



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 27, 2010

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Wetland Planting Set at Bradley Creek Elementary School

WILMINGTON — Third-grade students at Bradley Creek Elementary School will trade pencils and paper for shovels and rakes to plant two new stormwater wetlands at the school. Community volunteers and parents will join the students between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 2, to plant native grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees in the two large stormwater wetlands.

Everyone is invited to attend this Community Clean Water Day. Information on rain gardens and other measures people can take to reduce stormwater pollution will be available during the planting.

Together with New Hanover Schools, Bradley Creek is working with numerous partners to design and install four stormwater-reduction projects around the school. These projects include rain gardens, bioretention areas and stormwater wetlands. They are designed to capture stormwater runoff from the school and serve as outdoor classrooms for students and teachers.

The N.C. Coastal 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 \$48,000 for the projects. Additional financial support for the projects is coming from the N.C. Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program and the Five Star Program, which is a partnership of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the National Association of Counties and the Wildlife Habitat Council. The projects are receiving strong community support. Local people are volunteering to help the students and Jason Thompson at American Property Experts is donating \$800 of mulch.

The rain gardens, bioretention areas and stormwater wetlands 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.

The bioretention areas 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 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. Teachers, students and community members will plant and maintain the projects. The rain gardens and wetlands will 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: For more information please contact Ted Wilgis at tedw@nccoast.org or 910-509-2838 with the N.C. Coastal Federation. Reporters planning to attend the planting are asked to contact Wilgis and to check in at the school office when arriving.