



**BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE BILL (BIL) FUNDS**  
Workplan and Proposed Budget for FY24, FY25 & FY26

(October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2026)  
September 2023

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sarasota Bay is a 50-square-mile coastal lagoon located on the southwest coast of Florida (Figure 1). Its interconnected Gulf waters, bays, and tidal creeks link together a rich mosaic of bay habitats, including seagrass meadows, hardbottom, oyster reefs, beaches, and saltwater and freshwater wetlands. These iconic habitats are animated with a great diversity of fish and wildlife that underpin ecosystem integrity and function and provide the foundational environmental services that drive the cultural identity and economies of our coastal communities.

**Figure 1 – Sarasota Bay watershed, bay segments and major drainage features**



Each of the 28 National Estuary Programs is charged with developing and implementing a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), which establishes priorities for activities, research, and management of the estuary. The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's (SBEP) CCMP, available via an interactive ArcGIS story map ([A Thriving Estuary \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)) serves as a

blueprint to guide decisions and actions and addresses a wide range of environmental protection issues and opportunities including water quality, habitat, wildlife, and public access to Bay resources.

The CCMP is a living document that reflects the community's evolving understanding of the bay and its watersheds. It sets priorities, focuses resources, and ensures that SBEP staff, Management Conference members, protection and restoration partners, and other stakeholders are working toward common goals and objectives through coordinated, collaborative planning and action.

Our 2022 CCMP update centers around restoration and resilience throughout Sarasota Bay. Strong collaboration, dedicated partnerships, and a shared vision will bring our plan to life.

The 2022 CCMP features four Action Plans with 21 Objectives and 57 Activities. Each Action Plan has a high-level goal that is supported by quantifiable Objectives, that are elaborated on by specific activities. Our four Action Plans are:

**Water Quality & Quantity Action Plan** – Improve water quality and the timing, quantity, and distribution of freshwater flow to the estuary.

**Watershed Action Plan** – Restore shoreline, wetland, and bay habitats and eliminate future losses.

**Wildlife Action Plan** – Protect, restore, and enhance fish and wildlife populations in SBEP bays and watersheds.

**Community Engagement Action Plan** – Engage, educate, and encourage environmental stewardship of Sarasota Bay and increase community connections to the estuary through low impact recreational use and enjoyment.

The projects listed in this BIL Workplan are a combination of projects that include stormwater retrofits, habitat restoration, and shoreline stabilization. They are constructed to help the SBEP implement the 2022 CCMP Update and are also focused on creating a more resilient Sarasota Bay, and to increase public access and educational opportunities, particularly for underrepresented communities.

The SBEP staff charged with overseeing the implementation of both the CCMP and the BIL Workplan include the following:

- David Tomasko, Ph.D., Executive Director
- Jay Leverone, Ph.D., Program Scientist
- Heather Moody, Operations Manager
- Megan Barry, Public Outreach Manager
- Cheryl Dexter, Executive Assistant
- Christine Quigley, Public Outreach Assistant (Contractor)

## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2021, President Biden signed into law the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act, aka the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The BIL contains more than \$50 billion in funding for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for responding to national needs on drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. About \$20 billion is proposed for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and \$15 billion for replacing lead pipes for water supplies (e.g., Flint, Michigan water supply issues). About \$12 billion is focused on Clean Water State Revolving Fund projects, which would deal with issues related to water quality such as wastewater upgrades, etc.

Of particular interest to the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) is that the infrastructure deal includes \$132 million for EPA's National Estuary Program (NEP) to be disbursed over five years, starting sometime in 2022. There are 28 NEPs (National Estuary Programs) across the country, and the language in the BIL says that all 28 NEPs would equally share in the funds. This would equal about \$943,000 per year per NEP. The language in the bill allows EPA 3% of the distribution to oversee these funds, which would bring the SBEP's anticipated funding to about \$909,800 per year for each of the next five years.

There was no local cost-share match requirement for FY22 and FY23 funds, and those funds are already being used to construct habitat restoration and stormwater treatment efforts at the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (FISH) Preserve using FY22 funds. EPA guidance is that these funds are meant to be used for implementing projects consistent with each NEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). In addition, BIL-funded projects should include elements that respond to climate change and resiliency and include outreach and educational efforts for underserved communities and environmental justice concerns, to the greatest extent possible. It is EPA's goal to have at least 40% of BIL funds spent on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

In response, the SBEP developed an Equity Plan, to be used for identifying project opportunities that would address both SBEP's CCMP obligations, as well as EPA's desire to benefit underserved communities. A draft workplan was reviewed by EPA Region 4 staff, and then the revised Equity Plan was approved by the SBEP's Policy Board at their May 12, 2023, meeting - [2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#).

Over the past few years, the SBEP has worked with EPA Region 4 and EPA Headquarters staff to develop and refine methods to be used to develop an Equity Strategy to identify historically underserved (i.e., disadvantaged) communities across our watershed to support the goals of the White House's Justice40 Initiative (EO 14008) and the EPA's Equity Action Plan (EO 13985). The purpose of this initiative is to ensure SBEP and its partners implement environmental restoration projects that are designed to be resilient and capable of accommodating expected impacts of climate change, while also having shared public access for all 6 communities. These goals are contained within the SBEP's 2022 updated CCMP, which has been accessed by over 1,500 viewers via an ArcGIS Storymap - A Thriving Estuary (arcgis.com). Community Engagement chapter of the CCMP.

The SBEP approach to documenting disadvantaged communities is based on methodology to identify demographic indicators to determine the disadvantaged communities in the SBEP watershed is as follows:

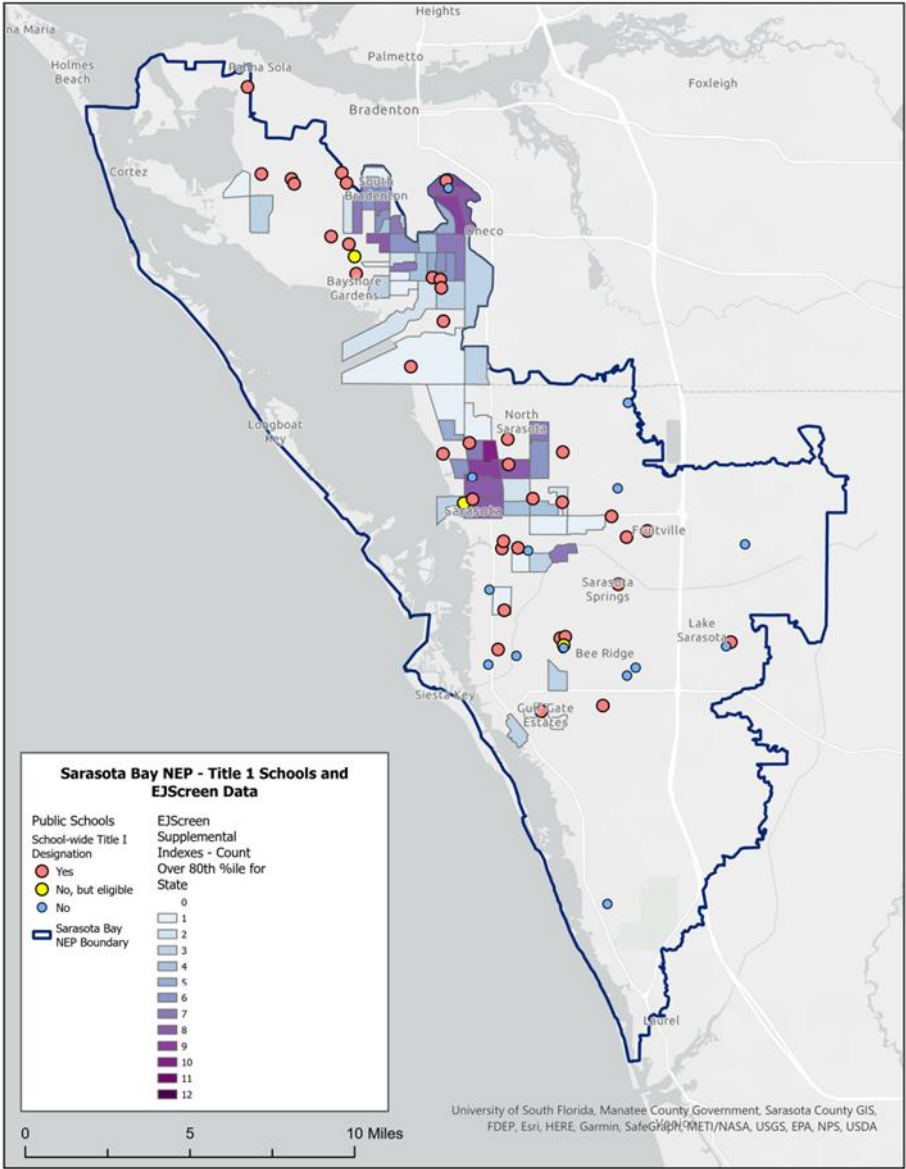
- Communities (on a census tract level) will be considered disadvantaged if at least one of the demographic indicators used in EPA’s EJScreen tool results in an index percentile between 80 and 100.
- EJScreen will be supplemented using a second screening tool from the White House Council on Environmental Quality (WHCEQ) - “Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool” - Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (geoplatform.gov).
- Output from both screening tools will be further supplemented by consideration of the proximity of the more than four dozen Title 1 schools in the SBEP watershed. Such schools reflect a prior determination by the State of Florida and the Federal Government that the schools serve a community which has a “...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children.”

