

BAY REFLECTIONS

SBEP Newsletter - January 2015 Edition

Happy New Year from SBEP!

In this editon: Bay Guardians in Bradenton, Bay Partners Grants 2015, Policy Board and CAC joint meeting, Fisheries-Independent Monitoring Program, Sarasota Bay Today interviews, Next BG event and remaining Bay Wise Kayak Tours. Thank you for supporting the SBEP mission and its various programs.

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SBEP Bay Guardians at G.T. Bray Park in Bradenton

SBEP hosted a **Bay Guardian** volunteer event at G.T. Bray Park in Bradenton Saturday, December 13. There were 48 volunteers who removed invasive species and trash. The volunteers removed approximately 1,500 Carrotwood trees from a bank near an athletic field. Other invasive species removed included Brazilian pepper, wandering jew, cherry laurel tree and Surinam cherry.

Partners that joined SBEP included Johnson Middle School, Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources and Around the Bend Nature Tours. SBEP provided a picnic lunch to volunteers following the project.



Students from Johnson Middle School.

The next **Bay Guardian Volunteers** event is Saturday, February 7 at North Water Tower Park.

Bay Partners Grant Applications Due March 2

The purpose of the SBEP Bay Partners Grant Program is to promote environmental education, awareness, community involvement, and stewardship to improve the overall quality of Sarasota Bay and its tributaries. To support these goals, funding is available from SBEP for projects that focus on Bay Education, Bay Restoration or Bay-Friendly Landscaping.

SBEP has awarded nearly $247,000 in Bay Partners Grants to support 126 organizations since 2003. Applications for the 2014-15 Bay Partners Grants must be received by 4pm on March 2. Visit the **Bay Partners Grant page** to learn more and download the application.

Please contact Sara Kane at sara@sarasotabay.org if you have any questions about the program.



Volunteers supporting a Bay Partners Grant project at Save Our Seabirds.

SBEP Policy Board and Citizens Advisory Committee Hold a Joint Meeting at Selby Gardens in December

SBEP hosted a combined CAC / Policy Board workshop Friday, December 5 at Selby Gardens. The event was facilitated by Frank Alcock, Associate Professor, Political Science and Environmental Studies at New College of Florida. Members of the SBEP Policy Board had a chance to connect with volunteer members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in a casual setting.



Fisheries-Independent Monitoring (FIM) Program

The SBEP website has been updated with **technical publications** of the Fisheries-Independent Monitoring (FIM) Program. This program is developed, conducted and managed by the Florida Fish and

Wildlife Conservation Commission through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) in St. Petersburg.

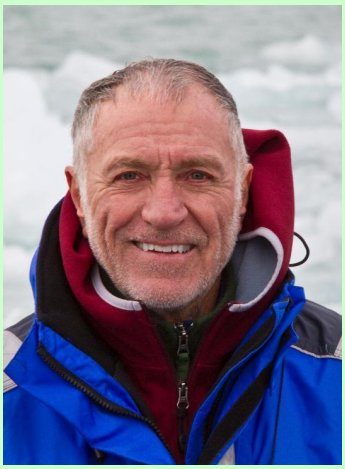
A major component of SBEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan is the importance of restoring and protecting juvenile fish habitats. The Sarasota Bay estuary has undergone considerable urbanization since the 1950's. An understanding of the distribution, abundance and habitat use of nekton (fish and macro invertebrate) within the Sarasota Bay estuary is critical to protecting and restoring estuarine habitats.

The goal of the FIM Program is to provide timely, accurate, and consistent fisheries-independent data and analysis to fisheries managers for the conservation and protection of Florida's fisheries. FIM reports include **Year 1** (July 2010), **Year 2** (June 2012), **Year 3** (June 2013) and **Year 4** (May 2014). Please contact SBEP Staff Scientist, Dr. Jay Leverone at jay@sarasotabay.org to learn more.



FWRI scientist pulling seine nets to collect fish samples for the FIM program.

