



WELCOME TO THE Gulf Coast Heritage Trail YOUR GUIDE TO PARADISE

The Gulf Coast of Florida is a sub-tropical paradise best known for its aquamarine waters and white sandy beaches. The area features outstanding fishing, boating and wildlife viewing opportunities. The area is also rich in history, culture and the Arts; providing a wide range of unique destinations for everyone to enjoy.



Discover Sarasota and Manatee Counties' natural areas, botanical gardens, wildlife and bird viewing, enjoy the wide variety of culture and history that abounds here on Florida's Suncoast.

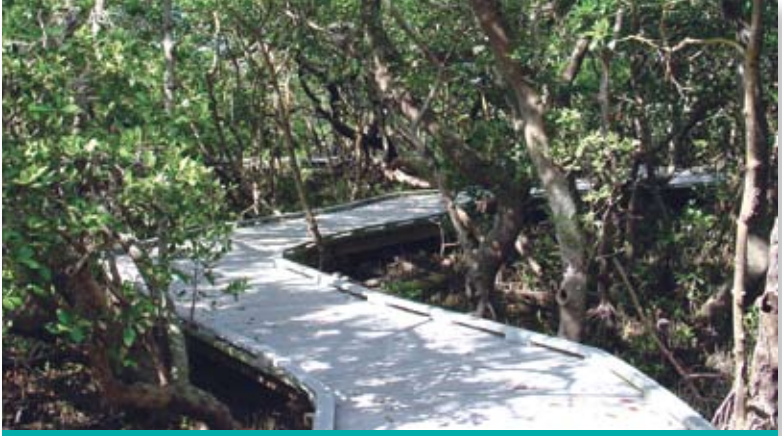


Red Drum (Redfish), nice catch!

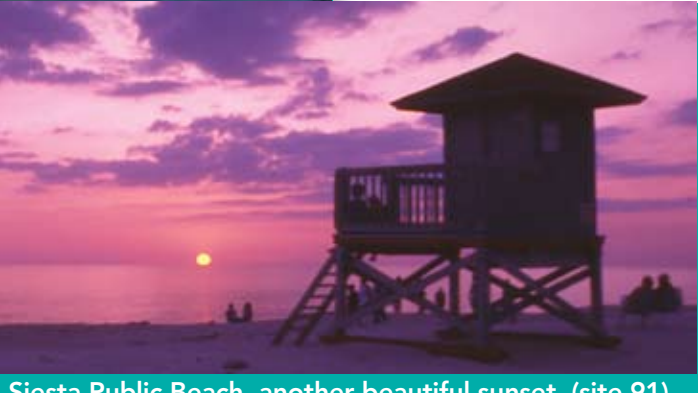
Enjoy discovering paradise...
On the Heritage Trail of Manatee and Sarasota Counties, you are invited to tour, visit and experience an array of environmental, cultural and historical gems throughout this region of Florida.



Paddle at the Myakka River State Park. (site 94)



Joan M. Durante Park boardwalk. (site 43)



Siesta Public Beach, another beautiful sunset. (site 91)

Restoration and preservation efforts suggest that Florida will continue to be defined by the beauty and utility of its coast, allowing future generations to share its benefits.

The Trail promotes a scenic tour route and includes bicycle staging areas where visitors may park then peddle to nearby destinations. Additionally, nature walks, scenic trails and wildlife viewing opportunities can be found at many of the points of interest. If you are interested in canoeing and kayaking, launch areas and trails have been mapped. Our area's history and "the Arts" can also be enjoyed by using this guide. Because the Trail cannot be traveled in a day, it has been segmented into three areas: **North, Central and South.** The recommended scenic routes are the most pleasant and highlight the character of the area. Each North, Central and South tour route takes a full day or up to several days depending on the number of points of interest you decide to visit along the way. The **North** tour route takes you through Manatee County which is rich in agricultural heritage. Enjoy the downtown waterfronts of Palmetto and Bradenton, along the scenic Manatee River, which offer a wealth of cultural and historical attractions. The **Central** tour route focuses on the City of Sarasota and northern Sarasota County. It is best known for white sandy beaches, arts, culture and fine dining. Enjoy Sarasota's cultural coast and the local treasures surrounding the gem of the area, Sarasota Bay. The **South** tour route takes you through southern Sarasota County in and around the quaint historic district of Venice. Treasures in the area include pre-historic shark teeth finds, large nature preserves and canopy roads. Whether you're a naturalist, a cyclist, a kayaker, one who appreciates fine art and culture, or a history buff, the Gulf Coast

Heritage Trail has something for you. Enjoy exploring the wonders of paradise...

Birds

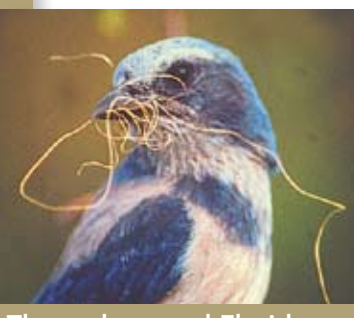
The migratory routes of birds, are referred to as "flyways". These flyways, are not specific, they are general routes that most migrating birds follow. Florida is a part of the Atlantic Flyway System, which accounts for the high number of bird species found in our area. Most migrating birds require the presence of wetland estuaries, rich habitats where a source of freshwater meets the Gulf. Large numbers of migrating



The wood stork are wetland dwellers and use fresh, brackish, and salt water for feeding and nesting. They are

reserves to continue their flight.

