ASBPA STATEMENT: NATIONAL NEEDS IN LIVING SHORELINE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Since the 1970s, many communities have implemented estuarine and/or beachfront restoration projects. These projects serve as living laboratories where practitioners can study successes and failures. In the last decade, restoration and stabilization projects have advanced significantly and increased implementation has allowed design testing to occur. Partner organizations have observed trends in the field and prioritized the following community actions:

Advocate

Elevate the discrepancy in **terminology** on a national scale: Estuarine coastal restoration projects are commonly labeled as Natural and Nature-based Features (NBS)/Nature Based Solutions (NBS)/Living Shorelines. State and Federal programs should develop standard terminology and consider a move away from “Living Shorelines.” Due to this lack of consensus, here we use NBS.

Bridge the gap between estuarine and beachfront coastal restoration projects: List similarities and opportunities to leverage lessons learned. Also note differences, e.g., unlike regional approaches to beach nourishment, no “one size fits all/most” NBS exists between sites and regions.

Plan

Recognize opportunities as well as limitations: Ensure NBS is the best solution for each site, communicate the design level of protection, and determine if there should be a mixture of "grey" and "green" components. NBS often require future adaptations based on monitoring.

Analyze state policy conflicts: Many of the early dredge and fill laws enacted by states were necessary and effective in minimizing the filling of wetlands, for example, for development. Today, these laws can be a deterrent to NBS projects that may conflict with existing state policies, regulations, and laws. Environmental review requirements

designed to avoid or minimize habitat degradation may lead to NBS policy conflicts, especially wetland habitat creation or island building, that may involve habitat type changes (e.g., open water or submerged aquatic vegetation to tidal marsh or high marsh).

Regulate

Improve applications: Regulators need to receive well-thought-out proposals with sound engineering and impacts/benefits analyses. Project benefits must be clear and measurable (e.g., 10 acres of habitat enhancement, erosion control from boat wakes, flood protection for 1 foot of sea level rise, etc).

Streamline existing **regulatory framework**: Revisit the benefits of regulations and discuss potential tradeoffs to expedite permitting. Consider when temporary resource impacts are acceptable to ensure environmental and engineering functions.

Monitor

Define metrics for success: Encourage the intent and success of a project to be defined publicly at the start. This is our duty as practitioners - be more comfortable presenting lessons learned (the good and the bad). Encourage practitioners to publish/present failures in addition to success stories to facilitate community information sharing and advancement.

Adapt

Acknowledge and model **adaptation pathways**: NBS function today will likely not be the same in 10 or 20 years. Lay out possible pathways for when the existing design features might have to be modified to accommodate SLR.