

Oyster Shell Recycling and Reef Restoration

The Town of Mount Pleasant has partnered with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) SCORE program to renourish oyster reef habitats in South Carolina. Oysters and oyster reefs are an important component of our marsh system because they improve water quality, decrease erosion, and provide habitat for fish and shellfish species. SCORE, which stands for South Carolina Oyster Restoration and Enhancement, relies on volunteers to help build new oyster reefs in our brackish and marine waters. Reefs are constructed from bagged, recycled oyster shells. Town of Mount Pleasant residents can participate in SCORE through the oyster shell recycling program and reef restoration activities.

Oyster Shell Recycling

Though South Carolina waters produce thousands of bushels of oysters a year, only 10% of South Carolina harvested oyster shells are recycled and put back into our waters (SCDNR, 2011). By recycling oyster shells at your event, you can help promote oyster growth, establish habitat and support local, commercial shellfish harvesting.

Recycle your oyster shells at any of these locations east of the Cooper River:

- Town of Mount Pleasant Public Services Department Facility (Sweetgrass Basket Parkway)
- Red's Ice House on Shem Creek
- Garris Boat Landing, Awendaw (Bulls Island Road)
- McClellanville Town Hall

Oyster Shell Recycling Tips (courtesy of SCDNR, 2011):

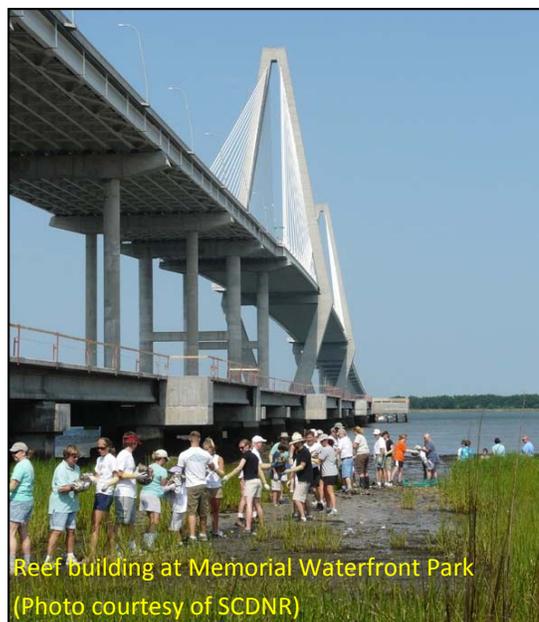
DO separate shells from trash.

DO keep shells in a porous container to reduce odors.

DO bring shells to your nearest shell recycling center.

DO NOT put live oysters in South Carolina waters. If the oysters purchased were harvested outside of South Carolina, it is illegal to place them in our waters and can create public health problems and harm local oyster and animal populations.

DO NOT put freshly shucked shell in South Carolina waters—shells should be dried for 6 months to decontaminate.



Oyster Reef Restoration

Volunteers can help participate in oyster reef restoration efforts through bag filling and reef building events. Since May 2001, volunteers have helped construct 188 oyster reefs at 35 sites in the South Carolina Lowcountry and have returned more than 500 tons of oyster shells to local waters (SCDNR, 2011). In Mount Pleasant, residents and other volunteers have worked with SCDNR staff to construct oyster reefs at Memorial Waterfront Park, Patriots Point, Boone Hall, Hobcaw Creek, and Alhambra Hall. SCORE offers several bagging and reef construction volunteer opportunities a year so check our calendar for any upcoming events.

You can also find out more information on volunteering with SCORE by visiting their website at <http://score.dnr.sc.gov/> or emailing score@dnr.sc.gov.