The WHCEQ’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool includes metrics shared with EPA’s EJ Screen such as: 1) percent low income, 2) linguistic isolation, 3) unemployment rate, and 4) percent of the population with less than a high school education. In addition, the WHCEQ’s screening tool also includes climate-related metrics such as 1) expected building loss rates due to natural hazards, 2) expected impacts to the population due to natural disasters, and 3) projected flood risk from storm surges, etc.

**The SBEP’s Equity Plan would identify disadvantaged communities as those census tracts that intersect one or more of the five metrics (at an 80% exceedance rate) in EJScreen and/or one or more of the 14 metrics in the WHCEQ’s screening tool (at a 90% exceedance rate) while also being within a half hour bus ride (for purposes of field trips) from a Title 1 school.**

Figure 2 displays how the overall alternative approach would work, as it displays EJScreen screening tool output based on the number of exceedances (out of 12 potential metrics) as well as the location of Title 1 schools.

**Figure 2 - Spatial distribution of impairment status using all twelve metrics in EJScreen (not just the 5 suggested for use by EPA) as well as locations of Title 1 schools. Areas without shading represent census tracts that don't trigger any EJScreen criteria, while shaded areas show increasing numbers of exceedances. Title 1 school locations are labeled as to those with vs. without programs in place to assist with responding to Title 1 designation.**



Based on the EJ methodology developed by SBEP and contained within the 2023 Equity Plan, projects identified for completion using BIL funds for FY24, FY25 and FY26 are then compared to the screening tool described above. Not all projects are likely to have benefits for identified EJ communities, but 44% of the FY24, FY25 and FY26 funds are anticipated to have benefits to such communities. More specific details are included in each project description.

## ANTICIPATED USE OF BIL FUNDS

For the latter FY24 to FY26 funds, each of the 28 NEPs developed and prepared an equity strategy for BIL funds for EPA no later than June 1, 2023. As noted above, the SBEP's Equity Plan was unanimously approved by the SBEP's Policy Board on May 12, 2023.

As was agreed upon at the SBEP's February 11, 2022, Policy Board meeting, the SBEP intends to spend all BIL funds for project implementation, rather than salaries, office expenses and/or additional studies or report writing. That said, habitat restoration and/or stormwater retrofit projects require funds spent for design, permitting, construction management and construction. Also, habitat restoration projects that the SBEP has funded traditionally include public access elements (e.g., boardwalks and trails) as well as educational elements (e.g., signage) and follow up monitoring of the success of completed projects.

This Workplan summarizes eight proposed projects, at a total budget of \$2,710,000. These projects are divided into three fiscal years, each of approximately \$900,000 each. The SBEP and its partners will continue to pursue additional funding sources, and projects costs can both increase and decrease as they move through the phases of design, permitting and construction. Nonetheless, these projects represent a series of projects that are consistent with implementation of the 2022 CCMP Update, they have been vetted through the SBEP's Citizens and Technical Advisory Committees, and they have been developed with input from our local government partners – who own the land (in all cases) on which these projects would occur.

The projects proposed for funding via the BIL will leverage existing efforts, so that the SBEP will spend BIL dollars on project implementation, rather than the earlier stages of design and permitting, at least for those projects where design and/or permitting are already underway.

The SBEP intends to track BIL funds separate from our normal operating funds and expenditures. Staff time spent managing these additional projects will not come from BIL funds but will be part of our regular job descriptions. In this manner, SBEP anticipates that BIL funds will be spent entirely on paying for consultants and contractors needed to implement specific restoration and education/outreach efforts, as well as monitoring for project success.

**As outlined below, the anticipated cost of the identified projects for FY24, FY25 and FY26 is \$2,710,000, which is slightly less than the total amount of funds anticipated from BIL funds for those same years.** Based on the EJ Screening criteria described above, 44% of the BIL funds would be used for projects that would have benefits for previously identified underserved communities.

An overview of the projects to be completed during these three years of funding is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Summary of project costs, by FY, to be completed with anticipated BIL funds**

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. <b>Partner:</b> City of Sarasota	24	\$200,000	\$900,000
Longboat Key Bayfront Park Shoreline	Seawall removal, living shoreline, mangrove planting. <b>Partner:</b> The Town of Longboat Key	24	\$500,000	
Sarasota Baywalk at City Island	New boardwalk, debris removal, additional signage. <b>Partner:</b> The City of Sarasota	24	\$200,000	
Matheny Creek	Stormwater treatment (ponds and swales), facilitated cistern use for adjacent community. <b>Partner:</b> 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. <b>Partner:</b> Manatee County	25	\$160,000	
Rose Park Phase I	Living shoreline design and permitting. <b>Partner:</b> Manatee County	25	\$150,000	
Rose Park Phase II	Construction of living shoreline. <b>Partner:</b> 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. <b>Partner:</b> City of Sarasota	26	\$400,000	
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$2,710,000</b>	

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

Using the EJ screening criteria contained within the SBEP’s 2023 Equity Plan (as described above) the following projects would benefit disadvantaged communities:

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park - \$200,000
- Matheny Creek - \$600,000
- City of Sarasota Bayfront Park South Shoreline - \$400,000

**These three projects total \$1,200,000, which is 44% of the \$2,700,000 BIL funds available for FY24, FY25 and FY26. As such, implementation of SBEP’s proposed projects would result in an amount being spent to benefit EJ communities that is above the EPA’s 40% guidance criteria.**

## *RELEVANCE TO CCMP OBJECTIVES*

The projects described below fall within the categories of CCMP sections on the Water Quality and Quantity (WQQ) Action Plan, as well as the Watershed Habitats (WH) and Fish and Wildlife (FW) Action Plans. Specifically, those projects that include elements associated with stormwater treatment fall within the CCMP categories of WQQ Objective 3 - "Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters" as well as WQQ Objective 4 - "Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater." Those projects that mostly focus on restoration and/or maintenance of habitats (rather than stormwater treatment) implement WH Objective 4 - "Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency," WH Objective 5 - "Protect, enhance and restore seagrass and other benthic habitats," and FW Objective 3 - "Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish." Proposed projects also include both public access and educational signage, thus acting on the CCMP category of the Community Engagement (CE) Action Plan Objective 2 - "Improve public understanding of bay-related issues."

Consequently, the three proposed projects will address multiple CCMP objectives.

## *PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PRELIMINARY PROJECT COST ESTIMATES*

The combination of FY24, FY25 and FY26 BIL funding is proposed to complete habitat restoration efforts at eight sites, as shown in Table 1. Each project is described below in terms of its relevance to CCMP goals, a summary budget, a brief description of the project, the leads and/or partners involved in the project, benefits, outputs/outcomes, deliverables, and estimated milestones, and probably project costs (which can include design, permitting and construction). It should be noted that specific details for project implementation may change over time, as projects move through the phases of community input, design, permitting and then construction.

**RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS & SBEP PRIORITIES**

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

**SUMMARY BUDGET**

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY24 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$0	\$58,000	\$50,000
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$145,000
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$2,814	\$5,000

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration, stormwater treatment, and disadvantaged local surrounding communities and students at nearby Title 1 schools will be provided increased access and recreational opportunities.

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, school field trips for students from Title 1 schools within 30 min. of project, created school environmental curriculum, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget.

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$260,814

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project involves several different project components, including: 1) removal of exotic vegetation along a stretch of shoreline bordering Whitaker Bayou, 2) improving public access to the bayou by building a fishing pier and kayak launch, 3) removal of a dilapidated seawall along the



access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry out such field trips will be included in the SBEP’s Citizen’s Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done.**

### *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

**PROJECT TIMELINE:** The project is now in design, with resources devoted to obtaining input from important local community groups. Permitting activities could be completed by Spring of 2024, and construction itself would likely start in the Summer of 2024.

