

Students help plant grasses along Oxford Park shoreline



planting grasses

PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK

Members of the Easton High School Ecology Club and Environmental Concern gather for a recap after spending the afternoon planting Saltmarsh Hay on the shore line in Oxford on Thursday in an effort to create a living shoreline. The students volunteered with Environmental Concern to help restore 8,172 square feet of shoreline that is currently a marsh habitat project along the Tred Avon River, off the banks of the public park in the Town of Oxford. The group planted 1,275 plants on Thursday afternoon.

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By KELLEY L. ALLEN Staff Writer |

OXFORD Easton High School students on Thursday planted native grasses along a living shoreline at Oxford's Town Park.

Those grasses will create habitat, prevent erosion and filter pollution and are part of the project, funded through \$161,000 in grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and two grants from the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

"This project will demonstrate the value of wetlands restoration to town residents and visitors alike," said Jana Davis, associate director of CBF.

Living shorelines offer an alternative to riprap or bulkhead with a sill backfilled with sand planted with natural grasses like cordgrass and salt marsh hay.

Work started on the project in August after a lengthy public participation period and after some design changes. The finalized design included sills instead of breakwaters, maintained a beach with water access and incorporated a baptismal beach.

Kody Cario, wetland restoration manager with Environmental Concern, worked machines at the shoreline that removed the old seawall and added a sill and tons of sand.

Town Commissioner Peter Dunbar, who spearheaded the project, worked with Angler Environmental, who did the original project design, and Environmental Concern, who presented a revised design in December, to incorporate resident's comments into the project.

Once the park project is finished, a similar project at the ferry dock should start, Dunbar said, with a \$69,000 grant from the CBF.

Other living shoreline projects include one at the Cooperative Oxford Lab, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, and at Sailwinds Park in Cambridge.

Dunbar said the area at the town park is high energy, and showing that a living shoreline can work there means it can work anywhere.

