



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Help Restore Oyster, Salt Marsh Habitats on Permuda Island

WILMINGTON – Volunteers will create and restore valuable oyster-reef and salt-marsh habitats on the Permuda Island Coastal Reserve in Stump Sound on Tuesday, July 12, starting at 11 a.m.

The N.C Coastal Federation and the state's Coastal Reserve Program are sponsoring the work as part of project to clean up debris from a former causeway on Permuda Island. The goals of the project are to remove the remnants of an old bridge and causeway and to protect and restore the estuarine habitats and water quality of the island and Stump Sound.

The N.C. Division of Water Resources is paying for the project.

Volunteers will place about 1,000 bags of recycled oyster shells around the edge of an old causeway and plant over 2,500 marsh-plant seedlings along the shoreline. The shell bags will attract oyster larvae that will attach to the empty shells and start an oyster reef. Once planted the salt marsh seedlings will help stabilize the shoreline and restore marsh habitat in the project area.

Permuda Island is part of the N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve System, a network of 10 protected sites established for long-term research, education and stewardship. The 83-acre Permuda reserve is near Surf City and includes the 50-acre island. The reserve is important for its archaeological remains and for the protection it gives the surrounding shellfish waters of Stump Sound. Because of the commercial importance of these waters, local shellfish growers and harvesters worked with the federation in the 1980s to protect Permuda Island. Through these efforts, the N.C. Nature Conservancy bought the island in 1987 and transferred it to the state to be added to Coastal Reserve Program.

Permuda Island was once attached to nearby Topsail Island by a private causeway and bridge. Over the years the causeway eroded and the bridge disintegrated, leaving debris on Permuda and pilings in the channel. The bridge remnants are a navigation hazard, and the causeway debris is preventing the natural re-establishment of salt marsh along the shoreline. A marine contractor is removing the bridge remnants, pulling pilings from the water and removing chunks of asphalt that line the former causeway.

The restored oyster reef and saltmarsh will become valuable habitat for important species of commercial and recreational fish and shellfish. The habitats will also buffer the shoreline from waves and boat wakes and help to improve water quality by filtering sediment from the water.

Volunteers are invited to join us for the work day. Please contact Ted Wilgis at the federation's Southeast Region Office at 910-509-2838 or tedw@nccoast.org to register and receive more information. On the day of the event, please contact Ted at 910-231-6605.

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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 headquarters are at 3609 N.C 24 in Ocean between Morehead City and Swansboro and are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The federation also operates offices in Wilmington and Manteo. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out its website at www.nccoast.org.