Some feathered friends who live and visit our area are the great blue heron, roseate spoonbill, snowy egret, wood stork, white ibis, anhinga, brown pelican, osprey, bald eagle and



The endangered Florida Scrub-Jay may be spotted in scrubby flatwoods habitats such as Oscar Scherer State Park (site #100), Rye Preserve (site 10), and Service Club Park (site 113).

Manatee

The Florida manatee, a subspecies of the West Indian manatee, is Florida's official marine mammal. Florida Department of Environmental Protection estimates there are about 2,400 of these gentle, fascinating mammals living in Florida. These vegetarian giants can grow to a length of 10 feet and can weigh up to 3,000 pounds as adults. Locally, manatees can be found around the fringes of Sarasota Bay from April to December.



You can view manatees at The Parker Manatee Aquarium (site 21), and at Mote Marine Aquarium (site 55).

NATURE ABOUNDS

Wildlife

Sea Turtles

The Gulf beaches along the barrier islands support loggerhead turtles and their nesting activities May through October. Five species of sea turtles inhabit the Gulf Coast region: loggerhead, green, hawksbill, leatherback, and Kemp's Ridley. However, loggerhead turtles, which are classified as threatened, are the predominant species on our beaches. In 1998, more than 4,538 nests of loggerhead turtles were documented in the region.



Loggerhead Turtle

Dolphins

During the spring and summer, mothers and calves can be found in the shallow waters of Palma Sola Bay and Anna Maria Sound. The newborns are safer in the shallow coastal waters away from such predators as adult Bull Sharks, which swim in the Gulf offshore in the summer. In the fall and winter, dolphins are more frequently found in the passes and along Gulf shorelines. A large Bottlenose Dolphin population call Sarasota Bay home year round.



Dolphin

You can be part of the solution...

Unfortunately, a leading cause of death and injures among Florida Manatees, Sea Turtles and Dolphins are human-related from collisions with boat hulls and propellers, entanglement in floats, fishing lines and ingestion of foreign objects, such as garbage thrown from boats. Please follow safety cautions to ensure protection for our region's wildlife.

DEVERSE DESTINATIONS

Cultural Attractions

The Gulf Coast Heritage Trail offers an array of cultural attractions, which range from visual and performing arts to nationally famous museums. Home to many writers, artists and patrons, Manatee and Sarasota counties present a year-round festival of the Arts.



Bayfront BayWalk (site # 70) located near the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall (site 72).



Sarasota Opera House (site 75).



Circus Sarasota.



Ca'd'Zan (site #48) at Ringling Museum (site 47).



Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (site 82).



Historic Bridge Street Pier (site 35).



Gulf Coast Wonder & Imagination Zone (site 73).



De Soto National Memorial (site 19).



Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium (site 55).

A world-class collection of Baroque art along with a Circus Museum and Venetian-styled mansion are part of the Ringling Museum (sites 47 & 48) , a gift of John and Mable Ringling to the people of Florida.

Other sites and museums such as the Crosley Museum (site 45), Historic Spanish Point (site 98) , and De Soto National Memorial (site 19) educate visitors about the area's history. Visual arts are enhanced by community arts organizations, college galleries, fairs, festivals and commercial art galleries. There is a rich circus heritage that still can be seen through the performances of Circus Sarasota and Sarasota's Sailor Circus (site 84), the oldest continuously running youth circus in America.

Among the riches from which visitors and locals may choose are productions on theatrical stages, including professional theater companies and dinner theaters. At the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall (site 72), you can see a full season of artistic performances. Music lovers can select from among a symphony orchestra, an opera company, choral groups, smaller orchestras, concert bands and numerous jazz ensembles. The region's cultural community also offers outstanding ballet and ballroom dance companies.

THE AREA'S RICH HERITAGE

History

The rich heritage of Manatee and Sarasota counties centers around the Manatee River and Sarasota Bay.

Native Americans

Mineral springs in southern Sarasota County and burial, midden, and temple mounds located along the river banks and bay shore have provided evidence of human habitation back 12,000 years. Much like today, native Florida Indians depended on estuaries, lakes, and rivers for their livelihood. Over the centuries this area's water resources continued to attract inhabitants. When settlers first arrived in the 1840s, Florida was not yet a state. The territory was populated by scattered fishermen who came from Cuba and established fishing camps called *ranchos* on the coast. Seminole Indians, though restricted by the federal government to interior lands, mingled with the new arrivals. By the early 1850s one of the few important Seminole War Chiefs left in Florida was Billy Bowlegs. Billy Bowlegs would frequently visit settlers in the Manatee River area. Visit the South Florida Museum (site 21), and the De Soto National Memorial (site 19) to learn more of the areas' Native Americans and early Spanish explorers.



