News from around Sarasota Bay. View this email in your browser



BAY REFLECTIONS

News from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Summer 2017

U.S. EPA Scientists Visit Sarasota Bay



U.S. EPA scientists setting up equipment for measuring dissolved oxygen in South Creek.

During the week of July 10th, a team of scientists from the EPA Region 4 Science and Ecosystem Support Division in Athens, Georgia came to Sarasota to assist with the SBEP's continued study of tidal creek water quality. Southwest Florida's tidal creeks are unique water bodies that often support lots of wildlife despite having poor water quality measurements, including low dissolved oxygen and high nutrient levels. This work will help the SBEP better understand nutrient flux from creek sediments and continuous dissolved oxygen dynamics in creek bottom waters. A clear picture of these two important aspects of tidal creek water quality will help inform our understanding of the habitat value of southwest Florida's tidal creeks.

Read more about the study on our website >



EPA Region 4 Project Officer Felicia Burks (left) and SBEP Executive Director Mark Alderson (right).

Each year, the SBEP looks forward to a visit from our Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 Project Officer, Felicia Burks. On her visits, the program benefits from her helpful guidance while getting the chance to show off some of our favorite restoration projects. This year, Staff Scientist Dr. Jay Leverone brought us to see a newly-constructed oyster reef near Bayshore Gardens in northern Sarasota Bay.

SBEP Bay Partners Grants Support Bay-Friendly Projects



A 2015 SBEP Bay Partners Grant supported the installation of the Sarasota Audubon Society bioswale at the Celery Fields.

The mission of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Bay Partners Grants program is to promote environmental education, awareness, community involvement, and stewardship and to improve the overall quality of Sarasota Bay, its tributaries, and its watershed. Nine local projects were completed between 2016-2017 with the help of a Bay Partners Grant. These diverse projects brought Bay-related education and volunteer opportunities to 248 students, teachers, and volunteers.

The SBEP has awarded over **$306,000** to **77** Sarasota-Manatee organizations through Bay Partners Grants since 2003.

The interactive Bay Partners Grants Map on the SBEP website is a fun way to browse local projects that have received Bay Partners Grants. Each point on the map contains a

project description and a link to the awardee's website. Check it out - there's probably one in your neighborhood!



Visit the Bay Partners Grants Projects Map >

Bay Partners Grants applications are reviewed once per year.

The annual application deadline is **March 1**.

Phillippi Creek: Are You In?



Have you seen this snook? It's the new ambassador for Phillippi Creek, the largest tidal creek in the SBEP's study area. The creek is an important economic and ecological asset to the Sarasota community that provides habitat for plants and wildlife and opportunities for recreational activities. Nutrient pollution enters the creek through runoff from yards and parking lots, eventually reaching Roberts Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida is kicking off a new initiative to empower people who live and work in the Phillippi Creek watershed to learn more about the creek. Do you live in the Phillippi Creek watershed? It's bigger than you might think, extending as far north as

University Parkway and as far as 4 miles east of I-75. Click on the button below to plug your address into the online map on phillippicreek.org and find out. If you're a watershed resident, it's easy to get involved with creek restoration – just sign up for emails about opportunities to volunteer and learn more.

Find out if I live in the Phillippi Creek watershed >

SBEP's Bay Wise Kayak Tours Receive Eco-tourism Award

The SBEP's Bay Wise Kayak Eco-Tours program was certified Gold by the Florida Society for Ethical Ecotourism (FLSEE) in May. The goal of the Florida SEE Certification Program is to certify responsible ecotour providers that contribute to the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of Florida. Many thanks to Bay Wise Guide Brad Tanner for leading the program through the certification process – and for guiding tours that educate and inform as well as entertain. Bay Wise Kayak Tours will resume in December.



Brad Tanner leads a Bay Wise Kayak Tour in 2016.

SBEP Project Creates New Oyster Reef in Sarasota Bay



This spring, SBEP staff scientist Dr. Jay Leverone collaborated with the State of Florida Marine/Estuarine Habitat Restoration and Restoration Monitoring and Assessment (MEHRMA) program to create 1.2 acres of oyster habitat along the eastern shore of Sarasota Bay near Bayshore Gardens.



