BAY REFLECTIONS

Restoring Our Bays

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Newsletter Summer 2010

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Creating New Oyster Habitat in Sarasota Bay



Volunteers placing bagged oyster shell in Bay to create habitat.



Volunteers filling bags with fossilized oyster shell.

This summer, the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is creating two new oyster habitats within the Bay. The SBEP is increasing the footprint of an oyster habitat that was built in 2005 at White Beach, in Little Sarasota Bay and the construction of a new habitat at the Gladiola Fields along the eastern shore in Manatee County. White Beach is located in a highly urbanized setting that historically supported oyster beds, but shoreline alterations and residential development have since destroyed them. The Gladiola Fields site lies adjacent to agricultural lands that border the Bay. This project builds on the success of an earlier pilot project that showed that prospective Sarasota Bay oyster habitats are substrate limited. This means that oysters will not recover without suitable and sufficient substrate material for oysters to attach and grow.



This map shows the locations of the two new oyster habitats created by SBEP: White Beach in Little Sarasota Bay and the Gladiola Fields along the eastern shore in Manatee County.

The SBEP designed the habitats to replicate the structure of existing oyster habitat in Sarasota Bay by utilizing fossilized shell to create the structural component of each habitat. Once completed, there will be five, fifty-foot diameter habitats built at each site. Each habitat will contain a perimeter of bagged fossil shell to prevent the shell from dispersing, while the interior will consist of a 6" - 1' layer of loose shell. The fossil shell will be colonized by natural oyster larvae, or spat, which is available from nearby natural oyster beds. This restoration technique is readily transferable to other Florida estuaries that may lack sufficient substrate.

The habitats will be monitored for two years after they are constructed. How the habitats are functioning will be assessed by measuring growth and survival of spat (= recruits to the shell) and habitat use by fish and invertebrates.

These habitat creation projects are important and valuable to the local estuarine ecology and integral to the overall habitat restoration goals of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. Sarasota Bay is an estuary of national significance, Outstanding Florida Water, and a Florida priority estuarine conservation area as part of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Partial funding has been provided by The Nature Conservancy through its Global Marine Program and its partnership with the NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program.

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The Economic Value of Estuaries

Celebrate National Estuaries Day on September 25, 2010



Estuaries are places where freshwater mixes with salty water from the sea. Teeming with life, our nation's estuaries provide vital habitats for 80 percent of the world's fish and shellfish species, including many that are listed as threatened or endangered. Estuaries are one of our nation's most valuable natural resources, creating more food per acre than the richest farmland.

The significance of the economic value of our nation's estuaries becomes crystal clear when you consider the following statistics (taken from US Senate Resolution 596, designating September 25, 2010 as "National Estuaries Day"):

1. The estuary regions of the United States comprise a significant share of the national economy, with 43 percent of the population, 40 percent of the employment, and 49 percent of the economic output of the United States located in the estuary regions of the United States.

2. Coasts and estuaries contribute more than $800,000,000,000 annually in trade and commerce to the United States economy.

3. 43 percent of all adults in the United States visit a seacoast or estuary at least once a year to participate in some form of recreation, generating $8,000,000,000 to $12,000,000,000 in revenue annually.

4. 28,000,000 jobs in the United States are supported by commercial and recreational fishing, boating, tourism, and other coastal industries that rely on healthy estuaries.

In the past 100 years 55,000,000 acres of estuarine habitat have been destroyed. Bays once filled with fish and oysters have become dead zones filled with excess nutrients, chemical wastes, harmful algae, and marine debris. Sea level rise is accelerating the degradation of estuaries by submerging low-lying land, eroding beaches, converting wetland to open water, exacerbating coastal flooding, and increasing the salinity of estuaries and freshwater aquifers.



Estuaries provide critical ecosystem services, also known as 'Natural Capital', that protect human health and public safety, including water filtration, flood control, shoreline stabilization and erosion prevention, the protection of coastal communities during extreme weather events, climate stabilization, and maintenance of soil fertility. Overharvesting or direct forms of manipulation (paving, soil erosion, seawalls, etc.) that deplete Natural Capital have resulted in degraded ecosystem services.

