



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 27, 2012**

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### **Volunteer Event to Kick Off Oak Island Living Shoreline Project**

**Wilmington** – Volunteers will kick off a project to restore marshes on Oak Island by bagging oyster shells on Saturday, March 3, at Waterway Park. The bagged shells will eventually be used to build an oyster reef at the park.

The bagging will start at 10 a.m. at the park, which is at the end of Northeast 14<sup>th</sup> street on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Sponsored by N.C. Coastal 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.

Volunteers will fill mesh bags with oyster shells and limestone marl that will be used later this summer to create the new oyster reef. The town will supply a Bob-Cat to do the hard work, but many hands will be needed to cut, seal, lift and stack the bags. There will be a variety of activities to accommodate everyone's physical abilities.

Later this summer the bags will be placed along the shoreline to form a low-profile reef. Baby oysters will attach to the shells and eventually turn the bags into a living reef. Salt marsh plants will be planted behind the oyster reef to restore the marsh. The town will be cleaning up debris from the shoreline to help with the project.

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

Funding for the project comes from the Estuary Restoration Act which was passed into law in 2000 to establish an Estuary Habitat Restoration Strategy and make restoring estuaries a national priority. The Army Corps of Engineers' Wilmington District is the federal sponsor for the project.

This event is suitable for all ages. Pre-registration is requested and can be done by visiting [www.nccoast.org](http://www.nccoast.org). For more information contact Ted Wilgis the federation's coastal education

coordinator at 910-509-2838 or [tedw@nccoast.org](mailto:tedw@nccoast.org) or John Michaux, Oak Island's Public Works manager, at 910-201-8008 or [jmichaux@ci.oak-island.nc.us](mailto:jmichaux@ci.oak-island.nc.us).