



North Carolina Coastal Federation | 3609 Hwy 24 (Ocean) | Newport, North Carolina 28570 | Web: <http://www.nccoast.org>

# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Volunteers Needed to Sample Stormwater Runoff

Ocean, NC – It seems only fitting that a hurricane that dumped 10 inches of rain on the area cancelled the NC Coastal Federation’s public meetings on a program it is starting this fall to test for bacteria in stormwater runoff.

The meetings have been rescheduled for next week, and the Federation is still looking for volunteers in Carteret and Onslow counties to take water samples.

“It took a hurricane to wash us out last week. I think that’s called poetic justice,” noted Frank Tursi, the Federation’s Cape Lookout COASTKEEPER®. “But torrential rain from the storm, which flooded roads and buildings, offered a dramatic example of what storm runoff can do to property. Our monitoring program will show what it can do to the beautiful water all around us.”

The community meetings will be Wednesday, Sept. 28, at the Western Park Community Center on old NC 58 in Cedar Point; and Thursday, Sept. 29, at the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce, 801 Arendell St. in Morehead City. Both meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

The Morehead City meeting is for potential volunteers for the three sampling sites in that area: downtown Morehead City, Atlantic Beach and Beaufort. The other meeting is intended to attract volunteers for the two other sites: Emerald Isle and Swansboro.

Anyone who knows of a pipe or ditch that discharges stormwater runoff into coastal waters is also encouraged to come to the meeting.

Stormwater is rain that washes off developed land and picks up a host of pollutants, among them pesticides, herbicides, oil, grease, heavy metals and bacteria. The polluted water isn’t treated. It’s merely directed to the nearest waterbody, where it can have devastating effects. Sixty percent of the oyster and clam beds in the White Oak River, for instance, are closed to fishing after moderate rain because of bacteria contamination. Though it is now the major source of coastal water pollution, stormwater isn’t routinely tested by state and federal agencies, Tursi noted.

To determine just how much bacteria enters the water, each of the Federation’s three COASTKEEPER® will test five storm drains in their regions for at least a year. Trained volunteers will take monthly water samples, which will then be sent to state-certified labs for analysis. All the sites will be accessible from land, Tursi said, and volunteers won’t need boats or be required to get in the water.

The sample results will be used to educate people about the effects of stormwater on coastal water quality, Tursi said. Results from this ongoing program could also be used later to challenge state permits and policies, Tursi explained.

“I expect we’ll see bacteria levels at many times the state standard,” he said. “Having good, local data will be helpful in persuading the state to enact better controls on stormwater. This is a wonderful opportunity to get involved in meaningful citizen science that could have far-reaching effects on state policy.”

Sampling for bacteria doesn't require a great deal of training or specialized equipment, Tursi explained. "It will require the dedication to go out in weather that normally has you curled up on the couch with a book," he noted.

Teams consisting of two volunteers and at least one backup will be assigned to each site. So Tursi will need at least 15 people to test the five sites in his region. Volunteers will be assigned to sites closest to their homes and will undergo a half-day of training before sampling begins.

The COASTKEEPER® will dedicate a portion of their website, [www.nccoast.org](http://www.nccoast.org), to the monitoring program to make the information available to the public. They will also publish quarterly reports in the Federation's newsletter, Coastal Review, and include the sampling data in presentations to civic groups and government officials.

Reporters and editors note:

Frank Tursi is available to take reporters and photographers on the water to tour storm drains. Call to arrange a time.

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***About the North Carolina Coastal Federation:  
"Citizens Working Together for a Healthy Coast"***

*The North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is the state's only non-profit organization focused exclusively on protecting and restoring the coast of North Carolina through education, advocacy and habitat restoration and preservation. NCCF headquarters are located at 3609 Highway 24 in Ocean between Morehead City and Swansboro and are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5 pm. The NCCF also operates regional offices in Wilmington and Manteo. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out NCCF's website at [www.nccoast.org](http://www.nccoast.org)*