

Dear readers,

Below is a revised version of our summer Bay Reflections newsletter. This copy includes a correction to our first story regarding Piney Point. We apologize for the inconvenience, as it is our goal to share important and thorough updates with our audience.

Effects of Piney Point found over 30 miles away from spill

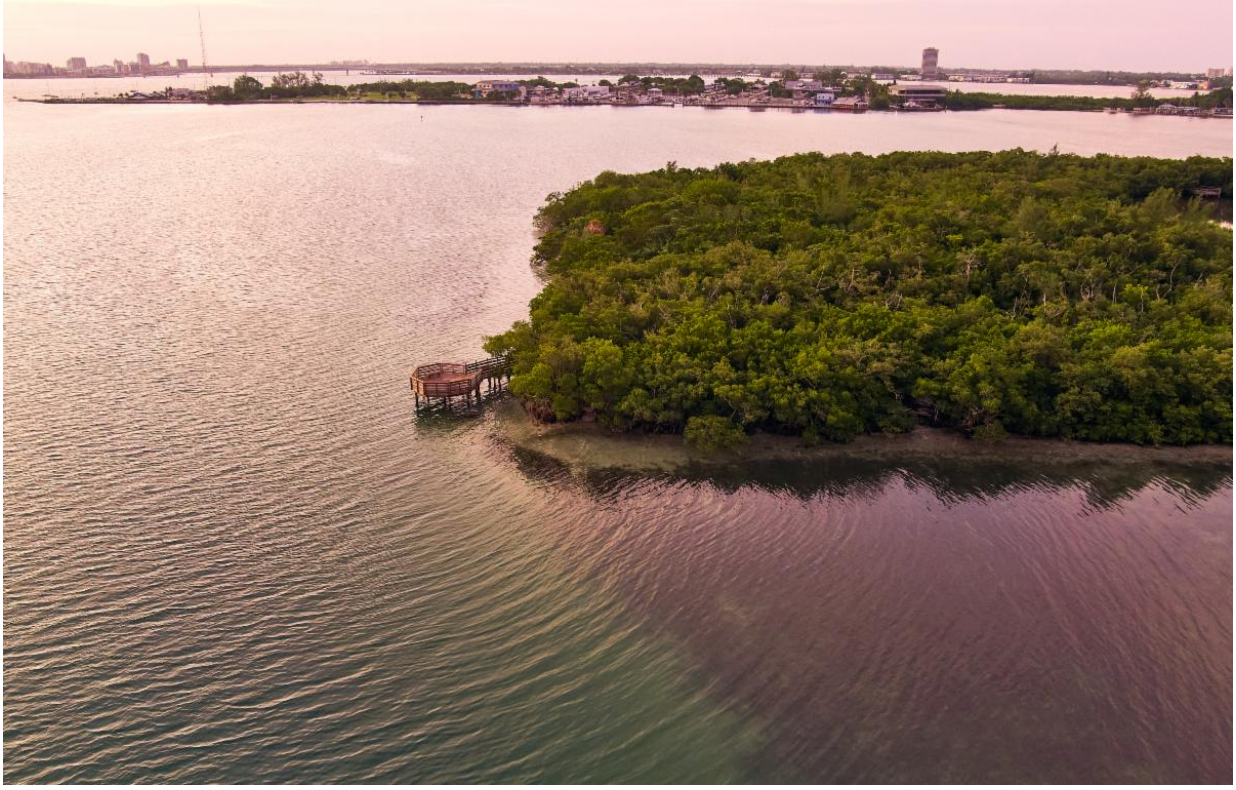


A **new study** shows the extent of the spill from Piney Point not only contributed to algae blooms and red tide in the surrounding waterways of Tampa Bay, but a chemical signature from the spill was found further than expected, over 30 miles away in St. Joseph sound near Tarpon Springs.