Natural Capital must be quantified and understood in its economic dimensions to avoid its destruction by markets that underestimate its value.



"The ecological landscape of Sarasota Bay provides a treasure trove of Natural Capital. These assets are the very foundation upon which our regions quality of life and economic success are built. Healthy ecosystems make very significant economic contributions, but often in ways that transcend conventional accounting."

Sarasota Bay: Celebrating Our Water Heritage
Video script: Caroline McKeon 2008

The health of Sarasota Bay is inextricably linked to the economic vitality and quality of life we experience in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. To truly comprehend that impact to our community in economic terms we need to quantify the revenue generated to our local economy from jobs, recreational activities, ecotourism and other coastal industries that rely on a healthy estuary. Only then will we fully appreciate Sarasota Bay as a primary economic engine of our region and as our most important natural asset.



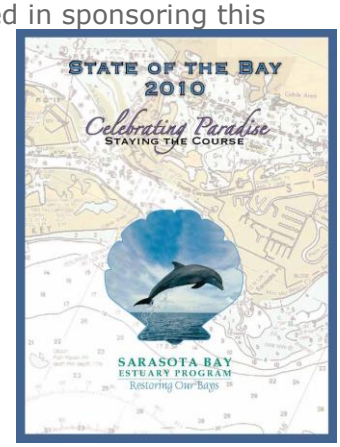


Upcoming Events

Monday, August 30 - 2010/2011 Bay Partners Grant Applications Available
Bay Partners Grants to promote environmental education, awareness and

stewardship that improve the overall quality of Sarasota Bay and its tributaries are now available. Funding is available for projects that focus on Bay Education, Bay Restoration or Bay-Friendly Landscaping. Get more information and download an application at http://www.sarasotabay.org/nar-grants.html
Deadline for receiving applications is 4pm on March 1, 2011.

Saturday, September 18, 10am- 7pm - "10th Annual Adpotathon"
Humane Society of Sarasota County, Inc
2331 15th Street, Sarasota, Fl
Join the HSSC to celebrate the grand reopening of the newly renovated dog building. There will be Fantastic raffles and refreshments throughout the day and the HSSC teen club will have a yard sale. During the event there will be a special adoption fee of only $35.00 that includes a goody bag for every adopter! Make sure to visit the SBEP booth for Pooches for the Planet educational materials and giveaways! For additional information or if you are interested in sponsoring this event Call (941) 955-4131.



Friday, September 24 - Release of the 2010 State of the Bay report
The Crosley Estate
4-6 pm invitation only partner and media reception
For more information please contact Sara Kane at sara@sarasotabay.org or (941) 955-8085

Saturday, September 25 - Celebrate National Estuaries Day and the 2010 International Coastal Cleanup

Staging area - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park, 2523 Coconut Avenue, Sarasota, FL
9am-2pm - Celebrate National Estuaries Day with the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and other local conservation organizations. Learn about the many ways that you can contribute to your community and learn about ways to improve the health of our water resources and Sarasota Bay. Organizations interested in having a booth at this event should contact Sara Kane at sara@sarasotabay.org or (941) 955-8085
8am-noon - 2010 International Coastal Cleanup
Volunteers wanted to join the Sarasota Bay Guardians and Keep Sarasota County Beautiful for the 2010 International Coastal Cleanup at Whitaker Bayou. To register by September 7th contact the Sarasota County Call Center at (941) 861-5000 and ask to sign up for the Coastal Cleanup at Whitaker Bayou.
Look for more details about both of these events in the near future.