Billy Bowlegs



Pinewood flatwoods at Carlton Reserve (site 101).

Mangroves

Mangrove are also known as "walking trees," changing tides giving their extensive root system the illusion of movement. They are a critical part of the Sarasota Bay ecosystem. There are three types of mangroves: the red mangrove, the black mangrove, and the white mangrove.



Great Blue Herons nesting in the mangrove treetops.



Explore the mangrove tunnels at South Lido Park (site 64).

Mangroves are rich with life, providing food and safe haven for coastal and marine creatures. Mangroves also provide benefits to humans, helping to filter pollutants and play a major role in stabilizing shores, preventing erosion and as a buffer for our communities from storm surges.

Other types of Habitats

In addition to the important saltwater wetland habitats of the Sarasota Bay Region, there are other habitats that are equally significant to the health of the watershed: flatwoods, prairies, hammocks, and freshwater marshlands. These types of diverse habitats with unique wildlife and important biological functions can be seen at state and county parks within the region. For a glimpse of "Old Florida," visitors should not miss the spectacular Myakka River State Park (site 94). The park includes more than 30,000 acres where deer, bobcat, bald eagle and the American alligator roam free. Because Florida has such diverse habitats there are an abundance of unique wildlife. Be aware that Manatee and Sarasota Counties are home to several endangered or threatened species, such as the scrub-jay, West Indian manatee, gopher tortoise and indigo snake, so keep your distance while you enjoy viewing these fantastic creatures.



Endangered Gopher tortoise.

OUR AREA'S GREATEST NATURAL ASSET

Sarasota Bay

MANATEE & SARASOTA COUNTIES

Sarasota Bay forms the coast of Manatee and Sarasota counties. This series of embayments start at the Anna Maria Sound and goes south to the Venice Inlets. Sarasota Bay has 50 square miles of open water and a 250 square mile watershed—the land, river and streams that drain into a body of water—forming the backbone of the social and economic vitality of the region.



Overlooking downtown Sarasota and Sarasota Bay.



Marina at the Manatee riverfront, downtown Bradenton.



Sunset on the Manatee River.

The Bay supports 50 water-dependent industries. Tourism, the largest industry in Sarasota County and the second largest industry in Manatee County, depends strongly on the condition and quality of the Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

Our area is a tropical paradise best known for its aquamarine waters and white sandy beaches. From the coastal shores to the scenic Manatee and Myakka Rivers you can find outstanding fishing, boating, canoe/kayak trails, and wildlife viewing.

Do your part to help protect the natural beauty of our community and maintain our healthy Bay—

- Respect wildlife - appreciate from a distance.
- Do not litter.
- Pick-up after your pet and dispose of the waste properly.
- Follow all boating regulations and posted signage.

UNIQUE ECOSYSTEMS OF THE GULF COAST

Habitat

RESOURCE DIRECTORY



Sarasota Bay Estuary Program & The Gulf Coast Heritage Trail	941.955.8085
Arts/Cultural Interests	
Arts Hotline	941.745.ARTS
Manatee County Cultural Alliance	941.721.0405
Sarasota County Arts Council	941.365.5118
County Parks	
Manatee County	941.749.7123
Sarasota County	941.861.5000
Department of Historical Resources	
Manatee County Department of Historical Resources	941.741.4070
Sarasota County Department of Historical Resources	941.861.5000
Public Transportation	
Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT)	941.749.7116
Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)	941.861.1234
State Parks	
Myakka River State Park	941.361.6511
Oscar Scherer State Park	941.483.5956
Tourist Information	
Manatee County Tourist Information Center	941.729.7040
Sarasota County Tourist Information Center	941.957.1877
Anna Maria Chamber of Commerce	941.778.1541
Manatee Chamber of Commerce	941.748.3411
Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce	941.383.2466
Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce	941.955.2508
Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce	941.349.3800
Venice Area Chamber of Commerce	941.488.2236
Englewood Chamber of Commerce	941.474.5511

Some museums and art institutions have limited operating hours. It is recommended you call the locations prior your visit.

This publication is presented by the Sarasota Estuary Program (SBEP)

Mission Statement

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) is dedicated to improving and protecting the area's greatest and most important natural asset—Sarasota Bay. SBEP strives to improve water quality, increase habitat and enhance the natural resources of the area for use and enjoyment by the public.



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Gulf Coast Heritage Trail

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA



a new height in the 1920s which sparked the area's first housing boom. Mansions and winter retreats from this time can still be found including the Gamble Plantation

(site 8), the Crosley Musuem (site 45), the Cad'a'Zan (site 48), home of John and Mable Ringling, and Historic Spanish Point (site 98).

Modern Era

Always important industries, agriculture and fishing eased the counties though the depression of the 1930s. The region experienced a population explosion after World War II, with the accompanying growth in industry, shopping centers, schools, tourist attractions and accommodations. As they did decades ago, the scenic and bountiful waters of Manatee and Sarasota still draw new residents and visitors to its beautiful shores.



Cortez Commerical Fishing Village (site 36).



Days gone by...



John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art (site 47).



Crowley-Tatum House (site 90).

