



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Bradley Creek Elementary School Working to Protect and Restore Hewlett's Creek**

WILMINGTON — A two-year project at Bradley Creek Elementary School designed to help protect the water quality of Hewlett's Creek is nearing completion with the help of students and volunteers.

Third-grade students at Bradley Creek Elementary School will head outside on Wednesday, April 13, to help plant a new rain garden at the school. Wal-Mart volunteers, community members and parents will join the students between 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. to plant native grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees in the large rain garden, also known as a bioretention area.

Then on Saturday April 16, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., community members and volunteers from Work On Wilmington ([www.workonwilmington.org](http://www.workonwilmington.org)) will install the remaining plants, lay six pallets of sod and spread over 100 cubic yards of mulch in the 7,812 square-foot bioretention area. The volunteers will also work on four additional existing rain gardens and stormwater wetlands that were installed at the school in 2010 as part of this water quality and education project. The public and media are invited to attend both events.

Bradley Creek Elementary School has been working with numerous partners on this long-term project 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 initiative together with New Hanover County Schools, New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District, Wilmington's Stormwater Services, and the N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation. The district's Community Conservation Assistance Program is providing about \$59,000 for the projects. The projects are also receiving strong community and financial support from Wal-Mart, the Wachovia-Wells Fargo Foundation, the Landfall Foundation, the Cape Fear Garden Club and Work On Wilmington and its sponsors. 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 project contractor is Larry Sneed of Coastal Stormwater Services, Inc.

The rain gardens, bioretention areas and stormwater wetlands will help to slow down and soak up the rainwater flowing off the 19-acre school property. These stormwater reduction measures will be able to capture and

treat almost 100,000 gallons of stormwater when it rains. 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, rain gardens and wetlands 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 the City of Wilmington are devising to identify stormwater sources and reduce runoff in Hewlett's 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 of the N.C. Coastal Federation at [tedw@nccoast.org](mailto:tedw@nccoast.org) or at 910-231-6605. Reporters planning to attend the planting are asked to contact Wilgis and to check in at the school office when arriving.**

