

Swift Tract Living Shoreline Project

Phase III Early Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Swift Tract Living Shoreline Project will construct approximately 1.6 miles of breakwaters covered with oyster shell to reduce shoreline erosion, protect salt marsh habitat, and restore ecosystem diversity and productivity in Mobile Bay. The Trustees also expect that over time, the breakwaters will develop into reefs, providing added reproductive and foraging habitat and shelter from predators.

The 615-acre state-owned Swift Tract site is located in Bon Secour Bay and is part of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Shorelines are often stabilized with hardened structures, such as bulkheads and concrete seawalls. Ironically, these structures often increase the rate of coastal erosion, removing the ability of the shoreline to carry out natural processes, and providing little habitat for estuarine species. A “living shoreline” uses more natural bank stabilization techniques that maintain valuable habitat.

By protecting this salt marsh and increasing the cover of reef habitat, the Trustees will be protecting a rich source of food for shrimp, crabs, and sport fishes such as red drum which feast on annelid worms and other organisms that are abundant around salt marshes and reefs.

As a result of the spill, Alabama experienced a loss to salt marsh habitat and secondary “benthic” (bottom habitat) productivity, including oyster reefs. Completion of this project will reduce shoreline erosion and restore benthic productivity.

ESTIMATED COST \$5,000,080.



*Living Shoreline Breakwater at low tide at Swift Tract, Alabama.
Photo courtesy of The Nature Conservancy - Mary Kate Brown.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Renata Lana
Senior Communications Specialist
NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation
renata.lana@noaa.gov
301-427-8656



Location for the Swift Tract Living Shoreline Project

