

BAY REFLECTIONS

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Newsletter September 2012

In This Edition:

Our lead item references the local restoration projects being supported by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and other partners. Funded projects include Sarasota Bayfront Park, Pinecraft Park and South Creek running through Oscar Scherer State Park. Planning continues for the inaugural **Sarasota Bay Water Festival** set for Saturday, November 17 at Ken Thompson Park. Thank you to all of the current sponsors; new sponsors welcome. **Click here** to complete the online exhibitor application form. The next Bay Guardian volunteer outing is set for Saturday, October 6 at Perico Preserve in Manatee County. Thank you to everyone that supports the ongoing efforts by SBEP and its partners to restore and protect Sarasota Bay.

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Southwest Florida Water Management District Approves Funding for Local Restoration Projects

Southwest Florida Water Management District has approved funding for a number of local projects to be managed by SBEP in 2013. The projects are located at Sarasota Bayfront Park, Pinecraft Park, and South Creek running through Oscar Scherer State Park. **Project partners** include Sarasota County, City of Sarasota, Florida Park Service, Florida DEP, USFWS, and NOAA.



SBEP is partnering with the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County to create "sustainable" features at Bayfront Park that will showcase eco-friendly landscape practices and low impact development techniques. SBEP plans to construct several variations of "living shorelines" featuring native plants for erosion protection and shell substrate with organic soils. The site will also feature signs explaining the ecological benefits of "living shorelines."

Pinecraft Park is a 15-acre Sarasota County park located adjacent to Philippi Creek. The park includes recreational amenities and an oak hammock with trails for hiking and bird watching. The County has worked on the eastern shoreline of the Creek removing sediments and installing rip-rap revetment, removing exotic vegetation and modifying the slope to reduce sedimentation and provide public access. SBEP will be grading, re-stabilizing and planting the western shoreline of the Creek.

South Creek flows through Oscar Scherer State Park. SBEP is planning to restore and enhance historical wetlands. Activities include exotic removal, re-grading and planting, restoring an isolated borrow pit with altered hydrology, and improving the water quality through nutrient uptake prior to discharge into South Creek and eventually Sarasota Bay.

Ben Hammond to Perform November 17; I Love Sarasota Bay Photo Contest Set with Three Age Divisions; Festival Accepting Exhibitor Applications



Scenic view of Sarasota Bay from Ken Thompson Park.

The inaugural **Sarasota Bay Water Festival** is set for Saturday, November 17 at Ken Thompson Park. Ben Hammond, a popular guitarist from Sarasota and Maine, was recently selected as the festival's first music performer. Ben will also serve as the MC on the music stage. More performers will be announced soon.

Click here to learn more about the *I Love Sarasota Bay Photo Contest* with three age divisions. The winning submissions and other finalists will be displayed at the event and guests will have an opportunity to select the People's Choice Award. Another art component of the water festival is a Creative Arts Tent displaying photography and other art from a dozen respected professionals. Many items will be on sale in time for the holiday season. The Observer Media Group is the sponsor of the Creative Arts Tent.



Ben Hammond

The first "iceberg" ever seen in Sarasota Bay will also be unveiled at the festival thanks to the creativity of New College Sculpting Professor Rick Herzog. The award-winning Sarasota Ski-A-Rees Water Ski Show Team will perform at 4pm. Event guests can also gain free admission to the popular Mote Aquarium which is open from 10am to 5pm. Free admission requires obtaining a special stamp at the event.

SBEP is the host sponsor and Triple 3 Marketing is managing the festival. Other sponsors in random order include: City of Sarasota, Solar Direct, Manatee County, Stantec, Whole Foods Market, Sarasota County, Economy Tackle, Observer Media Group, Town of Longboat Key, HDR Engineering, Inc., City of Bradenton, Janicki Environmental, Inc., Southwest Florida Water Management District, Mote Marine Laboratory, Caldwell Trust Company, Visit Sarasota County, New College of Florida, Sarasota Sailing Squadron, Scheda Ecological Associates, Inc., Freedom Boat Club, Around the Bend Nature Tours, WSRQ Talk Radio, Save Our Seabirds, Inc., Reef Innovations, Inc., Sarasota Audubon, Nature's Academy, Friends of Sarasota County Parks, Science and Environmental Council of Sarasota County, and the UF/IFAS Extension in both counties.

