

# Tidal Wetland Training & Capacity Workshop



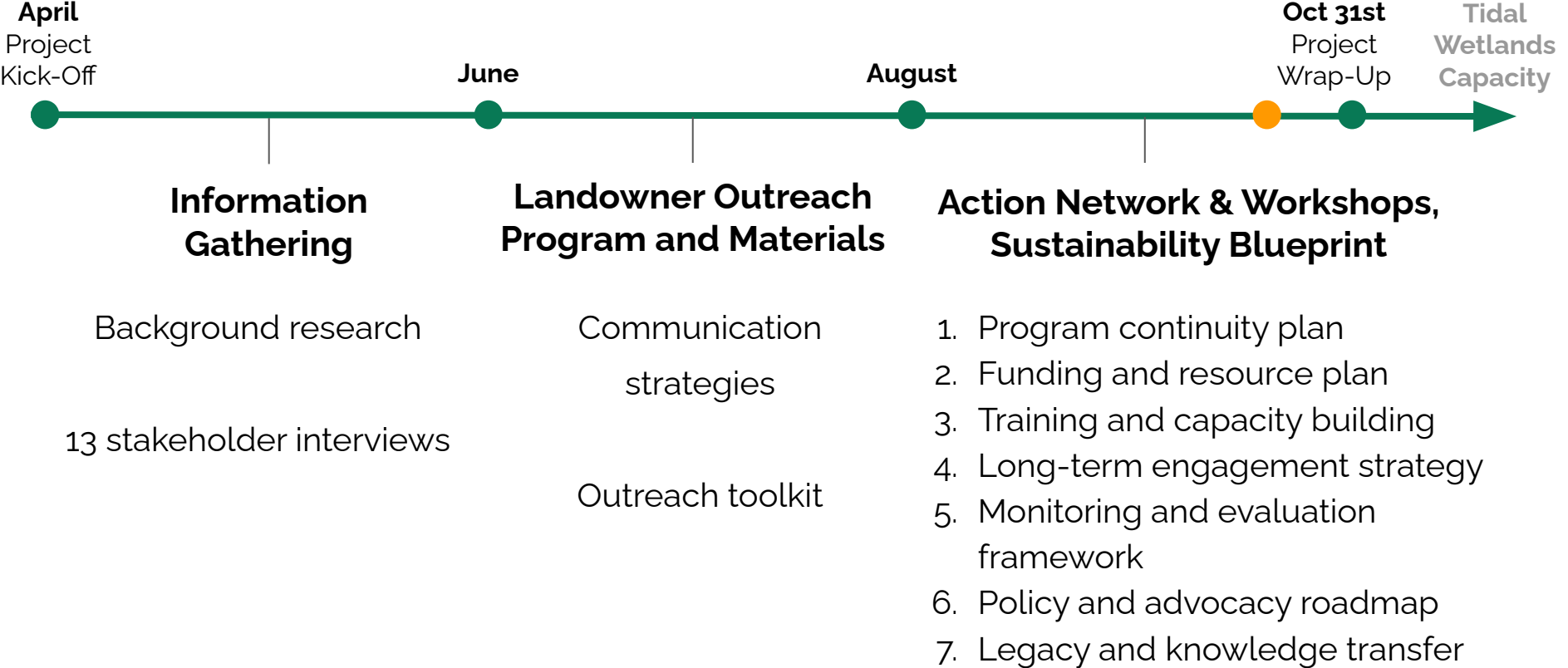
October 2025



# Workshop Agenda

- Welcome & Overview (5 minutes)
- Community-Based Social Marketing Approach (25 minutes)
- Custom Outreach Materials (10 minutes)
- Q&A (15 mins)
- Preview of upcoming work (5 minutes)

# Project Timeline



# Outreach Program Purpose

Equip wetland professionals with **tools and communication strategies** that encourage the conservation, restoration, creation, and enhancement of **tidal wetlands on private lands**.



## Tidal Wetlands Private Landowner Community Engagement: Outreach & Education Program



Photo credit: Native Shorelines

*August 2025*

# Action Network

To share information among relevant state, federal, nonprofit, academic, and community partners from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia in support of restoration and protection efforts for privately owned tidal wetlands.

