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New Hanover School Wins Pelican Award

Wrightsville Beach – Thanks to the leadership and dedication of Bradley Creek Elementary School and New Hanover County Schools, there is much less polluted stormwater runoff flowing into Hewletts Creek.

For those efforts, the school and county school system won a 2010 Pelican Award from the N.C. Coastal Federation as the Education and Restoration Partners of the Year in the Southeast Region.

The award was one of 15 Pelican Awards the federation gave to individuals, groups and agencies across North Carolina. The annual awards recognize exemplary action to protect and preserve the coastal environment. The winners were recognized today at a ceremony at the federation's headquarters in Ocean in Carteret County.

During the past two years, the federation and the New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District have partnered with the school and the school system to install seven stormwater reduction projects on school grounds. Volunteers, teachers and students built rain gardens and stormwater wetlands and planted hundreds of native plants. The 19-acre school property is adjacent to a tributary of Hewletts Creek, and the projects will capture and treat an estimated 100,000 gallons of stormwater runoff before it can enter the creek.

Over the past two years, the entire third grade has participated in classroom and field activities centered on the projects, which are meant to increase students' understanding of their connection to their local creeks. The school yard has become a true living classroom.

Two other Pelican Awards winners were recognized in the Southeast Region, which includes Brunswick, New Hanover, Pender and parts of Onslow counties:

Business of the Year Award, Coastal Stormwater Services Inc.: Larry Sneed of Coastal Stormwater Services Inc. has helped design a great variety public and private civil engineering projects in southeastern North Carolina. Larry has worked with communities on the Lockwoods Folly River and schools in the Hewletts Creek watershed on a series of innovative measures to reduce stormwater and protect productive and sensitive coastal rivers and creeks. Larry and his crew go above and beyond normal contracting duties to make sure the projects are built to the highest standards and perform as designed. Working with multiple private and public partners, a variety of funding sources, community residents, volunteers and schools, Larry has displayed an amazing amount of dedication, patience, skill, expertise and generosity. He and his company provide an excellent example of a business as a coastal steward.

Volunteer of the Year Award, Ian Oeschger: As the volunteer webmaster for the Stop Titan efforts, Oeschger researched, built, edited, uploaded and maintained over 140 pages on the website, donating hundreds of hours to the cause. He also helped design the Stop Titan logo, now seen on thousands of bumper stickers and yard signs throughout the community. Oeschger's contributions provided invaluable tools for information exchange, branding and messaging. "I am proud that StopTitan.org continuously framed the Titan issue as bad news for our community, while keeping the information empirical, data-driven and not too crunchy," says Oeschger.

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