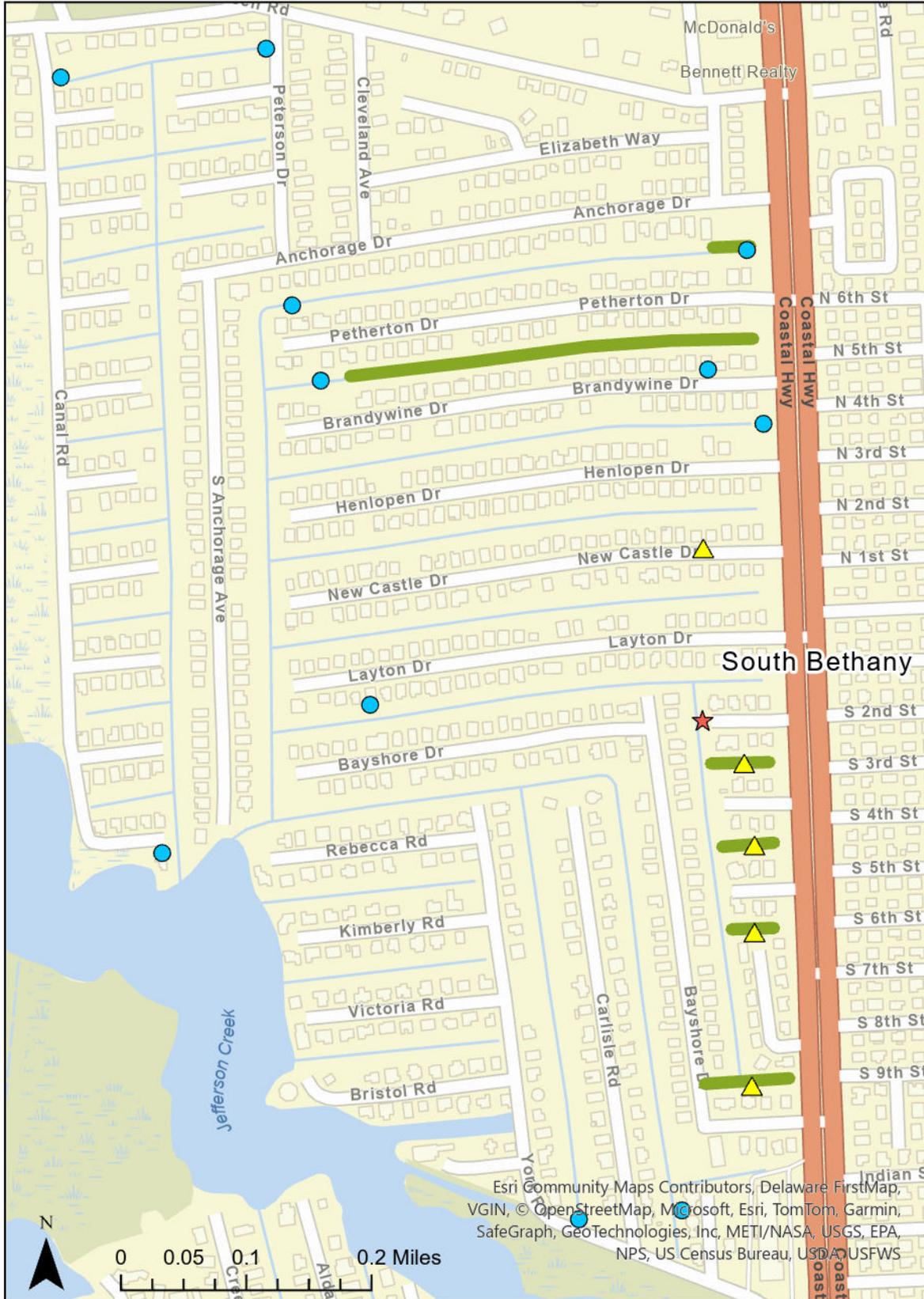
We are looking for **volunteers** to:

- ◆ **Provide water access** from private properties for monitoring & kayak deployment
- ◆ **Host data loggers** off bulkheads or docks (inside & outside SAV beds) and assist with maintenance & data collection
- ◆ **Collect the tall flowering and seed shoots** when ripe for seed harvesting
- ◆ **Provide input** as to whether you would support establishing long-term monitoring sites in the canals.

CONTACT US:

Kayla Clauson - Kayla.Clauson@delaware.gov
Brittany Haywood - haywoobl@udel.edu
Taylor Hoffman - thoffman@inlandbays.org

PROPOSED SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION (SAV) WATER QUALITY MONITORING STATIONS IN SOUTH BETHANY CANAL SAV BEDS



- ▲ Proposed SAV Monitoring Stations
- ▬ Bethany Canals SAV
- ★ 2024 CIB Monitoring Station
- Citizen Monitoring Sites