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

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BAY REFLECTIONS

News from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

April 2021

Check Out Our Featured Stories

- Florida Macroalgae Workshop Recap
- Sorting Through the Green Stuff
- SBEP In House Updates
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- Tidy Island Restoration Update
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Florida Macroalgae Workshop Brings Together

Scientists and Managers to Improve Understanding and Monitoring






Environmental professionals and engaged citizens from both coasts of Florida recently got together in late March and early April for a 3-day virtual workshop on macroalgae. Coordinated by the four Florida National Estuary Programs, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, St. John's River Water Management District, Florida Sea Grant, the University of Florida IFAS Extension Program, and Florida Atlantic University, the workshop aimed to build a shared understanding of existing macroalgae patterns and knowledge gaps and help guide future monitoring efforts. The sessions featured presentations from 11 experts as well as facilitated breakouts, storyboarding and mapping exercises, and real-time polling to capture information specific to Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay, Charlotte Harbor, and the Indian River Lagoon. For each bay, participants identified existing knowledge, gaps, ongoing research, and historical perspectives. Results and feedback from the workshop will be compiled into a report over the next couple months. All workshop recordings and breakout materials are available on SBEP's website.

We want to thank everyone who coordinated and participated. A special shout out goes to Caroline Donovan for her exceptional coordination and facilitation throughout the workshop!

Click here for the macroalgae workshop recordings and materials >

Sorting Through the "Green Stuff"



Photo credit: Dennis Hanisak

Macroalgae, cyanobacteria, marine plants, oh my! There are a lot of organisms that fall into “that green or brown stuff” category, but in fact are quite different from each other. So what exactly is the difference? And what are scientists referring to when they say things like phytoplankton or submerged aquatic vegetation? Here is a quick review of these photosynthesizing wonders.

Read more about macroalgae, cyanobacteria, and marine plants >

SBEP In House Updates

Welcome Race Stryker!

SBEP is very excited to welcome Race Stryker to the team! Race is the

new Eyes on Seagrass intern and is focused on developing a program to monitor macro-algae growth and track the potential impacts of the Piney Point spill in the broader Sarasota Bay ecosystem. He is looking forward to conducting a lot of field work in the coming months with the help of volunteers. Race is a New College of Florida alum and returned Peace Corps Volunteer who is passionate about ecology, conservation, and coastal management. Race is inspired by mangroves and the ecosystem services that they provide, but he admits that seagrasses are cool too. In his free time, Race enjoys hiking the back trails at Myakka River State Park, looking for epiphytes to appreciate, scuba diving, and brewing his own beer.

Eyes on Seagrass is an extension of a Florida Sea Grant community monitoring effort that began in Charlotte Harbor in 2019. The goal of the project is to engage community members in monitoring macroalgae and their potential impacts on seagrass habitats. The first citizen science event in Sarasota Bay is tentatively planned for July. Keep an eye out for updates over the next couple months.

Welcome Race! We're glad to have you join us!



Congratulations to Darcy Young!

SBEP staff and partners also want to send



best wishes and congratulations to Darcy and her husband on the arrival of their new daughter! We will greatly miss Darcy over the next three months and wish her family much health and joy in the weeks to come!

Seagrass Scarring Outreach Pilot Launched in Sarasota and Manatee



The next time you visit a nearby boat ramp, marina, or boat rental shop, keep an eye out for new seagrass scarring outreach. SBEP has partnered with local agencies and water-based businesses to promote awareness around the presence and importance of seagrass in Sarasota Bay, targeting access points near scarring hot spots as well as those who may not be very familiar with the area. This month kicks off a pilot program with 10 participating locations. Each location has a “Scars Hurt” sign, designed by Florida Sea Grant, along with free Sarasota Bay maps that indicate where seagrasses are, how to avoid scarring them, and what to do in the case of a grounding. Over

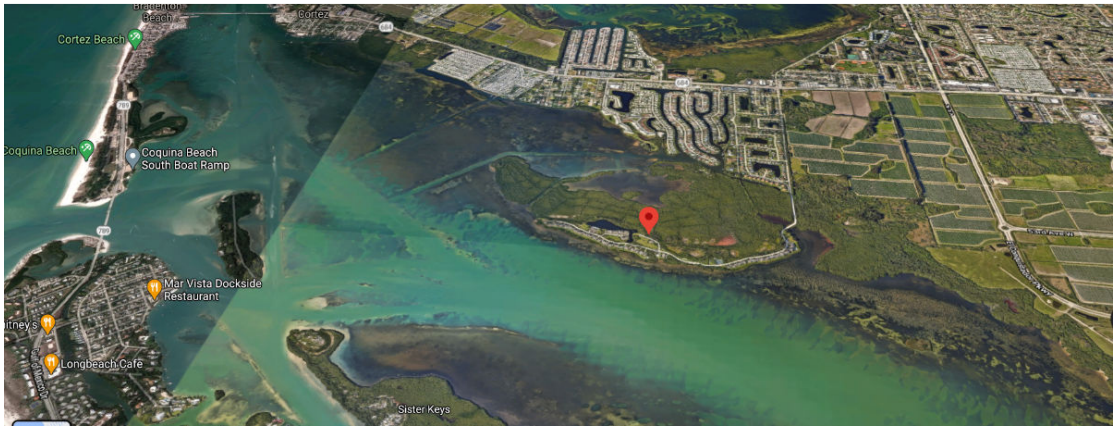
the next 6-7 months, SBEP will be tracking user feedback regarding how helpful the materials are through an online poll as well as comments from partnering locations. The results will help inform a larger rollout of these materials.

