BAY REFLECTIONS

Restoring Our Bays

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Newsletter Spring 2010

In This Issue

Gulf Guardian Awards

Deepwater Horizon Response

Bay Guardians New Volunteer Program

Upcoming Events

2010 Bay Partners Grants Awarded

CAC Member, Cyndi Seamon

SBEP joins Tampa Bay Estuary Program for Kayak Trip

PIER PROGRAM... Protection, Involvement, Education and Restoration

Bowlees Creek Island Restorations

ALERTS...Protect Sarasota Bay's Threatened Beach Nesting Wildlife!
...Restricted Season for Fertilzer Application Begins

Pooches for the Planet

SBEP in the News



Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Tapped to Organize Local Environmental Organizations for Sarasota Bay Watershed Emergency Management Briefings

On Tuesday, May 11th Ed McCrane, Sarasota County's Emergency Services Director hosted a two hour briefing at the Sarasota County Emergency Operations Center for Sarasota County's environmental and conservation organizations to update them about the county's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Manatee County's Emergency Operations Center briefing will be held at the beginning of June. For more information or to have your group included contact sara@sarasotabay.org or call (941)

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Gulf Guardian Awards Presented to Inter-local Partners

Over the first quarter of 2010 SBEP Executive Director Mark Alderson presented each of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Inter-local Partners and Citizens a Gulf Guardian statue to acknowledge their contribution for winning a first place 2009 Gulf Guardian Award in the Partnership Category.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program partners recognized included U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Florida Water

955-8085. Updates also available at Facebook or www.sarasotabay.org.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program was tapped to compile a list of local environmental groups as part of a local oil response team and to invite them to attend the briefings. Some of the groups attending were Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Save Our Seabirds, Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota Bay Watch, Anna Maria Turtle Watch, Keep Manatee County Beautiful, Keep Sarasota County Beautiful, The Snook Foundation, The Wildlife Center of Venice, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, The Science and Environment Council, Wildlife Inc., SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee, SBEP Technical Advisory Committee, Sarasota Conservation Foundation, Volunteer Services of Manatee County, Preserve Palma Sola Scenic Highway, Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve, Realize Bradenton and Florida Sea Grant.

The Sarasota Bay watershed has had no impact from the Deepwater Horizon oil rig spill but continues to monitor developments related to the location and size of the spill. For complete updates, local resources, community partners and volunteer info visit: Sarasota County's Emergency Response Info Center

http://www.scgov.net/OilSpill.asp
Manatee County's Emergency Response Info Center
http://www.mymanatee.org/

HOW YOU CAN HELP
The Florida Division of Emergency Management suggests those who want to aid the oil cleanup consider the following methods:

- Watch for oiled wildlife, vegetation and beaches by becoming a Coast Watch volunteer. Find information on scheduled beach cleanups and other volunteer opportunities at www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org.
- Report injured or oiled wildlife to the Wildlife Distress Hotline at 1-866-557-1401.
- Report oil spotted in water or on shoreline at 1-866-448-5816.

Other Resources:

Management District, Manatee County, Sarasota County, City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, City of Bradenton Beach, City of Holmes Beach and City of Anna Maria Island.

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been designated the lead state agency for responding to potential impacts of the oil spill along Florida's shoreline. For updates/information on response actions and impacts to the state of Florida: www.dep.state.fl.us/
- Mote Marine Laboratory's Beach Conditions Report has expanded its information to include advisories about the oil spill impacts to the Florida beaches that they monitor: http://www.mote.org/beaches/

SBEP Launches New Volunteer Program!

SARASOTA BAY GUARDIANS



SBEP has launched its newest volunteer program, Sarasota Bay Guardians, in partnership with Around the Bend Nature Tours. Bay Guardians was established to get families, teens, and children out in the field where they learn about the flora and fauna of the region while engaging in activities that contribute to the restoration of Sarasota Bay.