Right after the spill in 2021, SBEP partnered with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Manatee, Hillsborough, and Pinellas counties, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the University of Florida, and the University of South Florida to set up a series of sites to monitor existing conditions and determine the extent of the spill's impact. Results of this effort, recently published in May, show evidence of algae blooms and high concentrations of red tide in the months following the spill. A chemical signature, unique to the Piney Point effluent, was also found at a location in St. Joseph Sound originally chosen to be a reference site, as it was assumed to be far enough away from the spill to avoid impact. However, this was not the case as evidence of the Piney Point spill was also found at this location. Spatial modeling from the University of South Florida also predicted the impact of Piney Point to extend beyond Tampa Bay. The study validates model predictions and highlights the threat infrastructure failures pose to coastal waterways. It also emphasizes the need for nutrient management strategies with concurrent monitoring, especially under a changing climate.

Click here to read more on the impact of Piney Point

SBEP plans for $2.7 million in restoration projects



SBEP recently submitted preliminary plans for $2.7 million in habitat restoration projects for 2024 - 2026. Funding for these projects will come from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and support enhancement of eight sites in Sarasota and Manatee counties. Projects focus on shoreline restoration and stabilization, stormwater treatment, and increased public access to waterways. We want to thank our partners for their support in planning and proposing many of these great initiatives. We look forward to working with them and others on improving our water quality and coastal habitats over the next couple years.



SBEP BIL PROJECTS

$2.7 million in restoration projects for 2024-2026 will come from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Project	Description & Partner	Fiscal Year	Cost	Fiscal Year Total
Dr. MLK Park Construction*	Shoreline restoration, kayak launch, fishing pier, stormwater treatment, native plants, educational exhibit. **Partner:** City of Sarasota	24	$200,000	$900,000
Longboat Key Bayfront Park Shoreline	Seawall removal, living shoreline, mangrove planting. **Partner:** The Town of Longboat Key	24	$500,000	
Sarasota Baywalk at City Island	New boardwalk, debris removal, additional signage. **Partner:** The City of Sarasota	24	$200,000	
Matheny Creek	Stormwater treatment (ponds and swales), facilitated cistern use for adjacent community. **Partner:** Sarasota County	25	$600,000	$910,000
Flamingo Cay	Restoration of upland spoil area via contouring and planting, mangrove migration corridor, primitive paddle-up campsites. **Partner:** Manatee County	25	$160,000	
Rose Park Phase I	Living shoreline design and permitting. **Partner:** Manatee County	25	$150,000	
Rose Park Phase II	Construction of living shoreline. **Partner:** Manatee County	26	$500,000	$900,000
City of Sarasota Bayfront Park South Shoreline	Shoreline restoration and beach stabilization, kayak launch, native plantings, small watercraft mooring. **Partner:** City of Sarasota	26	$400,000	
Total			$2,710,000	

**additional funding possible via Gulf Coast Community Foundation and/or Sarasota Bay Watch*



Click here to view table as a PDF

Welcome Tom Kane!



SBEP would like to welcome Tom Kane as our new Coastal Stewardship Intern! Tom's previous seagrass scarring work with SBEP helped us target outreach at boat ramps and marinas near scarring hot spots. He now joins us to assist with research and communication around canal community stewardship initiatives.

Tom is a marine scientist with a background in physical oceanography, conservation ecology, and applied data science. He has experience working within both public and private sectors with non-profit environmental organizations and public research institutions. As an undergrad, Tom used his intern experience with SBEP and geographic information systems (GIS) to author his baccalaureate thesis concerning seagrass propeller scarring in Southwest Florida seagrass habitats, identifying key hotspot areas in Sarasota Bay vulnerable to further degradation. He holds a master's degree in Marine Science from Hawai'i Pacific University and a bachelor's degree in Natural Science from New College of Florida and received research funding from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County's Environmental Discovery Awards Program (EDAP) in 2019. When time permits, he enjoys surfing, programming, exploring Florida's natural environments, and advocating for the protection of human rights and academic freedom.