Event organizers are seeking additional sponsors from the private and public sector. Some of the sponsor contributions will support SBEP education and volunteer programs benefiting Sarasota Bay. **Click here** to complete the online exhibitor application form. Limited spaces are available for non-sponsoring exhibitors. Learn more at **sarasotabaywaterfestival.com**.

SBEP to Provide Technical Expertise to Help Future Bay Scallop Seeding Projects in Sarasota Bay Waters

The SBEP is working with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Sarasota Bay Watch and Mote Marine Laboratory in an effort to help boost scallop populations in Sarasota Bay. The plan is to do four scallop releases beginning in the fall and continuing in early spring. Two locations have been identified for the release; North Bay and the vicinity of New Pass and Big Pass.



Photo by Dotty Motta of Bradenton.

The restoration technique that will be used was developed by the SBEP Staff Scientist, Jay Leverone, PhD.
It involves the release of millions of hatchery produced scallop offspring (larvae) into the Bay's most productive seagrass meadows. One

of the ways to measure results is counting the number of scallops that settle on artificial collectors placed around the designated restoration site.

Dr. Leverone worked previously for more than two decades as a scientist at Mote Marine Laboratory where he conducted research about bay scallop restoration. The SBEP provided funding for various grants supporting his research and also helped to fund the first scallop restoration project in Sarasota Bay in 1993. The SBEP, with the ongoing support of its partners, has also led local efforts to restore oyster beds.

Click here to read more about SBEP science and technical projects.

Join the SBEP Bay Guardians at Perico Preserve October 6; More than 400 Bay Guardians Have Completed Seven Projects since October 2011



Bay Guardian volunteers at Emerson Point Preserve in Manatee County.

The next Bay Guardian volunteer outing is set for Saturday, October 6 at Perico Preserve in Manatee County. The plan is to plant Florida-native plants. It will be the fifth Bay Guardian event in 2012. Inquiries are welcome by Sara Kane, the SBEP Public Outreach Manager at **sara@sarasotabay.org**.

The SBEP **Bay Guardians** continue to have a positive impact on regional efforts to restore and protect Sarasota Bay. More than 400 adult and student volunteers have participated in seven volunteer outings since October 2011. Most of the projects involved planting Florida native species, removing invasive plants and removing trash and debris.

Completed projects have taken place at Ken Thompson Park, Neal Preserve, FISH Preserve in the Village of Cortez, Quick Point Nature Preserve on Longboat Key, North Water Tower Park, Emerson Point Preserve, and North Lido Beach Park. Neal Preserve, FISH Preserve, and Emerson Point Preserve are located in Manatee County.

Chris Warn, Jack Merriam and Tommy Vaughan-Birch Confirmed as Volunteer Officers of the SBEP CAC

The SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) approved a slate of new volunteer officers at the August 6 meeting. Chris Warn is the chairman, Jack Merriam is the vice chairman and Tommy Vaughan-Birch is the secretary.



Chris Warn

Chris Warn is an environmental consultant employed by Weston Solutions, Inc., a national environmental services company. Jack Merriam is the recently retired environmental manager for Sarasota County where he worked for 12 years in the mid 80s and more recently from 2005 until his retirement earlier this year. Tommy Vaughan-Birch has been a volunteer at Mote Marine Laboratory since 1990 and is a past president of the Volunteers of Mote Marine Laboratory.

The 26-member CAC provides public input to support SBEP planning. The group also promotes the SBEP mission and its various programs throughout Sarasota and Manatee County. Current members include parents, grandparents, educators, former elected representatives, business owners, environmental advocates, scientists, ecologists, realtors, and engineers. **Click here** to learn more about the CAC.

New College Completes Bay Partners Grant Project Benefiting 17 Science-Minded High School Students

New College of Florida recently completed a SBEP Bay Partners Grant project that helped 17 local high school students learn more about the scientific method, critical thinking and the relationship between Sarasota Bay and human health. The Push Success Program, under the guidance of Sandra Gilchrist, PhD, focused on local habitat and aquatic life.

