



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2012

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Volunteers Evaluate Restoration Projects at Morris Landing

WILMINGTON – Volunteers will work as scientists-in-training to evaluate a series of shoreline oyster reef and salt marsh restoration projects Friday at the N.C. Coastal Federation's Morris Landing Clean Water Preserve near Holly Ridge in Onslow County.

The Coastal Federation purchased the 52-acre Morris Landing site in 2004 through funding from the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund to protect the high quality shellfish waters and habitats of Stump Sound. The almost \$1 million grant enabled coastal habitats, including salt marsh and maritime forest, on the site to be protected. The area around the site is seeing increasing growth and stormwater discharges from development around it. This clean water preserve serves as a vital buffer for the outstanding resource waters of Stump Sound.

The federation has worked with numerous partners to implement a series of oyster reef and salt marsh habitat restoration projects at Morris Landing. The volunteers will work alongside federation staff and scientists to count and measure oysters and reef dwelling organisms that have colonized the created reefs. They will also measure the growth and vegetative coverage of the restored salt marsh habitat.

The monitoring is used to evaluate the restoration projects' progress towards becoming fully functioning habitats, to determine if the projects need any maintenance, to provide guidance for future projects, and to engage volunteers. The data collected by the staff and volunteers is evaluated and summarized, and then it is reported to the regulatory agencies that permit the projects and agencies that provided the project funding.

The volunteers will be monitoring a series of habitat restoration projects that have been installed since 2005 as part of an initiative to create healthy oyster and saltmarsh habitat along the shoreline of Stump Sound.

The oyster reef and marsh provide valuable habitat for important species of commercial and recreational fish and shellfish. The habitats also help with water quality improvements and shoreline erosion control.

The Fish America Foundation, the American Sportfishing Association, NOAA Restoration Center, Restore America's Estuaries, NC Community Conservation Assistance Program and the NC Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program provided funding for the projects.

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. On the day of the event, please contact Ted at 910-231-6605.

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About the North Carolina Coastal Federation, "Citizens Working Together for a Healthy Coast"

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 restoration and preservation. The federation's headquarters are at 3609 N.C 24 in Ocean between Morehead City and Swansboro and are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The federation also operates offices in Wilmington and Manteo. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out its website at www.nccoast.org.