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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Volunteers to Build Shoreline at Jockeys Ridge State Park

Manteo—Next week a coalition of students, conservationists, and volunteers will take to the water to build a “living shoreline,” a state-of-the-art erosion control structure on Roanoke Sound at Jockeys Ridge State Park.

From Monday, April 20, through Saturday, April 25, middle school students, local environmentalists, and adult volunteers will construct a shallow-water sill made of oyster shells that have been placed in net bags. At a length of 425 feet, the sill will contain almost 8,000 bags of shell, carefully placed to slow the waves that would otherwise eat away at the park’s shore.

Once the sill is in place, wetlands grasses will be planted behind it to provide fisheries habitat and further stabilize the shore.

The North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is leading the living shoreline project. Over the past year, NCCF Coastal Scientist Erin Fleckenstein has shepherded the design and permitting of the sill and marsh planting. Since September, Outreach Specialist Sara Hallas has worked with eighth grade students at First Flight Middle School, teaching classes about the importance of estuarine habitat for protecting water quality and working with them to bag the shell. Nearly 200 eighth-grade students will help with the sill’s construction.

Living shorelines provide protection from erosion by enhancing natural conditions. Unlike bulkheads, they improve shallow water habitat for important estuarine species, including fish and shellfish. “With the sill, we’ll be rebuilding the whole estuarine system,” Fleckenstein says. “It’s a way to protect the shoreline while preserving the ecologically important interaction between the uplands, the wetlands, and the estuary.”

Other project partners include The Nature Conservancy, the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, and Jockeys Ridge State Park. Funding has been made available by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Southeast Aquatic Resource Partnership.

The eighth graders will be on site Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings to begin building the sill. College student and adult volunteers will finish construction later in the week.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: NCCF needs adult volunteers to help plant marsh grasses on Saturday, April 25, the final day of construction. A work session will be held from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Please sign up or request further information by contacting Sara Hallas at sarajh@nccoast.org or 473-1607.

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The N.C. 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 at 3609 N.C. 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 or to join call 252-393-8185 or visit the federation's website at www.nccoast.org