



Living Shoreline Permitting Considerations



Purpose of a Living Shoreline

A living shoreline is a nature-based approach to shoreline stabilization that uses native vegetation, natural materials and low-profile structures to reduce erosion caused by flooding, waves, and storm impacts while maintaining natural coastal processes, enhancing habitat, improving water quality and increasing coastal resilience.



Scoping Meeting

Living shoreline projects vary widely based on site conditions and design. Early coordination with resource agencies helps identify potential concerns and permitting constraints. Conduct the scoping meeting during the planning phase, once conceptual plans are developed.

PURPOSE OF A SCOPING MEETING:

- Present the project concept to reviewing agencies
- Receive early technical feedback and recommendations
- Identify potential permitting challenges
- Refine project design prior to CAMA permit application submission



How to Request

Contact the Environmental Assistance Coordinator in the appropriate Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regional office (Washington or Wilmington):

[https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/
environmental-assistance-and-customer-service/
environmental-assistance-coordinators](https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/environmental-assistance-and-customer-service/environmental-assistance-coordinators)

Describe Current Site Conditions

Clearly depict existing conditions including hydrology and jurisdictional features in application materials.

- Delineation of normal high-water line (NHW), mean high-water line (MHW), or normal water level (NWL)
- Waterbody classifications (e.g. outstanding resource waters (ORW), primary nursery areas (PNA))
- Presence of any habitats such as wetlands (including Section 404), coastal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) or shellfish habitat
 - Mapped extent (footprint) of each habitat type
 - Inventory of existing wetland and SAV plant species
- Existing shellfish leases (if applicable)
- Privately-owned submerged lands (depict boundary of the claim if applicable)

Develop a Comprehensive Proposed Design

Each living shoreline will be designed to the specific site conditions, but all applications should address the following core components.

- Depict all permanent and temporary impacts (e.g., access routes, wetland mats)
- Linear distance (in feet) of the proposed structure to:
 - NHW/MHW/NWL lines
 - Coastal wetlands, SAV or shellfish habitat
 - The navigable channel
- Water depths within the footprint of the proposed structure at normal low tide
- A cross-section of the proposed structure that depicts:
 - The width of the base (in feet)
 - The height of the structure in relation to NHW/MHW/NWL lines



Other Suggested Design Components

There are several structural elements that should be incorporated into the design, if applicable, to proactively address and satisfy concerns often raised by regulatory agencies regarding living shoreline projects.

Structure Length & Flow of Water

For structures longer than 100 linear feet, include at least a 10-foot gap every 100 linear feet to allow for water flow and fish passage.

SAV Survey

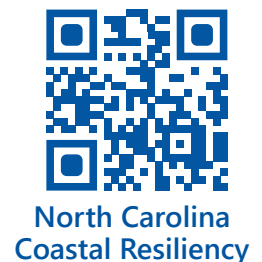
If the proposed structure(s) is in or adjacent to SAV habitat as mapped by the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) it is suggested to have an SAV survey conducted within an active growing season that can be submitted with the application

Plantings (if proposed)

- Identify if there will be additional fill required for the plantings
- Provide existing water depth in the footprint of the plantings at normal low tide
- Specify the species to be planted and planting method

Additional Resources

- Field Representative Map Tool:
<https://ncdenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1a5881ec85ca40679988982e02665b51>
- DCM Permitting Information:
<https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-permits/types-permits>
- CAMA Major Permit Application Checklist:
<https://ncdeq.dynamics365portals.us/knowledgebase/article/KA-01017/en-us>



**Disclaimer: This document is intended as a general reference to support early planning for constructed wetland projects. It does not guarantee permit approval or substitute for formal regulatory review. Applicants should coordinate with DCM and their assigned field representative for project-specific guidance.*