



# POST-COVID OYSTER SHELL RECYCLING PLAN

Money Island, NJ

Baysave is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and registered New Jersey charity that supports private businesses, recreational users, government and nonprofit entities to develop sustainable and restorative aquaculture and helps balance the needs of the other specific interest groups in the Nantuxent watershed of the Delaware Bay.

## SUMMARY

The Baysave oyster shell recycling program is put on pause as we recover from significant losses occurred in the pandemic shutdown period of 2020 and 2021. Storm Isaias in August 2020 caused more damage to Money Island Marina infrastructure than any prior storm, including superstorm Sandy. The equipment used for shell transportation was stolen or became unusable. Recovery is now slowed by delayed government recovery assistance, lack of labor, loss of equipment and increased equipment costs. We are approximately half-way through a \$100,000 recovery and plan to resume the oyster shell recycling program when that recovery is complete.

## HISTORY

Money Island NJ is the focus of many types of environmental research by a wide range of government and nonprofit organizations. Living shoreline restoration programs and oyster reef reconstruction have been active on Baysave waterfront properties for years.

Since its founding in 2009, Baysave Corporation has contributed to the gradual transformation of a former bayshore fishing hamlet at Money Island, NJ into an aquaculture facility as a model for sustainable redevelopment with restorative potential for the Delaware Bay region. Baysave evolved from a focus on oyster reef aquaculture and spat-on-shell production to an expanded role in promoting the commercial seafood and baitfish today. Baysave now supports living shoreline restoration, oyster reef restoration, the aquaculture infrastructure development plan and the working waterfront community's sustainability response plan at Money Island NJ.

In 2013 Baysave launched the Philadelphia region oyster shell recycling program. This paralleled the living shoreline restoration and oyster reef restoration projects at Money Island New Jersey that were conducted by a partnership led by The Nature Conservancy. Baysave licenses waterfront space to the partnership for this environmental work but the projects are otherwise not connected. About 50 tons of shells were collected in 2013 and allocated to oyster restoration projects in 2014. The labor was donated and the cost of vehicles and collection containers was donated by supporters.

The project was slowed for lack of continued funding after 2014. From 2015 to present Baysave recycles typically about one ton of oyster shells per year.

Environmental research partnership projects continued at Money Island but activities were greatly reduced during the pandemic shutdown of 2020 and 2021.

In August 2021, after two years without any revenue and the forced retirement of our ten-year-old shell collection vehicle (noted as the "oystermobile" in the book 'The Drowning of Money Island'), the oyster shell restoration project was paused.

## RE-ENTRY PLAN

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The pandemic shutdown and storm Isaias had great impact on Money Island of any events in recent history. We have already recovered, rebuilt and replaced about \$45,000 on the 12 months prior to August 2021.

Re-entry will require a replacement commercial grade towing vehicle capable of hauling heavy shells. We have adequate trailers, containers, and a storage facility. We expect to have use of a borrowed front end loader.

Availability of local labor is a long-term concern, but we believe that we would receive enough donated time by volunteers to re-start the collection project on at least a short-term basis.

Total losses in 2020 are estimated around \$100,000 We estimate the remaining physical recovery costs of \$55,000 remain to repair the core infrastructure and \$15,000 to replace the hauling vehicle (SUV or pick-up truck). Financing inquiries and applications are started with SBA, USDA and others but little feedback is available so far.

The long-term demand for oyster shells in shoreline restoration project is likely to remain strong. We anticipate funding from environmental restoration users in the future at a rate of about \$10 per bushel for one year old aged shell. That is likely enough to cover the cost of collection and storage. Our focus is on the costs for the first year of operation, including a replacement hauling vehicle.

Our strategy is to focus on generating grant and loan funding to simultaneously re-start both the marina and the oyster shell collection project after the COVID shutdown ends, and gain some synergy by sharing some of these resources with the marina.

## SUMMARY OF 2021-2022 GOALS

- 1) Stabilize, replace and repair physical damages from storm Isaias and the COVID shutdown.
- 2) Expand the board of Baysave and recruit community advisers.
- 3) Renegotiate an offshore shell storage site lease.
- 4) Replace the hauling vehicle to resume shell collections in Philadelphia region.



Oysters landing at Money Island

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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