Sarasota Bay Today Website Updated with New Interviews with Lou Newman and Sherri Swanson





Lou Newman and Sherri Swanson are the latest interviews featured on the Sarasota Bay Today website sponsored by SBEP and managed by Triple 3 Marketing. Lou and Sherri are both volunteer members of the SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Randy Moore is the editor of **Sarasota Bay Today**.

Lou is a retired veterinarian who has developed a reputation as a professional wildlife photographer. He has traveled to more than 70 countries in all seven continents in the pursuit of wildlife photography adventures. What many people don't know about Lou is he's also the father of 9 children, 9 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. **Interview with Lou**.

Sherri is a senior environmental scientist with HDR Engineering, Inc. With expertise in soil, water, wetlands, permitting, and wildlife, Sherri has managed projects in the immediate area as well as Tampa Bay, the Caloosahatchee River, Pasco County, Indian River Lagoon, and even Guam. Sherri has been a major supporter of the Sarasota Bay Water Festival since its inception in 2012. **Interview with Sherri**.

Next Bay Guardian Volunteers Event at North Water Tower Park in Sarasota on Saturday, February 7



The SBEP **Bay Guardians** will be visiting North Water Tower Park in Sarasota on Saturday, February 7. The clean up event will once again target the Air Potato Vine for removal. SBEP has partnered with the local disc golf club for several consecutive years to help reduce the Air Potato Vine population.

The event will also be a kickoff for a three-year restoration, stormwater improvement, and environmental education project at the park. Managing partners include SBEP, Sarasota County, and the City of Sarasota. Funding was recently awarded to SBEP from the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program and to Sarasota County from the Southwest Water Management District. The grant application process has brought together diverse groups that value the park including the Bayou Oaks Neighborhood Association, Indian Beach Sapphire Shores Neighborhood Association, the North Trail Redevelopment Partnership and the Sarasota Sky Pilots Disc Golf Club.

The project will incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to reduce stormwater pollution and improve water quality in Whitaker Bayou and Sarasota Bay. Invasive plants will be removed to increase native habitat and improve aesthetics throughout the park. A diverse education, volunteer, and outreach program will improve environmental stewardship in the area while engaging school groups and local citizens. For more information or to get involved with the project please contact Sara Kane sara@sarasotabay.org.

SBEP Announces Bay Wise Kayak Tours Schedule

Ten trips are organized from December through April with two outings per month led by professional guide Brad Tanner. The trips are free but require participants to bring their own kayak and gear. Each trip lasts between two and three hours and space is limited to 15 individuals per outing.

The late Jack Taylor, a respected marine biologist, helped to create the popular **kayak tour program** in 2007 with a SBEP funded Bay Partners Grant.



Remaining Dates:

January 3 and **January 17**
Leffis and Jewfish Key

February 7 and **February 21**
Lido Mangrove Tunnels

March 7 and March 21
Blind Pass

April 4 and April 18
Lyons and Blackburn Bay

For more information or to be placed on a waiting list please contact Camille info@sarasotabay.org

SBEP News Briefs

Join SBEP on Facebook
Click here to like SBEP. The social media site also features links to many other bay-friendly organizations. We recently reached our goal of 750 page likes! Our new goal is to reach 1,000 page likes in 2015.

SBEP Public Meetings
The next Management Board Meeting is set for 9am on Friday, January 30 and the next Policy Board Meeting is set for 1pm on Friday, February 6. The venue for both meetings will be the Manatee County Administration Building, 1112 Manatee Ave. W, BCC Conference Room, 9th floor Finance Meeting Room. **SBEP Online Calendar**.

Final Reflection with Lou Newman



Lou Newman is a retired veterinarian and active wildlife photographer. Lou is also a volunteer member of the SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee. You can view more of Lou's work on the **Creative Expressions Gallery** on the SBEP website or at **LouNewmanPhotography.com**. Also be sure to read the **interview with Lou Newman** on the Sarasota Bay Today website.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) is dedicated to restoring the area's greatest natural asset - Sarasota Bay. Its unique program strives to improve water quality, increase habitat and enhance the natural resources of the area for use and enjoyment by the public. Sarasota Bay is one of 28 estuaries in the U.S. that have been named by the U.S. Congress as an "estuary of national significance."