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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Many partners join to restore coastal habitat at Morris Landing

Wilmington, N.C. – Thanks to the efforts of many groups, oysters, salt marsh habitat and the coastal creatures that depend on them are getting a big boost at Morris Landing in Stump Sound, starting this week.

The North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is working with partner agencies, corporations, organizations, the local community and shellfish growers and harvesters on a couple of large projects aimed at protecting and restoring the coastal habitats at the Morris Landing Clean Water Preserve on Stump Sound in Holly Ridge. NCCF purchased the 52-acre Morris Landing site through funding from the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) in 2004 to protect the high quality shellfish waters and habitats of Stump Sound. Morris Landing also serves as an environmental educational site, offers public access for fishing and small boat launching, and is an oyster shell recycling and stockpile site for the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF).

Starting Thursday July 24 and ending Saturday July 26, NCCF staff and volunteers will restore 200 feet of estuarine shoreline at Morris Landing by planting salt marsh grasses and installing oyster shell bags to control erosion. Volunteers from Wal-Mart created over 1,000 of the shell bags for this living shoreline project. NCCF volunteers and volunteers from the Wilmington-based General Electric Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GEH) facility and Progress Energy will place about 2,000 oyster shell bags and plant 2,000 saltmarsh vegetation seedlings along the eroding shoreline to help restore vital saltmarsh habitat. Funding for the restoration comes from the generous support of the Onslow Soil & Water Conservation District Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) and the N.C. Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program (EEG).

In another project, this week NCCF and DMF will begin to build a heavy-duty pier to help with oyster restoration and shell planting activities in Stump Sound and surrounding waters. Morris Landing is the only permanent shell stockpile site for DMF between the New River and Brunswick County. With the construction of the pier, DMF barges will be able to load up with recycled oyster shell from the stockpile site and recycling center, and spread the shell to create

oyster reefs and enhance habitat in area waters. This project is also funded by the EEG program.

Oysters are vital components of fish habitat and healthy water quality, and are an important commercial and recreational fishery. Oysters are capable of filtering out pollutants from our estuaries by filtering 15-35 gallons of water per day. Over 300 species of aquatic animals depend on the habitat and food provided by oyster reefs, including those important to North Carolina's commercial fisheries such as flounder, shrimp and crabs. Despite all the benefits oysters provide, oyster populations have declined over 50% since the year 1900.

Media note: Media and volunteers are invited to join NCCF at Morris Landing on July 24 and 26 to participate in the activities. The group will meet at 10 a.m. and introductions to both projects will follow. Please contact Ted Wilgis or Tracy Skrabal at NCCF's Wilmington Field Office (910) 790-3275 or tedw@nccoast.org for more details if you would like to participate in these events.

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

Celebrating 25 years of Coastal Conservation (1982-2007)

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 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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