

BAY REFLECTIONS

News from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

January 2022

In This Issue:

- Sarasota Bay Partners Grants - Call for Applications
- Register for the Sarasota Bay Educators' Workshop
- EPA Grants $105 Million WIFIA Loan to Sarasota County for Water Infrastructure
- Video How-To: Adopt a Vertical Oyster Garden
- Piney Point Update
- Water Quality Framework for Tidal Creeks
- Bay Partners Grant Project Highlight: Suncoast Reef Rovers
- Join the Citizens Advisory Committee
- Volunteers Needed for Seagrass Outreach
- Jobs and Funding Opportunities, Events, and Bay-Related News

Apply for a Sarasota Bay Partners Grant: Deadline March 1



Community partners are crucial to our mission of restoring Sarasota Bay. That's why we provide technical and financial assistance for community environmental projects through the Sarasota Bay Partners Grants Program.

This year, groups may apply for up to $10,000 for projects that focus on **Habitat Restoration and Water Quality** and **Bay-Related Environmental Education and Community Stewardship**. Applicants must use the application form provided on the SBEP website. SBEP staff will provide technical assistance with projects and applications upon request.

Most organizations with projects located in the greater Sarasota Bay watershed (**click for a map**) are eligible to receive funding.

Watch the grants webinar

SBEP staff hosted a webinar to review grant basics and answer questions from potential applicants. We recorded the webinar and posted it on our website for later viewing.

Missed the webinar, but want to ask a few questions? Contact Darcy Young at darcy@sarasotabay.org.





2022 Priority Issue: Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure techniques use natural systems to filter pollutants from stormwater before it reaches Sarasota Bay. Projects that address this priority will be awarded additional points. Examples of green infrastructure projects include:

- rain gardens and bioswales
- planting trees in urban areas
- diverting gutter downspouts from paved areas to garden beds or rainwater harvesting systems
- enhancing shorelines with native plants
- replacing paved areas with pervious pavement

Projects that address the priority issue will receive

preference during the scoring process.

Learn more about Green Infrastructure (EPA)

Click here for more information and grant application materials

---

Register for the Sarasota Bay Educators' Workshop



Help us expand opportunities for K-12 educators to incorporate Sarasota Bay into their classrooms! The free Sarasota Bay K-12 Educators' Workshop will be held on Monday, March 21, 2022 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium. The workshop will gather formal and informal educators and organizations that serve them to discuss how to make Bay-related education more effective, accessible, and equitable. We welcome all participants who care about and wish to enhance local bay-related educational opportunities for K-12 students.

Learn more and register for the workshop

Sarasota County to Receive $105 Million WIFIA Loan to Improve Water Infrastructure



Bee Ridge Water Reclamation Facility, Credit: Sarasota County

Last month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that Sarasota County Government will receive a $105 million Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan to help offset the cost of upgrades at the Bee Ridge Water Reclamation Facility. The loan, which will cover about half the upgrade costs and save taxpayers about $22 million, will help the county increase the facility's treatment capacity from 12 million to 18 million gallons per day and upgrade the plant to advanced wastewater treatment (AWT).

According to SBEP Executive Director Dr. Dave Tomasko, "Upgrades to this facility will be one of the most important steps involved in reducing nutrient loads to the bay, as it will lessen the impacts of any future overflows, and it will lessen the impacts of over-application of high nutrient non-AWT effluent used for residential irrigation. Great news – and much kudos to the staff of Sarasota County utilities and Sarasota County Commissioners to get this grant application submitted and then seen all the way through." Upgrades are expected to be completed by 2025.

Click here to read more about the WIFIA loan

Video How-To: Adopt a Vertical Oyster Garden

SBEP teamed up with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program and Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources to create an "Adopt-a-VOG" station at the Robinson Preserve Expansion. What the heck is a VOG, and why would you want one? Check out the TBEP-produced video for the scoop.

