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# Press Release

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## **Bate Foundation Expands Coastal Federation Education Program**

**New Bern, N.C.** – Many students returning to classrooms in Craven, Pamlico and Jones counties will have a unique opportunity to learn about and improve habitat and water quality in their communities, courtesy of the Harold H. Bate Foundation in New Bern.

The Harold H. Bate Foundation has awarded the North Carolina Coastal Federation a \$50,000 grant to conduct environmental education programs in the three counties that are the focus of the Foundation's philanthropy. The Federation will work with 225 students over the coming school year to construct wetland nurseries and rain gardens on school grounds and to create oyster habitat.

“The Coastal Federation offers programs that connect students to local water quality by teaching them about habitat and ecosystems, and then helping students to actually work on projects that improve ecosystems,” explained Joyce Hendricks, Director of Operations for the Bate Foundation. “It’s a valuable lesson for students to learn that they can make a difference in their communities at any age.”

Through the Federation's Wetland Nursery Program, students will learn about wetlands in the classroom and during field trips. Students from Arapahoe Charter School and Pamlico County High School will build nurseries at the schools and raise wetland grasses. Once the grasses are mature, students will travel to a waterfront restoration site and plant the grasses, creating new habitat and improving water quality.

Jones Middle School and Jones Senior High School students will learn about native oysters and how they contribute to the health of coastal waters. Following classroom

instruction and field trips to learn about oysters and their habitats, students will participate in field activities to create new oyster habitat.

Rain gardens will be built at Arthur W. Edwards Elementary and Havelock Annunciation Catholic School. A rain garden is a shallow depression, planted with native plants, designed to slow, capture and soak up rain, thereby controlling stormwater runoff. Students, teachers and volunteers will work together to design, build and plant the rain gardens. Educational signage will highlight the project goals and encourage similar community projects.

“While rain gardens, wetland nurseries and oyster habitat projects improve the environment, they also are wonderful teaching tools, providing a “living classroom” for students,” stated Sarah Phillips, NC Coastal Federation’s Public Education and Outreach Specialist. “We’re really excited about working with new teachers and students in Craven, Jones and Pamlico counties. We’ve had so many requests from teachers to conduct programs, but until now, we simply didn’t have the funding.”

The Harold H. Bate Foundation was created by the estate of Harold H. Bate, philanthropist, investor and retired lumber executive. Mr. Bate generously supported many local charitable organizations and causes over the years, and was known as a resourceful businessman with a strong social conscience. His Foundation now supports the communities of Craven, Pamlico and Jones counties and East Carolina University.

The North Carolina Coastal Federation 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. Its headquarters and central regional office are located at 3609 Highway 24 in Ocean between Morehead City and Swansboro. The Federation also has a northeast regional office in Manteo and a southeast regional office in Wilmington. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out NCCF's website at [www.nccoast.org](http://www.nccoast.org)

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