Pilot locations include:

- Boat ramps: Palma Sola, Kingfisher, Coquina North, Coquina South, 10th St., and Ken Thompson
- Marinas: Cannons Marina and Marina Jacks
- Rental/Tackle Shops: New Pass Grill and Bait Shop and Island Jet Ski Tours and Rentals

Read more about seagrass safe boating >

Invasives Removed on Tidy Island



Back in 2018, SBEP teamed up with New College of Florida for a restoration and research project on a section of Tidy Island in Manatee County. The project involves:

- removing invasive plants along 13.5 acres of spoil ridges
- researching how different methods of disposing the removed material affect mangrove carbon cycling, fish communities, and revegetation
- experimental replanting in a 4 acre area

To date, the first treatment of invasives is complete. The Australian pines that used to occupy the area have been removed. Post-restoration research will continue as the project progresses.







Photo credits: Brad Oberle

Click for a 360 view of the restoration on Tidy Island >

SBEP/Mote Youth Kayak Program Brings Visible Men Academy Out to Sarasota Bay

This past March, a group from the Visible Men Academy ventured out to explore Sarasota Bay as part of SBEP's youth kayaking program in partnership with Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium. The program aims to increase access to the bay for those who may not be able to get out on the

water regularly. The tours, led by Brad Tanner, Mote's Marine Science Educator, launch from Mote's campus to explore the bay, look for local critters, and discuss the importance of estuaries. Afterwards, participants get to explore the aquarium and learn more our local oceans and current research. Both SBEP and Mote are looking forward to several more trips over the next couple months.







Photo credits: Brad Tanner

SBEP in the News

Seagrass Is A Vital Weapon Against Climate Change, But We're Killing It -

HuffPost
Environmentalists Warn That Piney Point Pollution Could Affect Sarasota Bay - *Sarasota Magazine*
Reel Time: The price of inaction - *AMI Sun*

Piney Point Resources

SBEP is working alongside our partners to help monitor water quality in response to the the Piney Point discharges. Below are resources for the latest water quality data, imagery, and updates. Thank you to everyone who is working so hard on this effort.

- Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Piney Point Dashboard
- Department of Environmental Protection Piney Point Regional Notification
- USF's Ocean Circulation Group Effluent Evolution Model
- NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) Algal Bloom Satellite Imagery
- Manatee County Updates

Bite-Size Bay News



Red tide threat looms after Piney Point spill. Here are lessons from last big bloom
"Just out this month, an in-depth report from the Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida offers some eye-opening insights into the last major red tide event that affected the Tampa Bay area from 2017-2019."

Read more about the red tide impact report >



Conservation Foundation, Audubon Society Move Forward With Quad Parcels
"The 33 acres will buffer the western edge of the environmentally sensitive Celery Fields, a nationally recognized birding hotspot that is a

vital part of Sarasota County's water quality and flood protection system for the Phillippi Creek watershed."

Read more about the Quad Parcels >



UF scientists to probe downstream ecological impacts of stormwater ponds
"A University of Florida scientist will embark on a study this summer, using Manatee County as his lab. But his results will apply to much of Florida, including Tampa Bay and Biscayne Bay."

Read more about the stormwater pond study >

Events & Volunteer Opportunities



FAMILY FOOD FUN DOOR PRIZES

Join

Multicultural Health Institute and Oneco United Methodist Church

2112 53rd Ave East, Bradenton FL 34203

In Celebration of our Planet Earth!!!

Thursday April 22, 2022 from 3pm -5pm

Online Panel Discussion – Health/Food Disparities

Sunrise Community Compost -**Live In Person**- Demonstrations

Free Give-away for kids

Family Food Bags & more...

