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Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Bay Buddies Participate in the Great Sarasota Bay Scallop Search

Cortez, FL – August 18, 2008 The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's (SBEP) Bay Buddies will participate in the Great Sarasota Bay Scallop Search on Saturday August 23 at 9am. About 20 of the Bay Buddies Bubble-Blowers will join the Reef Rakers and SBEP staff to snorkel transects off Cortez to look for scallops in Sarasota Bay.

In July of 2007 it was members of the Sarasota Bay Buddies and Boys and Girls Clubs of Manatee County that discovered scallops in Sarasota Bay during a routine cleanup effort near Emerson Point. While cleaning up the shoreline at the mouth of the Manatee River they discovered many scallops while snorkeling. What began as a cleanup soon turned into a significant finding for area researchers and scientists who said it was the largest population of scallops found in this region in the last 25 years.

The Sarasota Bay Great Scallop Search will be hosted by the newly formed Sarasota Bay Watch, a 501c3 nonprofit organization committed to preserving and restoring Sarasota Bay's ecosystem through community education and citizen participation. Sarasota Bay Watch will be celebrating their launch by hosting The Sarasota Bay Great Scallop Search.

Scallops are the "gold standard" for water quality in southwest Florida. That is why a scallop shell is featured in the logo of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. That is also why Sarasota Bay Watch chose a Great Scallop Search for a launching event. The fact that scallops have returned to the Bay is a good sign.

To find out how you can volunteer for this Bay Buddies project or others, please contact the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program at 941-955-8085 or visit www.sarasotabay.org. To learn more about Sarasota Bay Watch and the Great Scallop Search please contact Rusty Chinnis at 941-383-2900 or visit www.sarasotabaywatch.org.

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 have been named by the U.S. Congress as an "estuary of national significance."

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