

BAY REFLECTIONS

SBEP Newsletter - November 2015

News Summary In this Edition



Tidal Creek Study update, SSA donates $5,000 to support artificial reef program, Bay Wise Kayak Tours, New College completes education program with support from a SBEP Bay Partners Grant, students at Riverview High complete restoration project, Bay Guardians to enhance bioswale at Celery Fields, and the Bay Guardians complete project at Grassy Point Preserve. Thank you for supporting our mission and our various programs.

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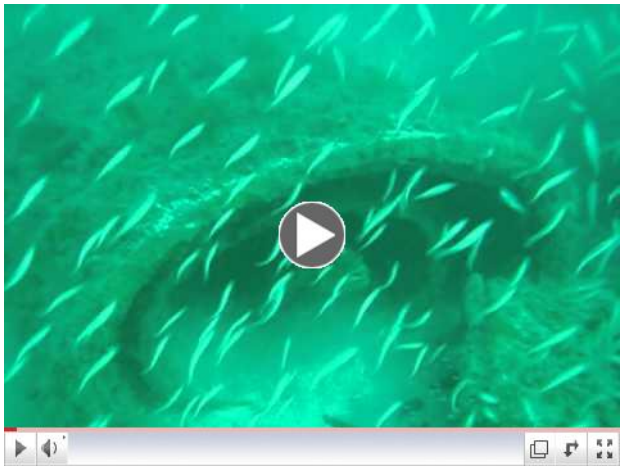
The SBEP Provides Update about Tidal Creek Study

If estuaries are where salt water and fresh water mix, tidal creeks draining to those estuaries are the place where this mixing first occurs. And since daily tides dictate where this mixing occurs, tidal creeks are actually not separate, static entities, but rather dynamic swaths of water at the lower reaches of coastal tributaries below the freshwater upstream.



Despite a tendency toward lower dissolved oxygen and higher chlorophyll levels, tidal creeks are still extremely productive systems. These unique conditions are exploited by many important fish species as refuge from predators and nursery habitats. **Read more**.

Sarasota Sportsmens Association Donates $5,000 to Support Sarasota Bay Artificial Reef Program



Artificial Reefs Attract Fish Species

The Sarasota Sportsmens Association (SSA) donated $5,000 recently to the SBEP. The donation will support the Bay's Artificial Reef Program managed by SBEP, Sarasota County and Manatee County. SSA has donated $50,000 to support the program since 2003.

SSA has operated for 19 years. The nonprofit supports outdoor events and activities while providing education focused on fishing, youth education, sportsmanship, conservation, and public safety. **Read more**.

The SBEP Announces Eighth Bay Wise Kayak Tour Season; First Trip is to Neal Preserve December 5



The SBEP has launched its eighth season presenting the free Bay Wise Kayak Tour Program. This is a fun opportunity for residents and visitors to join professional guide and naturalist Brad Tanner on excursions exploring Sarasota Bay. Brad is a member of the SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the School Coordinator for Mote Marine Laboratory. The late Jack Taylor, a respected marine biologist, created the program in 2007 with a SBEP Bay Partners Grant.

Each morning trip lasts two to three hours and participants are required to provide their own kayak. **Details** are posted on the SBEP website. Here's the schedule: **Neal Preserve on 12/5** and 12/19, Leffis and Jewfish Key on 1/9 and 1/16, Lido Mangrove Tunnels on 2/6 and 2/20, Phillippi Creek on 2/27, Blind Pass on 3/12 and 3/19, and Lyons and Blackburn Bay on 4/9 and 4/16.

New College Completes Summer Education Program with Support from a SBEP Bay Partners Grant



New College of Florida recently completed its fourteenth annual summer PUSH / SUCCESS Program with support from a SBEP Bay Partners Grant. Other supporters included Publix Charities and The Dart Foundation.

PUSH is an acronym for Preparing Unique Students for Healthcare careers; the program helps students in grades 9 through 11. SUCCESS is an acronym for Students United to Create Culturally and Educationally Successful Situations; the program helps students in grades 6 through 8. The focus is to support local students that do not have access to tools and resources promoting science education.