How (and why!) to Adopt-a-VOG



Piney Point Update from SBEP

"In sum, the processes being applied to the stack appear to be working to reduce, by about 90%, the concentration of nitrogen in the remaining water. The bad news is that there are likely dozens of additional patches to the liner of the pond that could leak in the future [...] The entire facility

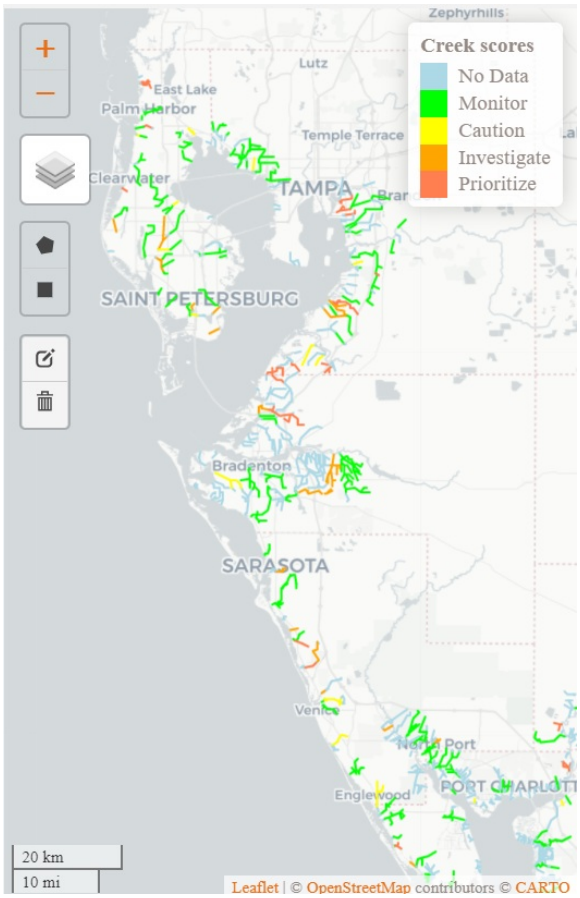
needs to be shut down, all the ponds drained and then capped so that we don't keep repeating this same event over the next 20 years that we've dealt with three times over this past 20 or so years."

Read more on our website

Water Quality Framework for Tidal Creeks Goes to Press; Receives National Highlight

A collaborative study of Southwest Florida tidal creeks was recently **published in the journal *Estuaries and Coasts*** and featured by the **Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation (CERF)** due to its "strong implications for management of coastal areas".

The study filled a gap in understanding of local tidal creek conditions by creating a regional framework for assessing health and management needs. Over the course of the study, the team compiled existing data on water quality and creek characteristics from a range of sources and models in addition to collecting additional data from 16 different creeks in the watershed boundaries of the three Florida Gulf Coast National Estuary Programs. All of this information was then used to create a color-coded report card for each creek that indicates recommended management actions such as: "No Data, Monitor, Caution, Investigate, or Prioritize".



Tidal creeks dashboard

The framework is a living tool that will continue to be updated and remain fully accessible through an online open science dashboard.

Click here to explore your tidal creeks on the dashboard

Bay Partners Grant Project Highlight: Suncoast Reef Rovers Dive Cleanups









We want to congratulate 2020 Bay Partners Grant recipient Suncoast Reef Rovers. Over the past year, the club, along with FWC, Sarasota Bay Watch, Sarasota County, Sea Tow, Suncoast Aqua Ventures, Venice Fire Department, Venice Police Department, and many volunteers, conducted **13 underwater cleanups removing over 6,000 pounds of marine debris and derelict fishing gear, including 58 crab traps.** The club used their grant funds to purchase equipment needed for new cleanup locations at several artificial reefs, including one of SBEP's monitored reefs, Walker Reef. In addition, the group also held cleanups at local piers, marinas, and jetties. Their impressive efforts highlight the impact that can be made by concerned citizens and volunteers, but they also serve as a reminder of how important it is to continue to focus on removing marine debris.

