



Fighting Erosion at Camps with Plants

In Louisiana's eroding coastal marshes, it's common to see water lapping hungrily at the front steps of camps that were once surrounded by solid ground. Camp owners can help prevent erosion and actually build land around their camps by replacing lost shoreline plants that absorb wave energy.

The kinds of plants that work best are stiff-stemmed species that grow in water, called "edge" plants. They should be planted at the shoreline. As waves wash against them, the plant stems break the water's force, reducing land-gobbling surges to gentle eddies.

In a salt or brackish marsh, smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) is recommended. For freshwater, giant cutgrass (*Zizaniopsis miliacea*) is ideal. Bullwhip (*Scirpus californicus*), also called bulrush, is another edge-zone plant that can be used in shallow, interior lakes where wind-whipped waves eat away shorelines.

Plants for shoreline protection should be planted in rows parallel to the shore and as close together as possible so they will grow together quickly. Grasses should be planted at average or mean tideline. The plants should be planted deep enough so that the soil ball is well anchored, but high enough so the stems can bend with the wind.

Many wetland plants can be purchased in containers from most commercial wetland nurseries. Digging up and transplanting wild stock could create problems in the area where the plants were harvested.

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