BAY REFLECTIONS

Restoring Our Bays

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Newsletter January 2011

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Bay Reflections Goes Bimonthly

Bay Reflections is now bimonthly effective this month to enable SBEP to communicate more timely information. Future editions will be published in January, March, May, July, Sept. and

Low Impact Development Promotes More Effective Stormwater Management



Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is involved with the effort promoted by Sarasota County to employ Low Impact Development (LID) strategies. LID is a stormwater management approach that uses a suite of hydrolic controls that replicates the natural hydrolic flow of the developed landscape. Unlike conventional systems, which typically control and treat runoff using a single stormwater pond at the lowest point on a property, LID systems promote treatment at or near the source of stormwater runoff. This is done through more creative efforts focused on retention, detention, infiltration, treatment, and reuse of water runoff.

This intervention reduces the amount of stormwater and it also enhances the quality of the water being discharged. Examples include the use of cisterns, detention basins, green roofs, rain

November. Your suggestions about future reports, news items and special features are welcome. Please email Randall Moore at randy@triple3marketing.com. Thank you for encouraging people you know to visit the SBEP website to sign up to receive Bay Reflections.

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gardens, planter vaults, and permeable pavement. **Click here** to learn more about the program with Sarasota County. A digital copy of the LID Manual is posted on the county website.

"LID techniques afford us an opportunity to provide a more comprehensive approach to managing stormwater treatment," explained Jack Merriam with Sarasota County Environmental Services. "A number of other counties in Florida are studying our manual as a starting point for their own efforts to promote low impact development."

Mark Alderson, SBEP's Executive Director acknowledges the program's importance. "The potential of LID to help manage stormwater pollution is significant locally and throughout Florida. All of the strategies that are part of LID work together to enhance overall efficiency."

Photo of Bay Guardians at Robinson Preserve.

Bay Partners Grant Recipient Spotlight: Windward Bay Condominium Association



The Windward Bay Condominium Association located on Longboat Key continues to convert significant segments of their property from grass to Florida Friendly plants and small Florida natives. A series of Bay Grants from SBEP have helped to finance the conversion of nearly 100,000 square feet on the 27-acre project featuring 151 units. The most recent effort included the development of a saltwater bioswale to capture and direct water runoff.

According to Jerry Gornowicz, the grounds chairperson at Windward Bay, all of the efforts over the past three years has helped to reduce the use of water and stormwater pollution running into Sarasota Bay. An added benefit from the effort to create a more natural habitat is the increase in species. "I saw six wood storks sitting among the blanket flowers recently as well as a kingbird and red shoulder hawk," said Jerry.

The SBEP Bay Partners Grants promote environmental education, awareness, and stewardship that improve the overall quality of Sarasota Bay and its tributaries. Projects should focus on Bay Education, Bay Restoration or Bay-Friendly Landscaping. The deadline for submitting applications for new Bay Partner grants is 4pm on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. Click here to download a copy of the application. Visit the Neighborhood Action page at www.sarasotabay.org to see a list of the current grant recipients.

Photo of Jerry Gornowicz, May Parsalls and Lupe Briones working on a pump in connection with Windward Bay's development of a saltwater bioswale.

Bay Wise Kayak Tours Continue Through April with Free Trips to South Lido Mangrove Tunnels, Whitaker Bayou, & Lyons and Blackburn Bay



Nature lovers can still enjoy a free guided kayak tour on Sarasota Bay through April as part of SBEP's annual Bay Wise Kayak Tour Program. The kayak excursions are a fun learning opportunity to discover the plants, animals, habitats, and restoration projects that distinguish Sarasota Bay. Brad Tanner, an expert kayaker and the School Programs Coordinator for Mote Marine Laboratory is the expert tour guide.

Various trips in December and January explored Neal Preserve and Leffis & Jewfish Key. The remaining trips for the season include South Lido Mangrove Tunnels (2/5 and 2/19), Whitaker Bayou (3/5 and 3/19), and Lyons and Blackburn Bay (4/9 and 4/23). Participants are required to bring their own kayak. Outfitters throughout the region rent kayaks and offer demonstrations and beginner classes. The Bay Wise Kayak Program is for experienced kayakers.

Please register online and notify SBEP if you need to cancel at info@sarasotabay.org. You can also add your name to a waiting list for trips that are already booked.

