



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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G.E. Volunteers Bagging Shells for Oyster Habitat Restoration

WILMINGTON – Volunteers from the General Electric Hitachi Nuclear Energy plant in Wilmington will spend Saturday, June 16, helping create oyster habitat around Oak Island.

Company volunteers will join staff from the N.C. Coastal Federation and Oak Island to fill mesh bags with oyster shells and limestone marl at Waterway Park on Oak Island from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The bagged shells and marl will be placed in the water later this summer to build an oyster reef at the park.

Sponsored by the federation and Oak Island, the restoration project will ultimately lead to the creation of an oyster reef and restored salt marsh along the shoreline of the park. The reef and marsh will work as a living shoreline to slow down erosion while providing important habitat and water quality benefits. The town is helping with the project to promote the benefits of living shorelines, which use more natural methods of erosion control than wooden or concrete bulkheads and stone rip-rap.

To date almost 3,000 of the 5,000 shell bags needed for the project have been made. Over 100 students from Hoggard and Ashley high schools in Wilmington and Wingate University teamed with volunteers, town staff and elected officials to use 500 bushels of oyster shells and 24 tons of marine limestone marl to fill the bags.

Funding for the project comes from the federal Estuary Restoration Act, a 2000 laws that makes restoring estuaries a national priority. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District is the federal sponsor for the project.

Volunteers can register for the event at www.nccoast.org. For more information contact Ted Wilgis the federation's coastal education coordinator at 910-509-2838 or tedw@nccoast.org, or John Michaux, Oak Island's Public Works manager, at 910-201-8008 or jmichaux@ci.oak-island.nc.us.