### *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park is located in the Newtown District of the City of Sarasota. Based on the approach to identifying disadvantaged communities contained within SBEP’s Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)) the project meets relevant criteria and would be considered compliant with EPA’s goal of spending at least 40% of BIL funds on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

The SBEP will continue to use the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park site for outreach and education efforts, with a particular focus on underserved communities, building upon our current efforts to reach out to these populations via neighborhood cleanup events, kayak tours for community-based youth organizations, and grant support for field trips for local Title 1 schools within a half-hour drive of the project site. Designation as a Title 1 school represents the determination by the State of Florida and the US Government that a school has a “...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children.” Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. By expanding public access and educational opportunities from nearby communities, the project will provide direct support for the BIL goal of having project benefits extend to disadvantaged communities.

The project site is located within the Coastal Flood Hazard Zone, as identified by EPA’s EJ Screening and Mapping Tool, and is classified as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

### *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The project is designed to increase public access to an important tributary to Sarasota Bay, treat urban stormwater runoff, improve the quality of tidal creek habitats, and allow intertidal communities to migrate “upslope” within the project boundaries in response to future sea level rise,

thus allowing these important natural resources to persist in a changing climate. The project will also have designated public access and educational signage to allow visitors and students from neighboring schools to understand the value of such habitats, and the need to preserve and protect them. Signage would include QR codes that would link to the SBEP's website, where further information about the project and the importance of habitat restoration would be available. Efforts to include the project into field trips for local schools, especially Title 1 schools, will be included, in collaboration with those schools and school districts.

*RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS AND SBEP PRIORITIES*

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

*SUMMARY BUDGET*

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY24 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$445,000
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$0	\$5,000

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration, stormwater treatment, and increased resiliency of bay shoreline

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget.

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$500,000

*PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

The proposed project involves habitat restoration along a stretch of bay shoreline on the east side of the Town of Longboat Key’s Bayfront Park. The project involves two activities: 1) the conversion of a portion of shoreline with an aging seawall into a living shoreline, and 2) the installation of “mangrove panels” on the outside of an existing fiberglass seawall. The park is owned by the Town of Longboat Key. Project components include the removal of a deteriorating seawall, removal of invasive exotic species, regrading of the shoreline, the placement of materials to protect the shoreline from damage from wave action, and the reestablishment of a living shoreline. For the area of a recent and intact fiberglass seawall, the proposed project component in that area is to install concrete panels on the outside of the seawall allow for increased coverage of oysters and other

filter-feeding organisms, compared to the depauperate flora and fauna associated with fiberglass and vinyl seawalls.

The project is in an area that is susceptible to future sea level rise, and the project will incorporate appropriate upland areas that would allow intertidal vegetation to migrate upslope along those sections of the project that would include a living shoreline. The project is in a highly visible and much-used public park. Enhanced public access to the shoreline will be matched with educational signage to allow visitors to understand the value of such habitats and the need to restore the bay's shorelines.

Figure 4 shows the area of the park with the compromised seawall that would be regraded and reconfigured into a living shoreline. The upland portions of the park will be preserved to allow for the upslope migration of intertidal vegetation (mostly mangroves) expected to occur over the next 30 years. Figure 5 is a closeup photo of a section of seawall where a concrete mangrove panel has been attached, which would be the activity used to increase ecosystem functions along the stretch of the park where a fiberglass seawall has been recently installed.

**Figure 4 – Shoreline at Bayfront Park, facing west. Area on right (adjacent to tennis courts) is location where living shoreline is to be implemented. The area on left (south) is where a recent fiberglass seawall is to be amended with mangrove panels (see Figure 5).**



**Figure 5 – Photo of a concrete “mangrove panel” attached to the outside of an existing seawall. These mangrove panels would be installed on the recently completed fiberglass seawall at the park.**



The two project components for the Town of Longboat Key’s Bayfront Park have not yet been through the stages of design and permitting. However, SBEP and its partners have prior experience with the design, permitting and construction of both living shorelines and mangrove panels, and this project will benefit from this experience. Aside from unforeseen issues, the SBEP expects to initiate design and permitting in the spring of 2024. The proposed project would move forward with construction and construction management after the development of bid documents and the procurement of qualified contractors.

#### *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property itself is owned and managed by the Town of Longboat Key. The project design and permitting efforts for this project have been paid for and overseen by SBEP staff, using CWA 320 funds. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry out such field trips will be included in the SBEP’s Citizen’s Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done.**

## *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

Final design and permitting is expected to commence in the spring of 2024, with all relevant permits expected by summer to fall to winter of 2024. Pending the availability of funds and final permits being received, the project could be bid out for construction in the spring of 2025. Construction itself would likely start in the spring to summer of 2025.

## *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The Town of Longboat Key's Bayfront Park is located on the barrier island community of Longboat Key. Based on the approach to identifying disadvantaged communities contained within SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](https://www.sarasotabay.org/files/2023/07/2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf)) the project does not meet relevant criteria and would be considered compliant with EPA's goal of spending at least 40% of BIL funds on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

The SBEP and its partners could use the Bayfront Park site for future outreach and education efforts, with a particular focus on underserved communities, building upon our current efforts to reach out to these populations via grant support for field trips for local Title 1 schools within a half-hour drive of the project site. Designation as a Title 1 school represents the determination by the State of Florida and the US Government that a school has a "...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children." Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. By expanding public access and educational opportunities from nearby communities, the project will provide direct support for the BIL goal of having project benefits extend to disadvantaged communities.

The project site is located within the Coastal Flood Hazard Zone, as identified by EPA's EJ Screening and Mapping Tool, and is classified as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would not meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

## *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The project is designed to create more natural shoreline features along a highly visible public park on Longboat Key. It includes two main project components – the replacement of an aging seawall with a living shoreline, and the enhancement of a recently installed fiberglass seawall with mangrove panels. Both project components will increase the habitat value of the site, compared to existing conditions. The project will include designated public access and educational signage to allow visitors and students from neighboring schools to understand the value of shoreline habitats and their connection to a healthy bay. Signage would include QR codes that would link to the SBEP's website, where further information about the project and the importance of habitat restoration would be available. Efforts to include the project into field trips for local schools, especially Title 1 schools, will be included, in collaboration with those schools and school districts.

## CITY ISLAND BOARDWALK AND SIGNAGE - FY24

### RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS AND SBEP PRIORITIES

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

### SUMMARY BUDGET

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY24 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$0	\$0	\$20,000
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$175,000
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$2,000	\$5,000

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration, stormwater treatment, and increased resiliency of bay shoreline

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget.

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

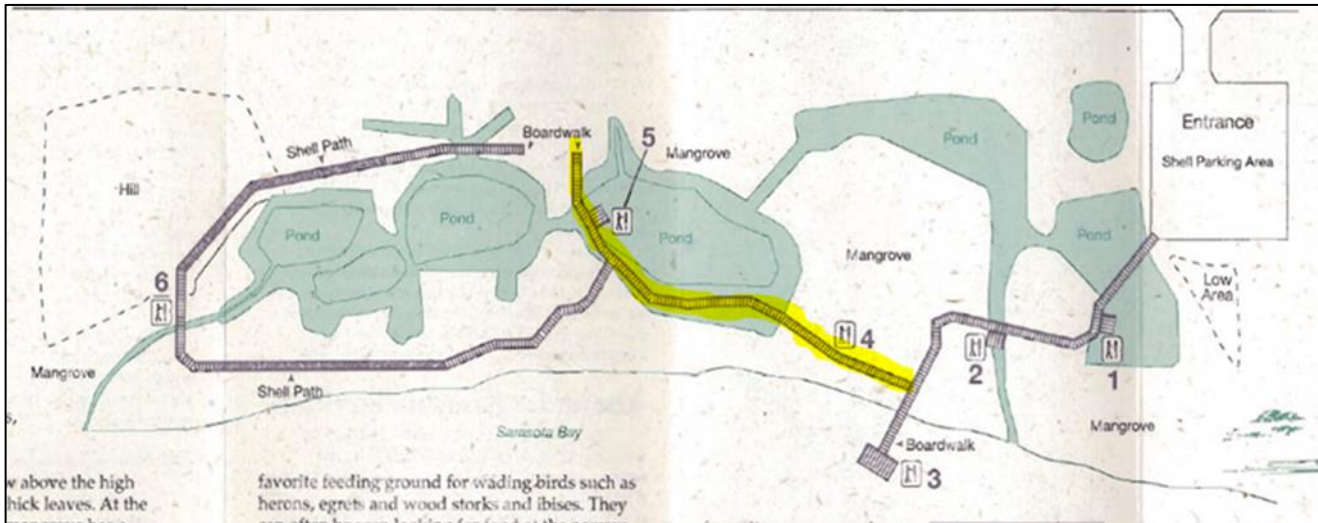
**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$200,000

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves three different project components: 1) removal of a dilapidated boardwalk through one of the SBEP’s oldest habitat restoration projects, 2) replacing degraded sections of that boardwalk with a new boardwalk, and 3) increased signage and educational materials. Public access to the site is via existing infrastructure, and the project will include signage, enhanced public access, and educational opportunities. Project implementation will be coordinated with SBEP and other sources to bring students out to the site for educational field trips, with a particular focus on Title 1 schools in nearby neighborhoods. This project does not meet the EJ screening requirements outlined in the SBEP’s Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)).