The students met over a three week period to learn about field collection techniques, scientific writing, the protocol for creating and interpreting graphs, proper use of the microscope, and the use of online data sets. Development of leadership skills and conflict management were also incorporated into the curriculum.

Special projects during the program included an analysis of collected beach trash; wound healing of corals; the study of seagrass and oyster habitat; ocean acidification experiments to demonstrate how humans can affect the oceans unintentionally; the impact of pollutants on aquatic species; and the relationship between aquatic life and human nutrition. Participating students made a final presentation to family members and others to demonstrate their enhanced knowledge.

SBEP has awarded more than $213,000 in support of 109 local grants since 2003. Applications for the next fiscal year must be received at the SBEP offices by 4pm on Friday, March 1, 2013 to be eligible. Applications can be downloaded from the SBEP website at **sarasotabay.org**.

New College Professor Frank Alcock Answers Questions for Sarasota Bay Today; Interview Focuses on Sustainability & Environmental Politics in Florida



Click here to read the latest interview in Sarasota Bay Today, the region's Bay-centric blog edited by Randy Moore with Triple 3 Marketing. Frank Alcock, PhD, a political science professor at New College of Florida, answers questions about his work and research in the areas of sustainability and climate and energy politics.

Other posts on Sarasota Bay Today include interviews with Tim Rummage, PhD, with Ringling School of Art & Design, Cris Costello with the Sierra Club, Jon Thaxton with Sarasota County, Jeanne Dubi with Sarasota Audubon, Zachary Cole with the University of Florida, Jack Merriam the recently retired environmental manager with Sarasota County, Jay Leverone, PhD, with SBEP, Paul Hindsley, PhD, with Eckerd College, Sara Kane with SBEP, and Randy Moore with the **Sarasota Bay Water Festival**. New interviews are posted monthly.

Citizen's Advisory Committee Profile: Sarah Hirsch

A native of Virginia, Sarah earned her undergraduate degree in Biology from Wake Forest University. After graduating, she pursued her passion for the ocean and worked for the U.S. National Park Service at Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland where she monitored water quality. She is currently a biologist with Mote Marine Laboratory's Sea Turtle Conservation and Research Program. For 30 years, this program has coordinated conservation efforts for 35 miles of Sarasota County shoreline. Sarah enjoys beach combing, scuba diving, kayaking, and gymnastics.



"As a fairly new resident of Sarasota, I was excited to join the CAC where I could learn and participate in the efforts to restore and protect Sarasota Bay." Sarah said. "The Sea Turtle Conservation and Research Program relies on volunteers and I'm proud to be associated with SBEP which is pursuing similar goals."

Click here to read the bios of all of the current members of the SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee. The purpose of the group is to provide citizen input to support SBEP planning and to promote the SBEP mission and programs throughout the region.

SBEP Welcomes Intern Stephanie Sherman

Stephanie Sherman is the new intern with SBEP. She joined the organization in early August. Stephanie graduated with honors from New College of Florida last year with a BA Degree in Marine Biology.



Some of her prior independent study projects focused on local aquatic ecosystems, aquarium design for seahorse breeding, and the study of coral growth with the use of electric currents. She also completed outreach programs from 2007 to 2012 with Push Success based in Bradenton, IMG Academies also in Bradenton, Pritzker Marine Biology Research Center, and Countryside Nursery. Some of her hobbies include scuba diving, racquetball, yoga, photography, tree climbing, and leisure reading.

Mote Marine High School Intern Program Completes Bay Partners Grant Project Focused on the Bay



A group of 15 high school students with the Mote Marine Laboratory High School Internship Program recently completed a science learning project that was funded by a SBEP **Bay Partners Grant**. The effort included student participation in two cleanup projects at City Island and Quick Point Preserve, a biodiversity sampling of New Pass, and the presentation of sample findings to staff at Mote Marine Laboratory and family members.

Funding support from the SBEP grant helped the group purchase research tools including seine nets, dip nets, plankton nets, aerators, water quality test kits, microscopes, waders, and binoculars. Studying biodiversity within New Pass waters expanded student awareness about the importance of data collection, analysis, teamwork, research, and public speaking during the presentation of the findings.