Hardworking volunteers helped us bag fossilized shells in biodegradable twine. Over 100 bags were arranged in four 30-foot-wide circles on the bottom of the Bay. The circles were filled with loose shell. They might not look like much now, but barnacles and oyster spat are beginning to colonize the loose shells. Soon, the reefs will be teeming with fish.

Learn more about oyster restoration on our website >

SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee News

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Citizens Advisory Committee is a group of local citizens dedicated to making Sarasota Bay better. The group provides input to SBEP staff on Bay-related projects, issues, and opportunities. The committee meets on the first Monday of every other month from 4:30-6:30 pm in the McClure Auditorium at the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport. All meetings are open to the public.

See a schedule of upcoming SBEP CAC meetings >

SBEP's Citizens Advisory Committee welcomed two new members in June. Both are avid outdoorswomen with a passion for estuaries.



Nicole Iadevaia is an Environmental Specialist with Sarasota County working in water quality and outreach. Previously, she served as a fisheries biologist and outreach coordinator with the Florida Wildlife Research Institute. Nicole originally hails from Colorado where she studied Evolutionary Biology & Ecology and Biological Anthropology at CU-Boulder. She is a co-founder of Student Outreach and Retention Center for Equity, a student-run center aimed at high school students from under-represented communities. It provides resources for tutoring, college admissions, and scholarships. This led to work in grass-roots organizing with the U.S. Student Association to expand higher education access and funding. Nicole spends her free time paddling, hiking, and chasing her wanderlust whenever possible.



Briana Dobbs is a Senior Planning Technician at the Urban Design Studio with the City of Sarasota. She moved to Florida in 2013 after graduating from the University of Virginia with a degree in Architecture and minor in Urban and Environmental Planning. Briana finished her Master's in Sustainable Design from the University of Florida in 2016. Her thesis work focused on investigating alternatives to seawalls throughout the coasts of Sarasota County and calculating the suitability of living shoreline and hybrid solutions. Briana also holds her LEED Green Associate where she enjoys finding the balance between the natural and built environment. In her free time, you can find Briana kayaking, paddle boarding and practicing yoga on the beach.

King Tides Photo Contest Winners

On May 26th and 27th, SBEP hosted a King Tides Photo Contest to capture images of how extreme high tides can depict how infrastructure and natural landscapes could be affected by higher seas in the future. Brant McCarville's photos of the Siesta Key Marina and Karen McLeod's photos of a stormwater pipe on Anna Maria Island were selected as the contest winners because of their clear depiction of high waters in places we might not expect to see them. Brant and Karen's photos will be featured in an upcoming King Tides exhibit in

partnership with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. Thank you to all who submitted! Please continue to send us photos of high water events for our library. Knowing about these flooding "hot spots" helps us anticipate them.

Brant McCarville - Siesta Key Marina





Karen McLeod - Anna Maria Island





Learn more about SBEP's climate change work >

USFWS Grant to SBEP funds habitat restoration at North Lido Beach



A grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funded the SBEP's removal of one acre of invasive exotic vegetation including 25 Australian Pines from the North Lido Beach restoration area this spring. Australian Pines crowd out native vegetation with their large, shady canopies and their strange ability to exude chemicals that inhibit the growth of nearby plants (technically known as *allelopathy*). What's more, their root systems are shallow and weak, meaning that they fall over easily and contribute to erosion problems. The photo above shows an Australian Pine that has been topped using a cherry picker. Contractors later returned to remove the remainder of the trunk and the stump. The North Lido Beach project is a good example of how restoration projects do not happen all at once. The bulk of the work to restore this area was completed in 2009, but the SBEP continues to seek funding to maintain and enhance native vegetation at the site.

