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Contact: Benning DeLaMater | (518) 402-8000
Press Office | PressOffice@dec.ny.gov

DEC PROPOSES GUIDANCE DOCUMENT RELATING TO LIVING SHORELINES

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced the agency's proposed guidance document that emphasizes natural and nature-based solutions to better protect New Yorkers and the state's coastline and help guide communities to produce living shorelines in New York's marine district.

"Improving coastal resiliency and reducing risk to communities is a priority of Governor Andrew Cuomo, and this proposed living shorelines guidance encourages smart approaches to protect against shoreline erosion," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "Using natural solutions will build a more resilient coastline that will be better able to withstand the impacts of severe weather and coastal storms. Living shorelines can reduce shoreline erosion while maintaining habitats that are critical to our economy and we urge coastal communities and planners to follow these important suggestions."

DEC's proposed guidance encourages the appropriate use of natural shoreline protection measures in place of hardened or man-made approaches to coastal erosion controls. The guidance document, which can be found on the DEC's website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4940.html>, provides information on different types of living shorelines, explains how tidal wetland and protection of water permit standards relate to living shorelines, and speaks to proper siting, maintenance, and monitoring considerations for these shoreline approaches.

Citizens and officials interested and affected by the Tidal Wetland Land Use Regulations are encouraged to make comments on this guidance document.

The guidance document advances the concepts of the Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRA) signed by Governor Cuomo in 2014. CRRA's goal is to speed up New York's adaptation to climate change and create opportunities to use living shorelines as natural buffers to coastal erosion.

New York's proposed guidance is an example of national trends emphasizing the importance and value of natural and nature-based features (NNBF) to reduce flooding and erosion risks. Living shorelines and tidal wetlands areas are invaluable for improving water quality, marine food production, wildlife habitat, flood, hurricane, and storm control.

In the early 1970s, New York State began to recognize the importance of tidal wetland areas and sought to insure their protection from human activities by passing the Tidal Wetland Act in 1973.

Tidal wetlands line much of the salt water shoreline, bays, inlets, canals, and estuaries of Long Island, New York City, and Westchester County. These wetlands also line the Hudson River in Westchester and Rockland counties upstream of the salt line.

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The guidance document will provide communities in these areas a better understanding of what living shorelines are and how to incorporate them within tidal wetland and protection of water regulations (Part 661: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regs/2485.html>) with the intention of maintaining the quality of habitats and their storm risk reduction function.

Notice of availability for comment will be published in the Environmental Notice Bulletin on Jan. 4, 2017.

Citizens and officials interested and affected by the Tidal Wetland Land Use Regulations may provide comments on this guidance document. All comments and questions on this guidance document should be forwarded to: Dawn McReynolds, Bureau of Marine Habitat, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 205 N. Belle Meade Road, E. Setauket, NY 11733 fw.marine@dec.ny.gov by Feb. 8, 2017. **Please reference Living Shoreline Guidance in the subject of the email.**

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