



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 10, 2011

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Volunteers Needed to Build Reefs, Plant Marsh in Stump Sound

WILMINGTON – The N.C. Coastal Federation needs help to build three oyster reefs and to restore salt marsh along the shoreline of Stump Sound in Onslow County.

Volunteers will work on Thursday, Nov. 17, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Saturday, Nov. 19, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the federation's Morris Landing Preserve near Holly Ridge in Onslow County.

Volunteers on Thursday will start the reef construction by carrying about 4,000 bags of oyster shells and marl from a stockpile to the shoreline where they will be stacked in shallow water to form the new reefs. Contractors will place concrete domes in the water to make up the third reef. Volunteers may have to help move a few domes by hand along the shoreline. They may also fill more bags with marl.

Then on Saturday, the federation and WHQR Public Radio will partner to complete the reef and to create new salt marsh along the shoreline. WHQR helped raise money for the project during its summer pledge drive. Volunteers, members and staff from WHQR will join with employees from the GE Hitachi plant in Wilmington, students from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington and other volunteers.

They will haul the remainder of the 4,000 bags down to the shoreline to complete the two new oyster reefs. They'll also plant about 2,800 seedlings of a native wetland grass, *Spartina alterniflora*, or salt marsh cordgrass. The volunteers will help to create and restore about a quarter-acre of valuable oyster reef and salt marsh habitat.

The oyster reef and marsh will work together to protect the shoreline from erosion, and they will become valuable habitat for important species of commercial and recreational fish and shellfish. The reef and marsh also will help improve water quality by filtering sediment from the water. Coastal North Carolina has lost about half of its wetlands. Through this project, combined with other state and federal efforts, meaningful progress is being made to restore these essential habitats.

The Fish America Foundation, the American Sportfishing Association and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Restoration Center supplied money for the project. The Onslow County Soil and Water Conservation District's Community Conservation Assistance Program is also providing funding and support. The N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation administers the program is receiving money from the N.C. Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program for the Stump Sound project.

To preregister or to get more information, contact Ted Wilgis at the federation's Southeast Region Office at 910-509-2838 or tedw@nccoast.org to receive more information. In case of bad weather the event may be postponed.

You can find more information about the project and the federation's web site, www.nccoast.org.