Multicultural Health Institute

Contact us: The-MHI.org or 941-906-9484

Salt Marsh Planting at Robinson Preserve

Tuesday, April 27th from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM



Make a direct impact on the restoration of Robinson Preserve! Join us for a salt marsh volunteer planting day at the Robinson Expansion. Salt marshes are essential for healthy fisheries, coastlines, and communities. This important coastal habitat provides food, refuge, and nursery for fish, shrimp, crabs, birds, and protects shorelines from erosion while filtering runoff and improving water quality. Reservations are required

Register for salt marsh planting at Robinson Preserve >

Explore the Robinson Expansion area by drone!



Credit: Manatee County & SWFWMD

OSCAR SCHERER STATE PARK

"VIRTUAL" 32nd Annual Earth Day

"RESTORE OUR EARTH"

22 WAYS IN 22 DAYS COUNTDOWN TO EARTH DAY

A Count Down with Videos, Action Incentives,

Scavenger Hunts and Prizes.

VISIT THE FRIENDS OF OSCAR SCHERER FACE BOOK PAGE.
Beginning April 1, 2021

Like and Share daily posts from local organization that helps support the environment and the community. Use the daily post to complete your action item and scavenger hunt clue. Message us your answers to be entered into the prize drawing. Visit us daily for more chances to win.
Happy Hunting and Make Earth Day EveryDay.

https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofOscarSchererPark



YOU

have the power

to change the world!

2019 Best of Show Coloring Contest



Explore Virtual Earth Day Activities >



The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is an international effort to get people outside to document their local biodiversity. Over the course of four days, citizen scientists around the world will log as many observations of the natural world as they can. Then experts will help to identify those observations to see how many different species were documented.

This is the first year that Sarasota and Manatee counties are participating in CNC, through Selby Gardens' Sarasota Manatee EcoFlora Project. We are partnering with The Nature Conservancy in Orlando to host a friendly competition among several Florida metro areas, and we are calling on everyone to participate! While the EcoFlora project usually focuses on plant species, we will be celebrating and documenting plants and animals during CNC. Show us your flora and your fauna!

Learn more about the City Nature Challenge >

Compost-A-Thon - May 2-8, 2021

A Local Event Hosted During International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW)

How many people and partners can we get involved to divert precious food scrap resources from the landfill in just one week's time?






Join us to celebrate all things community, composting and soil regeneration while helping to raise funds for education, outreach, volunteer and work trade programs.

This is a great time to try out food scrap separation and composting if you haven't tried composting yet. If you already compost, it's a great time to measure your impact and weigh, record and be counted as part of a bigger community education and action effort.

Learn more & register for the Compost-A-Thon >

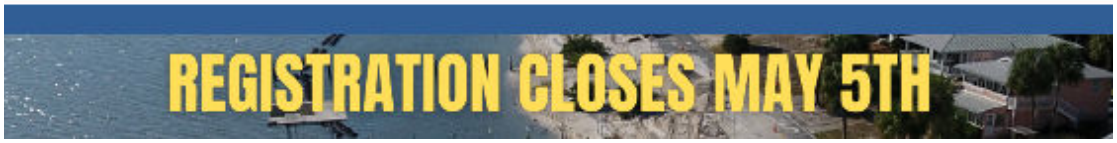


LIVING SHORELINES TRAINING FOR MARINE CONTRACTORS

Pre-Course
Prior to May 12 - Complete pre-test on Canvas (15 minutes)
Session 1
May 12, 2021, 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM Live on Zoom
Self-Guided Session
May 12, 2021: 12:30 - 5:00 PM - Field Tour, Videos
Session 2
May 13, 2021, 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM Live on Zoom

Instructors:
Armando Ubeda, UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County
Vincent Encomio, UF/IFAS Extension Martin/St. Lucie Counties
Savanna Barry, UF/IFAS Nature Coast Biological Station

Registration fee of $75 includes full color printed manual
6 CEU credits from CILB or SER-CERP



Register for the Living Shoreline Marine Contractor Training >

Suncoast Reef Rovers Underwater Cleanups

Wednesday, May 5th - artificial reef cleanup at South Brohard Beach
Sunday, May 23rd - Venice Fishing Pier
Saturday, June 19, 2021 - Venice South Jetty
For more information, contact: Ken Lackmann (ken.lackmann@usda.gov)



Learn more about Suncoast Reef Rovers >

Register Now for the

2021 Southwest Florida Climate Summit

May 6, 2021

The Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership is hosting a free public event to share knowledge, showcase climate action, engage leadership across sectors, and mobilize the collaboration needed to tackle this significant challenge. The Summit includes expert presentations with interactive question and answer sessions, to exchange ideas on expanding the region's climate resiliency. For registration and more information, please visit chnep.org/2021-climate-summit.

