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## **Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana Resumes Oyster Shell Recycling Program** *Shell collected from New Orleans-area restaurants helps protect Louisiana's eroding coastline*

**NEW ORLEANS (Jan. 5, 2021)** — After being shut down since mid-March of 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, the [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana's Oyster Shell Recycling Program](#) has resumed shell collection at its partner restaurants in New Orleans. The program kicked off again this week, initially with seven restaurants, after what was a banner year for oyster shell recycling in Louisiana despite the extenuating circumstances.

"We are grateful to our restaurant partners, volunteers and others who have supported our Oyster Shell Recycling Program — even to people who support coastal restoration in Louisiana by simply slurping down some oysters," said James Karst, director of communications and marketing at the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL). "This program is a win-win-win for our state. It supports the oyster industry and our restaurants, both of which have been hit hard by the pandemic, by encouraging people to enjoy one of the signature items on Louisiana menus. It protects our coast through the construction of oyster reefs, and therefore it protects our communities and our jobs. It diverts a plentiful resource from landfills. And it creates habitat for new oysters and other wildlife."

Through the program, bins provided by CRCL are used to collect shell at restaurants after oysters have been consumed. The bins are emptied three times a week by a contractor for the program, and the shell is delivered to CRCL's new shell curing/volunteering site in St. Bernard Parish. Eventually, volunteers will help package the shell into marine-grade mesh bags before they are deployed into the water to create oyster reefs, also known as living shorelines. The reefs act as wave breaks that help prevent soil from eroding and even have the ability to adapt for climate change, growing to adjust to rising sea levels.

The seven restaurants initially involved with the program's resumption are Cooter Brown's Tavern & Oyster Bar; New Orleans Creole Cookery; Peche Seafood Grill; Redfish Grill; Seaworthy; Elysian Seafood (at St. Roch Market); and Superior Seafood & Oyster Bar. More restaurants may be added in the coming months.

CRCL had already constructed two oyster reefs before the COVID-19 pandemic began, but shell collection was placed on hold as New Orleans restaurants closed their doors when the city became an early hot spot for the virus in the United States. Planned volunteer events had to be scuttled, and the delivery of gabions — steel cages used to give the reef structure — was delayed as the pandemic forced the closure of the factory where they are assembled.

The gabions were eventually delivered, and CRCL built its third oyster reef, this one in Barataria Bay, in August. Now, with shell collection resuming, the Oyster Shell Recycling Program is nearing a return to normal. A fourth reef is planned for Plaquemines Parish this year.

"Our Oyster Shell Recycling Program connects many different components of our work at CRCL," said the organization's executive director, Kim Reyher. "But most importantly, it helps stave off the steady fall of our coast into the Gulf of Mexico. Our coast is an important component of our hurricane protection here in south Louisiana, and we've been reminded this year all too often and all too tragically of the need to restore it."

The Oyster Shell Recycling Program was founded with support from Shell. Numerous other partners and supporters have joined since the program began. CRCL's Shell-A-Bration event, scheduled for Feb. 5, also supports and promotes the program.

**Editor's note: [Click here](#) for images of the Oyster Shell Recycling Program and reef deployments. For video describing the program, including footage from the recently completed Barataria reef, [click here](#).**

**About the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana:**

*The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that drives bold, science-based action to sustain a dynamic coastal Louisiana through engagement and advocacy. CRCL was founded in 1988 and is the state's oldest and most comprehensive coastal restoration organization. For more information, visit [crcl.org](http://crcl.org) or follow CRCL on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).*