2/5 - South Lido Mangrove Tunnels **CLICK HERE**
2/19 - South Lido Mangrove Tunnels **CLICK HERE**
3/5 - Whitaker Bayou **CLICK HERE**
3/19 - Whitaker Bayou **CLICK HERE**
4/9 - Lyons and Blackburn Bay **CLICK HERE**
4/23 - Lyons and Blackburn Bay **CLICK HERE**

Photo of CAC member Steve Foster enjoying a kayaking excursion on the Bay.

SBEP Working with Mote Policy Institute and County Governments on Development of LIDAR Map Detailing Impact of Rising Water Levels

CLIMATE READY ESTUARIES EPA

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program continues to work with Mote Marine's Policy Institute and Manatee and Sarasota County on climate ready adaptation planning. The ongoing effort is part of the Climate Ready Estuaries (CRE) Program with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The purpose of the program is to help selected National Estuary Programs (NEPs) identify climate change vulnerabilities, develop adaptation plans, and begin implementing actions to integrate climate change planning with NEPs nationwide.

The CRE program is a partnership between EPA and the NEPs to address climate change in coastal areas. This effort is building additional capacity in coastal communities as they prepare to adapt to the possible effects of climate change. CRE provides tools and assistance to assess climate change vulnerabilities, engage and educate community stakeholders, develop and implement adaptation strategies, and share lessons learned with other coastal managers.

One of the tools currently being developed by a contractor with the EPA is an online LIDAR map capability that shows how rising sea levels would impact habitat and coastal shorelines throughout Sarasota Bay. LIDAR is a visualization tool using Light Detection and Ranging data. Focus groups will work with the online map system before going final to help ensure that the tool is useful for future use by policy leaders focused on coastal management issues. Future editions of Bay Reflections will provide updated information about LIDAR and the Climate Ready Estuaries Program.

Science Report with Dr. Jay Leverone:
SBEP Study Focuses on Macroalgae in our Bay



We know that nutrients enter our estuary from stormwater pollution and other sources, but what happens to them when they reach the Bay? There are many types of plants waiting to make a meal of these nutrients with nitrogen being particular important in Sarasota Bay. These plants include microscopic phytoplankton (including the one that causes red tide), seagrasses, epiphytes (plants that primarily grow on seagrass), benthic microalgae that produce a film on the bay bottom, and benthic macroalgae, which occasionally form large colorful drifting balls that resemble aquatic tumbleweeds.

How these different plants compete for resources determines whether the Bay maintains a healthy balance or experiences a "bloom" of one of these plant types. Macroalgal blooms, like the one that covered many of our beaches in 2007 for instance, can displace indigenous algal species, destroy benthic habitats, deplete oxygen levels, and cause seagrass to die.

Last year, the SBEP initiated a study of Sarasota Bay waters to understand the composition, seasonality and nutrient sources supporting macroalgae (perhaps the least understood player in this contest). Under the direction of Dr. Brian Lapointe from Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, SBEP began sampling macroalgae throughout the Bay and in the near-shore coastal waters. Samples of the most abundant macroalgae are currently being analyzed for nitrogen content and stable isotope ratios to determine the source of nitrogen in the algae's tissues. Results from this study will provide clues as to how certain types of estuarine plants respond to nutrients entering the bay from the watershed.

Photo of Dr. Mike Marshall holding algae.

Join the Bay Guardians to Help SBEP Restore and Protect Sarasota Bay; Next Outings Include G. WIZ on February 12 and Neal Preserve on March 26



You can help restore and protect Sarasota Bay by joining the SBEP Bay Guardians. Our volunteers help on a variety of restoration projects impacting on Sarasota Bay. Most of the work is concentrated in 2-3 hour segments and its a fun way to meet other people that love nature and value our natural resources.

The next volunteer effort is exotic vine removal at G. WIZ in Sarasota from 9:30am to noon on Saturday, February 12. Another exotic plant removal effort is set for Neal Preserve from 9:30am to noon on Saturday, March 26.

The Bay Guardians is a helpful volunteer outlet for individuals, families, students, and seniors. Make a difference while learning about our natural environment. Please contact Sara Kane at sara@sarasotabay.org.

Express Your Passion for Sarasota Bay: Share Your Favorite Photos, Art and Poetry



We welcome free submissions of photos, art, poetry and other creative expressions that can be featured in upcoming editions of Bay Reflections and the SBEP website. Images and poems should focus on the local habitat, sunsets, coastal scenes, and diverse wildlife associated with Sarasota Bay. Please submit high resolution digital files and a brief bio to Randy Moore with Triple 3 Marketing at randy@triple3marketing.com.