EVENT SPONSORS:

EDF Environmental Defense Fund — Finding the ways that work

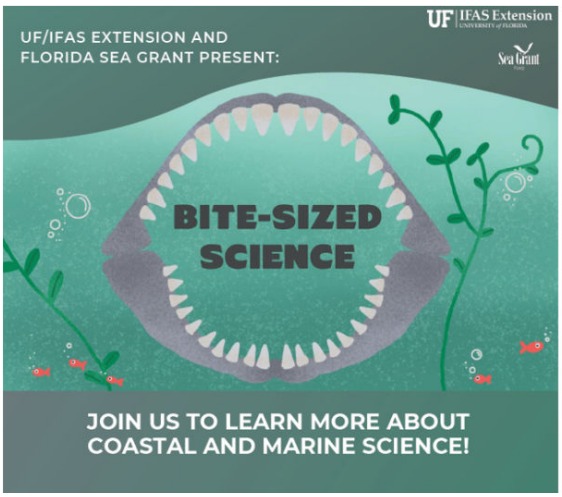
Florida Gulf Coast University — The Water School

WGCU PBS npr

Register for the SWFL Climate Summit >

Florida Sea Grant: Bite Sized Science Bocados de Ciencias

4PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays through May 6, 2021





Register for Bite Sized Science / Registrarse para Bocados de Ciencias >

Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast Virtual Summer Photo Contest

Submissions due May 31, 2021



2020 Winner Best of Show
Did That Really Happen?! by Gunilla Imshaug

Learn more about the Virtual Summer Photo Contest >

Florida Society for Ethical Ecotourism (FL SEE) Webinars



The Importance of Mangroves
Alyssa Vinson, UF/IFAS Manatee County
May 19, 2021 at 7pm

Ethical angling



Angela Collins, Florida Sea Grant
June 16, 2021 at 7pm

Register for FL SEE webinars >

Manasota Solar Co-op

Open to all Manatee and Sarasota County residents until June 11, 2021



Imagine walking into a solar company's office with 50 or 100 of your neighbors and saying, "We all want to get solar. What kind of deal can you give us?" That's a solar co-op!

Learn more & register for the Manasota Solar Co-op >

Manatee County Preserve Nature Tours

Join Manatee County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers on an educational stroll of a Manatee County preserve to learn about native plants and indigenous people. Multiple dates & locations.



Register for a Preserve Nature Tour >

Upcoming University of Florida/IFAS Extension Webinars

Sarasota County

Manatee County

Jobs & Funding Opportunities

- Habitat Restoration Intern – Manatee County, due April 26, 2021
- Special Events & Site Rental Manager - Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, due May 6, 2021
- Student Internships - Environmental Caucus of Sarasota County Democrats, positions will be available for both high school and college students on a rolling basis throughout the Spring and Summer.
- 2021 NEP Coastal Watersheds Grant RFP - Letters of Intent due June 7, 2021. SBEP would be happy to write an acknowledgement letter for partners or community organizations in our watershed that are planning to apply. Please contact Michael@sarasotabay.org.

Water Reading from Around the Web

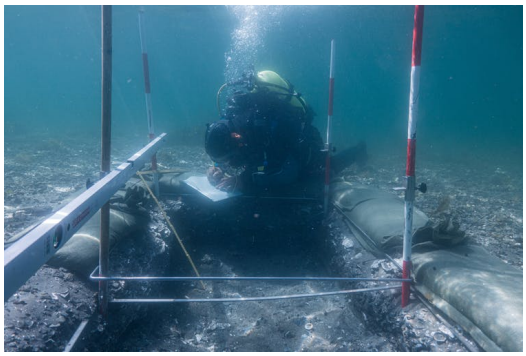
New Species of Baleen Whale in the Gulf of Mexico



“A recently published article in *Marine Mammal Science* indicates that the whale previously known as the Bryde’s (pronounced “broodus”) whale is actually a new whale species living in the Gulf of Mexico."

Read more on NOAA >

[Ancient undersea middens offer clues about life before rising seas engulfed the coast. Now we have a better way to study them]



"For a large portion of humanity’s existence, sea levels were significantly lower (up to 130 metres) than they are today, exposing millions of square kilometres of land. And the archaeological record is clear: people in the past lived on these coastal plains before the land slipped beneath the waves."

Read more on the Conversation >

[COVID-19 and Ship Noise]



"In the beginning of 2020, many cruise ships, whale watching tours and commercial fishing boats were put to rest in their slips and moorings. Acousticians suddenly were given a rare chance to compare the acoustic impacts from ships at a global scale."

Read more from Applied Ocean Sciences >

Request a (Virtual) Speaker from SBEP

SBEP staff members regularly speak to homeowner, neighborhood, and community groups and upper-level classrooms about Sarasota Bay ecology and restoration. Weekday and evening presentations are now being scheduled through summer 2021. Click the button below to request a speaker for your group.

SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM
Restoring Our Bays

Visit the SBEP website to schedule a speaker >

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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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