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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hyde Farmers, Conservationists Work to Restore Land

ENGLEHARD--Farmers in Hyde County, working with the N. C. Coastal Federation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have completed the first phase of a restoration project that reduces stormwater runoff, creates habitat for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl and helps with farming operations.

The partners completed a pilot project that restores the hydrology on 600 acres in the Mattamuskeet Ventures farm in northeastern Hyde County. They built dikes and several other types of structures to divert agricultural runoff to designated blocks of land on the farm. The water had been leaving the farm through canals and had flowed directly into Pamlico Sound and connecting creeks and rivers. A grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service paid for the work.

Beginning in the spring, a carefully controlled amount of water will be held on the land, creating vital habitat for migrating shorebirds and improving local water quality by removing runoff from the canals. In the summer, the farmers could use the excess water for irrigation. In the winter, the flooded blocks will attract waterfowl, which could provide a potential source of income from hunting leases.

The project is one of the first collaborations between local farmers and conservationists in the region, but it won't be the last.

"We all have a love and deep respect for the land and waters that make coastal North Carolina such a treasure. We see many opportunities for future partnerships," says Erin Fleckenstein, a coastal scientist with the federation.

During the past four years, the federation has worked with Hyde farmers and other partners to devise a hydrologic restoration plan that encompasses more than 42,500 acres of farmland. The plan provides opportunities to hold rainwater on the land, rather than shunting it through canals to the sound, creeks and rivers. By holding stormwater, sediment and pollutants can settle out. The excess water also recharges the local water table.

“We’re pleased to be part of this large-scale effort to restore habitat and hydrology in the county,” says Jamin Simmons, president of Mattamuskeet Management and Consulting, manager of Mattamuskeet Ventures and one of the landowners participating in the hydrologic restoration plan. “The project moved along quickly and it provides multiple benefits to both the environment and the farm.”

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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. The federation’s Northeast Regional Office is at 128 Grenville St., Manteo 27954. The office’s mailing address is P.O. Box 475, Manteo 27954. We have another regional office in Wilmington. Our main office is in Ocean in Carteret County. For more information, call 252-473-1607 or check out our website at www.nccoast.org