



## Coalition To Restore Coastal Louisiana

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CRCL Views Diversions through Eyes of Shrimpers

*Project facilitates discussion with shrimpers*

(BATON ROUGE, LA—September 19, 2017) – The last few weeks serve as another reminder of the tremendous power of wind and water – and the critical importance of protecting our coast.

Louisiana’s coastal wetlands provide our cities and people a critical line of defense against storms. We continue to lose these wetlands at a rate of a football field of land every 100 minutes, but we’re on the edge of action to protect ourselves. We are embarking upon what is expected to be the largest environmental restoration project in our nation’s history. The state is working to break ground on the first major project to re-connect the Mississippi River to our starving wetlands, the [Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion](#), by 2020. The importance of this project cannot be overstated. Sediment diversions are the cornerstone approach of Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan. We need to start building without delay.

To consider what sediment diversions will mean for the shrimp fishery, one of the most important fisheries of our state, the [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#), (CRCL) facilitated community-based engagement with shrimpers from varying socioeconomic backgrounds to better understand the concerns that shrimpers have regarding sediment diversions.

“We need to make this critical strategy work for everyone. We need to address concerns on the front end,” said CRCL Executive Director, Kimberly Reyher. “This is a vitally important project for Louisiana. It’s important for everyone to be heard and to clear as many roadblocks as possible so the state can meet its goal of breaking ground on the Mid-Barataria Diversion in 2020.”

The CRCL project gathered 50 concerned shrimpers from across Southeast Louisiana in small facilitated groups to discuss the potential futures of their shrimping businesses with the construction and operation of sediment diversions. The resulting report, [Shrimping with Diversions: Understanding the Resilience of Southeast Louisiana Shrimpers in Response to Large-Scale Ecological Restoration Projects](#), details the views and ideas of those who participated.

Shrimpers expressed concern about impacts to shrimp populations (less shrimp, smaller shrimp, located farther away) that they perceive will occur from sediment diversions. Researchers worked with shrimpers to detail these concerns, to understand how they would impact the various participants, and to identify strategies for adaptation along with the possible obstacles to adaptation.

According to Corey Miller, Outreach Director for CRCL and lead researcher on the project, the most critical finding of the report is that there is a wide range of vulnerability depending the socioeconomic background of each individual shrimper and how they run their business.

“This means that some shrimpers may not be able to adapt without assistance,” said Miller. “But now, we have the issues and concerns, along with ideas on how shrimpers can make adjustments to their

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businesses, all in one place. Our goal was to contribute to the larger conversation of how diversions and shrimping will co-exist.”

*Shrimping with Diversions* is the first project of its kind to work with a specific segment of the Louisiana fishing community to aggregate their perceptions of large-scale sediment diversions and how they will affect fisheries into the future.

“There is nothing worse than the unknown. CRCL helped shed light on this issue by sitting down with shrimpers—people who know this subject better than anyone else— and developing this report,” said Julie Falgout, Seafood Industry Liaison, LSU AgCenter.

It is incredibly important for sediment diversions and other large-scale ecological restoration projects to move forward quickly. For that to happen effectively, it will be critical to find ways to ensure that those affected can adapt.

“It is crucial for a plan to be made for fishermen who will be affected by diversions—fishermen and their families are at stake--and they need to be listened to,” said Acy Cooper, President of the Louisiana Shrimpers Association and Chair of the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force.

“CRCL is excited to add to the body of knowledge that will help all stakeholders come to the table and work together,” said Reyher. “This has been a rewarding project for us, but it is only one piece of a larger puzzle. We hope this can be a model for others to use for effective community engagement. Louisiana has to get it right and we have to do it together if we’re going to survive this land loss crisis that threatens our culture, livelihoods and way of life.”

The full report is available at [crcl.org](http://crcl.org).

#### **About CRCL:**

Founded in 1988, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana is the longest standing statewide organization driving bold, science-based action to rebuild Coastal Louisiana through outreach, restoration and advocacy. With the support of members and volunteers, CRCL advocates for strong coastal policies and implements restoration projects across Coastal Louisiana. Visit us at [www.crcl.org](http://www.crcl.org).

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