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**Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) Stormwater Projects Make the Cut**

**SBEP lead agency in successful CIBR funding from the Florida State budget**

**SARASOTA, FL – June 23, 2008** In these tight fiscal times for the Florida State Budget two projects proposed by the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) survived the budget cuts and were recently awarded planning funding. The Community Issue Budget Request funding was \$150,000 for the Whitaker Bayou Greenway Park and \$100,000 for Indian Beach Sapphire Shores (IBSS) Stormwater Retrofit.

The purpose of the *Whitaker Bayou Greenway Park project* is to improve the water quality, native habitat, stormwater quantity, recreational access and community appreciation of Whitaker Bayou. The purpose of the *Indian Beach Sapphire Shores Stormwater Pilot Project* is to utilize newest stormwater technologies and Low Impact Development (LID) strategies to capture, detain and treat the stormwater from north US 41 and the Indian Beach Sapphire Shores neighborhood as a demonstration project for other coastal neighborhoods and municipalities.

The CIBR was developed, written and submitted by SBEP outreach coordinator Julia Burch. “In keeping with our partnership emphasis, these project will be collaborative efforts with the City of Sarasota, Sarasota County, neighborhoods and consulting firms,” says Burch. “The City of Sarasota Surtax III will provide some implementation funds but we are still looking for additional funding partners.”

These projects were initiated by members of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Citizen Advisory Committee. Among the community benefits from these projects will be improved neighborhood aesthetics, removal of contaminants and bacteria in stormwater in neighborhood, reduced exposure to contaminated stormwater, increased citizen education and involvement and ultimately improved water quality in Sarasota Bay

*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."*