



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Come Give Thousands of Marsh Grasses a Home

OCEAN – Fifteen thousand plugs of salt marsh grass will travel from a nursery in Clinton to the coast, where they will be ferried over to Jones Island in the White Oak River where students and volunteers will plant them along an eroding shoreline on Saturday, May 7, and Friday, May 13.

The plantings will begin at 8 a.m. on May 7 and at 10 a.m. on May 13 and will last until early afternoon.

Salt marshes that surround our coastal sounds and rivers are very important. They provide vital habitat for our favorite seafood, including shrimp, blue crab and flounder. The grasses improve water quality by filtering pollutants out of the water and reduce erosion by slowing down waves during storms. Without them, our coast would be in bad shape.

Many of the volunteers live near the White Oak River. Others come from the nearby Camp LeJeune and from Pamlico County High School. They also live close to creeks and rivers that empty into a sound or into the ocean. By giving these marsh grasses a home at Jones Island, the volunteers will help their coastal environment in their backyards.

The federation acquired much of the uninhabited island in 2005 and donated it to Hammocks Beach State Park in Swansboro. The park and the non-profit group are offering educational programming for elementary school students at their Jones Island Environmental Education and Restoration facility this summer. Volunteers will also be working on Jones Island throughout the spring and summer to help complete other shoreline and oyster restoration projects.

The federation and Hammocks Beach State Park are leading the May 7 and May 13 plantings, which are supported by grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Restore America's Estuaries, Fish America Foundation and the Estuary Restoration Act.

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Lexia Weaver at 252-393-8185 or at lexiaw@nccoast.org to sign up and for more information.

Volunteers will meet at the Hammocks Beach State Park maintenance area and then take a short boat ride over to Jones Island for the planting. Water, snacks, sunscreen, bug spray and planting tools will be provided. Restroom facilities are available on the island. Volunteers should wear closed-toe

shoes and clothing that may get wet and dirty. All ages are invited, though children under 12 will need to be accompanied by an adult.

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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.