



CRCL's first reef protects ½ mile of shoreline in Biloxi Marsh

CRCL's Oyster Shell Recycling program kicked off in 2014 with two goals in mind – keep oyster shell out of landfills, and return this valuable resource to Louisiana's coastal waters. For the first year and a half we focused on the first goal - we've partnered with 28 New Orleans restaurants to recycle over 2800 tons of shell, and that number grows every day. In November 2016, with your help, we took our first step toward making our second goal a reality. Utilizing 848 tons



of shell recycled from your restaurants, we built a half-mile living shoreline in Biloxi Marsh. This reef was specifically designed to protect and stabilize the shoreline against erosion, but it also provides valuable ecosystem services; the reef serves as habitat for a variety of invertebrate and fish species as well as forage for birds, filters the water, and provides a place for larval oysters to settle and grow, potentially bolstering the oyster population in the area. With the settlement and growth of new oysters, the reef will become a living shoreline that has the ability to keep pace with sea-level rise – a sustainable solution to the land loss threatening the area.

In December, we began biannual monitoring of the Biloxi reef, to assess its impacts on erosion as well as its role in providing habitat for juvenile oysters. We're tracking changes in the shoreline behind the reef as it compares to the surrounding, unprotected marsh, using both a high accuracy GPS unit and an innovative use of a camera technology. Using timelapse photography will allow us to watch as the shoreline changes over the next year. We will return to Biloxi Marsh this winter to see how well wild oysters have settled onto their new home.

The Half Shell

CRCL volunteers bag 71 tons of shell in 2017

Our program is not just about recycling and restoration – it's also about encouraging coastal stewardship in our communities, through hands-on education and involvement. This year alone, we've hosted over 120 volunteers over six events at our shell curing and bagging site in Buras, Louisiana. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, we've bagged over 70 tons (that's 3,000 bags) of recycled shell, for use in future restoration projects across the coast.



These volunteer events don't just help us prepare for reef restoration projects – they provide a unique opportunity for locals and out-of-towners alike to learn about coastal issues in our state, the importance of healthy oyster reefs, and how they can support sustainable practices that help Louisiana's seafood industry flourish – including patronizing our partner restaurants. We've had volunteers ranging from high school and college groups, to business teams, to folks from across the country. We've also attracted international attention – a group of college undergraduate and graduate students from Korea's Chungbuk National University, interested in implementing their own shell recycling program, visited our bagging site to learn more from our recycling model.



Ongoing Efforts Towards Financial Sustainability

We're continuing our efforts to develop the Oyster Shell Recycling Program into a sustainable, long-term way to keep Louisiana oyster shell out of our landfills. This month, we're releasing a public request for proposals for the recycling aspect of the program; this will help us ensure that we continue to provide the best quality recycling service for the best possible price for our partners. Proposals are due in early June – we'll execute a contract by the end of the month.

We're also working to locate a shell curing site closer to the Greater New Orleans area, to reduce the costs of the recycling program as a whole. We have several promising options – stay tuned for updates!



Support for the Oyster Shell Recycling Program Provided By:



Thank You
for your support!

Please let us know if we can help you educate your staff about this important project.

