



2023 Press Kit

Billion Oyster Project is on a mission to restore oyster reefs to New York Harbor through public education initiatives.

Our Vision: A future in which New York Harbor is the center of a rich, diverse, and abundant estuary. The communities that surround this complex ecosystem have helped construct it, and in return benefit from it, with endless opportunities for work, education, and recreation. The harbor is a world-class public space, well used and well cared for—our Commons.

Why Oysters: 220,000 acres of wild oyster reefs, like coral reefs, once sustained a vibrant marine ecosystem in New York City. Oysters are *ecosystem engineers** - they provide habitat and protection for many marine species and their young, have the ability to filter water - up to 50 gallons a day, and can help shield New York City shorelines from storm damage.

An ecosystem engineer is **any species that creates, significantly modifies its environment.*

Why education initiatives: We believe that restoration, without education, is temporary. In order to ensure the preservation and conservation of oysters and marine life in New York Harbor, the youth of our shoreline communities must become the next generation of environmental stewards. In addition to involving students in our restoration work, we develop curricula and resources available to teachers and students that foster engagement with our shared waterfront.

Our Goal: To restore one billion oysters to New York Harbor by the year 2035.

Active Work & Key Stats

Since launching in 2014, the Billion Oyster Project has ...

- Restored 122 million oysters across 19 acres of New York Harbor

- Established [18 reef sites](#), 9 of which are **Billion Oyster Project Field Stations** - where New York students and community groups can help build and monitor oyster reefs.
- Engaged [nearly 11,000+ local students in STEM education](#) through restoration work, hands-on Billion Oyster Project curricula, and an annual Student Symposium which celebrates student research on the Harbor.
- Diverted more than 2 million pounds of discarded shell from landfill to become the foundation for our permanent reefs, through our [Shell Collection Program](#) - a recycling program that over 100 NYC restaurants and the public have participated in. View our list of [60+ currently active restaurant partners](#).
- Engaged over 15,000 [volunteers](#) in hands-on restoration work
- Adopted the [Citizen's Water Quality Testing Program \(CWQT\)](#) which tests 40+ water samples collected by community scientists across the city for enterococcus levels and makes that information publicly accessible.

Project History

Murray and Pete met at [The Urban Assembly New York Harbor School](#), where Murray served as Director and Pete taught Aquaculture. The two found that when students are given real responsibility, like helping to restore a degraded New York Harbor, they rise to the occasion with great enthusiasm. Billion Oyster Project has expanded on that idea – offering public school students, volunteers, community scientists and restaurants the opportunity to learn about New York City's rich oyster history and lead the movement to restore it.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

Media Resources: [Media Mentions & Press Releases](#) · [Logos & Assets](#)

Boilerplate

Billion Oyster Project is a nonprofit organization on a mission to restore oyster reefs to New York Harbor through public education initiatives. [Why oysters?](#) Their reefs provide habitat for many marine species, have the ability to filter water, and help shield New York City shorelines from storm damage. Founded on the belief that restoration without education is temporary, and

observing that learning outcomes improve when students have the opportunity to work on real restoration projects, Billion Oyster Project collaborates with public schools. The crew designs [STEM curriculum](#) for NYC schools through the lens of oyster restoration, and engages [Urban Assembly New York Harbor School](#) students in large-scale restoration projects, collects discarded oyster shells from nearly 70 NYC restaurants, and engages the local community. The project has introduced 122 million oysters across 19 acres and 18 oyster restoration sites, with the help of 11,000 students and more than 15,000 volunteers.

Contact

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