

NYSG Increasing Awareness of “Living Shorelines” for Erosion Protection

Several New York State reports have called for the use of “living shorelines” for coastal erosion control since this method has environmental benefits and is considered more “adaptable” to sea level rise than traditional erosion control structures. Agencies and NGOs are also promoting living shorelines for erosion protection. Unfortunately, living shorelines are not presently used in New York due to regulatory hurdles, a populace unfamiliar with the approach, and a lack of reliable technical information.

NYSG Responds

With funding from the National Sea Grant Office’s Climate Change Adaptation Initiative, New York Sea Grant’s (NYSG) Coastal Processes Specialist organized and chaired a New York Living Shorelines Work Group and Steering Committee with representatives of government agencies, marine contractors and consulting firms. With this committee, NYSG planned and held a technical workshop entitled *Living Shorelines for Coastal Erosion Protection in a Changing World*.

Information Improves Hazard Resiliency

The workshop attracted 90 federal, state and local officials, property owners and managers, marine consultants and contractors, NGOs and property owners who learned how to evaluate, site, design and implement living shoreline projects from nationally recognized experts with extensive experience in designing, building, and monitoring living shoreline projects around the country.

After attending the workshop:

- a NYS Coastal Management Program representative said the state would use \$800,000 to fund a living shorelines demonstration project (a workshop recommendation)
- the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated that NYSG workshop information was being used in the development of a \$20 million study to identify strategies to reduce risk and increase resiliency in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy, and



NYSG Living Shorelines for Coastal Erosion Protection in a Changing World workshop, photo: NYSG/James Pearce

- the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Marine Habitat Section leader indicated the Department would reevaluate regulations to help encourage the use of living shorelines.

With the overarching goal of helping coastal communities and property owners improve response to coastal hazards with adaptive responses, NYSG is providing resource managers and decision-makers with critical information about living shorelines and their use in New York.

Partners: NYS Department of State, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Long Island Marine Contractors Association, GEI Consultants, First Coastal Corporation

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Hazard Resiliency in New York Coastal Communities.

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

New York Sea Grant Extension

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