

LIVING SHORELINES

FROM BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITIES

A SPECIAL REPORT BY



RESTORE
AMERICA'S
ESTUARIES

WHY LIVING SHORELINES?

As we experience the impacts of climate change, wise shoreline management is critical both to protect property interests and protect estuarine ecosystems. Mounting evidence shows that hardened shorelines management techniques do not function well over time in many settings and that they do real and widespread harm to estuarine ecosystems. In contrast, living shorelines protect ecosystem services and perform better over time in controlling erosion and preventing catastrophic flood and storm damage. Why, then, is there not broad use and support of living shorelines?

To answer this question, Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) empaneled a committee of experts to investigate what institutional barriers are hindering the broader use of living shorelines and to recommend appropriate actions to remove those barriers.

THE BARRIERS

After research and consultation, the committee concluded that three major barriers are limiting the use of living shorelines, all of which are detailed in the report:

Institutional inertia

Lack of a broader context for shoreline management decisions

Lack of an advocate

THE STRATEGIES

To overcome these barriers, the committee recommended the following four strategies, each of which has in-depth, practical recommendations detailed in the report:

Education and Outreach

The first step necessary to affect all of the

other strategies is the development of a broad and common understanding of the efficacy, impacts, and benefits of living shorelines as well as hardened structures.

Regulatory Reform

Regulatory reform is necessary to assure that all shoreline management permits are equally subject to application and review criteria consistent with the current scientific knowledge about the impacts of these systems.

Improve Institutional Capacity

To successfully implement comprehensive regulatory reform and wider use of living shorelines, the capacity of the major constituencies must be improved and expanded.

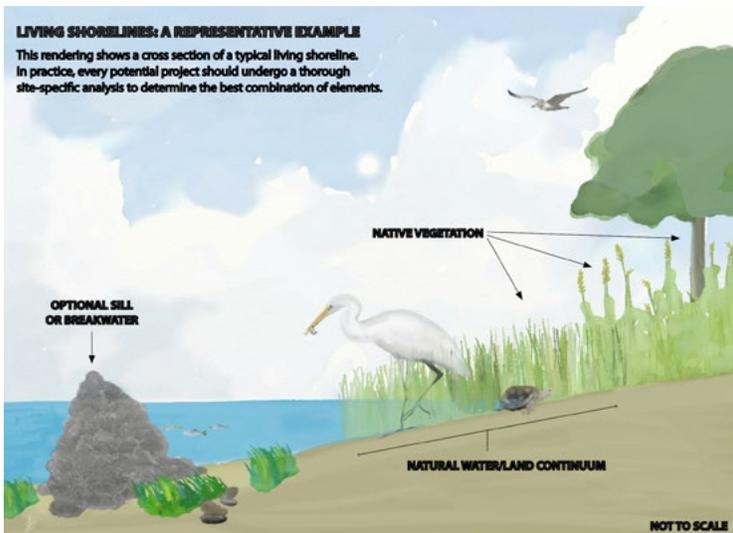
Public Agencies as Role Models – Lead by Example

Public lands maintained and/or owned by all levels of government are ideal candidates for living shoreline demonstration projects that would raise awareness and acceptance of these techniques.

THE COMMITMENT

Successfully pursuing these strategies will require a vigorous dedication to substantively reforming how we are managing our shorelines. It is critical that all living shoreline constituencies, public or private, be involved in the effort to bring about the needed reforms to overcome institutional barriers.

The report and related information is available at the [RAE website](#).



FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT, A LIVING SHORELINE IS DEFINED AS:

ANY SHORELINE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THAT IS DESIGNED TO PROTECT OR RESTORE NATURAL SHORELINE ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH THE USE OF NATURAL ELEMENTS AND, IF APPROPRIATE, MANMADE ELEMENTS. ANY ELEMENTS USED MUST NOT INTERRUPT THE NATURAL WATER/LAND CONTINUUM TO THE DETRIMENT OF NATURAL SHORELINE ECOSYSTEMS.

RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES:

2300 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 603 • Arlington, VA 22201

Tel: (703) 524-0248 • Fax: (703) 524-0287



estuaries.org

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