

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES USING A DEMONSTRATION LIVING SHORELINE

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Florida has more than 1,350 miles of coastline, making it highly vulnerable to erosion, sea level rise and the impacts of climate change. Coastal communities need to plan for coastal resiliency, yet numerous challenges arise when discussing climate change and sea level rise. Demonstration projects are an innovative approach to bringing communities together and creating public engagement on controversial topics. A demonstration living shoreline implemented by UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension is being utilized to educate and engage the local community of Northeast Florida on oyster restoration, water quality issues while simultaneously discussing sea level rise and climate change. Community volunteers and Florida Master Naturalist students assisted with phase one of the project creating a unique shoreline that showcases several materials homeowners can use to build their own living shoreline. Five educational workshops and two citizen science monitoring events provided participants an opportunity for a more open community discussion. The session will share the approaches used and lessons learned.

PRESENTER BIO: Justina Dacey is the Natural Resources & Agriculture Extension Agent for UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension with more than six years of experience planning, designing, and implementing educational programs. She has extensive experience with conservation of Florida's water resources and coastal habitats.