The overall site plan is shown below in Figure 6, with the deteriorated boardwalk shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 6 – Overall site plan of proposed efforts for City Island project. The area highlighted in yellow represents the section of boardwalk to be rehabilitated. The boardwalk to the right (between stations 1 and 3) does not need replacement, and the section of boardwalk to the left (between stations 5 and 6) is so damaged that it was deemed not worth replacing.**



**Figure 7 – Segment of boardwalk to be rehabilitated**



This project is currently in the stages of project design. Once a final project design is agreed upon by local stakeholders, it will then move to the final design and permitting stages. The final designs and permits are anticipated during the spring of 2024.

#### *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property itself is owned and managed by the City of Sarasota. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with neighborhood groups, local schools, and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry out such field trips will be included in the SBEP's Citizen's Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done**

#### *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

**PROJECT TIMELINE:** The project has not yet entered final design and permitting. Permitting activities could be completed by spring to summer of 2024, and construction itself would likely start in the summer to fall of 2024.

#### *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The City Island project site is located on City Island, which is located between Lido Key and Longboat Key. Based on the approach to identifying disadvantaged communities contained within SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)) the project does not meet relevant criteria and would not be considered compliant with EPA's goal of spending at least 40% of BIL funds on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

The SBEP and its partners could use the City Island Park site for future outreach and education efforts, with a particular focus on underserved communities, building upon our current efforts to reach out to these populations via grant support for field trips for local Title 1 schools within a half-hour drive of the project site. Designation as a Title 1 school represents the determination by the State of Florida and the US Government that a school has a "...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children." Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. By expanding public access and educational opportunities from nearby communities, the project will provide direct support for the BIL goal of having project benefits extend to disadvantaged communities.

The project site is located within the Coastal Flood Hazard Zone, as identified by EPA's EJ Screening and Mapping Tool, and is classified as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would not meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

### *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The project is designed to increase public access to an important section of the shoreline Sarasota Bay, while allowing intertidal communities to migrate “upslope” within the project boundaries in response to future sea level rise, thus allowing these important natural resources to persist in a changing climate. The project will also have designated public access and educational signage to allow visitors and students from neighboring schools to understand the value of such habitats and the need to preserve and protect them. Signage would include QR codes that would link to the SBEP’s website, where further information about the project and the importance of habitat restoration would be available. Efforts to include the project into field trips for local schools, especially Title 1 schools will be included, in collaboration with those schools and school districts.

## MATHENY CREEK STORMWATER PROJECT – FY25

### RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS AND SBEP PRIORTIES

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

### SUMMARY BUDGET

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY25 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$0	\$0	\$60,000
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$535,000
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$2,814	\$5,000

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration, stormwater treatment, and disadvantaged local surrounding communities and students at nearby Title 1 schools will be provided increased access and recreational opportunities.

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, school field trips for students from Title 1 schools within 30 min. of project, created school environmental curriculum, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$260,814

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves several different project components, including: 1) improving water quality in Matheny Creek, a tributary to Sarasota Bay, 2) reducing local flooding concern via removal

of accumulated sediments, and 3) removal of exotic vegetation along the banks of this tidal tributary. This project would treat stormwater runoff from a highly developed and high-density portion of Sarasota Bay’s watershed that currently has no stormwater treatment. The project is anticipated to be able to remove 1,600 to 2,300 pounds of total suspended solids per year, and between 85 and 100 pounds of total nitrogen loads per year. The project will include signage, and SBEP will work with local stakeholders to seek out ways to increase educational opportunities for the public to understand the need for better management of stormwater runoff, with a particular focus on Title 1 schools in nearby neighborhoods. This project meets the EJ screening requirements outlined in the SBEP’s Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)), The overall site plan is shown below in Figure 8.

**Figure 8 – Overall site plan and potential benefits of proposed Matheny Creek stormwater retrofit project**



The water quality benefits of the proposed project have already been quantified by Sarasota County, based on a conceptual project design. Once a final project design is agreed upon by local stakeholders, it will then move to the final design and permitting stages. The final designs and permits are anticipated during the spring to summer of 2025.

#### *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property has been identified by Sarasota County as a high-priority stormwater project. All efforts for design, permitting and construction will be closely coordinated between the SBEP and the County, to ensure that the County's expectations of project performance are met by the final project. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry out such field trips will be included in the SBEP's Citizen's Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done.**

#### *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

**PROJECT TIMELINE:** The project is now in the conceptual project development phase, but the project size and potential pollutant removal efficiencies have been modeled by the County's consultants. Final design and permitting could be initiated by spring of 2025, with construction initiated after permits are in-hand and a general contractor selected by the SBEP, after review and concurrence by County staff.

#### *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The Matheny Creek stormwater retrofit project is located south of Gulf Gate Drive, and just east of the 30-acre Mobile Estates mobile home park. The project is located within a few blocks of Gulf Gate Elementary, a Title 1 school, and would directly benefit the downstream waters of Matheny Creek, which are identified as disadvantaged via the WHCEQ screening tool, based on the approach to identifying disadvantaged communities contained within SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)). The project meets relevant criteria and would be considered compliant with EPA's goal of spending at least 40% of BIL funds on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

The SBEP will work with Sarasota County to look for opportunities for public outreach and education efforts, building upon our current efforts to reach out to underserved populations via grant support for field trips for nearby Title 1 schools, such as nearby Gulf Gate Elementary. Designation as a Title 1 school represents the determination by the State of Florida and the US Government that a school has a "...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children." Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. By expanding public access and educational opportunities from

nearby communities, the project will provide direct support for the BIL goal of having project benefits extend to disadvantaged communities.

The project site is just upstream from an area designated as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

### *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The project is expected to include the following elements: 1) construction of an offline wet detention pond to reduce sediment and nitrogen loads to Sarasota Bay, 2) to provide treatment for stormwater runoff from a 30-acre mobile home park that currently has no stormwater treatment, 3) to remove accumulated sediments in an existing stormwater conveyance ditch, thus reducing the likelihood of flooding in adjacent properties, and 4) improve wildlife habitat via removal of exotic vegetation and shoreline restoration. Depending on final design, the project could potentially have designated public access and educational signage to allow visitors and students from neighboring schools to understand the importance of better managing stormwater runoff from areas with no current treatment. Signage would include QR codes that would link to the SBEP's website, where further information about the project and the importance of habitat restoration would be available. Efforts to include the project into field trips for local schools, especially Title 1 schools will be included, in collaboration with local schools and school districts.

*RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS AND SBEP PRIORTIES*

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

*SUMMARY BUDGET*

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY25 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$0	\$0	\$20,000
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$135,000
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$0	\$5,000

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration and increased resiliency of bay shoreline

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget.

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$160,000

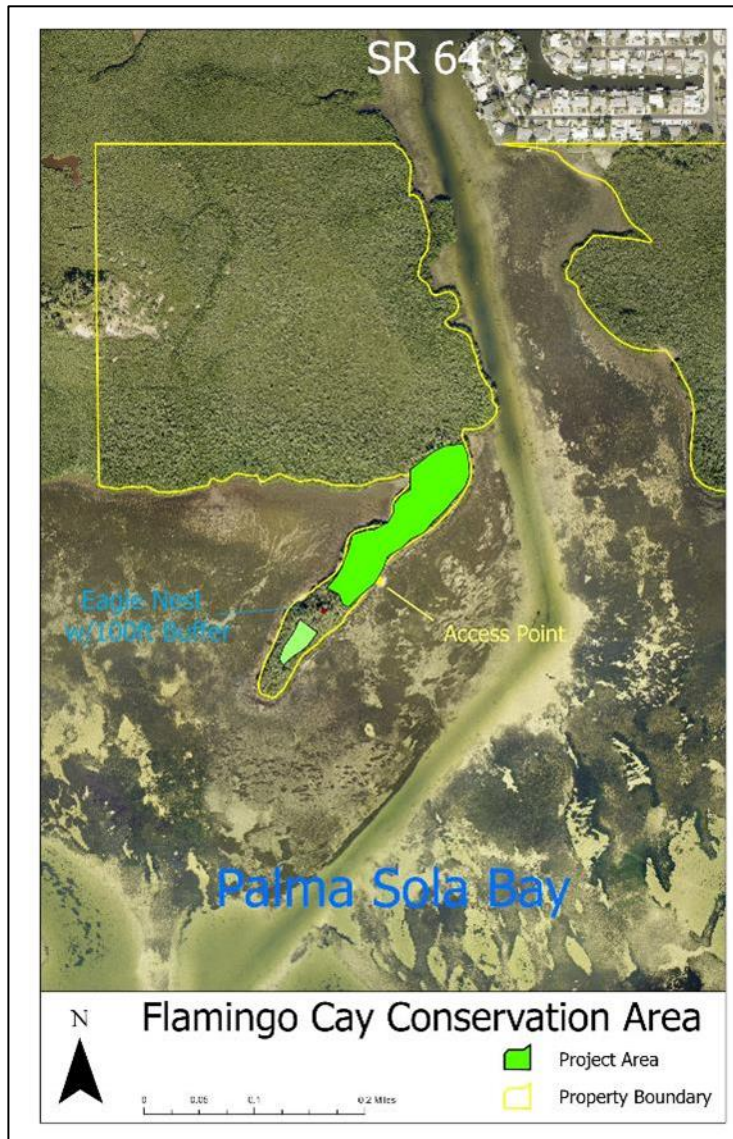
*PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