The SBEP creates volunteer opportunities to get everyday people involved in making a difference in their community by engaging in activities that make a positive impact on the Sarasota Bay watershed. These volunteers help SBEP, local governments and nonprofit partners with the restoration and maintenance of parks and preserves in the Sarasota Bay watershed by removing trash and exotic plants, and planting native plants.

For more information about getting involved with the Bay Guardians contact sara@sarasotabay.org / (941) 955-8085 OR karen@aroundbend.com / (941) 794-8773.



Saturday, April 10th - Earth Day Restoration Native Planting at Robinson Preserve. Sarasota Bay Guardians volunteers planted drought tolerant plants, grasses and native vegetation throughout Robinson Preserve.

Saturday, May 8th - Sister Keys Clean Up
Sarasota Bay Guardians along with Audubon, Around the Bend Nature Tours and the Snook Foundation gathered close to a ton of trash during the Sarasota Bay Watch Second Annual Sister Keys Clean Up.







Saturday, May 15th - Great Air Potato Roundup at North Water Tower Park
Sarasota Bay Guardians, Sky Pilots, elementary and middle school students, and families from the Bayou Oaks neighborhood dug up over 85 pounds of air potatoes and vines!

Upcoming Events

Sunday, June 6, 10am-2pm - World Ocean Day at Mote - Visit the SBEP booth

Environmental Specialty Summer Camps from 9am-noon

Friday, June 18 - Cub Camp at Nokomis Beach
Thursday, July 22 - Regular Camp at Turtle Beach
Monday, July 28 - Regular Camp at Nokomis Beach
Tuesday, August 10 - Advanced Camp at Turtle Beach

Uncover the mysteries of the beach wrack line and explore the seashore using seine nets to collect and identify coastal animals and plants with SBEP outreach coordinator Sara Kane. Short classroom time followed by hands-on time outside. Offered by Sarasota County. For camp information call 941-861-9870 or after June 1st register in person at Twin Lakes Park, 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota, FL.



2010 Bay Partners Grants Awarded

Fully Funded
Scenic Waves Partnership Committee, City of Bradenton Beach $1,575 - *Neighborhood Water Conservation Demonstration Project*. Installment of a rain catchment system at their local neighborhood community center. They will incorporate signage with "bay-wise" lessons and have a workday kick-off event.

Bay Haven Basics Plus and New College $950 - *The Garden of Reign*. Transformation of a barren spot on campus to one that is sustained by a rain garden and hosts native plants.

Palma Sola Botanical Park Foundation $2,000 - *Palma Sola Botanical Park Bay Partners Planting and Habitat Restoration Project*. Enhance an existing landscape with native plants and improve impacted tributary riparian habitats.

Manatee County YMCA, Bradenton Branch/Aquatics $3,000 - *Bradenton Branch YMCA Bubble Blowers Program*. Students and families learn how to snorkel to conduct shallow water, inshore, grass flat cleanups.

Island Village Montessori Schools $3,000 - *Island Village Community Bay Education Project*. Educate students and families about the importance of coastal ecology in Florida. Students will have the opportunity to attend sea-camp and other educational experiences at Mote Marine Laboratory and Myakka State Park.

Windward Bay Condominiums $1,639 - *Create a Saltwater Bioswale Demonstration Plot*. Bay Friendly landscaping project for a demonstration plot of a bioswale with native plants.

Partially Funded

Mote Marine Laboratory $1,000 - *Mote High School Internship Education Program*. High school students will participate in marine research by collecting data about the health of seagrass beds. This will engage students in the scientific process and enhance their understanding of local marine life.

Keep Manatee Beautiful $1,500 - *Kingfish Boat Ramp Native Landscaping on Palma Sola Scenic Highway*. Enhancement project for boat parking lot to reduce stormwater runoff.

Simply Green Solutions $1,500 - *Village on the Bay: Waterways Past, Present and Future.* Final design layout and creation of water education model for Cortez Fishing village.