SBEP in the News

December 30 - *Pelican Press* - The findings from the SBEP State of the Bay Report 2010 was referenced in their annual end of year review highlighting 2010 news and events.

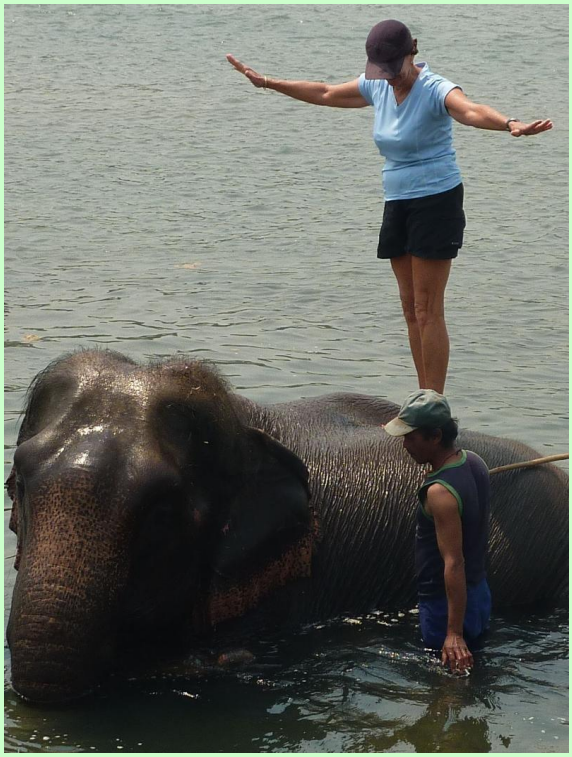
December 2010 - Multiple listings in local newspapers regarding SBEP's Bay Wise Kayak Tour Program.

December 2010 - *Boca Sierra* - Local Sierra Club newsletter featured article titled "Act now to combat excess nutrients" written by Cris Costello. Author points out some of the issues related to water management and the excess use of nitrogen and phosphorus, resulting in the overgrowth of algae. Author emphasizes the importance of quantifiable nutrient pollution limits and fertilizer management ordinances.

November 24 - *Pelican Press* - "Phillippi Creek erosion control plan could improve Roberts Bay". Article quotes Stephen Suau of Progressive Water Resources, a technical advisor with SBEP. He advocates slowing water flow to allow sediment to settle to the creek's bottom. Suau proposes a series of terrace-like structures along the creek banks know as "filter socks" or "compost blankets". Sediment is thought to be a contributing factor in the poor growth of seagrass in Roberts Bay. **Click here** to read the article.

CAC Member Profile

Erin Tom "Tommy" Vaughan-Birch



Tommy was born and raised in Central Florida and graduated from the University of Florida. She and her husband moved to Sarasota in 1969 after he graduated from law school. After 9 years working for the Florida Department of Public Welfare she retired as the supervisor of the child welfare program for Sarasota and Manatee counties and became a full time Mom and community volunteer. She has done volunteer work with local schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and was active in the Jr. League of Sarasota.

Tommy is a Florida Master Naturalist and has been a Mote Marine Laboratory volunteer since 1990 working as an aquarium docent, with the Sea Turtle Research & Conservation Program, and also served as president of the Volunteers of Mote Marine Laboratory. Her interests include teaching aqua aerobics (instructor for 22 years), kayaking, tennis, and travel. Tommy and her husband have visited all seven continents. Upcoming trips include a 277-mile rafting excursion through the Grand Canyon in May and a trip to Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Russia in September.

"I enjoy expressing my passion for the aquatic environment through volunteer activities at SBEP and Mote. As an aquarium docent and member of Mote's speakers bureau, I love to get people interested in our coastal environment and the critters who live here. I'm always looking for that "ah ha!" reaction from people acknowledging the importance of conservation of our beautiful natural environment."

Click here to read short profiles about all of the CAC members. The CAC welcomes applications from prospective new members. Please contact Sara Kane, the SBEP Public Outreach Coordinator at sara@sarasotabay.org.

Photo of Tommy on vacation in Nepal.

