



Figure 1: Sunset at Sunset Park

Sunset Park

Living Shoreline & Stormwater Improvements

Project Status: Ongoing

Project Summary

Background

The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays' (Center) Living Shoreline Initiative aims to use natural alternatives to stabilize shorelines that improve water quality and provide habitat for fish, horseshoe crabs, terrapins, and other wildlife in the Bays. Living shorelines help to preserve and restore tidal marshes that are rapidly degrading in the Bays due to erosion, climate change, and sea-level rise.

Project Site

The Sunset Park living shoreline encompasses approximately 450 feet of shoreline beginning at the northeast boundary of Sunset Park (next to the Bay Resort Hotel) and extending south beyond Dagsworthy St. to the Lion's Club Marsh including stormwater improvements for McKinney Ave. (Figures 2, 3 & 4). Included in the project area is a removal of a portion of roadway, creation of a dedicated kayak launch and parking area, and improvements to Sunset Park itself.

Project Goals

The objective of the Sunset Park living shoreline is to improve flooding in Dewey Beach (Figure 6), implement the Town's Stormwater Master Plan, and stabilize severely-eroded shoreline all while enhancing the ecology and natural services of up to 1.5 acres of tidal wetlands. These Improvements will reduce flooding and increase resilience to sea-level rise and coastal storms—protecting homes and businesses, improving habitat for aquatic life, and leading to improved shoreline safety, aesthetics, public access, and recreation opportunities.



Figure 2: Lion's Club Marsh

Project Lead:

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Partner(s):

- Town of Dewey Beach

Estimated Costs:

- Planning: \$174,600
- Implementation: \$701,237

Funding:

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- Community Water Quality Improvement Grant



Figure 3: Sunset Park living shoreline project (red star); other Center living shoreline projects (blue stars)

Project Elements

- 100-linear foot reef of wave attenuation devices (WADs) to address erosion due to wave energy
- 450 linear feet of living shoreline stabilization that includes shallow reefs, oyster shell toes and groins (Figure 5), and sand nourishment (backfill)
- Removal of 375 sq. feet of roadway at the end of Dagsworthy St. replaced with a plastic grid paver and public kayak launch
- Upgrades to stormwater infrastructure
- Eradication of invasive plant species from the upland areas of Sunset park and replanted with native upland coastal vegetation



Figure 4: From the Concept Drawing, asphalt at Dagsworthy Street would be removed and replaced with a kayak launch, dune and marsh

Did You Know?

While hardening your shoreline with rip rap or bulkheads stops/slow erosion, it breaks the connection of land and sea that wildlife rely on for shoreline habitats. Living shorelines stop/slow erosion without breaking that connection, benefiting wildlife. The Delaware Living Shoreline Committee (QR code to the right) has more information if you think your community would benefit from a living shoreline.



Figure 5: Oyster toe (green arrow) in front of a marsh along the shoreline.



Figure 6: Flooding at Dagsworthy St. during tropical storm Ophelia (2023). Photo credit: Ellen Driscoll



Figure 7: Dagsworthy St. (2024)



DELAWARE CENTER FOR THE
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The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a non-profit organization established in 1994 to promote the wise use and enhancement of the Inland Bays and its watershed. With its many partners, the Center conducts public outreach and education, develops and implements restoration projects, encourages scientific inquiry and sponsors research. To learn how you can get on board with the bays go to inlandbays.org.