Be Part of the Conversation: Join the Citizens Advisory Committee

SBEP seeks interested Sarasota-Manatee community members to join the Citizens Advisory Committee! If you or someone you know would like to become more engaged with what's going on in and around Sarasota Bay, please consider submitting an application to become a member.

The Citizens Advisory Committee provides community input to SBEP and assists the Program in sharing information with the public. It also develops action plans to support SBEP programs and projects in an effort to influence public policies that impact the Bay and its resources. Members meet every other month on the first Monday from 4:30-6:30 to discuss the latest issues and updates and offer feedback. No prior board experience necessary.

Click here to learn more & apply for the Citizens Advisory Committee

Volunteers Needed to Help Design & Construct Map Holders for Seagrass Outreach

Are you handy with tools? SBEP seeks volunteers to construct durable, outdoor brochure/map holders to accompany Seagrass Safe Boating signs located throughout Sarasota and Manatee counties. If you enjoy building and designing, we would love to connect with you! All supplies will be covered. We are looking to construct 8-10 holders and we are open to testing different materials.
Contact christine@sarasotabay.org if you are interested.



Jobs and Funding Opportunities

- **National Park Service Scientists in Parks Fellows Program** – closes 1/23
- **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission - OPS BIO SCI I** - closes 1/24
- **Tampa Bay Estuary Program - Project Implementation Specialist** - closes 1/28
- **CITGO Caring for Our Coasts Gulf Region Grants Program** – closes 1/28
- **Southwest Florida Water Management District - Water Resources Engineer** - closes 2/1
- **Gulf Research Program's Early-Career Research Fellowship** – closes 3/2
- **Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund** - closes 3/11
- Sarasota County UF/IFAS Extension and Sustainability Department
    - **Community Outreach Specialist I - Florida-Friendly Landscaping**
    - **Environmental Education and Outreach Intern (Summer)**
    - **Commercial Conservation Intern (Summer)**
    - **Water Quality Intern (Summer)**
- Sarasota County Parks, Recreation & Natural Resources
    - **Environmental Specialist I - Land Management Support**
    - **Environmental Specialist Intern - Beach & Water Access Division**
- **Sunshine Community Compost - Outreach and Education Coordinator (part-time, short-term)**
- **Suncoast Waterkeeper - Executive Director**
- Transition Sarasota – Volunteer with Web Design Skills
    - "We are currently looking for a volunteer website designer to help us with some changes and updates, as well as do a little training for staff. You should have a proven understanding of graphic design fundamentals and a strong command of image composition, digital photo editing, and how to maintain consistent branding. You should be able to produce cohesive designs for marketing and social media use. We currently use Squarespace for our website, so we would be doing some light redesign, updating some data on the website, and adding some pages using that platform. The time commitment would be six to eight hours a month, on average, depending upon when updates were being made. **Email your resume to exec@transitionsrq.org**, along with a few sentences letting us know a little about you."
- Surfrider Foundation
    - **Florida Policy Manager**
    - **Technology Enablement Coordinator** - remote
- **Upcycled Food Association – multiple remote positions available**

Events & Volunteer Opportunities

TreeQuest
Manatee County Parks & Natural Resources
January 21st - January 31st



Fire Fest
Sarasota County
January 29th from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



Families Flock Together: Saltwater Fishing Clinic
Manatee County Parks & Natural Resources
January 29th from 2:00PM - 5:00 PM



Sarasota-Manatee EcoFlora Project: EcoQuest Challenge
Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
January and February

Palm Ball
Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast
February 5th at 6:30 PM

Scallopalooza
Sarasota Bay Watch
February 12th at 6:00 PM



Understanding Your Utility Bill and Florida's Energy Landscape
Southface Sarasota
February 17th at 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM



Sarasota Bay Guardians Workday at South Brohard Park
South Brohard Park, Venice
Saturday, February 26 from 8:00 AM - noon



Celebrating Florida's Wild Wonders Conference
Ringling College of Art + Design
March 11th from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM



