

A shore may be sand or mud, bare or vegetated, but it is always in dynamic tension with the sea. This challenges our understanding of property ownership and land management and leads to efforts to stabilize the shoreline. Thus, shore protection measures protect land and structures immediately inland of the shore rather than the shore itself and may actually eliminate the existing shore or its ecology. Shore-protection measures generally involve either shoreline armoring or elevating land surfaces.

The alternative is landward migration, retreat, or relocation as was done with the Cape Hatteras lighthouse. This depends on getting people to change their perceptions of property and of our ability to control natural processes. Through zoning and other ordinances, changes in flood insurance, conservation easements and buyout programs, it may be possible to build fewer structures that then require shoreline protection.

Shoreline issues include: sea level rise, weather patterns and storm activity, legal regulations, ownership - public & property rights, costs & funding, opportunities - waterways as assets.