

THE CREATION OF A LIVING SHORELINE USING RECYCLED OYSTER SHELL AND NATIVE PLANTINGS TO CONTROL EROSION ON TYBEE ISLAND, GEORGIA

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Estuaries are a vital component of the coastal ecosystem and provide numerous ecosystem services and habitat for ecologically and commercially important species. Shoreline hardening to control erosion or protect vulnerable upland areas is increasing and have traditionally been stabilized using bulkheads which break the connection of the estuaries to the upland. An alternative to traditional shoreline hardening that is being examined for use in Georgia are living shorelines. In the spring and summer 2015 a living shoreline was created at the Burton 4-H center on Tybee Island to control erosion that was threatening existing structures. To evaluate the ecosystem response to the living shoreline we examined the amount of oyster habitat pre and one year post construction. This analysis will be presented. In addition to the habitat value, the living shoreline has become an outdoor classroom and invaluable teaching tool.

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