



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wetland Planting Set for Bradley Creek Elementary School

WILMINGTON — Volunteers will join the N.C. Coastal Federation to plant a wetland at Bradley Creek Elementary School to help protect nearby Hewletts Creek.

Volunteers on Monday, Oct. 25, will plant native plants, trees and shrubs in two newly built wetlands at the school on Greenville Loop Road in Wilmington. Staff from the New Hanover County Extension Service will be on hand along with federation staff to provide volunteers with information on native plants, rain gardens and ways to reduce stormwater pollution. Everyone is invited to attend this Community Clean Water Day. The planting will start at 1 p.m. and will end about 4 p.m.

The federation is working with the school and numerous partners to design and install four stormwater-reduction projects around the school. These projects include rain gardens and stormwater wetlands. They all are designed to capture stormwater runoff from the school and serve as outdoor classrooms for students and teachers.

The federation is leading the effort in partnership with the New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District, New Hanover County Schools, Wilmington Stormwater Services, the N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation and Coastal Carolina Resource Group Inc. The district's Community Conservation Assistance Program is providing about \$56,000 for the projects. Additional financial support is coming from the N.C. Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program. The projects are also receiving strong community support with grant awards from the Landfall Foundation and Cape Fear Garden Club.

The projects will help to slow down and soak up the rain water flowing off the 15-acre school property. The stormwater from the school's roof, driveways, playing fields and parking lot will be treated by the projects before it can reach the nearby headwaters of Hewletts Creek.

These stormwater reduction measures are excavated and prepared depressions that are planted with native trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers. Together with the mulch and soil, the vegetation will help capture and infiltrate stormwater runoff before it enters a local waterway. These measures can be effective in reducing polluted stormwater runoff and coastal flooding. Rain gardens and stormwater wetlands also can be pretty landscape features; provide natural habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife; promote sustainable design practices; and encourage environmental stewardship and community pride. They also serve as "living classrooms" by providing lessons on plants, soils and hydrology for the students and teachers.

These projects are also components of the watershed plans that the federation and Wilmington are devising to identify stormwater sources and reduce runoff in Hewletts and Bradley creeks. The N.C. Division of Water Quality and the federal Environmental Protection Agency are paying for the plans.

Editors and reporters note: Reporters planning to attend the planting are asked to contact Ted Wilgis with the N.C. Coastal Federation at tedw@nccoast.org or 910-509-2838. Check in at the school office when arriving.