



North Carolina Coastal Federation – Wilmington Field Office | 131 Racine Dr., Suite 101 | Wilmington, NC 28403  
Phone: 910-790-3275 | Fax: 910-790-9013 | Email: [nccf@nccoast.org](mailto:nccf@nccoast.org) | Web: <http://www.nccoast.org>

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

**Date: November 18, 2008**

**Contact:** Ted Wilgis

**Phone:** (910) 790-3275 off; (910) 213-6605 cell

**Email:** [tedw@nccoast.org](mailto:tedw@nccoast.org)

## **Partners help coastal habitat and inhabitants at Morris Landing**

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

The North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is working with partner agencies, the local community, students and shellfish growers and harvesters on several 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 provides an oyster shell recycling and stockpile site for the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF).

On Wednesday, November 19, NCCF will work with community volunteers and students from Hoggard High School to create a rain garden, plant shrubs and marsh grasses to form a “living shoreline” buffer and clean up debris along Stump Sound at Morris Landing. The students and volunteers will plant several species of grasses in a rain garden designed in connection with the new shell loading pier to collect and treat any stormwater run-off from pier. They will also plant shrubs and grasses to form a vegetative buffer around the pier and to restore the saltmarsh along the adjacent shoreline. About 2,000 plants and shrubs will be planted along 250’ of the shoreline and in the rain garden.

Earlier this summer NCCF worked with volunteers to restore 200 feet of estuarine shoreline at Morris Landing by planting salt marsh grasses and installing oyster shell bags to control erosion and create a living shoreline. Volunteers from Wal-Mart created over 1,000 of the shell bags for the project. NCCF volunteers and volunteers from the Wilmington-based General Electric Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GEH) facility, Progress Energy, UNCW, Cape Fear Community College and Coastal Carolina Community College placed about 2,000 oyster shell bags and planted 2,000 salt marsh vegetation seedlings to help restore vital habitat.

In another project at the site, NCCF and the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) recently completed construction of 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.

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 animals that are the backbone 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.

Funding for these projects comes from the Onslow Soil & Water Conservation District Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP), the N.C. Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program (EEG), and the NOAA-Restore America's Estuaries Partnership (NOAA-RAE).

**Media note:** Media and volunteers are invited to join NCCF at the Morris Landing Clean Water Preserve near Holly Ridge on Wednesday November 19 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. to participate in the restoration activities. Please contact Ted Wilgis or Tracy Skrabal at NCCF's Wilmington Field Office (910-790-3275) for details if you would like to participate in the event.

###

---

## **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](http://www.nccoast.org)*