Living Shorelines
Benefits and Best Practices

Armando J. Ubeda
Florida Sea Grant Agent
A living shoreline is a term that is used to describe an alternative approach to shoreline stabilization—an approach that uses natural vegetation and native habitats instead of hardened materials such as bulkhead, a rip rap, or a sea wall.
Living shorelines use plants or other natural elements—sometimes in combination with harder shoreline structures—to stabilize estuarine coasts, bays, and tributaries.

- One square mile of salt marsh stores the carbon equivalent of 76,000 gal of gas annually.
- Marshes trap sediments from tidal waters, allowing them to grow in elevation as sea level rises.
- Living shorelines improve water quality, provide fisheries habitat, increase biodiversity, and promote recreation.
- Marshes and oyster reefs act as natural barriers to waves. 15 ft of marsh can absorb 50% of incoming wave energy.
- Living shorelines are more resilient against storms than bulkheads.
- 33% of shorelines in the U.S. will be hardened by 2100, decreasing fisheries habitat and biodiversity.
- Hard shoreline structures like bulkheads prevent natural marsh migration and may create seaward erosion.

The National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science | coastalscience.noaa.gov
~ 60% of the natural shoreline being replaced by seawalls
Resources

❖ Neighborhood Grants:
  • Sarasota County
  • City of Sarasota

❖ Tampa Bay Estuary Program
   – Bay Mini Grants
❖ Sarasota Bay Estuary Program – Bay Partners Grant
❖ Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program – Public Outreach Grants
Opportunities and Best Practices
Thank you

aubeda@ufl.edu