Upcoming Events

NOTE: ***Our community has numerous events and activities every month that celebrate the natural beauty and diversity of our region's environment. The following is a sampling. SBEP also emails periodic announcements about special events and programs that support SBEP's mission to restore and protect Sarasota Bay.***

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 5 - Oscar Scherer State Park will host the annual *Florida Park Services Southwest Florida Volunteer Appreciation Picnic*. The event recognizes volunteers and support organizations throughout the district. One of the planned activities is a walk around Lake Osprey to learn about the county's recreational and educational facilities. A number of local organizations will have booths to share information with the 500 visitors expected for the event. Learn more and RSVP at 941-483-5957 or 941-486-2155.

March 5 - *The Florida Friendly Family Festival* from 10am to 2pm at the Manatee County Fairgrounds will feature a variety of fun activities, learning programs, and entertainment that appeals to children of all ages. Activities and crafts will be related to environmental awareness and water conservation methods. Sponsors include Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program, Southwest Water Management District, Master Gardener Program with UF/IFAS Extension, and the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. Learn more from Michelle at 941-722-4524 or michelleatkinson@ufl.edu.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY NATURE

January 16, 9-11am - Master Gardener Tour - Each month, the Master Gardeners host a nature tour in the salt marshes at Robinson Preserve. Learn more about Florida's native plants with Master Gardener Sam Starrett on a relaxing stroll through this beautiful coastal property. Learn more and make reservations at 941-722-4524.

January 16, 10am-Noon - Join David Reynolds and his family for an off road wilderness bicycle ride through T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve. Expect to see lots of wildlife! This family bike adventure series runs every third Sunday of the month now through May 2011. The T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve located at 1800 Mabry Carlton Parkway in Venice was purchased in the 1980's for public water supply source and for conservation/ recreation purposes. Space for this event is limited to 10 participants. Reservations and meeting up details are available by calling David Reynolds at 941-412-5575.

January 18, 9-11am - Explore this preserve with retired Penn State biology professor and Sarasota County volunteer, Dr. Bill Dunson. While searching for unusual plants, hikers will pass through a brackish water wetland, a higher salinity mangrove and saltern area, scrub,

flatwoods, and coastal woodlands bordering Lemon Bay. Register online at www.scgov.net or call 941-861-5000 and ask for Natural Resources.

January 20, 9-11am - Join Sarasota County Environmental Specialist Jeff Weber as he leads participants on a nature hike from upland habitats to the shores of Shakett Creek at Pocono Trail Preserve in Nokomis. Along the way, participants will search the area for a variety of plant and animal species that continue to thrive despite recent cold snaps and the onset of the winter dry season. Register online at www.scgov.net or call 941-861-5000 and ask for Natural Resources.

January 23, 9-11am - Master Gardner Tour - Experience an all new Master Gardener tour at Rye Preserve. Master Gardener Bob will take participants through the Florida scrub for a close up look of the plants that populate this system. Please call 941-722-4524 for reservations.

January 26, 9-11am - Denny Girard and Al Squires, amateur botanists and Florida Native Plant Society members, will lead a nature walk at Red Bug Slough Preserve. Visitors will be led on a guided walk through various habitats while identifying plants and wildlife. Register on-line at www.scgov.net or call 941-861-5000 and ask for Natural Resources.

January 29, 9-11am - Join Florida Master Naturalist Lee Ann Harling for a casual nature walk at Manasota Scrub Preserve. She will share some history of the site and information about the preserve's varied landscape such as the depression marsh and the restored wetland. Participants will also learn about the local wildlife and see a few unusual native plants too. Register online at www.scgov.net or call 941-861-5000 and ask for Natural Resources.

Final Reflection

Manasota Morning by Jack Taylor (1932-2010)

Photo by CAC Member Lou Newman



A beach walk in morning
in lavender light,
is so joyous, uplifting
and to me a delight.

Sanderlings feeding
just ahead of the surf,

while long-billed willets
seek mole crab turf.

Loggerhead crawls
cross my path now and then,
solely guided by instinct
since heaven knows when.

Gulls fly above me
and call as they go,
to breakfast on minnows
always somewhere below.

And ponderous pelicans
flap gracefully by,
then glide over wave tops
or dive from on high.

On my way to the pass
and back again,
I can't help but stop
for a good morning swim.

With a bag full of shells
I get on my bike,
all salty and happy
from my beach combing hike.

Jack Taylor's timeless poem and Lou Newman's photo of a mother with her chick reminds us of the simple treasures found in our time exploring nature. Best wishes to your and your loved ones for happy memories enjoying Sarasota Bay throughout 2011.

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