Water Reading from Around the Web

From Florida Atlantic University: Simple Tactic Results in Dramatic Water Conservation



Photo credit: Florida Atlantic University

Even here in rainy Florida, water conservation is essential. The Sarasota-Manatee metropolitan area is part of the Southern Water Use Caution Area, which was designated in 1992 to address declines in aquifer levels due primarily to groundwater withdrawals. Landscape irrigation accounts for a large portion of home water use. A 2015 study found that 64% of the drinking water used in Central Florida homes goes toward irrigation (Science Daily). Researchers at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) conducted a study to determine if providing homeowners with more information about weather patterns and turf irrigation needs might reduce lawn watering more than information about restrictions alone. The researchers installed simple road signs stating how many inches of water the neighborhood had received over the past 7 days along with information about how little water South Florida lawns really need (1" per week). According to FAU, "Results of their research show the greatest impact during the rainier summer weeks with an astounding 61 percent decrease in lawn watering in the experimental households as compared to the control group."

How do you decide when and how much to water your lawn?

Mark Your Calendars for SBEP Partner Events

Build Habitat in Phillippi Creek



August 12, 2017
9 AM to noon
South Gate Community Center
3145 Southgate Circle, Sarasota



Tidal creeks nurture juvenile fish and provide refuge for your favorite wildlife. Two communities on the banks of Phillippi Creek have come together to improve fish and wildlife right in their neighborhoods. Greater than 10 acres of floodplain and approximately 3,000 feet of natural shoreline is preserved by Orchid Oaks and South Gate.

Jump at this rare opportunity to restore shorelines in our fertile tidal creeks.







Join Orchid Oaks Condominiums, South Gate Community Association, Sarasota County Neighborhood Services, Sarasota Bay Estuary Program, Sarasota Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team, the IFAS Florida Water Stewardship Program in a project led by a professional restoration scientist Ronnie Van Fleet of VHB.

Volunteers will install native habitat plants, cut invasive plants and vines, remove air potatoes and clean up trash. Bring your favorite shovels, loppers, spades, rakes and similar equipment but no power tools please. **Refreshments will be provided.**

Click here to volunteer for Phillippi Creek on August 12 >

SARASOTA BAY FISHERIES FORUM

Proactively addressing fisheries management issues in the Sarasota Bay area with the intent to affect change



August 3rd, 2017, Thursday, 6 – 8 p.m.

Mote Marine Laboratory
WAVE Center*

1600 Ken Thompson Parkway
Sarasota, FL 34236

* Click Here to Expand Flyer and see directions to WAVE Center

Sarasota anglers: Your knowledge can help our fisheries thrive.

Join local stakeholders and researchers for the 15th meeting of the Sarasota Bay Fisheries Forum, an independent, community discussion to help inform fisheries management and science

Meeting Goals: Join fisheries stakeholders from the Sarasota Bay Region to discuss the importance of habitat quality to Florida's Fisheries. Speaker: Dave Blewett

Click 'Sign Up' button below to RSVP
(the 'Sign Up' button on our forum website header)

**WAVE Center: Park in Mote's Aquarium Parking lot and enter through the WAVE Center entrance on the left side (South side) of Mote Marine Laboratory.*

