



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students, Volunteers Bag Oyster Shells at Morris Landing

WILMINGTON – Students from John T. Hoggard High School in Wilmington and volunteers will bag oyster shells on Thursday, May 19, as part of a project to build an oyster reef and restore a salt marsh.

The N.C. Coastal Federation is sponsoring the event from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Morris Landing Clean Water Preserve on Stump Sound in Holly Ridge in Onslow County.

The effort by the students and volunteers is part of a project to protect and restore an eroding shoreline at the preserve. Volunteers will fill mesh bags with recycled oyster shells and marine limestone. The filled bags will be used this summer to create an oyster reef that will help to restore habitat and control erosion. Native plant seedlings will be planted behind the oyster reef to restore the salt marsh.

The oyster reef and marsh will become valuable habitat for important species of commercial and recreational fish and shellfish. The reef also will improve water quality by filtering sediment from the water.

The Fish America Foundation, the American Sportfishing Association and the NOAA Restoration Center supplied money for the project.

The volunteer project is a component of the federation's Oysters in the Classroom Program, which focuses on the importance of oysters to our estuaries and coast. The program incorporates classroom lessons on estuarine ecology and environmental stewardship, an oyster dissection and a work on an oyster habitat restoration project.

The Oysters in the Classroom Program is one component of the federation's Southeast Region Student Habitat Education Program. This initiative engages students in the classroom and in the field with activities and lessons on estuarine ecology and environmental stewardship. The program's activities are correlated with the N.C. Standard Course of Study and use North Carolina's coastal habitats as living classrooms. Since 2008 over 2,700 students and teachers from Brunswick, New Hanover, Pender and Onslow counties have participated in the program, which is made possible by grants from the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation. The foundation awards grants to

nonprofit community agencies, universities and other partners for programs that promote the sciences, health and education.

Media and volunteers are invited to join us at Morris Landing. 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.

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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.