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# Press Release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Scuppernong Community Meeting, Oct. 8, to Feature Ways to Protect River, Sound

**Columbia, N.C.** – For centuries humans have lived alongside the Scuppernong River and Albemarle Sound, using them for transportation and reaping their bounty. In recent decades, however, the waters have come under stress from land practices that pose threats to their health and cleanliness.

Local residents can learn how to keep the waters clean and healthy, as well as hearing some river lore, at a community meeting Thursday, Oct. 8, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. This free event is sponsored by Tyrrell County, the Town of Columbia and the N. C. Coastal Federation. The meeting is part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Scuppernong River Festival, which this year has the theme “Rolling on the River.” The program will be held in the Walter B. Jones Sr. Center for the Sounds auditorium at the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge headquarters on N.C. 64 in Columbia, and will kick-off the Saturday, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> street festival in downtown Columbia.

The evening will begin at 7 o'clock. with light refreshments and the presentation of the annual Scuppernong River Festival Distinguished Citizen Award. At 7:30 p.m., local historian Walter Davenport will give a brief retrospective on how local residents have used the river and sound through history.

Discussions will include strategies that growing communities can use to protect local waterways without sacrificing economic prosperity. One method involves using low-impact development (LID) techniques. LID is a way of designing residential and commercial developments so pollutants can be removed from stormwater before it enters neighboring waters. “By using LID design principles in new developments, less money can be spent on traditional infrastructure such as curb and gutters. This translates to cost savings for the overall project,” explained Erin Fleckenstein, coastal scientist for the federation.

A presentation will briefly examine the natural history of the waterways and adjoining lands. Staff from the Pocosin Lakes refuge will describe the hydrologic restoration project that is helping revive the bottomland forests of the refuge—while reducing runoff from canals and ditches.

Another way to protect and improve local waters involves the use cutting edge hydrologic restoration practices on farmland. Hydrologic restoration can also be used

successfully in agriculture, as farmers in Hyde County are finding with projects designed to reuse their farm drainage water for irrigation and to attract waterfowl. Staff from the federation will describe what's on tap in Hyde County.

In 2007, during an update of the local Land-Use plan, citizens in Columbia and Tyrrell counties rated water quality as one of the top concerns facing the area.

"Residents of low-lying Tyrrell County have the dual challenges of quickly removing storm waters while protecting the water quality of our streams, rivers and sound," according to Rhett B. White, Columbia's town manager.

"Tyrrell County has a rich tradition of commercial fishing and farming," says Jan DeBlieu, the Cape Hatteras Coastkeeper© for the federation. "It's difficult to balance economic growth with the traditional uses of the waters. But it's been done other places, and it can be done here. It just takes foresight and careful planning."

For more information on the meeting, contact Sara Hallas, outreach specialist with the federation, at 473-1607 or sarajh@nccoast.org.

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***About the North Carolina Coastal Federation:***

***"Citizens Working Together for a Healthy Coast"***

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