

Development of a Restoration Technique for Red Mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*) in High Energy Environments

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Research Summary:
Restoration of red mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*) in high energy environments, while critical for erosional stability, has proven difficult using traditional direct planting or split PVC methods (e.g. Riley and Salgado Kent, 1999). We demonstrate an initial field test for a new three part method using armored concrete cultivators (Figure 1) to provide stability, protection and nutrients to young red mangroves until they are self sufficient. In order to minimize wash-out and advection of fertilizers into potentially sensitive systems such as coral reefs, we have developed a semi-enclosed slow release fertilizer delivery system using traditional Osmocote™ fertilizer encased in cement fortified plaster of paris discs.



Figure 4: Fert-Discs in laboratory testing environment. Note structural integrity of cement fortified (left) vs. unfortified (right) plaster

Fertilization System

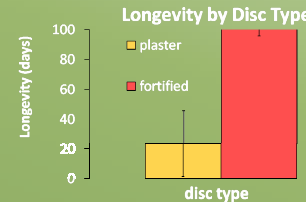


Figure 5: Longevity of Fert-Discs in laboratory setting. Error bars are 1σ

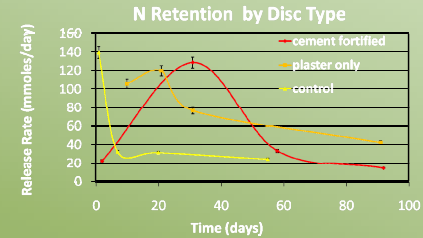


Figure 6: Retention times and release rates of nutrients by Fert-Discs. Error bars are mean RSD.

The Three Part Restoration System

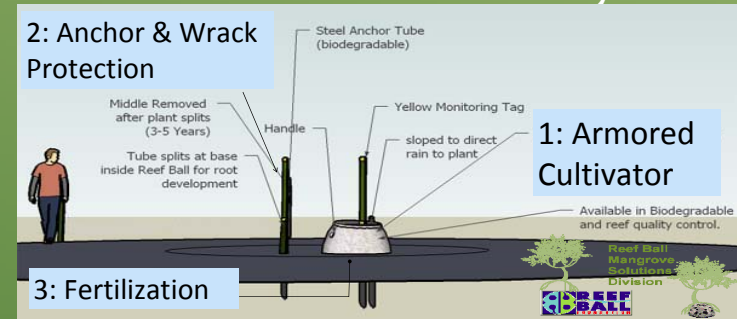
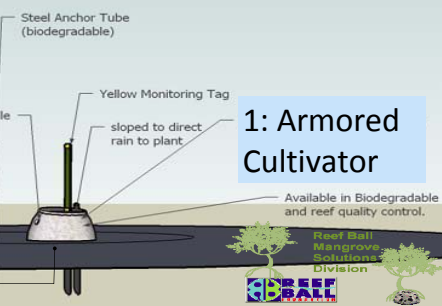


Figure 1: Conceptual drawing highlighting features of red mangrove restoration system. (image courtesy of www.mangrovesolutions.com)

- Fertilizer application can be customized for specific projects
- Preliminary laboratory collected durability and release rates compare well with literature vales, in situ pilot experiments are underway

- Fert-Disc fits snugly into base of cultivator unit

2: Anchor & Wrack Protection



1: Armored Cultivator

Available in Biodegradable and reef quality control.

3: Fertilization



Figure 7: Juvenile mangroves being transplanted from experimental nursery (left) into field pilot site. Note use of armored cultivators with and without wrack protection. (Photos : D. Hudson)

Field Pilot Study

- 850 units deployed in experimental nursery and field pilot site at Cayman Islands Sailing Club (Grand Cayman, BWI) in November, 2006

- Preliminary monitoring indicates that growth and survival are both within expected values.

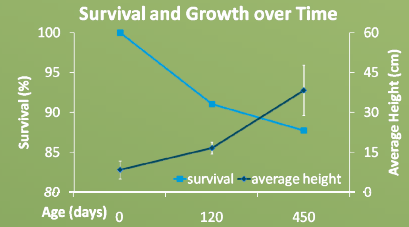


Figure 9: Growth rate and survival of juvenile mangroves in experimental nursery. Error bars are 1σ

The Armored Cultivator

- Made from 'reef-safe' pH neutralized concrete
- Stabilizes plant against waves, tides and debris
- Convex drainage holes provide water exchange while minimizing washout
- Can be constructed as permanent or biodegradable



Figure 2: Armored cultivator units awaiting deployment. (photo: J. Krumholz)

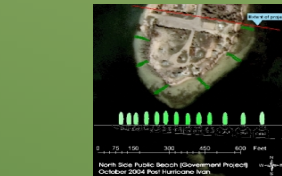


Figure 8: Schematic of proposed future experimental restoration project at Kaibo Beach Club, Grand Cayman, BWI. Proposed planting depths range from 20-40cm.

- Preliminary results indicate that within the range of anticipated planting depths, growth and survival are relatively consistent

- Mortality at the extremes of this range (and beyond) may be somewhat higher, but data are sparse

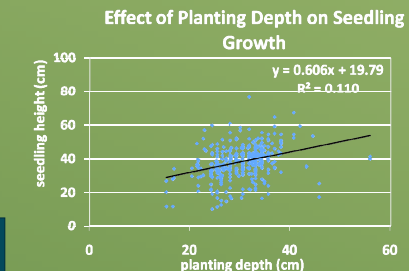


Figure 10: Effect of planting depth on seedling growth in experimental nursery area. Growth measurements taken at 450 days.

Part 2: Wrack Protection & Anchoring

- Modified from REM Method (Riley and Salgado Kent, 1999)
- Fits through top hole in armored cultivator
- Mangrove grows out of the protector after approximately 12-18 months
- Hollow steel anchor tube is cut at an angle to provide access to soil for roots.
- Presently, the wrack protector is designed to break open and be removed after 3-5 years
- We are investigating biodegradable options for this step

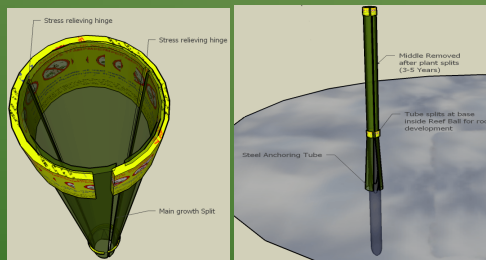


Figure 3: Close up of wrack protection and anchoring system. Wrack protector is hinged and designed to be removed after 3-5 years. Anchor tube is cut at an angle to enlarge split in wrack protector, allowing roots access to soil inside the armored cultivator.

Future Work

- More Data is required to determine effect of planting depth on growth and mortality
- Full scale experimental restoration project at Kaibo Beach Club scheduled for April, 2008

Works Cited

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dr. Candace Oviatt and Brooke Longval (URI/GSO) for facilities use, expertise, and assistance with the nutrient samples. We would also like to thank Tim Austin and James Gibb (Cayman Islands DOE), Ben Chisholm and Larry Beggs (Reef Ball Foundation), Jocelyn Dineen (Scotts Corporation), and David Hudson for their contributions to this work. This project was funded by an NSF IGERT grant through the University of Rhode Island Coastal Institute. Supplies were also donated by the Reef Ball Foundation and the Scotts Corporation.