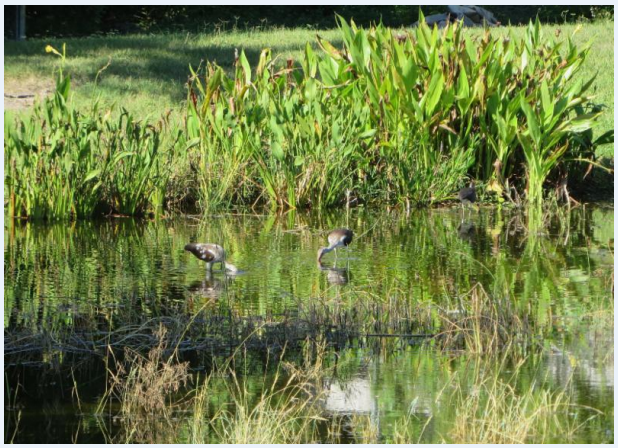
Under the guidance of New College biology professor Sandra Gilchrist, PhD, 34 students performed experiments, recorded observations, completed field trips, and produced data to learn more about the local environment and science protocols.

The SBEP Bay Partners **Grant Program** promotes environmental education, community involvement and citizen stewardship to enhance the quality of Sarasota Bay and its tributaries. SBEP has awarded more than $267,000 in grants since 2003.

Riverview High School Students Complete Phillippi Creek Restoration Project with SBEP Grant Support

Students at Riverview High School completed a demonstration restoration project recently along Phillippi Creek with the support of a SBEP **Bay Partners Grant**. The project entailed removing invasive plants, developing the school's native plant trail, restoring approximately 75 feet of shoreline, and planting native plants to reduce erosion.

The enhanced trail features a four-foot wide 330-foot shell path with signage and areas for viewing. Students also created a handout that explains the project. The restoration incorporates natural elements on campus into the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum.



Native plants attract wildlife

The SBEP Bay Guardians to Enhance Bioswale at the Celery Fields Bird Center Saturday Morning



The Bay Guardian volunteers will enhance a bioswale with native plants at Celery Fields on Saturday, November 7. Project partners include SBEP, Around the Bend Nature Tours, Sarasota Audubon, and Sweetbay Nursery. SBEP is supporting the project with a Bay Partners Grant.

The Bay Guardians will visit Robinson Preserve Saturday, December 12 to complete a morning Oyster bagging project. This is a joint effort with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP). Project partners include SBEP, TBEP, Around the Bend Nature Tours, and the Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Department.

Coming in early 2016 will be three Air Potato Roundup events to get rid of more of the invasive species at North Water Tower Park on January 16, Red Bug Slough on February 27, and Philippi Estate Park on March 12. Native plants are resilient to local environmental conditions and attract wildlife. Invasive species like the air potato compete with native plants, which can disrupt the balance of the bay's ecosystem. **Join** the award-winning Bay Guardians.

The SBEP Bay Guardians Plant 750 Plants at Grassy Point Preserve in Holmes Beach on October 10

A group of 33 Bay Guardians planted 750 Florida-native plants at Grassy Point Preserve in Holmes Beach on October 10. The project partners included SBEP, Around the Bend Nature Tours, City of Holmes Beach, and Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Department.



City of Holmes Beach Mayor Bob Johnson and City Commissioner Carol Soustek attended. Mayor Johnson presented a proclamation honoring former Commissioner Billie Martini for raising awareness and supporting fundraising that helped establish Grassy Point Preserve.

SBEP News Briefs

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Sustainable Communities Workshop December 3
The Tenth Annual Sustainable Communities Workshop is set for December 3 at the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida Event and Conference Center located on Cattlemen Road in Sarasota. Kaid Benifield with PlaceMakers LLC and Jon Thaxton with the Gulf Coast Community Foundation are the speakers. **Learn more** about registration and opportunities to be a sponsor or exhibitor.

Tidal Creek Study Presentation

Jay Leverone, PhD, the SBEP Staff Scientist, will make a presentation about the Tidal Creek Study at the **Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation** meeting in Portland November 8-12. The study engages SBEP, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, and six Florida counties.

SBEP Public Meetings

The next SBEP Management Board meeting is 9am on Friday, January 26. The next SBEP Policy Board meeting is 1pm on Friday, February 12. The venue for both meetings will be noted on the SBEP website calendar.

Final Reflection with Sandy Hedgepeth



The Painted Bunting is a ground feeder that can be found in northeast Florida through the Orlando area from April through September and south of Orlando from September through March. Sandy is a professional photographer and lifelong nature lover. She also served as a key volunteer supporting the Sarasota Bay Water Festival in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Visit Sandy's **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."