Saturday, October 2, 10am-5pm - *GreenHome Wamalama* Green Business Expo 2010
Robarts Arena at the Sarasota County Fairgrounds
Join us in a community effort to promote local awareness of organizations offering educational programs on energy conservation, water conservation, and recycling. Learn about the many local companies offering green, eco-friendly and other sustainable solutions for consumers, homes and business. Free Admission & Free Parking. http://www.wamalama.com/

Thursday, October 7
5th Annual Sustainable Communities Workshop- Bringing It Home 2010
Gulf Coast Girl Scouts Event Center, 4780 Cattlemen Road
For more information visit http://www.scgov.net/Sustainable Communities/default.asp

Saturday, October 16, 9 - 11am
Bay Guardians Volunteer Fall Planting at Robinson Preserve
1704 99th St. N.W., Bradenton, Florida
The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Bay Guardians are teaming up with Around the Bend Nature Tours and Manatee County Natural Resources Department for a fall planting at Robinson Preserve. **There is limited space for this event so please make your reservation today** by contacting sara@sarasotabay.org, 941-955-8085 or Karen@aroundbend.com, 941-794-8773.

Saturday, October 16, 8am - 4pm
Palma Sola Botanical Park Fall Plant, Antique & Art Sale
9800 17th Avenue NW, Bradenton, Fl
For more information: (941) 761-2866

Week of October 17-24 - Watershed Opportunities Week
To help create public awareness about the importance of our watersheds, the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners has declared October 17th through 24th "Water Opportunities Week." To celebrate, watershed-related educational events and programs for the whole family are scheduled throughout the week at Science and Environmental Council member sites. The public is invited to attend one or several of these fun, nature-based activities that teach awareness and good stewardship of watersheds. For more information visit http://www.secsc.org/watershed.htm

Sunday, October 17, 5 - 7pm - Water Opportunities Week
Dip Net Estuary Study
Ken Thompson/City Island Park, 1700 Ken Thompson Parkway, Sarasota
Join the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and guides from Around the Bend Nature Tours to catch critters in the grass flats of Sarasota Bay. Discover the nursery of the sea and all the amazing creatures that begin their life cycle here in the estuary. Suitable for all ages. Please wear closed toed shoes. **Reservation required**. Contact Sara Kane at (941) 955-8085 or sara@sarasotabay.org.

Saturday, October 29, 9am - 2pm - Native Plant Sale
Longwood Run Park off University Parkway in Sarasota
Sponsored by the Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and SBEP this plant sale will offer a large selection of Florida native trees, shrubs, grasses, blooming wildflowers for use in all types of gardens. Local conservation groups will have booths set up where attendees can get the latest conservation information. For more info about the event call (941) 794-8773 or (941) 955-8085.

Saturday, November 13 - Medication Disposal Take Back Event
University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee campus
This take back event will allow people to bring their unused, unwanted, and expired

medication to be properly disposed of. Attendees will also have the opportunity to find out about the many programs offered by the SBEP and how they can make lifestyle changes that will help to improve the health of Sarasota Bay.

Success Stories



Sarasota Bay Guardians

Great Air Potato Roundup at North Water Tower Park

On the morning of Saturday, June 26th fifty enthusiastic volunteers of all ages removed 565 pounds of the non-native, invasive air potato plant vine from North Water Tower Park during the Intergenerational Great Air Potato Roundup. Participating organizations included Sarasota Bay Guardians, Around the Bend Nature Tours, Senior Friendship Center's Retirees In Service of the Environment (RISE), ManaTEENs Summer of Service, Sarasota Sky Pilots Disc Golf Club, and residents of the Bayou Oaks and Indian Beach Sapphire Shores neighborhoods.

Guides from Around The Bend Nature Tours gave an educational briefing about invasive plants and their impact on the Sarasota Bay watershed. Air potatoes grow from vines with heart shaped leaves. Each leaf can spawn an air potato, and each vine can have up to 150 leaves! As a potato grows on the vine it eventually gets heavy and drops to the ground-which turns into an entirely new air potato vine that can spawn up to 150 more vines itself!

Every participant received a Sarasota Bay Guardians T-shirt. Miniature recycle containers containing flower seed packets that could be used as planters or coin banks were awarded to teams with the biggest, smallest, and weirdest air potato as well as the heaviest weight of potatoes and vines collected. The City of Sarasota

provided a yard waste dumpster and a trash dumpster to be onsite for the disposal of the invasive air potatoes.

