



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rain Garden Planting Planned at Queens Creek Elementary

OCEAN — Students, teachers and volunteers will join the N.C. Coastal Federation on Wednesday, Dec. 15, to plant two rain gardens at Queens Creek Elementary School in Swansboro to help protect nearby Queens Creek.

They will plant native shrubs in two newly rain gardens at the school on Queens Creek Road. Staff from the federation and the Onslow County Soil and Water Conservation District will be on hand to provide the students and volunteers with information on native plants, rain gardens and ways to reduce stormwater pollution. The planting will start at 12 p.m. and will end about 1 p.m.

The federation has been working with the school and numerous partners to design and install these stormwater-reduction practices at the school. The rain gardens 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 N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Withers & Ravenel, an engineering firm in Cary, and Carolina Excavation Service. The division's Community Conservation Assistance Program is providing about \$12,000 for the project. Additional financial support is coming from the N.C. Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program.

The rain gardens will help to slow down and soak up the rain water flowing off the school's rooftops and sidewalks. The stormwater will be treated by the rain gardens before it can reach the nearby tributaries of Queens Creek.

Rain garden 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 local waterways. These measures can be effective in reducing polluted stormwater runoff and coastal flooding. Rain gardens are also pretty landscape features that 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.

. 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 preservation and restoration. Since its founding in 1982, the federation has worked with citizens to safeguard the state's coastal rivers, creeks, sounds and beaches and has protected or restored more than 50,000 acres along the state's coast. Its headquarters is in Ocean, between Morehead City and Swansboro, and it has regional offices in Wilmington and Manteo.

Editors and reporters note: Reporters planning to attend the planting are asked to contact Lexia Weaver with the N.C. Coastal Federation at lexiaw@nccoast.org or 252-393-8185. Event is weather-dependent. Check in at the school office when arriving.