Westchester Condo Association $1,000 - *Restoration Project to enhance the Southern Boundary of the Westchester Condos.* Removal of non-native plants, restoration with native plants and installation of micro-irrigation equipment.

Wakeland Elementary School of International Studies $1,000 - *Habitat Hoopla.* Creating a wildlife garden and classroom habitats. Will have planting day that will involve students and parents.

Bayshore Elementary School $1,000 - *Bayshore Elementary Bay Buddies Bunch*. Cleanups and exotic plant removal at preserves throughout the Sarasota Bay watershed.

Venice Area Audubon Society $1,000 - *Barrels and Butterflies: Creating a Sustainable Wildlife Garden*. Refurbish an existing butterfly garden using Bay Friendly plants to create a sustainable irrigation system that will use rainwater. Garden will be used for public education and monitoring of butterfly species.

Sunbow Bay Condo Association $2,500 - *Demonstration Site for Condo Associations on Anna Maria Island Bay Fronts*. Bay Friendly landscaping project with native plantings. They will have an ongoing educational program to keep residents aware of the benefits of Bay Friendly landscaping.

Manatee County Natural Resources $2,300 - *World Beneath the Waves: Exploring the Fauna of Sarasota Bay by Land and by Sea*. Education program that will teach participants about the fauna of Sarasota Bay for hands-on aquatic collection and paddling sessions.

CAC Member Profile

Cyndi Seamon



Cyndi grew up in the Midwest most of her life and enjoyed the lakes and rivers of Iowa, Wisconsin & Minnesota. As a child she remembers seeing the commercials about Smokey the Bear & the iconic Native American Indian with the tear on his cheek. These images made an indelible imprint on Seamon and thus began a journey of commitment to the preservation of the environment and wildlife.

"Since moving to Florida in 2002 I've had many opportunities to volunteer for wonderful organizations like SBEP, Longboat Key Turtle Watch and Mote Marine," explains Seamon. "As a resident of Longboat Key I am surrounded by water and truly appreciate the clean environment."

Seamon didn't really understand what an estuary was until becoming a member of the CAC in 2008. "Since that time I have been able to share my knowledge with many people as I continue to learn more with every meeting or event. I feel honored to be a part of a wonderful organization that is able to bring in volunteers with a wealth of knowledge from many different backgrounds and as a group to make a difference."

SBEP joins Tampa Bay Estuary Program for Kayak Trip to Maripose Key



On May 19, 2010 members of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and the Tampa Bay Estuary Program Citizens Advisory Committees gathered for a joint kayak trip to Maripose Key, a recently restored island located in Tampa Bay.

PIER PROGRAM

Protection, Involvement, Education and Restoration





Wednesday, April 21 - Low Impact Development (LID) Field Trip
Around the Bend Nature Tours offered the first Sarasota Bay PIER high school Low Impact Development (LID) field trip to Booker High School students with a field trip to Oscar Scherer State Park.

In a pre-visit trip to Booker High on April 12, Karen Fraley introduced students to LID principles including rain gardens and bio-swales, rain barrels, cisterns, reducing pavement and increasing green space, permeable pavers, soil amendments, tree box planters & green roofs. Career options in the "green industries" were also

discussed during the school visit.

Forty six students and three chaperones visited Oscar Scherer State Park to put their new knowledge into practice. Water quality samples were taken at five sites and evaluated for temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity and salinity. Students also created their own storm water retention system using LID principles and identified native plants and local habitats. Funding was provided by a Science and Environmental Council grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Saturday, May 8 - Science Teachers Training Workshop
The third and final Science Teacher Training Workshop of the school year was recently held at New College of Florida by Sandra L. Gilchrist, Ph.D., Chair of the Natural Sciences Department. Teachers from all grade levels attended the workshop to learn about coastal fire ecology. The focus of the series of workshops is improving teaching skills and the understanding of science and how to teach science. Curriculum includes: Introduction to Estuaries, Waves and Currents, and Coastal Fire Ecology. Workshops run a full day on Saturdays thereby offering teachers the opportunity to earn continuing education credits and are sponsored by SBEP as part of the PIER program. Workshops are completed for this year but will resume in the fall of 2010.