The Flamingo Cay Conservation Area is approximately 100 acres of mangrove swamps and areas of former mangroves that were used for the disposal of spoil materials from the dredging of nearby residential areas. The proposed project involves several different project components, including: 1) removal of exotic vegetation in upland spoil disposal sites, 2) replanting these degraded upland habitats with native species, and 3) where appropriate, reestablishing a more natural intertidal fringe in areas also impacted by spoil disposal. While the area is not easily accessed, except by boat, kayak or other forms of transport, the project is located along a very busy boating channel, and such will include educational signage. The SBEP will work with local stakeholders to seek out ways to increase educational opportunities for the public to understand the need for better management of stormwater runoff, with a particular focus on Title 1 schools in nearby neighborhoods. However,

this project does not meet the EJ screening requirements outlined in the SBEP’s Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](https://www.sarasotabay.org/2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf)),

The overall site plan is shown below in Figure 9.

**Figure 9 – Overall site plan and potential benefits of proposed Flamingo Cay habitat restoration project**



### PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS

The property has been identified by Manatee County as a high-priority habitat restoration project. All efforts for design, permitting and construction will be closely coordinated between the SBEP and the County, to ensure that the County’s expectations of project performance are met by the final project. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry**

out such field trips will be included in the SBEP’s Citizen’s Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done.

#### *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

**PROJECT TIMELINE:** The project is in the conceptual project development phase. Final design and permitting could be initiated by spring of 2026, with construction initiated after permits are in-hand and a general contractor selected by the SBEP, after review and concurrence by County staff.

#### *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The Flamingo Cay habitat restoration project is located along the shoreline of Palma Sola Bay on a mangrove island south of the housing development also called Flamingo Cay. The project is not close to a community designated as economically disadvantaged, using the methodology contained within SBEP’s Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)).

Because the project is on a mangrove island, it is not a location that would lend itself to school field trips, etc. However, it is adjacent to a well-used boating channel, and would be considered high profile by boaters in the Palma Sola Bay region. The project is, however, susceptible to impacts of climate change, especially ongoing issues with accelerated sea level rise. The upland aspects of the project site will be configured to allow for the upslope migration of intertidal wetlands expected to occur with future sea level rise, thus capable of creating fisheries habitats in both the near future and in the coming decades.

The project site is in an area designated as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would not meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

#### *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The Flamingo Cay Conservation Area consists of 100 acres of mangrove swamp and coastal spoil areas. This parcel has been owned by Manatee County since 1931. Dredging of the interior canals at the adjacent Flamingo Cay Subdivision and of the main channel from Palma Sola Bay into Perico Bayou led to significant spoil deposition on the property sometime between, creating approximately 2.4 acres of upland that were previously mangrove swamp. The project is designed to remove exotic vegetation in the upland areas and create shoreline habitats while also allowing the current upland areas to serve as areas that would allow for the upslope migration of intertidal communities with future sea level rise.

*RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS AND SBEP PRIORITIES*

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

*SUMMARY BUDGET*

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY25 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$0
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$0	\$0

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration, stormwater treatment, and increased resiliency of bay shoreline

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget.

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$150,000

*PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

The project is in a small public park owned and managed by Manatee County, on the eastern shoreline of Palma Sola Bay. This project is the first phase of a two-step process to implement a living shoreline project at Rose Park, to enhance coastal resilience, restore intertidal habitats, improve water quality, and filter stormwater entering Palma Sola Bay. The project will prioritize improvements that soften the shoreline to enhance estuarine, shellfish, and fisheries habitat using nature-based resiliency techniques. This first phase will focus on obtaining final design for the project and gaining permits for later construction (Phase I), which would be funded with FY26 BIL funds.

The SBEP will work with local stakeholders to seek out ways to increase educational opportunities for the public to understand the need for better management of stormwater runoff, with a

particular focus on Title 1 schools in nearby neighborhoods. However, this project does not meet the EJ screening requirements outlined in the SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)),

The overall site plan is shown below in Figure 10.

**Figure 10 – Overall site plan and potential benefits of proposed Rose Park shoreline restoration project**



#### *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property has been identified by Manatee County as a high-priority habitat restoration project. All efforts for design, permitting and construction will be closely coordinated between the SBEP and the County, to ensure that the County's expectations of project performance are met by the final project. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry out such field trips will be included in the SBEP's Citizen's Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done.**

## *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

**PROJECT TIMELINE:** The project is in the conceptual project development phase. Final design and permitting could be initiated by spring of 2026, with construction initiated after permits are in-hand and a general contractor selected by the SBEP, after review and concurrence by County staff.

## *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

Rose Park is located along the eastern shoreline of Palma Sola Bay, south of the Manatee Avenue Causeway (SR 64). The project is not close to a community designated as economically disadvantaged, using the methodology contained within SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf](#) ([sarasotabay.org](http://sarasotabay.org))).

The project is contained within a small County Park, which could be used for school trips to educate children about the value of coastal habitats and the likely impacts of accelerated rates of sea level rise. The site is in an area designated as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would not meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

## *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The project is located along Palma Sola Bay in Manatee County, Florida. This project is the first phase of a two-step process to implement a living shoreline project at Rose Park, to enhance coastal resilience, restore intertidal habitats, improve water quality, and filter stormwater entering Palma Sola Bay. The project will prioritize improvements that soften the shoreline to enhance estuarine, shellfish, and fisheries habitat using nature-based resiliency techniques. This first phase will focus on obtaining final design for the project, and gaining permits for Phase II, which would be funded with FY26 BIL funds.

*RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS AND SBEP PRIORITIES*

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

*SUMMARY BUDGET*

Project elements	Previously spent FY25 BIL funds	Ongoing efforts	FY26 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$150,000	\$0	\$0
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$495,000
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$0	\$5,000

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration, stormwater treatment, and increased resiliency of bay shoreline

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget.

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$500,000

*PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

The project is in a small public park owned and managed by Manatee County, on the eastern shoreline of Palma Sola Bay. This project is the second phase of a two-step process to implement a living shoreline project at Rose Park, to enhance coastal resilience, restore intertidal habitats, improve water quality, and filter stormwater entering Palma Sola Bay. The project will prioritize improvements that soften the shoreline to enhance estuarine, shellfish, and fisheries habitat using nature-based resiliency techniques. This second phase is to cover the costs of construction of the shoreline restoration and stormwater retrofit project, pending the completion of Phase I, which will focus on obtaining final design for the project, and gaining permits, **using FY25 BIL funds.**

The SBEP will work with local stakeholders to seek out ways to increase educational opportunities for the public to understand the need for better management of stormwater runoff, with a particular focus on Title 1 schools in nearby neighborhoods. However, this project **does not meet** the EJ screening requirements outlined in the SBEP’s Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)).

The overall site plan is shown below in Figure 11.

**Figure 11 – Overall site plan and potential benefits of proposed Rose Park shoreline restoration project**



#### *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property has been identified by Manatee County as a high-priority habitat restoration project. All efforts for design, permitting and construction will be closely coordinated between the SBEP and the County, to ensure that the County’s expectations of project performance are met by the final project. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry out such field trips will be included in the SBEP’s Citizen’s Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done.**

## *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

**PROJECT TIMELINE:** The project would be initiated after obtaining final design and permits, which is part of Phase 1, to be conducted using **FY25 BIL funds**. If permits are obtained in the fall of 2025, it is anticipated that construction could start in the spring of 2026, after review and concurrence by County staff.

