

## 2023 American Shore & Beach Preservation Association's Best Restored Shores Award Winners

Resilient communities are better able to withstand and recover from adverse environment conditions and events when critical, natural and built infrastructure is identified and protected, and cooperation exists amongst stakeholders. ASPBA established its Best Restored Shores awards program to recognize and encourage more effective coastal risk management that restores natural infrastructure to recognize the communities and implemented projects that accomplish that. Now in its fourth year, this year's BRS awards go to Camp Occohannock, VA, Kyle Point, MD, Cat Point, FL, Captain Sinclair's, VA, and Lake Pontchartrain, LA.

### **Camp Occohannock Living Shoreline Project**

The Camp Occohannock Living Shoreline Project located near the mouth of Occohannock Creek in Accomac County, Virginia is one of the premier projects that has been implemented on the Chesapeake Bay within the past 30 years. The unique partnership between the funding agency (Nature Conservancy), Chesapeake Bay Trust Accomac-Northampton Planning District Commission, Camp Occohannock and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science illustrates how strategic partnering can be a very cost-effective approach. This was also a community-sourced project with numerous volunteers planting the marsh grasses.

### **Kyle Point Dynamic Living Shoreline Project**

The Kyle Point Dynamic Living Shoreline Project is reportedly the largest living shoreline project on the Severn River in Maryland. The project was voluntarily pursued by local property owners who value the ecological benefits that nature-based restoration brings, rather than installing seawalls or other hardened shoreline armoring. Implementing this project provided a significant enhancement and restoration of the habitat including protection to the shoreline and coastal bluff and providing ecological benefit to the Severn River and Chesapeake Bay using nature-based techniques. A dynamic living shoreline was implemented to stabilize the eroding shoreline and bluff and retrofit a stretch of shoreline previously stabilized with bulkhead and riprap. The project created a mosaic of integrated tidal marsh, beach strand, and submerged aquatic vegetation. This project also serves as a demonstration site for other private landowners, governmental organizations, and nonprofit groups interested in pursuing similar projects as a eco-friendly and beneficial project rather than traditional shoreline armoring.

### **Cat Point Living Shoreline Project**

The Cat Point Living Shoreline project demonstrates the resiliency of restored and enhanced coastal habitats. The project sponsors approached this project using natural processes specific to the local site for the successful implementation of the living shoreline at Cat Point, FL. Adapting planting strategies to specific areas accounting for sediment retention and wave attenuation with breakwaters contributed to the successful colonization of this marsh habitat by native. The Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Central Panhandle Aquatic Preserves were able to showcase successful project as a demonstration site providing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers guidance to developing a restoration strategy for a site in Charleston, SC. This project transformed a relatively featureless, disappearing shoreline into a thriving and functional marsh habitat.

## **Captain Sinclair's Recreation Area**

Captain Sinclair's Recreation Area is located on the Severn River in Gloucester County, Virginia. The 100-acre tract was donated to the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority. The natural marsh that exists at the site is a mix of vegetation that provides excellent habitat for the local fauna. The shoreline was eroding rapidly and needed protection from coastal hazards. This project serves as a demonstration project to further the installation of nature-based shore protection in Chesapeake Bay by showing their ability to enhance and restore habitat while protecting the upland. This project has succeeded admirably at habitat enhancement and restoration for marsh and oysters. This living shoreline projects provide shore protection and coastal resiliency for the site so that it can continue to provide public access into the future. Prior to implementation, the site had some oysters along the shoreline; however, the project has greatly increased number of oysters not only on the installed reef but also in the nearshore. The project reefs continue to produce spat that will continuously enhance oyster restoration in the Severn River.

## **Lake Pontchartrain Shoreline Protection Project**

The Lake Pontchartrain Shoreline Protection Project in Louisiana is providing continued reduction of erosion rates at this portion of the shoreline and has also reversed the erosive trend to resulting in naturally creating emergent land. Louisiana is in a continual fight to protect and restore coastal wetlands. By trapping sediment and building land, the project has a greater chance of adapting to the expected high rates of future relative sea level rise.

The Tangipahoa Parish sponsored the Lake Pontchartrain Shoreline Protection Project. The purpose of the project was to reduce erosion rates along the Lake Pontchartrain, LA shoreline between Pass Manchac and the mouth of the Tangipahoa River. This shoreline is a vital component of the Manchac Landbridge, which serves as one of several lines of defense to reduce the risks of hurricane storm surge for communities north and west of the lake. This area also provides habitat for wildlife including alligators, birds, and snakes. The marshes and swamps in the northwest portions of Lake Pontchartrain along the Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana shoreline have sustained significant land loss over time. Factors contributing to the land loss include daily wind-generated wave exposure, historical logging, frequent intense coastal storms, relative sea level rise, and increased salinity within the lake. This land build-up provides additional wetland habitat in an area that was rapidly losing land and will increase the chances of survival of the shoreline in the face of continued relative sea level rise over time. Because of the success of this project, additional phases of this project are planned.