Bowlees Creek Island Restoration


before


after

Bowlees Creek Island is a 3-acre spoil island at the mouth of Bowlees Creek in Manatee County. The island, which is managed by the Audubon of Florida's Coastal Islands Program, has been a priority candidate for habitat restoration by the SBEP in their Master Habitat Restoration Plan. Audubon and SBEP staff conducted a habitat evaluation last year and endorsed restoring the island to improve wildlife habitat primarily through exotic vegetation removal and installation of native plants.

The island is fringed with mangroves, but the interior landscape is overrun with exotic carrotwood and Brazilian pepper trees and dotted with Australian pines. In January, the firm WilsonMiller was contracted to remove the exotic vegetation on the island. The vegetation was gathered into several piles for eventual burning once it has dried out. WilsonMiller will also maintain the area to prevent seedlings from sprouting. Native vegetation will eventually be planted since there are limited opportunities for native plants to colonize the island. The timing of the planting will coincide with the rainy season for irrigation. In the meantime, there will be a volunteer trash cleanup scheduled for later this year.

ALERTS

Protect Sarasota Bay's Threatened Beach Nesting Wildlife!

Sarasota Bay and the Gulf beaches provide critical habitat for endangered wildlife year round. But in the summer nesting activities of these endangered species makes our region even more special. Being aware and respectful of these endangered species and their nesting activities is critical for their continued existence. You can help!

Beach Nesting Birds





From February through August threatened species such as snowy plovers, Wilson's plovers, least terns and black skimmers nest on our local beaches. Due to human interference and vandalism these nests have not been successful in the last few years. This is a serious problem for the continued existence of these protected species.

Here is what you can do to protect beach nesting birds:

· Pick up litter, fill in holes, and never leave furniture or debris lying on the beach
· Keep dogs and pets off the beach
· Respect posted nesting areas
· NEVER FEED WILDLIFE. Gulls, crows and raccoons prey on eggs and chicks. When you feed them you draw them to near-by nesting sites in great numbers.
· Avoid flying kites or throwing balls near designated beach-nesting bird areas. The nests and chicks are very well camouflaged. You may trample nests and birds without even knowing it!
· Stick close to the water's edge and avoid the vegetated upper beach and dune

areas. Stay on established paths when crossing vegetation. The birds nest in, near and around the vegetated dune areas of the beach. Again very well camouflaged chicks and nests make them very hard to see!
· Promote sharing the beach with other species. Talk to friends and neighbors about this issue. Volunteer!

To report violations call 1-888-404-FWCC (3922). Beach nesting birds are threatened species and protected by the State of Florida.

For more info on how you can help protect beach nesting birds visit Anna Maria Island Beach Nesting Bird Watch, Sarasota Audubon Society or Manatee Audubon Society.

Beach Nesting Sea Turtles





From May 1st through October 31st sea turtles nest on our local beaches. Sarasota and Manatee County beaches provide nesting grounds for threatened loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) sea turtles, endangered green (*Chelonia mydas*) sea turtles and occasionally for other sea turtle species. Florida's west coast hosts the largest nesting population of loggerheads in the Gulf of Mexico.

