



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Coastal Groups Complete a Major Reforestation Effort**

## *CRCL, REF and LPBF plant 5000<sup>th</sup> Tree in St. Bernard Coastal Forest*

St. Bernard, LA (**March 20, 2015**) Today marks the completion of a 5,000 tree reforestation initiative executed by the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL) in partnership with Restore the Earth Foundation (REF), and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF). The 5,000 native tree reforestation effort took place during 2014 into 2015, completing the first half of the planting of a 10,000 tree donation from Restore the Earth Foundation. This represents the second donation of 10,000 trees from REF.

The planting and monitoring of these trees is the result of a partnership between CRCL, REF and LPBF who have been working together for over 7 years to execute coastal forest restoration projects in degraded and damaged areas along the coast.

“Restoring and rebuilding Louisiana wetland forests is important to all of us in the United States. It takes the efforts of more than one group to successfully address this challenge,” said P.J. Marshall, Executive Director of Restore the Earth Foundation. “This partnership represents a unique and effective collaborative approach for deploying and monitoring reforestation, essential to Louisiana’s coast.”

To plant the first 5,000 trees CRCL recruited 275 volunteers who participated in 13 planting days that helped to restore 30 acres of coastal forest habitat in St. Bernard Parish

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation will be tracking and monitoring trees at each project site, having assigned GPS coordinates to select trees to monitor the growth and survival of the trees on an annual basis and to track the success of each project.

“LPBF’s goal for this project is to show that swamp restoration is possible in southeastern Louisiana and to document the lessons learned throughout the process to inform other restoration efforts. Swamp forests provide habitat and storm surge protection, and are culturally significant to Louisianans, said Theryn Henkel, Assistant Director of the Coastal Sustainability Program at LPBF. “This successful collaboration has had a synergistic effect where substantially more restoration and science has happened in partnership than any one group could have accomplished individually.”

“Partnerships like this one with REF and LPBF are crucial to making CRCL’s Habitat Restoration Program (HRP) effective, but our work would not be possible without the hundreds of volunteers that give of their time and effort to help save our coast,” said Hilary Collis, HRP Director. “The fact that so many individuals understand that this coastal forest is our first line of defense against storm surge and flooding is a testament to this collaboration and we look forward to continuing our restoration efforts next Fall.’

While CRCL, Restore the Earth, and LPBF celebrate the completion of 5,000 trees in the ground this season, the work is not over. The groups will continue the effort in the fall of 2015 by recruiting more volunteers to help plant an additional 5,000 trees, which will restore even more of this important coastal forest habitat.



*Figure 1 St. Bernard Parish President David Peralta, State Rep. Ray Garofalo, representatives from CRCL, REF, LPBF and volunteers plant the 5000th tree in the St. Bernard Coastal Forest.*

### **About the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana**

Founded in 1988, The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana is a non-profit organization whose mission is to drive bold, science-based action to rebuild Coastal Louisiana through restoration, outreach, and advocacy. With the support of members and volunteers, CRCL advocates for strong coastal policies and implements restoration projects across coastal Louisiana. To learn more about the many ways in which we lead Louisiana's citizens in the coastal restoration effort, visit [www.crcl.org](http://www.crcl.org) or call us at 1-888-LA-COAST. Our coast, our future!

### **About Restore the Earth**

Restore the Earth Foundation (REF) is a 501(c) 3 with a mission to restore the Earth's essential forest and wetland ecosystems. REF employs the only landscape-scale forest restoration solution with environmental, social, and economic returns verified by a leading third-party impact accounting firm. Its present goal is to restore at least one million acres of marginal land in the Mississippi River Basin—North America's Amazon—to its natural state. To learn more go to [www.restoretheearth.org](http://www.restoretheearth.org)

### **About Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation**

As the public's independent voice, LPBF is a 501 (c) 3 dedicated to restoring and preserving the water quality, coast, and habitats of the entire Pontchartrain Basin. Through coordination of restoration activities, education, advocacy, monitoring of the regulatory process, applied scientific research, and citizen action, LPBF works in partnership with all segments of the community to reclaim the Basin for this and future generations. To learn more or to become a member visit [www.saveourlake.org](http://www.saveourlake.org)