The Road to Resurgence — Return of the Electric Vehicle
Southface Sarasota
March 11th from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Wild About Nature Festival
Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast
April 2nd from 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Reccurring Events

Weekly

- **Saturday Mornings at the Nest** – Manatee County Parks & Natural Resources
- **Walking in Wonder** - Around the Bend Nature Tours & the Bay Sarasota
- **Guided Bird Walks & Climate Walks** - Sarasota Audubon Society
- **Ranger's Choice Guided Hikes and Eagle Viewing** - Oscar Scherer State Park

Monthly

- **Volunteer Workdays** - Sunshine Community Compost
- **Master Gardener Tours** (Perico Preserve) - Manatee County Parks & Natural Resources
- **EcoWalk: Mindful Movement in the Mangroves** - UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County & the Bay Sarasota
- **HOA Tours** - Southface Sarasota
- **Audubon Adventures** - Around the Bend Nature and Discovery Tours
- **Nature Photography Walk** - The Bay Sarasota

Ongoing

- **Climate Leader Training Series** - Climate Interactive
- **Survey: Rapid Deployment Inventory of Personal Networks for Disaster Resilience** - iCAR (Initiative on Coastal Adaptation and Resilience) We want to know what types of social and personal network you rely on when you prepare for a disaster.
- **Survey: Do You Use a Well to Irrigate Your Lawn?** The Southwest Florida Water Management District and the United States Geological Survey are working together to study water use in irrigation wells used strictly for lawns or gardens in Polk and Sarasota counties.
- **UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County events and webinars**
- **UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County events and webinars**

Bite Sized Bay News



Land east of Celery Fields set aside for preservation

"A new agreement between a private owner and the same land-conservation organization working with the adjacent Quads parcels and Bobby Jones Golf Club will set aside nearly 50 acres of green space just east of Celery Fields."

Read More on Your Observer



Bradenton Beach combats rising sea, reviews new plan for living shorelines

"Environmental Science Associates went before the Bradenton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency Jan. 5 and city commission Jan. 6 to discuss a 30% plan for a living shoreline. The ESA presented proposals for resiliency in the face of rising sea levels and future storms."

Read More on the Islander



City of Sarasota to receive $10 million from state to address flood-prone areas

"The funds will go toward raising Van Wezel Way, restoring the natural flow and water quality of Hog Creek, and improving the Bay Conservancy Park shoreline while protecting it from further erosion and storm damage.

Read More from Tampa Bay 10 WTSP

Water Reading Around the Web

Fun Watch: Flip my Florida Yard

"From Emmy® award-winning director Chad Crawford comes a series dedicated to the joy and impact of having a yard that's friendly to Florida's environment."

Click here for free episodes on YouTube



Florida's Blue-Green Algae Task Force Bill To Save Seagrass, Manatees, Moves Through Senate

"A plan to carry out recommendations from the state's Blue-Green Algae Task Force started to move forward Monday in the Senate."

Read More on CBS 4 Miami



Feral hogs are a problem for the climate, researcher says

"They churn up soil with their snouts, releasing stored carbon to the atmosphere. Collectively, all of that churned up land could be emitting more carbon pollution each year than a million cars."

Read More on Yale Climate Connections



Environmental concerns continue for Sarasota Bay, expert says



The Observer caught up with Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Executive Director David Tomasko to discuss the environmental health of Sarasota Bay, the effects of losing about 2,000 acres of seagrass and what people can do to help the water quality.

Read more on the Longboat Observer

Book a 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 2022.

Click here to request a speaker

Follow us

Contact us

info@sarasotabay.org | (941) 955-8085
111 S. Orange Avenue, Suite 200W
Sarasota, FL 34236

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program | 111 S. Orange Avenue, Suite 200W, Sarasota, FL 34236 (941) 955-8085

Unsubscribe darcy@sarasotabay.org

Update Profile |About Constant Contact

Sent bydarcy@sarasotabay.orgin collaboration with

Constant Contact

Try email marketing for free today!