SNN6 was present and interviewed SBEP Public Outreach Coordinator Sara Kane. "Although our volunteers removed 565 pounds of air potato plant, the park is inundated with the non-native invasive plant and it will require ongoing efforts to eradicate them," explained Kane. To learn more about volunteer opportunities and to sign up for our volunteer list please contact Sara at sara@sarasotabay.org or 941-955-8085.





SBEP Launches Medication Disposal Education Campaign



On June 24th the Nonprofit Resource Center hosted a "Community Connections" Workshop to get volunteers involved in meaningful service projects with local non-profit organizations. Each non-profit organization gave a presentation to "pitch" their project and the attendees chose the projects that they wanted to participate in. An enthusiastic team of ten proactive citizens volunteered to take part in the SBEP Medication Disposal Education Campaign.

Many people believe that flushing medications down the toilet, pouring them down drains or throwing them away in the trash is the proper means of disposal, but this is not the case. So the main goal of the campaign will be to educate the community about the proper ways to dispose of unused medications, to get a process in place to collect unused medicine, and to find correct disposal opportunities that will protect our water, our Bay, and our citizens.

The campaign was created to educate community members about the dangers of improper disposal of medications and their impact on our water resources. "According to an investigation in 2008 by the Associated Press, pharmaceuticals can be found in the drinking water supplies of at least 41 million Americans. The study also indicated that antibiotics, mood stabilizers, and hormones are among the drugs found in the drinking water supplies of at least 24 major metropolitan areas in the U.S (NY Sea Grant)."

Currently the team is designing marketing materials, creating a social media plan, and planning a fall medication take back event as part of the Eco-health fair scheduled for November 13, 2010 at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee campus. The event will allow people to bring in any unused, unwanted, and expired medication to be properly disposed of. Attendees will also have the opportunity to find out about the many programs offered by the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and about our area's greatest natural asset- Sarasota Bay. For more info contact Sara Kane at sara@sarasotabay.org or (941) 955-8085.

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Selected as Climate Ready Estuaries Partner

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program has been selected by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to receive financial support in 2010 from its Climate Ready Estuaries program (CRE) to move forward with climate ready adaptation planning. EPA is providing targeted assistance to National Estuary Programs (NEPs) to identify climate change vulnerabilities, develop adaptation plans, and begin to implement selected actions within those plans.

The SBEP received two types of support for the development of an adaptation plan and direct technical assistance from an EPA contractor. The direct technical assistance will be used for creating an "easy to use" visualization tool using Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data. LIDAR is a remote sensing technology that can provide elevation data at high resolutions and accuracies. This tool will be used in community workshops and focus groups to support adaptation planning.

"We're very pleased that SBEP has been selected as a partner in the Climate Ready Estuaries program," says Mark Alderson, Director of the SBEP. " This funding will enable us to move forward with our local adaptation planning efforts."

The Climate Ready Estuaries (CRE) program is a partnership between EPA and the National Estuary Programs (NEPs) to address climate change in coastal areas. This effort is building additional capacity in coastal communities as they prepare to adapt to the effects of climate change. CRE is supporting NEPs and coastal communities in becoming "climate ready" by providing tools and assistance to assess climate change vulnerabilities, engage and educate stakeholders, develop and implement adaptation strategies, and share lessons learned with other coastal managers. To

learn more about the EPA's Climate Ready Estuaries program visit the CRE website at www.epa.gov/cre/explore.html

2010/2011 Bay Partners Grant RecipientHighlight:



Turf removed, area is prepped for planting



Same area after planting is completed

In March of this year the Sunbow Bay Condominium Association was awarded a $2,500 Bay Partners Grant to replace about 3,500-square-feet of turf with more than 340 native plants and trees, such as fire bush, peanut plant, coco plum and palmetto palms. The addition of a crushed-shell walkway with benches will create a park-like environment for the condo residents. This project will serve as a demonstration site for condo associations on Anna Maria Island Bay Fronts to educate local residents about the benefits of Bay Friendly landscaping. For more information and photos read the article at (click here)

SBEP in the News

May 24 - Bradenton Herald "HandsOn Manatee Participates in Environmental Efforts" covers ManaTeens and Sarasota Bay Guardians environmental efforts at Sister Keys clean-up and North Water tower Park air potato removal. read article

May 29 - The Bradenton Times "Mote's World Ocean Day gets Wacky with Dr. Seuss" mentions SBEP as one of the exhibitors.

