



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students, Volunteers Will Bag Oyster Shells for Stump Sound Project

WILMINGTON – Students from [Eugene Ashley High School](#) in New Hanover County will join other volunteers to fill bags with oyster shell for a shoreline restoration project along Stump Sound on Friday, Nov. 30.

The N.C. Coastal Federation is recruiting volunteers to help the students make a total of 1,000 shell bags. Students and other volunteers have already made almost 2,500 of the 4,000 bags needed for the project to create an oyster reef and restore salt marsh.

The volunteers will work from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday at the [Morris Landing Preserve](#) in Holly Ridge in Onslow County. Volunteers can join the federation and students for a morning or afternoon shift of bagging oyster shells.

The project will ultimately lead to the creation of an oyster reef and restored salt marsh along the Stump Sound shoreline of Morris Landing. The reef and salt marsh will work as a living shoreline to slow down erosion while providing important habitat and water quality benefits.

The students and volunteers will fill mesh bags with oyster shells and limestone marl that will be used to create the new oyster reef. The federation 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.

This field work is the final component for the students' participation in the federation's [Student Habitat Education Program](#). The program engages students in the classroom and in the field with activities and habitat restoration projects. Over 5,000 students and teachers have participated in the program since its start in 2008. A grant from the [N.C. GlaxoSmithKline Foundation](#) funds the program. The foundation awards grants to nonprofit community agencies, universities and other partners for programs that promote the sciences, health and education.

The shell and marl bags will be placed in the water along the shoreline next summer 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 installed behind the oyster reef to restore the marsh habitat. 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 [Restore America's Estuaries](#), [the NOAA Restoration Center](#) and through the federal Estuary Restoration Act. The law was passed 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. For more information contact Ted Wilgis, the federation's coastal education coordinator, at 910-509-2838 or tedw@nccoast.org.

About the North Carolina Coastal Federation: 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 preservation and restoration. Since its founding in 1982, the federation has worked with citizens to safeguard the state's coastal rivers, creeks, sounds and beaches and has protected or restored more than 50,000 acres along the state's coast. Its headquarters is in Ocean in Carteret County, between Morehead City and Swansboro, and it has

regional offices in Wrightsville Beach and Manteo. For more information about the Coastal Federation visit www.nccoast.org.