Homesteaders

Florida homesteaders, also known as "Crackers," started populating the state in the 1800s. Living in Florida was hard then without air conditioning and bug repellent. These hardy pioneers eeked out a living rustling wild cattle and living off the land. "Cracker" heritage sites can be found along the Gulf Coast Heritage Trail at Cortez Commerical Fishing Village (site 36), Crowley Museum and Nature Nature Center (site 90), and Historic Spanish Point (site 98).

Golden Age

By the 1870s the Sarasota Bay region was being advertised as a place for recreation and relaxation. This probably originated with advertisements for the Webb Resort Hotel in Osprey but was brought to

Area code: 941

● 1 Sunshine Skyway Fishing Pier State Park:

Among the longest piers in the world. Offering spectacular views, the piers are on both ends of the bridge, there is a bait and tackle shop, canoe/kayak launch, restaurants and restrooms. The piers are open 24 hours a day year-round. Located north and south ends of the Skyway Bridge on I-275 (US 19).

www.floridastateparks.org

● 2 Frog Creek Campground: An 18-acre campground. Electricity, fishing, laundry facilities, restrooms and shower houses are available. 865 Bayshore Rd., Palmetto...800.771.3764 or 722.6154 www.frogcreekrv.com

● 3 Emerson Point Preserve: A 365-acre public park offering woodland trails, boardwalks and scenic vistas; along with a sheltered canoe/kayak launch and archaeological exhibits on Native Americans and early Florida settlement life. Picnic areas and a pavilion is available by reservation. 5801 17th St. W., Palmetto...721.6885 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

Palmetto Historical District

● 4 Palmetto Historical Park: The site of Palmetto's first settlement, which now includes restored buildings, parks, businesses, shops, community clubs, a library and Heritage Park. Palmetto's first post office built here in 1880. 515 10th Ave. W. and 6th St. W., Palmetto...723.4570 www.palmettooff.org

● 5 Olympia Children's Theatre: Built in 1916, it originally served as a theatre and the Palmetto Bakery which remained in operation until the 1950s. Today it is under renovation for use as a performing arts and community center. 512 10th Ave. W., Palmetto...721.3456

● 6 Lamb House: Built by Julius A. Lamb in 1899, and purchased in the 1920s by J. Pope Hartlee (son of Palmetto's first settlers). The beautiful home has been restored and is now a private residence. Viewing only, no tours available.

● 7 Green Bridge Fishing Pier: Built for \$1,000,000 in 1927, named for E.P. Green who first petitioned for the new bridge that spanned the Manatee River. Open 24 hours. Great fishing and scenic views and a waterfront restaurant. 101 Eighth Ave. W., Palmetto...723.4570 www.palmettooff.org

● 8 Gamble Plantation Historic State Park: Built in 1844, it was one of the most successful sugar mill plantations in Florida. This confederate memorial offers a guided tour depicting old Florida living. Also, located on the grounds are the sugar mill ruins. 3708 Patten Ave., Ellenton...723.4536 www.floridastateparks.org

● 9 Ray's Canoe Hideaway: Near Rye Wilderness Park. Offers facilities for canoe/kayaks rentals, primitive camping, fishing, bait and tackle shop and swimming. 1247 Hegel Park Rd., Bradenton...1.888.57CANOE or 747.3909 www.rayscanoehideaway.com

● 10 Rye Preserve: Located along the Manatee River this 145-acre park offers picnic areas, pavilion, playground, camping, nature trails, bike trails, horseback riding trails, wildlife observation, fishing and canoe/kayak launch. 905 Rye Wilderness Trail, Parrish...776.0900 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

● 11 Headwaters at Duette Preserve: Possessing the unique distinction of comprising the headwaters of the Manatee River. A primitive preserve that offers 2,200-acres of trails, parking available for horse trailers. 745.3723 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

● 12 Duette Preserve: Offers miles of nature trails, horseback riding trails, non-motorized bicycle trails, camping, managed hunting and fishing. Picnic areas and a pavilion available by reservation or on a first-come-first-serve basis. 2649 Rawls Rd., Duette...776.2295 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

● 13 Lake Manatee State Park: Offers camping area, boat ramp, swimming, fishing and wildlife viewing. This park extends along three miles of the south shore of Lake Manatee, which serves as a water reservoir for Manatee and Sarasota Counties. 20007 SR 64, Bradenton...741.3028 www.floridastateparks.org

● 14 Jiggs Landing: Offers bait, tackle, canoe/kayak launch. You can paddle from Jiggs Landing to the Linger Lodge (restaurant) and enjoy a eclectic "Old Florida" experience. 6106 63rd St. E., Braden River Rd., Bradenton...745.3723 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

● 15 Pine Island Preserve: Boat access only. South of Braden River Bridge, SR 64, Bradenton...745.3723 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

● 16 Braden Castle Ruins: Once the site of Dr. Joseph A. Braden's Sugar Plantation is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Contains 209 frame bungalows, built from 1924 to 1929 for winter tourists. SR 64 and 27th St. E., Bradenton

