



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2012

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Volunteers Work to Restore Hewlett's Creek

WILMINGTON — Volunteers will be pulling weeds, hauling mulch and installing native plants in a series of rain gardens at Bradley Creek Elementary School as part of Work On Wilmington on April 21.

The event is one of many projects that adopted by Work On Wilmington, which was started by the 2006 Class of Leadership Wilmington, a civic leadership development program of the Greater Wilmington Chamber Foundation.

Volunteer will help to maintain the rain gardens that were built at the school over the past two years. The work begins at 8 a.m.

The N.C. Coastal Federation worked with Bradley Creek Elementary School and numerous partners to design and install a series of 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 rain gardens, bioretention areas and stormwater wetlands are helping to slow down and soak up the rainwater flowing off the 19-acre school property. These stormwater reduction measures are capturing and treating over 110,000 gallons of stormwater when it rains. The stormwater from the school's roof, driveways, playing fields and parking lot is 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.

The federation led 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 projects received strong community and financial support from Wal-Mart, the Wachovia-Wells Fargo Foundation, the Landfall Foundation, the Cape Fear Garden Club, Work On Wilmington and donations from Home Depot and Seaside Mulch. Additional financial support for the projects came from the N.C. Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program and the Five Star Program.