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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Students Monitoring Shoreline and Oyster Restoration Projects at Airlie Gardens

Wilmington, N.C. – Continuing with the spirit of Earth Day, the N.C. Coastal Federation will get 80 students from Hoggard High School out into the field to monitor shoreline and oyster restoration projects in Bradley Creek and Airlie Gardens. The students will be working from 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. on Thursday, April 23, at Airlie Gardens.

This field work will be the final component for the students' participation in the federation's Student Habitat Education Program. The program engages students in the classroom and the field with activities and lessons on oyster and saltmarsh ecology. The activities are correlated with the N.C. Standard Course of Study and use North Carolina's coastal habitats as living classrooms. Over 700 students and teachers have participated in the Student Habitat Education program which is made possible by generous support from the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation. The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation awards grants to nonprofit community agencies, universities and other partners for programs that promote the sciences, health and education.

The students will be monitoring restoration projects that were implemented in 2006 as part of an initiative to create healthy oyster and saltmarsh habitat and help restore Bradley Creek. The new oyster reef and enhanced saltmarsh buffer provides water quality improvements, additional fish habitat and shoreline erosion control for Airlie Gardens.

The federation and Airlie's education programs provide opportunities for area students and community volunteers to take an active role in the stewardship of our coastal waters and habitats. From visiting classrooms with stormwater models to hiking through the salt marsh, the programs increase awareness of the beauty of our coast and the issues surrounding it. Airlie Gardens' annual oyster roasts include educational programs on the value of protecting and preserving water quality and oyster reef habitat. In addition, the shells collected are used to restore oyster reefs adjacent to the Gardens and in Myrtle Grove Sound.

Media are invited to join NCCF at Airlie Gardens in Wilmington on Thursday April 23 from 9 – 11 a.m. and 1 – 3 p.m. Please contact Ted Wilgis or Tracy Skrabal at NCCF's Wilmington Field Office (910) 790-3275 if you would like to participate in the event.

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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. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out NCCF's website at www.nccoast.org