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Oyster Shell Recycling Program adds drop-off location in New Orleans

Green Project collects shell from residents for use in coastal restoration

Just in time for the holidays, the [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#)'s Oyster Shell Recycling Program is growing. Now New Orleans area residents can support coastal restoration by bringing oyster shell from household dining to a new public drop-off site -- the [Green Project](#).

Through CRCL's [Oyster Shell Recycling Program](#), shells that are often otherwise sent to landfills are instead used to build reefs that help minimize coastal erosion. Since the OSRP's inception in 2014, more than 10 million pounds of shell have been recycled to build over 7,000 feet of oyster reef living shoreline. The Green Project accepts shell at 2831 Marais Street from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. To recycle shells, simply place them in the purple trash bins by the Marais side gate.

Historically, the Oyster Shell Recycling Program has been a partnership between New Orleans seafood restaurants and CRCL. Restaurants collect the shell in plastic bins provided by CRCL, and several times a week, a contractor transports the shell to CRCL's curing site in Violet (St. Bernard Parish). Volunteers later scoop sun-cured shell into marine-grade mesh bags, which are then deployed into the water to create new habitat for oysters and other wildlife. These oyster reef living shorelines also help minimize erosion of soil, protecting our coast from land loss.

"After enjoying oysters at home with family and friends, you can help protect our coast simply by bringing shells to an OSRP public drop-off," said Kellyn LaCour-Conant, the restoration programs director at CRCL. "What a tasty way to give back! We appreciate the Green Project, as well as our other public drop off partners at Glass Half Full, and all participating restaurants for growing this program with us. Our vision is that one day all oyster shell passing through local restaurants will be recycled back to the water to support a sustainable coast."

Glass Half Full, the other residential oyster shell drop-off site in New Orleans, has paused shell collection as it recovers from Hurricane Ida.

Currently the following restaurants participate in CRCL's Oyster Shell Recycling Program: Bourbon House, Clesi's Seafood Restaurant & Catering, Cooter Brown's, Deanie's Seafood, Drago's Seafood Restaurant at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Elysian Seafood, Katie's, New Orleans Creole Cookery, Pêche Seafood Grill, Red Fish Grill, Seafood Sally's, Seaworthy, Sidecar Patio & Oyster Bar and Superior Seafood and Oyster Bar. The program is also supported by [Chef's Brigade](#).

CRCL has built four reefs to date -- in Biloxi Marsh, Barataria Bay, Pointe-au-Chien, and Adam's Bay. The organization plans to expand the Pointe-au-Chien reef in summer 2022.

Louisiana is the No. 1 oyster-producing state in the nation, and more than one million oysters from the state's waters are consumed per day. The industry often returns spent shell to the water to replenish what is harvested and encourage new oyster growth. However, because many Louisiana oysters are consumed in areas far away from where they are harvested, shells are sometimes simply discarded into mainstream trash. The OSRP seeks to keep this important and valuable natural resource out of landfills and instead use it to restore the state's coast, which has lost more than 2,000 square miles of land since the 1930s.

To learn more about the Oyster Shell Recycling Program, email oysters@crcl.org.

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The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to drive bold, science-based action to rebuild coastal Louisiana through outreach, restoration and advocacy.