● 17 Manatee Village Historical Park: A national historic site that offers a look at the heritage of the area's settlers. Special attractions include the Village of Manatee, the Cracker Trail, the Bunker Hill School, the Wiggins General Store, a smokehouse and a sugar cane mill. 1404 Manatee Ave. E., Bradenton...741.4075 www.manateeclerk.com click on: Clerk Services/Historical

● 18 Family Heritage House Museum: A gallery and resource center for the study of African American achievements, this museum is also a facility on the Natural Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. 1707 15th St. E. & 5840 26th St. W., Bradenton...752.5319 www.familyheritagehouse.com

● 19 De Soto National Memorial: A 27-acre National Memorial offering nature trails, canoe/kayak launch, a living history camp and visitors center, and a museum with educational films and artifacts focusing on Native American and Spanish history in Florida. Biking along scenic Riverview Blvd. 3000 75th St. N., Bradenton...792.0458 www.nps.gov/deso

● 20 Riverview Pointe Preserve: An 11-acre preserve located adjacent to De Soto National Memorial. The preserve is part of a large prehistoric coastal village site that was inhabited by Florida Indians from about 356 B.C. to A.D. 110. Manatee Ave to the end of 75th St. N., Bradenton 745.3723 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

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Bradenton Riverfront Cultural Center

● 21 South Florida Museum, Bishop Planetarium, Parker Manatee Aquarium: Explore Florida from "Astronomy to Zoology" with exhibits on the area's cultural and natural history, astronomy and lesser shows and the aquarium's manatee, Shooey, the oldest manatee "born and raised" in captivity. Great for kids! 201 10th Street W., Bradenton...746.4131 www.southfloridamuseum.org

● 22 Manatee Players Riverfront Theatre: An award-winning theatre company that presents six main stage productions, including live musicals, theatrical plays, and children's programs during their season. 102 12th St. W., Bradenton...748.5875 www.manateeplayers.com

● 23 ArtCenter Manatee: A long-standing creative presence offering art with exhibitions, lectures and workshops. 209 9th St. W., Bradenton...746.2862 www.artcentermanatee.org

● 24 Carnegie Library: Built in 1918 and houses Manatee County's early records. The first county archival library of its kind in the state of Florida. 1405 4th Ave. W., Bradenton...741.4070 www.manateeclerk.com click on: Clerk Services/Historical Records

● 25 Bean Point Park: The first homesteader landed here 100 years ago. A walkover provides a spectacular view of the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay. N. Shore Dr. & N. Bay Blvd., Anna Maria Island...778.7092 www.manatee.org click on: Parks and Recreation

● 26 Rod and Reel Pier: Built in 1947, the old style Florida pier offers fishing, casual dining and spectacular sunsets. 875 North Shore Dr., Anna Maria Island...778.1885

● 27 Bayfront Park: Offering picnicking, walking and biking to nearby Bean Point Beach and the local fishing pier. 310 N. Bay Blvd., Anna Maria Island...742.5923 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Parks and Recreation

● 28 Anna Maria City Pier: Originally built in 1911 as a dock for excursion boats from Tampa, the 736-foot pier attracts many sightseers and anglers. 1112 Riverside Dr., Palmetto...741.4070

● 29 Anna Maria Island Historical Society Museum: Built in 1920 as an ice house, the museum houses rare photos of settlers and artifacts such as shells, fossils, sharks teeth and antique quilts. Old City Jail (Next to museum) built in 1927, this landmark is a favorite for photographers. 402 Pine Ave., Anna Maria Island...778.0492 www.annamariainhistory.org

● 30 Island Players: Founded in 1948, it offers community stage productions. 10009 Gulf Dr. N., Anna Maria Island...778.5755 www.theislandplayers.org

● 31 Robinson Preserve: A 487-acre preserve including 40-acres of peaceful waterways for canoeing and kayaking. Paved and primitive walking trails, a visitors center, a canoe/kayak launch. At the terminus of 99th St. N.W. and 9th Ave. N.W., Bradenton...745.3723 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

● 32 Geraldson Community Farm: An educational non-profit working farm that grows organic produce available to members every week from Nov-May. 1401 99th St. NW, Bradenton...723.3252 www.geraldsoncommunityfarm.org

● 33 Manatee County Public Beach: 10-acres of white sand with concessions, lifeguards, a playground, fishing, volleyball, picnic tables, and restrooms. SR 64 and 4200 Gulf Dr., Holmes Beach...742.5923 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Parks and Recreation

● 34 Neal Preserve: 116-acres to explore. Located at the southwest tip of the Penicopa cove known locally as Spoonbill Bay, coastal waters of SR 64 on Perico Island. 776.0900 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Conservation Lands Management

● 35 Historic Bridge Street: Quaint shopping, restaurants and commercial district and location of the Bridge St. Fishing Pier, the center of the Historic Old Town District. The first bridge to Anna Maria Island, built in 1920. At the end of Bridge Street is the newly renovated Bradenton Beach City Pier overlooking Sarasota Bay. Bridge St., Bradenton...778.1005 www.cityofbradenbeach.com/bridgestreet