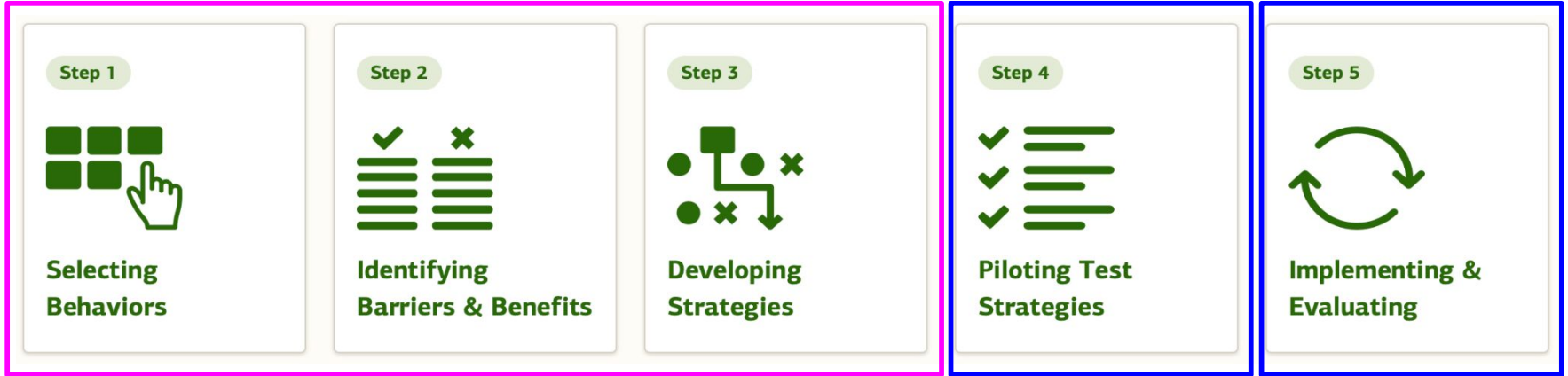


# Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) Approach

Tidal Wetlands Private Landowner Outreach Program

Workshops

Action Network



 We are here

# Step 1: Select Behaviors

**Goal**

**Behavior Change**

Maintain existing  
wetland vegetation

**Alter mowing practices**

Enhance shoreline and  
wetland vegetation

**Plant native species**

Install living shorelines

**Swap gray for green  
infrastructure**

Less effort

More effort

## Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits

Behavior	Homeowner Barriers*	Homeowners Benefits*
Alter mowing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fear of losing space, views, or property value</li><li>● Concerns about pests and access</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Improved water absorption and flood protection</li><li>● Shoreline stabilization</li><li>● Less maintenance</li><li>● Wildlife habitat</li></ul>
Plant native species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Concerns about maintenance and access</li><li>● Lack of education and availability</li></ul>	
Install a living shoreline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cost and permit requirements</li><li>● Not confident in the solution</li><li>● Lack of education</li></ul>	Same as above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Long-term cost savings</li><li>● Aesthetics</li></ul>

\* More detail in full Outreach Program

# Step 3: Developing Strategies

## Social Diffusion

Speed the adoption of new behaviors

Recruit local trusted messengers



## Social Norms

Build community support

Share local success stories



## Messaging

Connect with your audience's priorities

1. Property protection
2. Economic benefit
3. Recreation benefit



# Social Diffusion

Speed the adoption of behaviors by recruiting **local trusted messengers**

- 1 Neighbors
- 2 Family and friends
- 3 Contractors
- 4 Property and legal professionals
- 5 Residential community groups



# Social Norms

Build community support by sharing **local success stories**

When people see themselves or features of their property in a locally relevant success story, it is more likely to resonate.



# Messaging

Connect to the homeowners' values and understand their priorities.

**Highlight personal benefits to adopting the desired behavior instead of only the environmental benefits.**

Example:



# Messaging

## Property Protection

Natural shorelines as defense strategy

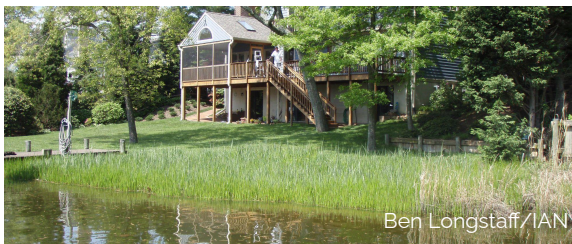
“Fight nature with nature” or  
“Your first line of protection”



## Economic Benefit

A smart, cost effective,  
long-term investment in  
your property

“Save money and time for better  
protection” or “Invest in lasting  
protection”



## Recreation Benefit

Protect what you love about  
waterfront living

“Tidal wetlands are for nature  
enthusiasts” or  
“Wetlands protect your waterways,  
so you can enjoy more of what you  
love”



# Other CBSM Best Practices

## Convenience

Make it easy for landowners to change their behavior

→ Remove barriers (education, cost, know-how, etc.)

