



Coalition To Restore Coastal Louisiana

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CRCL Launches Webpage to Promote Christmas Tree Recycling Programs

Five parishes continue a long tradition of using Christmas Trees to help our coast

Baton Rouge, LA (December 19, 2018) “O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree. How lovely are thy branches” is the opening line to a well-known Christmas carol, but did you know that those same branches can help restore the coast? For nearly three decades, parishes throughout the Bayou State have [recycled Christmas trees](#) to keep them out of landfills and protect coastal Louisiana.

In response to overwhelming interest in the Christmas Tree Recycling program, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL) has launched a brand-new webpage at CRCL.org that makes it easy to find out all the important information about recycling your live Christmas Tree. The new webpage focuses on the five coastal parishes--Jefferson, Orleans, St. John the Baptist, Tangipahoa, and Terrebonne--that still collect and recycle trees for use in coastal projects.

“CRCL was instrumental in getting the original program off the ground 30 years ago,” said CRCL’s Executive Director Kim Reyher. “Although we aren’t directly involved with collecting and placing the trees in the marsh any longer, we still get tons of calls after the Holidays. This new webpage is a way for us to support the great work these parishes are doing and help get the word out.”

The idea for the program came from a Dutch graduate student at LSU named Roel Boumans, who thought that Louisiana’s marsh was perfect for building brush fences, a tool that the Netherlands had been using for centuries to slow erosion. With help from his professors, Drs. John Day and Paul Kemp, he began experimenting with the idea and in 1989 Kemp, who was then Executive Director of CRCL formed a partnership between the newly formed CRCL and St. Charles Parish. It was so successful that the next year, 15 more coastal parishes joined the effort with funding from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). At its peak, 16 of the 19 parishes in the coastal zone used recycled Christmas trees for coastal use. DNR no longer funds the project, instead leaving it up to individual parishes to support their own programs.

“CRCL has always had a strong science component, but this program was the first organized effort that engaged residents to get involved in coastal restoration. We connected science with volunteerism,” said former CRCL Executive Director Dr. Paul Kemp. “This program showed that residents wanted to be involved. CRCL led the way to engage citizens, which can be seen in their volunteer programs today.”

Since the programs began, millions of trees have been used to help our coast. The trees help slow erosion, trap sediment, and provide a buffer to slow down waves while keeping them out of landfills.

“From the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, through the center of the Barataria Bay to Grand Isle, Jefferson is a coastal parish. Our Christmas Tree Project is a great opportunity for our residents and those in other parishes to directly participate in protecting our coast, whether donating their Christmas

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trees or volunteering in our Lafitte Shoreline Protection Project. This nationally recognized project is the largest and longest continuing of its kind in the United States, and continues to reduce marsh erosion, and increase public awareness to coastal erosion, solid waste issues, and conservation of our natural resources,” said Jefferson Parish Coastal Management Division Coordinator Lauren E. Averill, P.E.

Once the parishes collect the trees, they haul them to collection points and, with the help of volunteers – and sometimes helicopters - place them in the marsh, where they help reduce coastal erosion.

“More Louisiana! I can’t think of a better gift,” said Reyher. “Your tree may have lost all its needles, but its branches can do a lot more than just hold ornaments. It can actually help slow land loss. That’s a great gift to give after the holidays.”

The process and dates for collection vary from parish to parish. Most parishes will pick up trees curbside for easy recycling, but often the window for curbside pickup is limited. You can find those exact dates at crcl.org, but it is important to note that some parishes may not have dates available until late December. So, keep checking CRCL.org for the most up-to-date information.

Only live trees that have been stripped of their lights, ornaments and tinsel will be collected for recycling. No flocked or painted trees will be accepted.

Don’t let your tree take up space in a landfill when it could be helping to protect our coast. Visit crcl.org for more information on how your tree can help coastal Louisiana.

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About CRCL:

CRCL is a non-partisan, non-profit organization driving bold, science-based action to restore coastal Louisiana through outreach, restoration, and advocacy. CRCL was founded in 1988 and is the state’s oldest and most comprehensive coastal restoration organization. Visit crcl.org.