

Accomplishments from the Living Shoreline Strategy

In February of 2014, the [Living Shoreline Strategy](#) was published to address outreach, public awareness, research, financial incentives, and short and long-term implementation actions needed to advance the use of living shorelines in North Carolina. Living shorelines include a suite of options for shoreline erosion control that preserve existing connections between upland, intertidal, estuarine, and aquatic areas which are necessary for maintaining water quality, ecosystem services, and habitat values. Unlike vertical stabilization measures such as bulkheads, living shoreline techniques typically use native materials such as marsh plants, oyster shells, and occasionally minimal amounts of structural materials (e.g. stone) to stabilize estuarine shorelines, minimize erosion, and enhance habitats. Over the past several years, the Division of Coastal Management (DCM) has made significant investments in advocating for the use of living shorelines as an alternative to vertical stabilization measures. In particular, DCM has been working to implement a [Living Shoreline Strategy](#), which identifies short and long-term actions for a range of related issues including permitting, research, mapping, outreach, training, policy, and funding. The DCM and the NC Division of Marine Fisheries recently published the [Living Shoreline Strategy Accomplishments Report](#) which details progress relating to all ten actions. The major outcomes are summarized for you here.

- Developed, with the Coastal Resources Commission, two general permits for sill structures, and continue to work toward streamlining the permitting of marsh sills in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and various agency and partner organizations
- Improved communications strategies, outreach initiatives, and resources regarding estuarine shoreline stabilization options
- Offered training that reached 365 professionals in 2015 through the Coastal Training Program; video recorded workshops and are available on the [Reserve YouTube Channel](#)
- Installed educational signage at living shoreline demonstration sites and developed templates for future use
- Enhanced estuarine shoreline mapping inventory based on 2012 imagery, which provides the most accurate inventory of shoreline type and structures to date
- Implemented research projects designed to advance understanding of estuarine shoreline stabilization techniques' impacts to ecosystems and resilience to storms
- Leveraged funding from the N.C. Coastal Recreational Fishing Licenses (CRFL) Grant Program to improve understanding of the effectiveness of living shorelines

Significant progress has been made toward the initial goals of the Living Shorelines Strategy. “Approaching living shorelines from permitting, research and outreach perspectives has proven to be very beneficial,” say Rebecca Ellin, N.C. Coastal Reserve Program Manager and lead of DCM’s living shoreline workgroup. “We are excited to continue to work collaboratively on this topic to improve our understanding of these methods as well as promote them as a habitat-friendly shoreline stabilization approach.” For more information regarding Living Shorelines, visit: <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-estuarine-shorelines/stabilization>

