

❖ Importance of objective, site characteristics, and project design for oyster reef restoration projects

Martin Posey- University of North Carolina Wilmington

Restoration projects have had varied success, emphasizing the importance of considering the root causes for decline in an area as well as the importance of design and landscape in project planning. Areas may be differentially impacted by disease, larval supply, available settlement substrate, predators and parasites, overfishing, and adjacent land use practices. Furthermore, landscape factors of the actual reef system, such as reef size, shape, location, proximity to other habitats, and local flow and sedimentation patterns may not only impact reef health but may differentially impact various reef functions. The same project may be considered successful or not wholly successful when viewed from different restoration perspectives (e.g. harvest, self-maintenance, habitat, water quality impacts, or shoreline stabilization). As we learn more from restoration efforts, it is increasingly clear that we must design projects based on specific objectives and site characteristics and that we should take a broader view of restoration so that areas most suitable for one purpose may be complemented by effort in areas better suited for different restoration objectives. We need to clearly define the specific objectives of a project, presumably considering broad patterns and needs, and consider restoration designs and approaches that best fit both the objective and the local conditions.