New Vertical Oyster Gardens installed at Longboat Key's Bayfront Park



We want to congratulate the Town of Longboat Key, who recently worked with SBEP and **Oyster Boys Conservation** to install **40 vertical oyster gardens** (VOGs) along their dock! The vertical oyster program is a regional effort to install recycled oyster shell on docks and waterside structures. VOGs help create habitat for young oysters and other marine creatures to settle. Residents and groups can pick up free VOGs at the Robinson Preserve NEST or can contact SBEP or Oyster Boys Conservation for more information, to schedule a workshop, or receive help with installation.

Click here to learn more & adopt a vertical oyster garden

In Memory of Karen Steidinger

Our community is deeply saddened by the recent loss of Dr. Karen Steidinger, a renown scienctist, who passed away on June 11, 2023. The following was provided by Dr. Dave Tomasko about her work and impact on the scientific community.

"One of my favorite bosses of all time was Dr. Karen Steidinger, who was – at the time – the Director of the Florida Marine Research Institute (FMRI) in St. Pete. I interviewed with her while I was in grad school, and although she was way more accomplished than myself, she never allowed me or others who worked with her to feel anything other than gratitude.

Karen was a long-time local researcher, with BS, MS and PhD degrees from the University of South Florida. She studied red tide with so much intensity and for so long that the species was later renamed to honor her life's work (*Karenia brevis*). Karen was selected to head a research institute that was dominated by men, and her calm personality, great interpersonal skills and budgetary and scientific expertise allowed FMRI to expand to become the internationally known research institute it eventually became.

All of the work that we do to try and mitigate the impacts of red tides – all of it – is related in

some way to the pioneering work Karen devoted her life to. A sad day for marine researchers in Florida, but she'd be the first person in the room to tell all of us to get back to work."

Join SBEP's Citizens Advisory Committee

Community input is integral to our mission. The SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is a group of local individuals who gather six times per year to provide SBEP with input and to help us share information with the public. Our CAC members have a wide array of professional and personal attributes, but they are all tied by their dedication to the health of Sarasota Bay. Interested in joining? Click the button below to learn more or email megan@sarasotabay.org for a prospective member application.

Click here to learn more about the Citizens Advisory Committee

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Lights, Camera, Action!

SBEP in the News

Communication is vital to the protection and restoration of the bay. Check out the latest clips and articles featuring SBEP efforts.



Suzanne Atwell Show - Midnight Pass; Paradise lost
"A major environmental restoration project is being considered in Sarasota County. It is story about man-made mistakes of the past, the need for science based leadership in the future and sentimental aspirations that may cause more problems than they solve."



That Huge Sargassum Bloom Is Filled with Plastic and Possibly Deadly Bacteria
"A recent study by Florida Atlantic University researchers shows that there are massive quantities of plastic floating alongside this historic sargassum bloom, and that the plastic encourages the presence of the deadly flesh-eating bacteria *Vibrio vulnificus*."

Click here for SBEP in the News

Jobs & Funding Opportunities

- **Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium: multiple positions - Sarasota**
- **Florida Rising: Pinellas County Lead Organizer - Tampa**
- **Florida Aquarium: multiple positions - Tampa**
- **Environmental Defense Fund: multiple positions - remote**

Bite Sized Bay News



Sarasota County receives $14.5M grant for water quality improvements

"Sarasota County was chosen to receive a $14.5 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the Alligator Creek Stream Restoration Project.'"

Read more



Red Tide Long Term Forecast

"We are in transition from La Nina, to El nino. It has the potential to make red tide worse."

Read more



Summer fertilizer bans in place for Bay area counties to prevent algae blooms

"Fertilizer bans went into effect in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee and Sarasota counties Thursday and will last until Sept. 30. The bans are specifically on nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizers."

Read More

Community & Partner Events

Check out upcoming green events from over 100 local organizations on the NEW **Green Living Toolkit Community Events Calendar!**



Book a Speaker from SBEP

SBEP staff members regularly speak to homeowners, neighborhood, and community groups and upper-level classrooms about Sarasota Bay ecology and restoration.

Click here to request a speaker from SBEP

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