Here is what you can do to protect nesting sea turtles:



· Pick up litter, fill in holes, and never leave furniture or debris lying on the beach

· Tint windows that face the beach

· Turn off lights visible on nesting beaches or shield the lights from the beach

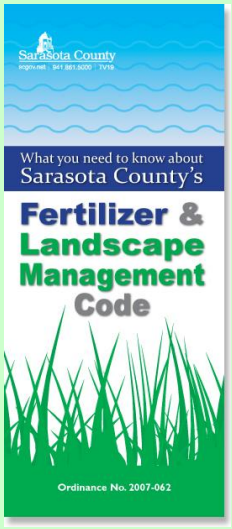
· Use Turtle Safe Lighting- these red lights emit a very narrow portion of the visible light spectrum, which is less intrusive to nesting sea turtles and hatchlings

· If disoriented hatchlings are found away from the sea, call local law enforcement

· Close opaque curtains or blinds after dark to cover windows visible from the beach

For more info on how you can help protect nesting sea turtles visit:

Sarasota County Sea Turtle Program - www.scgov.net
Longboat Key Turtle Watch - http://www.lbkturtlewatch.com/
Anna Maria Island Turtle Watch - http://www.islandturtles.com/
Learn more about local sea turtle research/monitoring efforts - www.mote.org.



Restricted Season for Fertilizer Application Begins June 1st

No fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus shall be applied to turf or landscape plants from June 1-Sept. 30 of each year in Sarasota County. Read the Sarasota County "Fertilizer and Landscape Management Code" to help you comply and make a difference in your own neighborhood in protecting and preserving our water resources. www.scgov.net

Pooches for the Planet

Scoop that Poop... Clean Waters! Clean Yards! Clean Shoes!

On May 1st The Valentine House at Robinson Preserve had its grand opening after a year of renovations. The Pooches crew was there and during the celebration aquired another 65 pledges signed from people committing to Scoop the Poop! For more info about Pooches for the Planet click here.

SBEP in the News

Spring 2010 - Natural Awakenings Pet has ad for Pooches for the Planet

"Earth Day Restoration Native Planting at Robinson Preserve, Sat. 4/10" promoting SBEP Bay Guardians volunteer event received coverage in the following calendars:

March 25 - Young Professionals Group Plugged-In eNewsletter
March 30 - Biz941 Daily on-line
April 7 - The Islander
April 8 - Bradenton Times on-line
April 9 - Herald Tribune
April 10 - Bradenton Herald
April 13 - Green Travel 1 Sustainable Tourism Headlines

April 13 - Bradenton Times On-line "Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Bay

Guardians Honor Earth Day at Robinson Preserve" (Erica Newport) click here

April 15 - Bradenton Times On-line "Manatee County Commissioners Often Speak Most Freely When Their Chambers are Nearly Empty' Comm. Chappie said, "The Tampa Bay Estuary Program meeting I recently went to had a single agenda item: Send a letter to the EPA requesting that the EPA accept nutrient levels the Sarasota Bay (Estuary Program) people recommend. (Robin Miller) click here

Bradenton Times On-line "Refurbished Valentine House at Robinson Preserve set for May 1 Grand Opening" mentions Pooches for the Planet and SBEP. click here

April 27 - HT Community Central section "Science winners lauded" Over the next year a winner will work with Dr. Jay Leverone from SBEP. click here

May 2 - Bradenton Herald "Proposed water quality criteria could be costly" mentions SBEP and the success it has had working with surrounding counties and municipalities. (Carl Nudi) click here

May 5 - ABC 7 mysuncoast.com "State of Emergency issued for City of Sarasota". "We need to be ready to respond for whatever comes our way," said Mark Alderson, Executive Director for the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program. "We're looking at the possibility of tar balls and patties. We'll have patchy impacts. But, everything really is contingent on how quickly BP can shut off that flow," said Alderson.
click here

"Unified Oil Spill Command Activated For West Coast Of Florida" - Article about the Coast Guard and Florida DEP meeting with non-governmental environmental organizations including Sarasota Bay Estuary Program to discuss local environmentally at-risk sites received coverage in the following:
May 5 - Eurasia Review News & Analysis " click here
May 5 - Orlando Sun Sentinel/Florida Politics" click here
May 6 - Bradenton Herald
click here

May 12 - The Islander - "SBEP Awards Bay Partners Grants to Local Groups"

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