## Commitment

Start with small actions and gradually make larger requests, that are compliant with all applicable regulations

→ Raise mower 6 inches → 9 inches → Stop mowing

Check in on progress, people often follow through when they know someone is going to “call back”

# Step 4: Piloting Test Strategies



Support this work by **providing feedback and questions** to strengthen these products.

Once we've incorporated feedback, these materials will be shared with the action network for use with private tidal wetland landowners.

**Living Shorelines**  
*Your First Line of Protection*

Photo by Native Shorelines

**What is a living shoreline?**

A living shoreline uses natural materials like native plants, sand, oyster shells, and biodegradable structures to stabilize the water's edge, forming a natural barrier between your property and the water.

When a storm hits, living shorelines reduce wave energy, hold your shoreline in place, and absorb rainfall. Living shorelines suffer far less storm damage than man made structures like seawalls or bulkheads.

Graphic from Protect Local Waterways

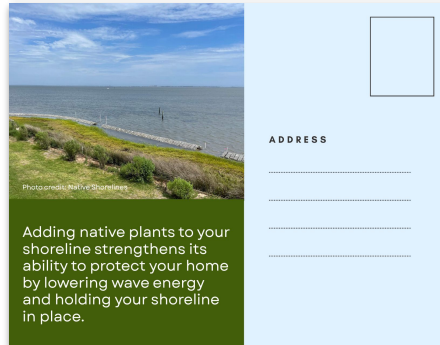
**Don't just hold the line, grow the line**

Consider choosing a living shoreline over a bulkhead or riprap. Because of the many benefits of living shorelines, they are the preferred option for shoreline protection in your state unless proven unsuitable. Living shorelines offer a beautiful, natural solution that will stand the test of time against storms and erosion.

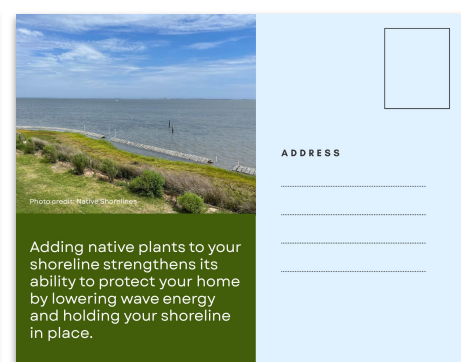
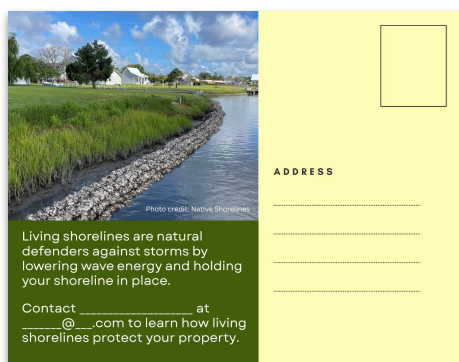
# Customizable Outreach Materials

**Postcards** - Targeted mailers or handouts that target a specific call to action or behavior change. Organizations can use this method to educate and attract interested landowners

**Fact sheets** – More detailed leave-behind materials that give coastal homeowners more information about shoreline management



# Customizable Outreach Materials: Postcards



# Customizable Outreach Materials: Fact Sheets

## Waterfront Living

### How to Protect Your Property

Waterfront living offers stunning views and direct access to nature. It can also present unique challenges for coastal landowners, including increased flooding risks, shoreline erosion, and potential property damage from coastal storms. Tidal wetlands are a natural and cost-effective solution to these challenges.

#### Top 5 tips for waterfront living

- 1 Keep what you have.** Wetlands are a benefit, not a problem - if you have a wetland on your property, consider yourself lucky! Wetlands soak up flood waters and are a first line of defense for your property.
- 2 Mow smarter, not harder.** Do you have an area of your property that is constantly or periodically wet? Do yourself and your shoreline a favor: raise your lawnmower blade six inches (or higher) in damp areas to allow wetland plant roots to grow deep and lock soil into place, preventing erosion.
- 3 Plant native.** Native wetland species are great at stabilizing shorelines that protect your property; let them! Locations where wetlands used to be are the obvious places to plant wetland species.
- 4 Invest in nature.** Waves, wind, and storms can erode coastal properties. A living shoreline is a great solution that decreases wave energy, reduces runoff, keeps your shoreline in place, and also saves you money on maintenance and repairs. This investment also attracts wildlife, like fish, birds, and crabs, for you to enjoy.
- 5 Don't just hold the line, grow it.** Preserving or enhancing a wetland or investing in a living shoreline provides much more than shoreline protection; choosing a natural solution over jetties, seawalls, and bulkheads is preferred by your state and has proven cost-savings. They are also more visually-pleasing and can grow your property value!