● 36 Cortez Commercial Fishing Village: Built in the 1880s, this quaint community has preserved the local heritage and offers walking tours and restaurants. The annual Fishing Festival is held every 3rd weekend of February. 123rd St. and 124th St. off Cortez Rd., Bradenton...794.1249 www.fishnews.org or www.cortezvillage.org

● 37 Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez: Located at this site is a historic shipwreck site. The museum is a 110-acre facility by classically inspired wooden piers; the building retains in its original floor plan, architectural detailing, and character. 4415 119th St. W., Cortez...708.6120 www.clerkcountcourts.com/ClerkServices/HisVill/cortez_maritimuseum

● 38 Coquina BayWalk at Leftis Key: Popular with the locals and tourists alike, this 30-acre preserve includes tidal lagoons, a foot bridge, and boardwalks for public access. Gulf Dr., Bradenton Beach...745.3723 www.visittomancos.com/ClerkServices/HisVill/cortez_maritimuseum

● 39 Coquina Beach and Bayside Park: 96-acres of white sand accommodating more than two million visitors a year; picnic shelters, grills, playground, concessions, nature trails, fishing, restrooms and nearby boat ramps. Gulf Dr. south of Bradenton Beach...742.5923 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Parks and Recreation

● 40 Greer Island Beach: Also known as Beer Can Island, perfect for secluded beach walks, brilliant sunsets and wildlife viewing opportunities. (Over 200 species of birds have been spotted here) W. side of Gulf Dr. just past Longboat Key Bridge, Longboat Key...742.5923 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Parks and Recreation

● 41 North Shore Rd. Beach Access: A pristine beach providing access to Greer Island Beach/Beer Can Island. 100 N. Shore Rd., Longboat Key...742.5923 www.mymnanatee.org click on: Parks and Recreation

● 42 Longboat Key Center for the Arts: Established in 1952, offering exhibits and art classes in sculpture, pottery, copper enameling, jewelry, photography and more. 6860 Longboat Dr. S., Longboat Key...383.2345 www.lbkca.org

● 43 Joan M. Durante Park: This 32-acre site is located on Sarasota Bay two miles south from the north end of Longboat Key. This park offers nature trails and boardwalks through a wetland and mangrove system, astronomy and laser shows, guided gazebos, botanical garden, restrooms, playgrounds and picnic areas. Available for special events Call for reservations. 5550 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key...316.1988 www.longboatkey.org

● 44 Bicentennial Park: A 1/2-acre park offering picnicking and a Florida Day Demonstration Landscape. 2730 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key...316.1988 www.sarascogov.net

● 45 Crosley Museum: The home of Powel Crosley, the entrepreneur (especially known for soap operas). This historic home, overlooking Sarasota Bay, has towering walls of cast stone, hand carved wooden doors, a stone portico, custom windows, fireplaces and a grand compass room. 1 Seagato Dr. / 8374 N. Tamiami Tr., Bradenton...722.3244 www.powelcrosleymuseum.com

● 46 Asolo Repertory Theatre: Two theaters featuring professional artists and Florida State University students. The Sarasota Ballet of Florida attains the highest international standards by performing mixed repertoires of treasured classics, contemporary and modern ballet. 5555 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...800.361.8388 or 351.8000 www.asolo.org

● 47 John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art: The state art museum of Florida featuring 22 galleries with 500 years of European art; the Ringling complex also features the Ringling Mansion (Ca d'Zan) and the Circus Museum. 5401 Bayshore Rd., Sarasota...351.1660 www.ringling.org

● 48 Ca d'Zan: The home of John and Mable Ringling, it's the "crown jewel" of the Ringling complex with stained glass windows, whimsical carvings, marble terraces, gardens, and historical furnishings. 5401 Bayshore Rd., Sarasota...359.5700 www.ringling.org

● 49 North Water Tower Park: 20-acres that offer picnicking, a playground, and a 5,463' course for disc golf. 4700 Rima Avenue, Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 50 Sarasota Classic Car Museum: The third oldest car museum in the US featuring 100 years of world-class automotive art and history, including John Ringling's motorcar collection. 5500 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...355.6228 www.sarasotacarmuseum.org

● 51 Sarasota Jungle Gardens: Sarasota's oldest attraction (1936) Features 10-acres of beautiful gardens and jungle trails; bird and reptile shows; Kiddie Jungle; educational programs; shell museum; eco-safaris; and animals from around the world. 3701 Bay Shore Rd., Sarasota...355.5305 www.sarasotajunglegardens.com

● 52 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park: A quiet park offering picnicking near the historic Newtown community. 2523 Coconut Ave., Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 53 Quick Point Nature Preserve: A 34-acre nature park offering trails, boardwalks, tidal pools, scenic vistas and wildlife viewing. Biking along beautiful Gulf of Mexico Drive, City Island 100 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key...316.1988 www.longboatkey.org

● 54 Overlook Park/New Pass Fishing Pier: provides access to Quick Point Nature Preserve. Canoe/kayak launch; limited parking. 101 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key...316.1988

