

HUMAN RESPONSE TO COASTAL EROSION: MODIFICATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI SHORELINE, by Klaus I. Meyer-Arendt, Department of Geology and Geography, Mississippi State University, MS 39762.

Transgression and shoreline erosion have been characteristic processes along the northern Gulf Coast for several thousand years, but not until coastal environments became recreationally popular in the 1800s did erosion become perceived negatively. Because of human desires to maintain beachfront summer homes and fixed property lines, shoreline retreat became a problem to combat. Over the last century, human efforts to offset the three dominant types of shoreline retreat—normal, storm-induced, and human-induced—have included a variety of structural and non-structural methods. The Mississippi Coast, the oldest recreationally developed shoreline along the Gulf Coast, has been greatly modified by humans. Narrow natural beaches of Harrison County have become replaced by seawalls and "the longest man-made beach in the world", and adjacent coasts of Hancock and Jackson Counties—including Pascagoula—have been similarly modified. More recent loci of shorefront urbanization such as the Gautier and Bellefontaine headlands contain groins and jetties which have been mostly in-effectual. In view of recent hurricanes and sea level rise predictions, policies of construction setbacks and beachfront retreat may be more rational.