#### Want more information?



#### Grow your expectations

When you invest in restoring a wetland or installing a living shoreline, you will reap the benefits for years to come. After they are established, these solutions are generally self-maintaining and require little to no additional effort from you. Natural buffers fight nature with nature, rather than trying to stop natural processes. Grow a lasting resilient and scenic asset to support your property's shoreline!

#### How to get started

- Research options available in your area by talking to neighbors with living shorelines and reach out to local professionals.
- Permit applications can be time-consuming, but experts are available to help.
- Some natural solutions are free or low-cost, like mowing less and planting more. A living shoreline is comparable (if not cheaper) than riprap and bulkheads.
- Funding opportunities are available to offset the costs for qualifying homeowners.

#### Want more information?

**Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals (CBLP)** - CBLP is a network of certified landscape professionals who are familiar with nature-based solutions and can help you implement them on your property.

**The Center for Coastal Resource Management (CCRM)** - CCRM has a webpage dedicated to native wetland plant species. Interested landowners can visit and connect with a local nursery or landscaper to plant native vegetation.

## Living Shorelines

### Your First Line of Protection

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#### Why choose a living shoreline for your home?



##### Erosion Control

- Buffers wave energy and storm surge that can erode your shoreline
- Adapts and strengthens to stabilize your shoreline as vegetation grows



##### Flood Fighter

- Absorbs excess water to prevent flooding and reduce loss of your shoreline
- Slows the flow of water with the help of wetland plants to protect your property



##### Water Purifier

- Filters water to keep it clean and builds healthy habitat for wildlife
- Reduces pollution and fights against algae blooms to keep waters clear



##### Wildlife Magnet

- Rebuilds threatened habitats and provides a home for crabs, fish, and birds
- Creates opportunities for better wildlife viewing, recreation, and access



##### Property Value & Shoreline Appeal

- Saves money in installation and maintenance costs compared to rip-rap or bulkheads
- Grows your property value by investing in a more affordable, long-term protection option

# Customizable Outreach Materials: Social Media Templates

## Recommended post types:

### Before & afters

Demystify the process and show success

### Talk about the benefits

Use the messaging strategies (protection, economic, recreation)

### Connect a problem to the solution

Illustrate common problems and show how the desired behavior is a solution

## Best practices for imagery:

- Tie image to the key messages
- Let the photos tell the story
- Show people enjoying their waterfront (with permission)
- Depict common problems (failing gray infrastructure, wave energy, flooding, etc.)

# Example

**Target behavior:** Plant native species

**Messaging strategy:** Property protection

**Outreach strategy:** Postcard mailer

Catchy headline



Highlights property protection benefit

Images depict private properties with desired behavior



More info on protection, option to add contact/link for more info

ADDRESS

.....

.....

.....

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Your logo here

Customize for your organization

# Step 5: Implementing and Evaluating

## **Join the action network**

Please put your name, preferred email, and affiliation in the chat if you are interested in joining the action network.

## **Lighten your load**

Incorporate these materials into your outreach toolbelt and customize them to reach your audience.

# What's Next

**Submitting report and associated materials to Bay Trust**

**Action Network launch**

As Phase 2, **Developing Tidal Wetlands Capacity** begins, be on the lookout for an opportunity to provide insights on capacity via survey or interview between November 2025 and January 2026.



Credit: Native Shorelines

# Q&A



# Canva Tutorial

The screenshot displays the Canva design tool interface. At the top, a blue navigation bar contains the following elements from left to right: a hamburger menu icon, the text 'File', 'Resize', 'Editing' with a dropdown arrow, undo and redo icons, a trash icon, the project name 'Tidal Wetlands Landowner Postcards', an 'Upgrade your plan' button, a 'Canva' logo, a 'Print with Canva' button, and a 'Share' button. On the left side, a vertical sidebar lists design categories: Design, Elements, Text, Brand, Uploads, Tools, Projects, and Apps. The main workspace shows a design titled 'Page 1 - Nature Front'. The design features a background image of a bird perched on a wooden post in a wetland. Overlaid on the image is the text 'WETLANDS ARE FOR NATURE ENTHUSIASTS' in large, bold, green, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, in smaller black text, is 'Birds & crabs & butterflies, oh my!'. At the bottom right of the image, it says 'Photo credit: Chesapeake Bay Program'. Below the design, the interface shows 'Page 2 - Nature Back' and a zoom level of 125%. The bottom right corner includes 'Pages 1 / 8', a grid icon, a refresh icon, and a help icon.