

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CRCL completes fifth oyster reef build with shells from New Orleans area restaurants

*Nearly 250 volunteers partner with nonprofit, Pointe-au-Chien tribe on restoration project*

The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana completed work to build its fifth oyster reef in late September, protecting about 400 linear feet of marsh at Bayou Pointe-au-Chien near Montegut by returning 200 tons of recycled shell to the water. The project, which is part of CRCL's Oyster Shell Recycling Program, was undertaken with the help of nearly 250 volunteers and was done in partnership with the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe. This was the second reef built with the tribe.

This was the second phase of the Bayou Pointe-au-Chien reef; the first phase was built in the fall of 2022. The reef protects a rapidly eroding mound complex of cultural importance to the tribe, whose community was hard hit by Hurricane Ida in 2021.

The tribe and CRCL are also in the planning stages of work to continue to stabilize the banks of a mound and strengthen the living shoreline by filling in the opening of the trenasse, a small cut through the marsh, that is eroding at a rapid rate. The trenasse closure will serve as a pilot effort to inform future work to plug abandoned canals in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuarine System.

"CRCL was honored to partner again with the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe, and we are thankful to our partners, our restaurants and our legion of volunteers," said Darrah Bach, the Oyster Shell Recycling Program manager. "This project will protect this community for decades to come. We can't wait to get started on our next reef build."

"The oyster shell project is a very good way to protect against rapid land loss," said Theresa Dardar, Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe elder. "We hope to continue to build oyster reefs with CRCL, so we encourage people to eat more oysters. We need the shells."

In addition to the tribe, partners on the project were: the United States Environmental Protection Agency; Restore America's Estuaries; the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Gulf Research Program; Ports America; Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership; Entergy; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Colonial Pipeline Co.; and Royal Engineering. Chefs Brigade supported restaurants' participation in the OSRP. Serve Louisiana members also worked on the project.

Through CRCL's Oyster Shell Recycling Program, more than 13 million pounds of shell have been diverted from landfills and returned to the water, where they form oyster reefs that create habitat for new oysters and a number of other marine species, as well as migratory birds. Oyster reefs also slow erosion by creating a barrier between water and the soft soil that makes up Louisiana's coast. Since live oysters attach to them, they can also grow vertically to adapt to sea level rise. And the reefs help to absorb storm surge from hurricanes and tropical storms.

CRCL has measured a 50% reduction in the rate of erosion in areas where it has built reefs.

More than 30 New Orleans area restaurants participate in CRCL's Oyster Shell Recycling Program. New Orleans residents can drop off their household shell at three locations around the city: the Green Project, Glass Half Full and Audubon Clubhouse Café at Audubon Zoo.

Through the OSRP, restaurants use bins provided by CRCL to collect shell separate from other trash. A contractor, R&R Recycling, picks up the shell and transports it to CRCL's Restoration Headquarters in Violet, where the shell cures in the sun for several months before being placed into marine-grade mesh bags by volunteers. The bagged shell is then placed into the water.

CRCL was the first statewide nonprofit dedicated to confronting coastal land loss in Louisiana, where about 2,000 square miles of wetlands have been converted into open water since the 1930s. CRCL is supported by individual donors, corporate sponsors and grants.

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*[The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to unite people in action to achieve a thriving, sustainable Louisiana coast for all.*