



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Contact:
Julia Burch
Public Outreach Coordinator
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program
(941) 955-8085
julia@sarasotabay.org
www.sarasotabay.org

SARASOTA BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM OFFERS FUNDING FOR BAY PARTNERS GRANTS FOR 2009

Eligible organizations can receive up to \$2,000 for projects that benefit the Sarasota Bay watershed

SARASOTA, FL (September 2, 2008) – The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) is pleased to offer applications for the 2009 Bay Partners Grants. The purpose of the Bay Partners Grant program is to promote environmental education, awareness and stewardship that improve the overall quality of Sarasota Bay and its tributaries. To further these goals funding is available for projects that focus on *Bay Education, Bay Restoration* or *Bay-Friendly Landscaping*.

Businesses, non-profit organizations, schools, academic institutions and civic associations located in Sarasota and Manatee counties with projects that will benefit the Sarasota Bay watershed are eligible. The watershed boundaries are from Anna Maria Sound south to the Venice Inlet as well as all of the barrier islands in between.

A **maximum amount of \$2,000** may be awarded to applicants. *Matching funds are not required, but are encouraged.*

Bay Partners Grant applications must be received in SBEP offices by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday November 13, 2008 for consideration. Applications can be downloaded from the SBEP website, www.sarasotabay.org (click on *Grants*). Contact Julia Burch at 941.955.8085 or julia@sarasotabay.org for more information.

Application Process

Eligible organizations will be evaluated by such criteria as ecological sensitivity, project location, benefit to the community and budgetary requirements. All submitted applications will be reviewed by the SBEP's Grants Review Committee, a panel of Citizen Advisory Committee Members. SBEP will announce this fiscal year's grant recipients via letter by January 2009.

The **Sarasota Bay Estuary Program** is dedicated to restoring the area's greatest natural asset—Sarasota Bay. Its unique program strives to improve water quality, increase habitat and enhance the natural resources of the area for use and enjoyment by the public. Sarasota Bay is one of 28 estuaries in the United States that has been named by the U.S. Congress as an "estuary of national significance."

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