## *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

Rose Park is located along the eastern shoreline of Palma Sola Bay, south of the Manatee Avenue Causeway (SR 64). The project is not close to a community designated as economically disadvantaged, using the methodology contained within SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)).

The project is contained within a small County Park, which could be used for school trips to educate children about the value of coastal habitats, and the likely impacts of accelerated rates of sea level rise. The site is in an area designated as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would not meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

## *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The project is located along Palma Sola Bay in Manatee County, Florida. This project is the first phase of a two-step process to implement a living shoreline project at Rose Park, to enhance coastal resilience, restore intertidal habitats, improve water quality, and filter stormwater entering Palma Sola Bay. The project will prioritize improvements that soften the shoreline to enhance estuarine, shellfish, and fisheries habitat using nature-based resiliency techniques. This second phase is dependent upon the acquisition of all required permits, which is to be accomplished with FY25 BIL funds.

*RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS AND SBEP PRIORITIES*

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

*SUMMARY BUDGET*

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY26 BIL funds
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$0	\$0	\$40,000
Construction and construction management	\$0	\$0	\$355,000
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$0	\$5,000

**BENEFITS:** Habitat restoration, stormwater treatment, and **disadvantaged local surrounding communities and students at nearby Title 1 schools will be provided increased access and recreational opportunities.**

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES:** Community/school engagement meetings/workshops, school field trips for students from Title 1 schools within 30 minutes of project, created school environmental curriculum, public outreach to be coordinated by SBEP, using Section 320 funds, via the SBEP’s Community Action Plan budget.

**OUTCOMES:** Please see Project Summary.

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** Estimated total costs of \$400,000

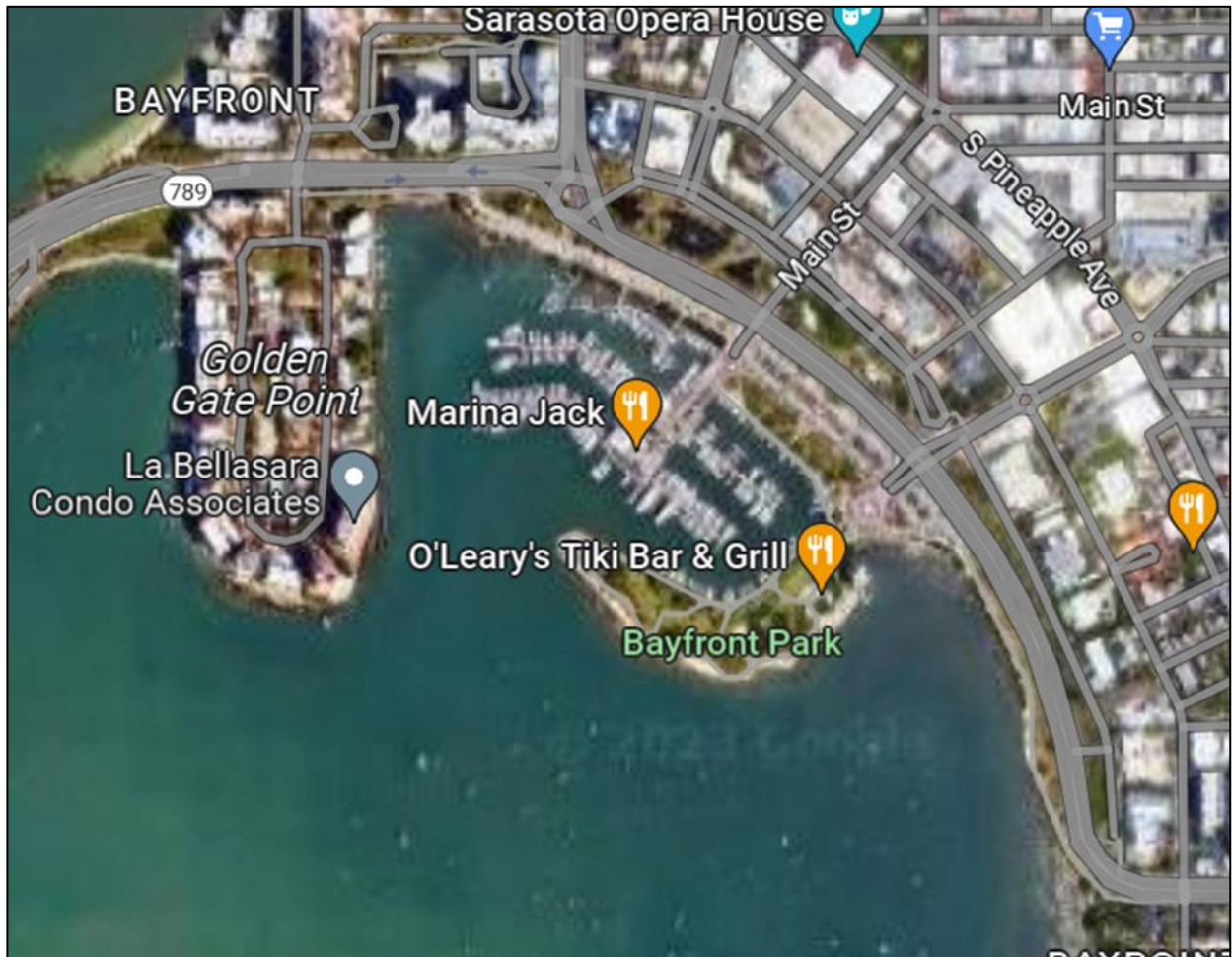
*PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

The proposed project involves several different project components, including: 1) removal of exotic vegetation along a stretch of shoreline bordering Sarasota Bay, 2) improving public access to the shoreline by clearing away non-native plants, 3) removal of a portion of compromised seawall along

the shoreline between Bayfront Park and Selby Gardens, and 4) creating of a living shoreline that would allow mangroves to migrate upslope with anticipated levels of sea level rise over the next few decades. Public access to the site is via the existing infrastructure of the park itself, and community input will be sought as to what features are desired for park users. The project will include signage, public access, and educational opportunities and project implementation will be coordinated with SBEP and other sources to bring students out to the site for educational field trips, with a particular focus on Title 1 schools in nearby neighborhoods. This project meets the EJ screening requirements outlined in the SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](https://www.sarasotabay.org/2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf)).

The overall site plan is shown below in Figure 12.

**Figure 12 – Overall site plan of proposed efforts for City of Sarasota’s South Bayfront Park shoreline restoration project**



This project is currently in the stages of development of a conceptual project design. Once a final project design is agreed upon by local stakeholders, it will then move to the final design and permitting stages. The final designs and permits could be initiated during the spring of 2026.

## *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property site is owned and managed by the City of Sarasota. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with neighborhood groups, local schools, and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for nearby Title 1 schools. **Funds shown for public education and outreach represent educational signage alone, based on current projects. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners actually carry out such field trips will be included in the SBEP's Citizen's Action Plan (CAP) budget, as is currently done.**

## *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

**PROJECT TIMELINE:** The project is only in the conceptual planning stages. For the project to move forward, additional resources will need to be devoted to obtaining input from City staff, as well as local community groups. Permitting activities could be initiated by spring of 2026, with construction phases coming only after final design and permits are obtained.

## *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The City of Sarasota's Bayfront Park is a major public asset, free to residents and visitors alike. It currently has been used as the location for both a living shoreline project, located at the tip of the park's peninsula west of Marina Jack, as well as a living seawall demonstration project, located just south of O'Leary's Tiki Bar & Grill. This proposed project would occur along the shoreline south and east of O'Leary's, between Bayfront Park and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Based on the approach to identifying disadvantaged communities contained within SBEP's Equity Plan ([2nd-revised-SBEP-Equity-Plan-July-2023.pdf \(sarasotabay.org\)](#)), the project meets relevant criteria and **would be** considered compliant with EPA's goal of spending at least 40% of BIL funds on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

The SBEP will use this site for future outreach and education efforts, with a particular focus on underserved communities, building upon our current efforts to reach out to these populations via grant support for field trips for local Title 1 schools within a half-hour drive of the project site. Designation as a Title 1 school represents the determination by the State of Florida and the US Government that a school has a "...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children." Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. By expanding public access and educational opportunities from nearby communities, the project will provide direct support for the BIL goal of having project benefits extend to disadvantaged communities.