● 55 Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium: Get a close-up look at the creatures that inhabit nearby coastal waters. Come face-to-face with a shark, touch a horseshoe crab or enjoy watching manatees gliding through the water. Great for kids! Sarasota Bay Explorers at Mote takes visitors on a wonderful tranquil cruise around Sarasota and Roberts Bay, experience the local wildlife and marine life as your adventure is narrated by an on-board naturalist. Also offered is the Explorer Kayak Adventures which takes you on a serene guided tour of area bays. 1600 Ken Thompson Pkwy., Sarasota...388.4441 www.mote.org

● 56 Sarasota BayWalk: A 4.5-acre wetland restoration site offering wildlife viewing and nature trails. 1550 Ken Thompson Pkwy., Sarasota...955.8085 www.sarasotabay.org

● 57 Ken Thompson Park: An 84-acre park offering picnicking, fishing, canoeing or kayaking. There are indoor/outdoor restaurants in the area. 1700 Ken Thompson Pkwy., Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 58 City Island/ Ken Thompson Boat Ramp and Bird Rookery: Provides ideal access to Sarasota Bay; offers unique bird viewing. 1700 Ken Thompson Pkwy., Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 59 St. Armand's Circle: Where John Ringling started his real estate dreams in 1917, it now offers world renowned dining and shopping pleasures. St. Armand's Cir., Sarasota...373.9660 www.visitstarmandscircle.com

● 60 Causeway Park: Offers the Tony Saprito Fishing Pier, a bait shop (Hart's Landing) and a boat ramp. 420 John Ringling Cswy., Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 61 Bird Key Park: Offers scenic vistas and recreational pursuits such as wind surfing and fishing (pets welcome). 200 John Ringling Cswy., Bird Key...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 62 North Lido Beach: A beautiful beach offering a nature trail, fishing and guarantees outstanding sunsets. 400 Ben Franklin Dr., Lido Key...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 63 Lido Beach: Popular and active 15-acre beach providing lifeguards year round, concessions, a gift shop, beach wheelchairs, picnicking, playground equipment, swimming pool and restrooms. 400 Ben Franklin Dr., Lido Key...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 64 South Lido Park: This bays to beaches park provides panoramic views of the Gulf of Mexico. Big Pass and downtown Sarasota. The park also offers a nature trail, a self-guided canoe trail, picnic tables, grills, playground equipment, volleyball court, horseshoe court and restrooms. 190 Taft Dr. and 2201 Ben Franklin Dr., Lido Key...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

City of Sarasota Cultural District

● 65 Whitaker-Gateway Park: Provides picnicking, a playground and a great vista of Sarasota Bay. 14th St., Sarasota...423.2065 www.sarascogov.net

● 66 Centennial Park: Largest boat ramp facility in Sarasota. 1059 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 67 The Players Theatre: Sarasota's oldest community theater (founded in 1930) with auditions open to everyone. Productions of Broadway musicals and special events. For almost 80 years, The Players Theatre has been a vital and intricate part of the Sarasota community. 838 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...365.2494 www.theplayers.org

● 68 Art Center Sarasota: Offers a variety of programs; workshops, exhibitions, education, and outreach, providing a destination for all visual artists in Sarasota. 707 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...365.2032 www.artcenter.org

● 69 Sarasota County History Center: Provides an understanding of Sarasota County's heritage and protects its historic resources. Research the past through its varied collections of photographs and historical documents. Collections consist of late 19th and 20th century photographs, architectural drawings, maps, business and personal papers, newspapers and other archaeological artifacts. 701 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...861.6090 www.sarascogov.net

● 70 Bayfront BayWalk: In the heart of downtown, take a stroll along the Sarasota bayfront while enjoying wildlife viewing. Located next to Van Wezel.

● 71 Florida West Coast Symphony: The oldest continuing orchestra in the US, founded in 1947. Featuring classical music, pops, children's concerts and resident chamber ensembles. The seasonal season approximately 75 concerts each year. 709 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...953.4252 box office: 953.3434 www.fwcso.org

● 72 Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall: Designed by the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, this landmark has featured world-class music, dance and theater since 1970 and hosted such artists as Luciano Pavarotti, Willie Nelson and Julio Iglesias. 777 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...www.vanwezel.org

● 73 Gulf Coast Wonder & Imagination Zone (GWIZ): Offers more than 60 hands-on natural and physical science exhibits (great for kids). The Florida Yard Demonstration Landscaping and Butterfly Garden offers a showcase of native Florida plants, a cistern, and a turtle and fish pond. 1001 Blvd. of the Arts, Sarasota...309.4949 www.gwiz.org

● 74 Sarasota Garden Club: Offers native plants, a butterfly garden, a 1/2-acre pond and a 1/4-acre of open space available for picnics, walking, and playing as well as lakes for those who enjoy fishing. Many special events are held on the grounds including, but not limited to: weddings, trade shows, corporate picnics, seminars, dog shows, musical events, and even a circus made its way to Twin Lakes Park. 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota 34241...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 94 Myakka River State Park: One of Florida's largest and most diverse natural areas, 28,876-acres. experience "Old Florida" offering fishing, canoe/kayak and bicycle rentals, hiking, nature trails, camping, horseback riding, boat and team sports. 13207 SR 72, Sarasota...861.5000 www.myakkariver.org