June 10 - Biz941 Daily "COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SARASOTA TO HOST "COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS" VOLUNTEER PITCH SESSION mentions SBEP as one of the participating organizations.

June 14 - Posted event info at Bradenton Herald "Sarasota Bay Guardians hosts Intergenerational Volunteer Event - Great Air Potato Round-Up!" read article

June 14 - Posted event info at Herald Tribune "Sarasota Bay Guardians hosts Great Air Potato Round-Up Volunteer Event" read article

June 17 - YPG Plugged-In eNewsletter "Community Connections - Thursday, June 24 - Community Foundation of Sarasota County" mentions SBEP as presenter

June 17 - Sarasota Chamber of Commerce website event listing "Community Connections - Thursday, June 24 - Community Foundation of Sarasota County"

June 19 - Bradenton Herald "Condo goes green with landscaping" about Sunbow Bay Condominium receiving Bay Friendly Landscaping grant from SBEP. Quote from Kane. read article

June 26 - SNN6 covered the 6/26 Bay Guardians Event and ran a short on a 24 hour cycle June 26/27

July 14 - Herald Tribune article "Sarasota Bay to serve as reference for spill" read article

July 21 - Islander article "HB's Grass Point stuck in funding quagmire" mentions SBEP involvement in restoration and funding read article

July 26 - Environmental Protection: The Solution Resource for Managing Air, Water, Energy and Waste Issues article "National Aquarium Initiates Damage Assessment for Sarasota Bay" read article

July 31 - Herald Tribune front page local section / promoted on Front page "Sarasota Bay seaweed study focuses on causes of growth" article about macroalgae study in Sarasota Bay highlighting SBEP involvement with numerous quotes from Leverone. read article

August 26 - Herald Tribune Guest Column written by Jay Leverone, "Why scallop count is down" read article.

POOCHES FOR THE PLANET

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

Don't forget to visit the new Pooches for the Planet FaceBook page click here and let us know that you "like us" and share it with your community groups, friends and family.

We are now offering Free Pooches for the Planet door hangers and rack cards (in English & Spanish) for your neighborhood distribution - please email Yvette@SimplyGreen.biz or call 941-981-9253. We also have logos, facts, links and articles available for community newsletters to share.

For additional info about Pooches for the Planet visit www.sarasotabay.org

CAC Member Profile

Steve Foster



Steve was born and raised by the world's greatest parents in Martinsville, IN on a small farm in the country where he spent as much time as possible exploring nature. An avid outdoorsman who loved to hike, camp, hunt and fish, Foster realized early on that many of the places he loved to explore were being lost.

It wasn't until he got to college that he understood that environmental activism could help preserve the places he loved. Eventually Steve and his wife moved to Florida to be near the ocean (gulf), and became concerned about Sarasota Bay and the near-shore ecosystem.

"I got involved with the CAC because I heard Julia Burch speak at a Manatee County science department chair meeting and was very impressed with her presentation" explains Foster. "I felt that joining the CAC would not only enhance my marine science curriculum, but would also provide me an opportunity to be a small part of preserving the Bay and near-shore waters."

Steve is the science department chair at Southeast High School in Bradenton where he teaches pre-IB biology honors, marine science and marine science honors. "Several of my former students have either completed or are enrolled in marine science or environmental studies majors in college. This is the greatest compliment an educator can receive. I'm honored that these students have chosen these career paths and look forward to their future contributions to the understanding of the marine ecosystem and environment."

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