The project site is located within the Coastal Flood Hazard Zone, as identified by EPA's EJ Screening and Mapping Tool, and is classified as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

**Based on the approach described in the Introduction, this project would meet the EJ criteria for the use of BIL funds.**

### *PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTCOMES*

The project is designed to increase public access to the shoreline of Sarasota Bay, treat urban stormwater runoff, improve the quality of shoreline habitats, and allow intertidal communities to migrate “upslope” within the project boundaries in response to future sea level rise, thus allowing these important natural resources to persist in a changing climate. The project will also have designated public access and educational signage to allow visitors and students from neighboring schools to understand the value of such habitats, and the need to preserve and protect them. Signage would include QR codes that would link to the SBEP’s website, where further information about the project and the importance of habitat restoration would be available. Efforts to include the project into field trips for local schools, especially Title 1 schools will be included, in collaboration with those schools and school districts.

*RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS*

This project, now under construction (as of 9/06/2023) addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

*SUMMARY BUDGET*

<b>Project elements</b>	<b>Previously spent</b>	<b>Ongoing efforts</b>	<b>FY22 BIL funds</b>	<b>FY22 BIL Funds spent (09/06/23)</b>
<b>Land purchase</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Design and permitting</b>	\$7,167	\$40,611	\$0	\$0
<b>Construction and construction management</b>	\$55,425	\$0	\$600,000	\$364,587
<b>Public education and outreach</b>	\$0	\$2,814	\$47,300	\$0

*PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

This project builds on prior habitat restoration projects on the property of the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (FISH) located just east of Cortez, on the south side of Cortez Road. Project components include the removal of invasive exotic species (partially completed) as well as the restoration of tidal influences via expansion and/or creation of wetland features. An additional feature, added in the fall of 2021, is to route stormwater runoff from an adjacent 30-acre mobile home community (located on the east side of the property) into a sediment sump, with overflows then feeding into created wetlands that would then merge with the enhanced tidal creeks in the southern half of the project site. Public access will be via an entrance on the west side, which would connect with hiking trails. The project includes signage, public access, and educational opportunities. Funding is included to assist in efforts to bring students out to the site for educational field trips, with a particular focus on Title 1 schools in nearby neighborhoods.

The overall site plan is shown below in Figure 13.

**Figure 13 – Overall site plan of proposed efforts for FISH Preserve Phase IV**



Phase IV of the FISH Preserve stormwater retrofit, and habitat restoration project is currently underway, as shown in Figures 14, 15 and 16.

**Figure 14 – Land clearing at FISH Preserve Phase IV restoration project**



**Figure 15 – Land grading at FISH Preserve Phase IV restoration project**



**Figure 16 – Installation of pipe connecting off-stie borrow pit to created wetland at FISH Preserve Phase IV restoration project**



## *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property itself is owned by the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (FISH), a local non-profit dedicated to promotion, education, and preservation of the historical commercial fishing village of Cortez and promoting “traditional maritime cultures” and the natural environment. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood.

Prior restoration efforts on the property (Phases 1, 2 and 3) have been completed through the coordinated efforts of various entities, including Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). Final design and permitting and clearance of exotic vegetation from the site have been overseen by SBEP staff.

## *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

All permits have already been obtained, using Section 320 funds, and construction, using FY22 BIL funds, is underway. The project is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2023.

## *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The FISH Preserve Phase IV project site is located just east of Cortez. Cortez represents one of the last working waterfronts in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. Based on EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping tool (Version 2.0) - [EJScreen \(epa.gov\)](#) the census tract including the project site is characterized by very high unemployment rates (above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile threshold) which reflects the irregular employment status of those engaged in commercial fishing. To the east of the project site is a 30-acre manufactured housing community, where most of the dwellings are less than 1,000 square feet in size, and where Zillow.com shows many units are listed at well under \$100,000. Using the White House Council on Environmental Quality’s “Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool” - [Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](#), the census tract immediately across the street from the project site (Census Tract 12081001107) is classified as disadvantaged for the categories of climate change and health burdens.

The SBEP will use the FISH Preserve Phase IV project site for future outreach and education efforts, with a particular focus on underserved communities, building upon our current efforts to reach out to these populations via grant support for field trips for the 25 local Title 1 schools within a half hour drive of the project site. Designation as a Title 1 school represents the determination by the State of Florida and the US Government that a school has a “...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children.” Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood. By expanding public access and educational opportunities from nearby communities, the project will provide direct support for the BIL goal of having project benefits extend to disadvantaged communities.

The project site is located within the Coastal Flood Hazard Zone, as identified by EPA's EJ Screening and Mapping Tool, and is classified as susceptible to impacts from climate change by the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic justice Screening Tool.

*RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS*

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WH Objective 4 – “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

*SUMMARY BUDGET*

<b>Land purchase</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Project elements</b>	<b>Previously spent</b>	<b>Ongoing efforts</b>	<b>FY23 BIL funds</b>	<b>FY23 BIL funds spent (09/06/23)</b>
<b>Design and permitting</b>	\$36,345	\$26,370	\$0	\$0
<b>Construction and construction management</b>	\$0	\$0	\$850,000	\$2,472
<b>Public education and outreach</b>	\$0	\$0	\$47,300	\$0

*PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

The project involves habitat restoration for a section of Cedar Hammock Creek, within the boundaries of GT Bray Park. The park is owned by the City of Bradenton, but is operated by Manatee County Parks and Recreation. Project components include the removal of invasive exotic species, regrading the stream bed, expansion of the creek to allow for wetland creation, and public access and educational signage.

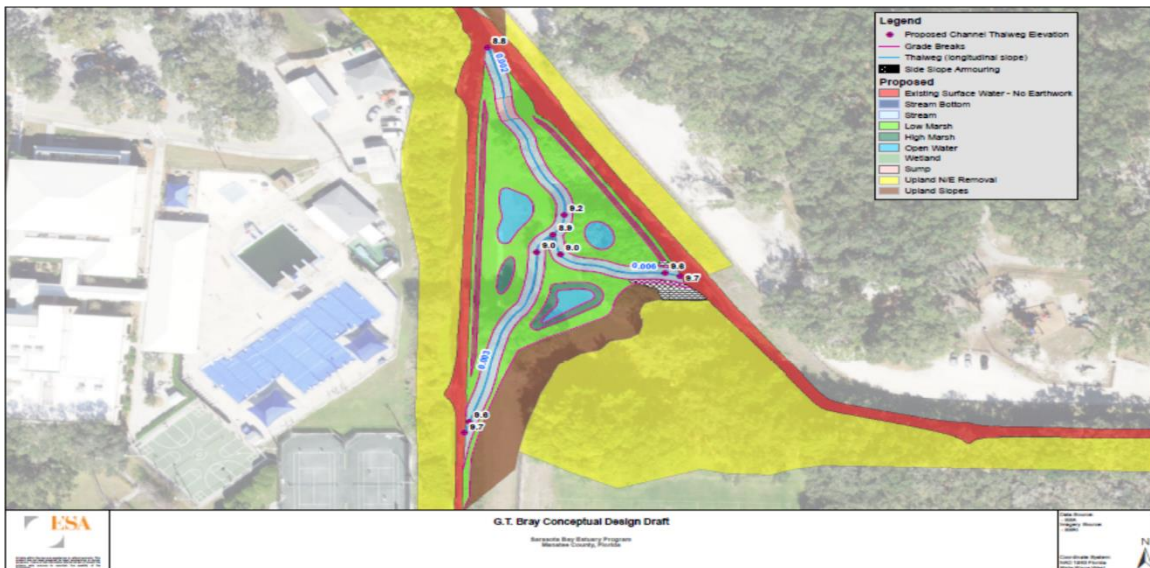
The project is in an area not susceptible to future sea level rise, but educational signage will stress the fact that enhancing water quality by acting on watershed pollutant loads will increase the sustainability of the bay and its natural resources. The project is in a highly visible and much-used public park and will create public access to the on-site creek that is rarely noticed by most park visitors. Enhanced public access to the creek will be matched with educational signage to allow visitors to understand the value of such habitats, and the need to restore the creeks and waterways that eventually flow to Sarasota Bay. The SBEP will use the project site for future outreach and education efforts, with a particular focus on underserved populations, building upon our current

efforts to reach out to these communities via grant support for field trips for the 25 Title 1 schools within a half hour drive of the project site. Signage would include QR codes that would link to the SBEP's website, where further information about the project and the importance of habitat restoration would be available.

The second component of the GT Bray Park project is to retrofit an existing stormwater treatment pond. This would involve removal of exotic invasive species along the shoreline, replanting the shoreline and establishing both a "no mow zone" along the upland fringe and an enhanced littoral fringe, as well as educational signage about the benefits of properly functioning stormwater ponds and enhanced access to the pond via trails and a potential shoreline lookout feature.

The overall site plan for the stream restoration effort is shown below in Figure 17, while the location of the existing stormwater pond is shown in Figure 18.

