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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Get on the Bus to Rally for Clean Water

Manteo, NC – The N.C. Coastal Federation is sponsoring a rally on the Legislative Mall in Raleigh June 4 to support new state rules to control polluted runoff that are under attack from powerful special interests.

The federation has chartered a bus that will leave at 6:30 a.m. from the rest area by the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau offices in Manteo, at the foot of the new bridge to Manns Harbor. It is scheduled to return by 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$15 for federation members and \$20 for non-members. The price includes a seafood lunch in Raleigh.

“For years we’ve been talking about what we need to do to stop new development from flooding existing communities—and ruining our coastal waters,” said Jan DeBlieu, the federation’s Cape Hatteras Coastkeeper. “The new regulations do that. Regardless of what the other side is saying, there are plenty of scientific studies to show that they’re badly needed.”

Stormwater carries bacteria, gas, oil and sediment into adjacent waters. It is now the largest pollutant of NC’s coastal creeks, rivers, and sounds.

The N.C. Environmental Management Commission (EMC) passed the rules earlier this year to replace coastal stormwater rules that state regulators acknowledged in 2005 had failed to protect water quality. More than 100,000 acres of shellfishing waters, which are among the most sensitive in the state, have been polluted with bacteria found in runoff since EMC passed the existing rules in 1987. The new rules are scheduled to take effect Aug.1 unless the N.C. General Assembly intervenes. Lobbyists for home builders, realtors, developers and other special interests have been working to get the rules killed or delayed. Rep. Bill Owens of Pasquotank County is among the cosponsors of a bill to kill the rules.

“Some of these lobbyists are among the most powerful and well-financed in the state,” DeBlieu said. “Our legislators need to hear from regular people who care about what happens to our coastal waters.”

The bus from Manteo will join other chartered buses from Wilmington and Morehead City. In Raleigh, participants will have an opportunity to speak to their legislators and eat lunch with them. Afterwards, the federation will release its annual *State of the Coast Report*, which this year focuses on stormwater, and recognize the exemplary environmental stewardship of people all over the state who have won this year's Pelican Awards.

People who don't want to ride the buses can still take part. They can gather at the federation tent on the mall behind the Legislative Building at 11 a.m. They will be briefed and will have an opportunity to speak to legislators. Those who don't ride the bus but want to eat lunch should call the federation at 252-393-8185 to reserve a lunch ticket, which costs \$5.

The federation's website, www.nccoast.org, contains more about the rally and plenty of factual information about the stormwater rules, including a Myth Buster Chart that corrects many of the inaccuracies that opponents have used to fight the rules.

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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 headquarters include NCCF's main offices, the Cape Lookout Coastkeeper office, a gift shop, Nature Library, Weber Seashell Exhibit, ShoreKeeper Learning Center, and adjoining nature trail. The NCCF also operates field offices in Wilmington and Manteo. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out NCCF's website at www.nccoast.org