



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 1, 2009

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

Discover Manatee and Sarasota Counties Rich Natural and Cultural Heritage with the Gulf Coast Heritage Trail Map

Sarasota, FL – Beginning at the Sunshine Skyway Fishing Pier State Park in Northern Manatee County and ending at Cedar Point Environmental Center on Lemon Bay in Englewood, the Gulf Coast Heritage Trail map highlights 127 must visit destinations near and along Sarasota Bay.

For the eco-heritage tourist this map is a must have. Whether your passion is birding, kayaking or visiting our areas educational, natural and cultural icons, the Gulf Coast Heritage Trail highlights our area's bountiful natural and cultural heritage that define our sense of place. A sense of place is the culture, heritage and diversity of a region. It is finding inspiration in the past, creating meaning for the present and planning for the future.

The Gulf Coast Heritage Trail was developed by the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) and was the first regional eco-heritage based tourism trail program within the state of Florida. SBEP was at the forefront of recognizing the economic value of linking and promoting Sarasota Bay's cultural, historical, and environmental heritage. The Gulf Coast Heritage Trail was the culmination of this recognition.

You can access information about 127 destinations that are highlighted on the Gulf Coast Heritage Trail by visiting the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's website at <http://www.sarasotabay.org/tourism-ght.html>. You can visit a specific destinations via a link on the website and also download a copy of the map. SBEP partnered with the Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau to make the maps available to allow a hard copy please contact the Sarasota Convention and Visitors Bureau at

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."

###