FREE ADMISSION • https://www.facebook.com/SarasotaBayForum

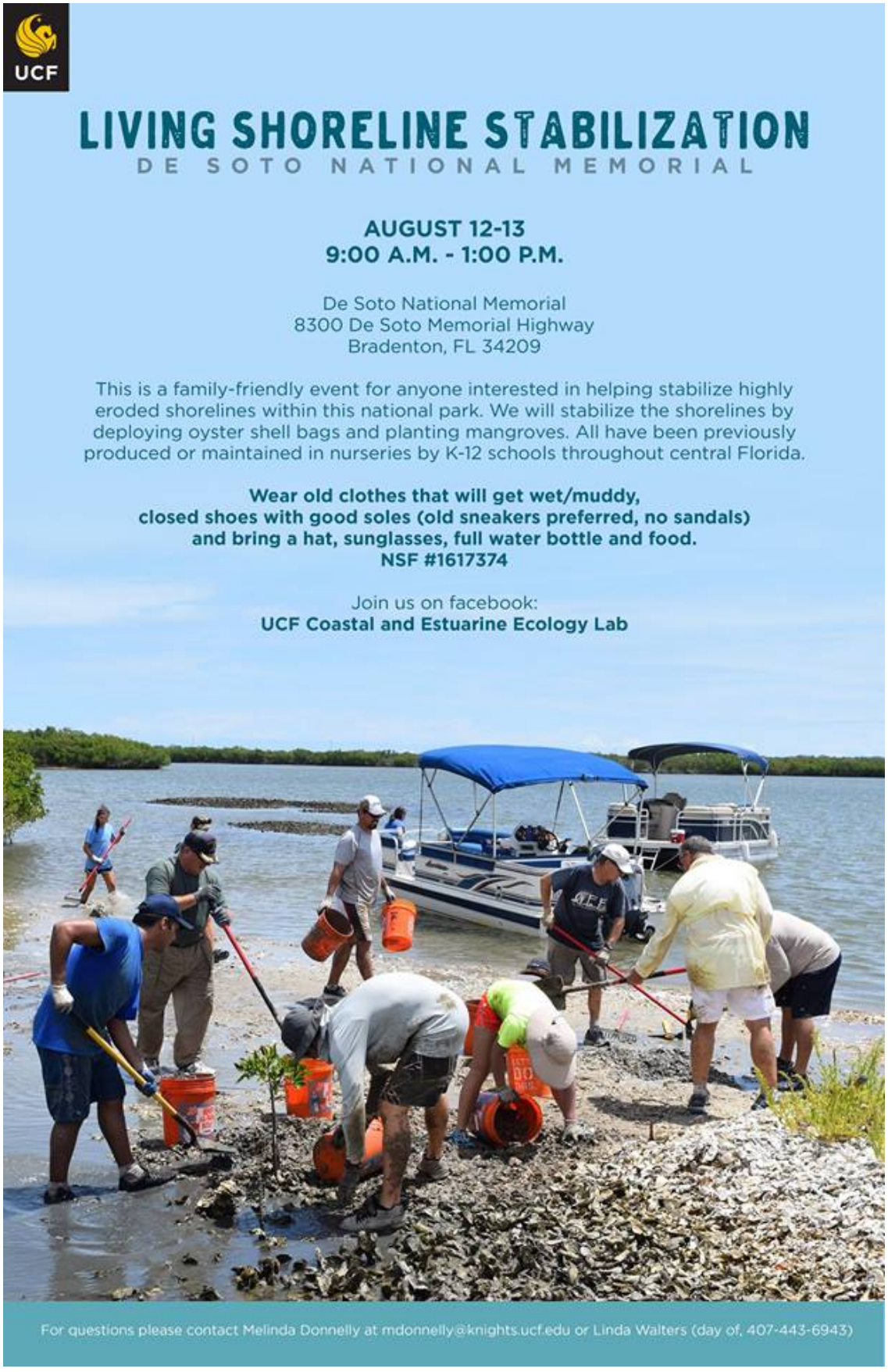
Forum Partners:

UF | UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Celebrating 50 Years Mote Marine Laboratory of Marine Science

Sea Grant Florida

Sign up to RSVP for the Fisheries Forum now >



Learn more on the UCF Coastal and Estuarine Ecology Lab's Facebook Page >



Air Potato Beetle Giveaway at Manatee County UF/IFAS Extension August 8, 11AM - 2PM

Manatee County residents are invited to visit the Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Office to learn more about the invasive air potato vine and a biological control, the potato leaf beetle. Receive a free supply of beetles for use on your property. For those who have registered, beetles will be available for pick-up during the event. All others will be on a first-come-first served basis.

Air potato vine is one of Florida's most problematic invasive plants. The air potato leaf beetle is a small but formidable enemy of this invasive plant. Residents are encouraged to bring a cutting of air potato for confirmation.

Register for your beetles now >



Register for early-bird prices now >

Bay Reflections is the quarterly e-newsletter from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is dedicated to restoring the area's greatest natural asset - Sarasota Bay. We offer special thanks to our partners: Sarasota County, Manatee County, City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

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