**Figure 17 – Overall site plan of proposed stream restoration project for GT Bray Park**



**Figure 18 – Aerial view of the stormwater pond to be retrofitted and revitalized at GT Bray Park**



The GT Bray stream restoration and stormwater pond retrofit has all permits required for construction of both project elements. The stormwater pond retrofit project is in the stages of contractor bid review, and construction is expected in the fall of 2023. The proposed project would move forward with the construction and construction management of this wetland restoration and stormwater retrofit project commencing after the approval of all required bid documents and the procurement of qualified contractors.

#### *PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS*

The property itself is owned by the City of Bradenton, but is managed by the Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department. The project design and permitting efforts for this project have been paid for and overseen by SBEP staff. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of environmental curriculum, with special attention to ensuring access for Title 1 schools in the neighborhood.

#### *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

Final design and permitting is complete, and the project has already commenced for the stormwater pond. Significant earth work is expected to start in the fall to winter of 2023. Pending the availability of funds and final permits being received, the project could be bid out for construction in the spring of 2023. Construction itself would likely start in the spring to summer of 2023.

## RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

The GT Bray project site is in west Bradenton in a neighborhood that is a mixture of working-class families and retirees. Based on EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping tool (Version 2.0) - [EJScreen \(epa.gov\)](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen) the census tract including the project site is characterized by having many elderly residents (above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile threshold for those aged 64 and over). This indicates the area around the project site includes a population that utilizes benefit programs such as Social Security and Medicare more than the US population. Census tract data also indicate that the area is in the upper 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for the incidence of heart disease, also reflecting the increased number of elderly residents living near the project site, which includes many features residents use for active recreation. Using the White House Council on Environmental Quality's "Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool" - [Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](https://www.geoplatform.gov) GT Bray Park is located within 2 miles of four census tracts that are classified as disadvantaged. These include census tracts 12081000603 and 12081000604 (health burdens), census tract 12081000309 (sustainable housing) and census tract 12081000307 (workforce development). Bayshore High School is located approximately three miles south and east of GT Bray Park, which offers opportunities for field trips and educational outings from this close by Title 1 school. Designation as a Title 1 school represents the determination by the State of Florida and the US Government that Bayshore High School has a "...high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged children."

The SBEP will use the GT Bray project site for future outreach and education efforts, with a particular focus on both elderly, retired residents, underserved communities, and students at Bayshore High School. More broadly, the SBEP will also build upon our current efforts to reach out to local populations via grant support for field trips for the 25 Title 1 schools within a half hour drive of the project site.

The project is designed to combine both habitat restoration and educational opportunities focused both on stream restoration and reducing downstream pollutant loads via enhancing an on-site regional stormwater pond. The land adjacent to both the stream restoration project and the stormwater pond are both located within the 100-year flood plain, as identified in EPA's Environmental Justice mapping tool – [EJScreen \(epa.gov\)](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen). As such, the project will allow the neighborhood to better be able to handle those elements of climate change that might result in increased intensity of rain events by increasing the capacity of the watershed to handle stormwater runoff, while not compromising water quality by simply draining runoff more quickly to Sarasota Bay.

## SARASOTA BAY ARTIFICIAL REEFS - FY23

### RELEVANCE TO CCMP GOALS

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 5 – “Protect, enhance and restore seagrass and other benthic habitats”
- FW Objective 3 - “Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

### SUMMARY BUDGET

Project elements	Previously spent	Ongoing efforts	FY23 BIL funds	FY23 BIL funds spent (09/06/23)
Land purchase	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design and permitting	\$36,345	\$0	\$0	\$7,740
Construction and construction management	\$112,600	\$0	\$275,000	\$0
Public education and outreach	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Artificial reefs within Sarasota Bay offer fishing opportunities for residents and visitors who don’t have the means to travel offshore to catch fish. Also, these reefs can provide shelter and habitat for juveniles of recreationally important finfish (e.g., gag groupers and grey snapper) that live within the estuary the first few years of their lives before entering the offshore fishery. Prior research in Sarasota Bay has resulted in the development of specially designed reef modules that can support juvenile stages of recreationally important species for that portion of their lives that they spend residing in the bay.

The artificial reef project will build upon prior efforts, which involved a series of individual artificial reef deployments located in six geographically distinct locations (three each in Manatee and Sarasota County waters): Bayshore North, Bayshore South and Whale Key reefs in Manatee County (Figure 19) and Walkers Reef, Hart’s Family Reef, and Sportfish Anglers’ Club Reef in Sarasota County (Figure 20).

Figure 19 – Location of artificial reef complexes in Manatee County portion of Sarasota Bay

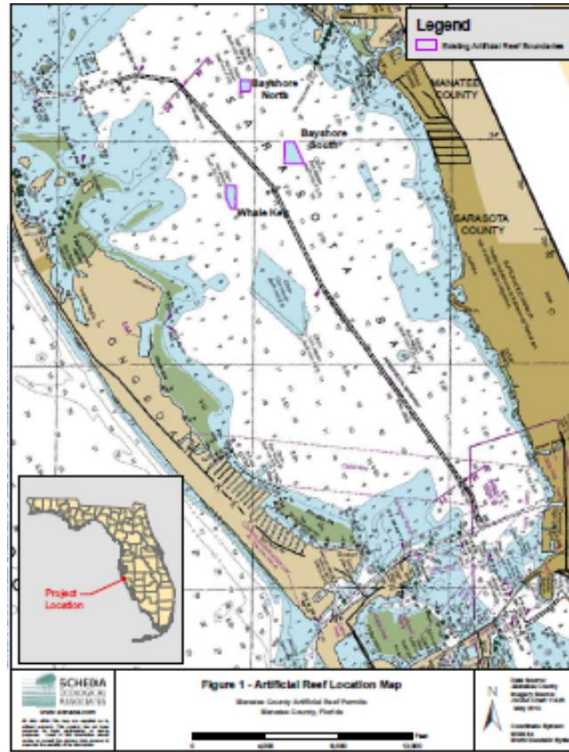


Figure 20 – Location of artificial reef complexes in Sarasota County portion of Sarasota Bay



The Walker’s Reef and Hart’s Family Reef complexes are in the open waters of Sarasota Bay and can be easily visited by small boats. In contrast, the Sportfish Anglers’ Club Reef complex is located much closer to shore and can be easily accessed by kayakers as well as small boats.

Research conducted in Sarasota Bay has determined that these artificial reefs provide habitat for both adult and juvenile stages of recreationally and commercially important species of finfish, as illustrated in Figure 21.

**Figure 21 – Underwater photo of artificial reef at Hart’s Family Reef complex in Sarasota Bay, showing multiple individuals of the recreationally important species gray snapper (aka mangrove snapper; *Lutjanus griseus*)**



This project will build off the SBEP’s prior experience, and will cover the costs to construct, deploy and monitor dozens of these reef modules at six permitted artificial reef locations in upper Sarasota Bay (three in Sarasota County and three in Manatee County).

#### **PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS**

As has been done previously, the artificial reef project will be overseen by SBEP staff, in full consultation with staff from both Manatee and Sarasota Counties, as well as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

## *ESTIMATED MILESTONES*

The artificial reefs would be used to supplement existing reef complexes, therefore permitting is expected to be minimal, requiring only the re-opening of recently expired permits. The reef designs – called “deep covers” - are based on upgrades to previously used molds for cast concrete. Contractors that have previously assisted SBEP in prior reef module production and deployment are available for additional efforts. Currently, permits are being revised and/or updated, and pending the successful resolution of any permit-related issues, construction and deployment could start anytime during the period of winter of 2023 to spring of 2024.

## *RELEVANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE*

The artificial reef program is located within the open waters of Sarasota Bay, and they are not located within any census tract. Therefore, quantifying the benefit in terms of environmental justice is not possible, using EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping tool (Version 2.0) - [EJScreen \(epa.gov\)](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen) or the White House Council on Environmental Quality’s “Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool” - [Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](https://www.geoplatform.gov) However, the artificial reefs in Sarasota Bay allow a wide variety of boaters and anglers to gain access to a fishery that would otherwise require larger boats to handle the rougher waters of the open Gulf of Mexico. Additionally, the Sportfish Anglers’ Reef complex is accessible to anyone with a kayak. Kayaks are much less expensive than power boats, and so an artificial reef complex within kayaking distance from the shoreline allows people access to the experience of fishing offshore in the Gulf of Mexico without the costs required to do so.

The submerged artificial reefs in Sarasota Bay are not likely to be impacted by expected rates of sea level rise over the next few decades. However, they would help to contribute to the overall health of the fish populations in the bay, by providing habitat features that could be lost due to impacts to shoreline features from accelerated rates of sea level rise.