SBEP News Briefs

Manatee County GeoTour Program
Manatee County's Natural Resource Department has launched a free Taking Flight GeoTour of Manatee County preserves. The idea is to use GPS-enabled devices like a smart phone or GPS unit to find 15 hidden geo-caches throughout the preserves. Participants can receive a free customized TFGT tracking tag after completing at least 12 of the 15 caches. The project also provides information about local birds. Participants will need a special Taking Flight GeoTour Passport available at MCNRD located at 415 10th Street West in Bradenton. The passports are also online **here**. Funding for the education program was provided by SBEP, Tampa Bay Estuary Program and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program. Inquiries are welcome at **melissa.net@mymanatee.org**.

New Sustainable Floridians Course
UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension is launching a new program about sustainability in September. The 8-week program will develop local sustainability ambassadors that can do community outreach through local programs and events. The program will focus on energy, land use, transportation, food, water, economic impact, and leadership. Evangeline Linkous, PhD, AICP, and Community Development Agent JP Gellermann are the instructors. Classes will also feature guest speakers. Sustainable Floridians classes will be held Wednesdays in September and October, starting September 12 from 9am to 2pm. Most sessions will be held at the UF/IFAS office at Twin Lakes Park. **Click here** to learn more or email **jpgeller@scgov.net**.

International Coastal Cleanup Day

The 2012 International Coastal Cleanup is set for two dates in September and October. With the support of many local volunteers, Keep Sarasota County Beautiful (KSCB) and Keep Manatee County Beautiful (KMCB) contributed to the 9 million pounds of garbage collected worldwide with over 500,000 volunteers. For KSCB, the event is set for Saturday, September 15. The first 2,500 volunteers to register will receive a goody bag. **Click here** to register or call 941-861-5000. For KMCB, the event will be held Saturday, October 6 from 9am to noon. More than eight locations in Manatee County have been identified for cleanups. **Click here** to learn more or call 941-795-8272.

Sustainable Communities Workshop
The seventh annual workshop organized by Sarasota County is set for 8:30am to 5pm on Tuesday, October 30 at the Girl Scouts Event Center located at 4780 Cattleman Road in Sarasota. This year's theme is Innovation for the Future. **Click here** to register.

Youth Ocean Conservation Summit
The second annual summit is set for Saturday, November 3 at Mote Marine Laboratory. A student film festival and the screening of the film This is Your Ocean: Sharks is also planned for the prior evening. One of the panel discussions is focused on careers in ocean conservation. Sara Kane with SBEP is one of the panelists along with Dr. Nick Whitney, a staff scientist at Mote Marine Laboratory, Keith Wilson with the Sarasota County 4-H Program, Kat Nicolalsen, a senior manatee research trainer at Mote, and Kim Bassos-Hull, a senior biologist with the Mote Dolphin Research Program. **Click here** to learn more about the summit program.

SBEP Public Meetings
The SBEP Policy and Management Boards will meet Friday, September 7 at the Buchanan Conference Room at Mote Marine Laboratory. The management board meets 9am and the policy board meets at noon. The next meeting of the SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is set for 4:30pm on Monday, October 1 at Dan McClure Auditorium located at the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport. The next meeting of the SBEP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is set for 9am on Friday, October 19 at Dan McClure Auditorium.

Visit These Bay-Friendly Links Today

Click here to see 600 photos from 30 plus local events and programs.
Click here to visit 60 websites of other Bay-friendly organizations.
Click here to visit the websites of the SBEP habitat restoration project partners.
Click here to visit a digital map showing completed, current and planned restoration projects.
Click here to learn more about the members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
Click here to learn more about the members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

Final Reflection with Ron Wooldridge



Ron Wooldridge served in both the U.S. Air Force and the FBI during his notable career. He will be one of the photographers showcased at the **Sarasota Bay Water Festival** on November 17. The SBEP **Creative Expressions Gallery** showcases the passion many people feel about the beauty and importance of Sarasota Bay.

Randy & Bryan Moore, Triple 3 Marketing, LLC, **randy@triple3marketing.com**
Sara Kane, SBEP Public Outreach Manager, **sara@sarasotabay.org**

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."

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