● 95 Potter Park: Offers picnicking, nature trails and tennis and basketball courts. 8587 Potter Park Dr., Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 96 Turtle Beach: A bay to beach park with a tidal lagoon connecting to Little Sarasota Bay; offering a large picnic shelter, volleyball court, horseshoe court, and restrooms. 8918 Midnight Pass Rd., Siesta Key...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 97 Palmer Point Park/Neville Marine Preserve: Secluded bays to beaches area; popular spots for boaters, canoeists and excellent for bird viewing. 1/2 mile south of Turtle Beach, Siesta Key...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 98 Historic Spanish Point: Features pioneer homestead built in the 1800s; featuring historic Indian Middens (dating from 1250 BC) and nature trails. 337 N. Tamiami Tr., Osprey...966.5214 www.historicspanishpoint.org

● 99 Blackburn Point Park and Bridge: A historic one lane swing bridge with an adjacent park offering picnicking and fishing with views of Little Sarasota Bay. 800 Blackburn Point Rd., Osprey...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 100 Oscar Scherer State Park: Offers nature and hiking trails, camping, swimming, picnicking, canoe/kayak and bicycle rentals. Look for the endangered Florida Scrub-Jay. 1843 S. Tamiami Tr., Osprey...861.5000 www.floridastateparks.org/oscarscherer

● 84 Sarasota's Sailor Circus: The oldest continuously running youth circus in America. Founded in 1949. 2075 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota...361.6350

● Circus Sarasota: A Sarasota based circus. Circus Sarasota is committed to broadening the artistic contribution of circus, while raising the level and perception of the American Circus to that of a fine art. Performance locations subject to change please contact for current information. 355.9335 www.circussarasota.org

● 85 Celery Fields: 300-acres that mainly consist of open marshlands, ponds and canals, edged by oaks, willows and pines. This regional stormwater flood control site is also a prime bird-watching location. Located east of I-75 Exit 210, Fruitville Rd. east, make right at Coburn Road light and follow road to curves. The Celery Fields will be on your left. Ackerman Lake and will be on your right. To get to the gazebo, proceed about 1/2 mile south from Ackerman Lake and make a left onto Palmer Blvd. After about 1/4 mile, make a left into the small parking lot near the gazebo. 861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 86 Sarasota Audubon Society: Palmer Blvd. adopted by the society, is just east of I-75 up to Tatum Road, right through to the Celery Fields. The program consists of monthly meeting open to the public. Sarasota County has long been known for its wildlife and protected areas, and many of these areas have been selected as part of the Great Florida Birding Trail. (listed on the website) P.O. Box 15423, Sarasota...364.9212 www.sarasotaudubon.org

● 87 Arlington Park and Aquatic Complex: Features an outdoor pool offering swimming instruction, walking trails, fishing, picnic areas, playground and restrooms. 707 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 88 Florida House Learning Center: A model home and landscape featuring readily available environmentally friendly materials and methods for new and existing Florida homes and yards. The house features an energy-saving passive cooling design and many cost-effective and affordable building methods and materials available through off-the-shelf technology. 4455 Beneva Rd., Sarasota...316.1200 www.sarasotaextension.ulf.edu/FHLC

● 89 Red Bug Slough Preserve: Occupies 72-acres with hiking and biking trails that lead away from the road. They're shaded by pines and palmettos that give way to oaks draped with Spanish moss and signposts mark the paths. Park benches look over the lake. 5200 Beneva Road...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 90 Crowley Museum and Nature Center: A 190-acre park with nature center, wildlife sanctuary, education facility, nature trails and pioneer museum. Bird watch from the observation tower. Learn the history of the Florida pioneer spirit in five historic buildings on this native land. 16405 Myakka Rd., Sarasota...322.1000 www.crowleymuseumandnaturectr.org

● 91 Siesta Public Beach: Recognized as one of the most beautiful beaches anywhere and as having the whitest sand in the world (99% pure Quartz); offering concessions, picnic shelters, tennis courts, pavilion, ball field, volleyball courts, fitness trail, a safety physical science exhibits (great for kids). The Florida Yard Demonstration Landscaping and Butterfly Garden offers a showcase of native Florida plants, a cistern, and a turtle and fish pond. 1001 Blvd. of the Arts, Sarasota...309.4949 www.gwiz.org

● 92 Phillippi Estates Park/Edson Keith House: A 60-acre park with Indian middens dating back 2000 years. The Edson Keith House was built in 1916 in the classic Italian renaissance style, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Enjoy a stroll on the nature trail. This park has a picnic area, canoe/kayak launch, playground, gazebo, fishing pier, and restrooms. 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota 34241...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

● 93 Twin Lakes Park Facility: A 123-acres Professional baseball games are open to the public for no charge February to October. Also popular for youth activities such as Little league baseball, soccer, and football. Adults make use of the tennis and racquetball courts. There is a lot of open space available for picnics, walking, and playing as well as lakes for those who enjoy fishing. Many special events are held on the grounds including, but not limited to: weddings, trade shows, corporate picnics, seminars, dog shows, musical events, and even a circus made its way to Twin Lakes Park. 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota 34241...861.5000 www.sarascogov.net

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