



SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM
Restoring Our Bays

BAY REFLECTIONS

November 2011 - *Happy Holidays*



See more images at the
Creative Expression Gallery
www.sarasotabay.org

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SBEP Launches New Website with More Features and Helpful Links

SBEP has a new website with enhanced features, more links, more photos, and a more contemporary design. [Click here](#) to visit. Triple 3 Marketing, the SBEP marketing contractor developed the site in cooperation with SBEP staff.

The home page showcases some of the wildlife and nature images from the SBEP Creative Expressions Gallery. Other pages present detailed information about SBEP, Sarasota Bay, local habitat restoration projects, water quality initiatives, research activities, eco-tourism resources, community outreach and education programs, resources for area teachers, a digital map showing future sea level rise scenarios, and hotlinks to more than 150 other Bay-friendly organizations.

One of the new features is a list of 375 of the most common species of aquatic life, birds and other wildlife found in Sarasota Bay. The list of species includes 10 select photos. Many more photos will be added in 2012 to make the presentation more comprehensive and useful for students, teachers, citizen scientists, media representatives, and others.

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What is Bay Reflections?

Bay Reflections provides information about projects, programs and events associated with the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP).

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White Pelican - Photo Courtesy of Ron Wooldridge

Bay Repair Kit Now Available

The SBEP Bay Repair Kit is now available as a resource for promoting Bay-friendly stewardship. The 38-page digital publication designed by Patti Cross features helpful information and solutions about stormwater pollution, low maintenance landscaping, use of fertilizers, creating living shorelines, low impact development, and related topics. [Click here](#) to learn more.

SBEP and Mote Marine Laboratory Set to Complete Fifth Tidal Creek Workshop for TAC on November 4

SBEP and Mote Marine Laboratory will complete a series of workshops November 4 that are helping identify key elements of a science-based management program that supports research, monitoring and restoration of local tidal creeks. The results will help local resource managers evaluate ways to enhance and restore the tidal creeks leading into the Bay. The effort also supports local objectives for water quality enhancement.

The final workshop in the series will integrate the information into a management report. Prior workshops in June, August, September, and October focused on tidal creek geography and geology, creek hydrology (how water moves), water quality and primary producers (phytoplankton, algae and seagrass), and fish, wildlife and ecosystem processes.

Dr. Ernie Estevez, director of Mote's Center for Coastal Ecology, explained that tidal creeks are among the nation's most common coastal landscape feature and they are vital for fisheries. They are also under a lot of pressure from urban development. "Learning more about how tidal creeks function will enable us to apply science-based methods to protect them for the benefit of future generations," he said.

The workshops are being presented to SBEP's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a 23-member group representing Sarasota County, Manatee County, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Town of Longboat Key, and many other organizations from government and private industry. The TAC initiates technical studies, assists SBEP with restoration and management plans for Sarasota Bay, and reviews various projects.



SBEP and Around the Bend Nature Tours Host Local Celebration of National Estuaries Day September 24



SBEP and Around the Bend Nature Tours hosted a National Estuaries Day celebration Saturday, September 24 at Ken Thompson Park near Mote Marine Laboratory. The theme of this year's free community event was Enjoy Sarasota Bay. Highlights included fun learning activities and exhibits as well as a performance by the Sarasota Ski-A-Rees Water Ski Show Team.

The event started with 83 volunteers with the SBEP Bay Guardians helping to clean up the park and surrounding area as part of Coastal Cleanup Day. Adult and youth

volunteers from King Middle School, the Sarasota Young Professionals Group, Southeast High School, and the Sarasota Military Academy participated.

One of the highlights for many visitors was the opportunity to learn more about kayaking with the SBEP Bay Wise Kayak Tour Guide Brad Tanner. Brad took out several groups into the Bay to demonstrate and practice proper techniques. Visitors also had an opportunity to encounter aquatic life with dip nets and conduct water quality testing with support from guides with Around the Bend Nature Tours. Bryan Moore, a professional disc golf player with Team Discraft, provided putting tips to kids.

Exhibitors included Mote Marine Laboratory, Island Style Water Sports, MarineMax, Sarasota Audubon, Florida Underwater Sports, Manatee County Natural Resources, Friends of Tampa Bay Wildlife, Florida Native Plant Society, Save our Seabirds, Sarasota County Extension, Mote Marine High School Intern Program, and Stow-it Fishing Line Bins.

The designation of a national estuaries day underscores the importance of estuaries as a vital habitat for juvenile fish and shellfish. Estuaries are regarded as one of the nation's most valuable natural resources, creating more food per acre than the richest farmland. Sarasota Bay is one of 28 nationally protected estuaries in the U.S.

101 Bay Guardian Volunteers Plant 1,000 Natives at Neal Preserve; Next Outing Set for Saturday, November 5 at FISH Preserve in Manatee County

One hundred and one Bay Guardians planted 1,000 native plants at Neal Preserve Saturday, October 15. Students from L.R. Johnson Middle School of International Studies, King Middle School, and Cub Scouts Pack 22 participated. The outing was supported by site managers from Manatee County's Natural Resources and guides from Around the Bend Nature Tours. A prior Bay Guardian volunteer event in late March removed invasive plants at the site.



Student volunteers from King Middle School.

Neal Preserve is the newest preserve maintained by Manatee County's Natural Resources Department. The preserve was purchased in 2005; it's notable for its natural beauty and archaeological significance related to early Native American tribes. Neal Preserve is expected to open in 2012. SBEP provided funding to support design plans.

The next Bay Guardian volunteer outing is set for November 5 at FISH Preserve located in the Cortez Fishing Village in Manatee County. The plan is to remove invasive plants and litter from a small section of the 95-acre preserve. [Click here](#) to register online.

The Sarasota Bay Guardians is a family-friendly volunteer program that SBEP manages in partnership with Around the Bend Nature Tours. The program was established to attract volunteers interested in helping restore Sarasota Bay's habitat. New volunteers receive a t-shirt featuring the Bay Guardians logo. Groups can learn more at sara@sarasotabay.org.

SBEP and other National Estuary Programs Collecting Photos of Recent King High Tides

SBEP along with Tampa Bay Estuary Program and Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program are collecting photos from the recent king high tides along the coastline that occurred October 25 through October 29. Local high tides were as much as two feet higher than normal because of the gravitational forces and alignment of the moon and sun.

The higher than normal tides provided local communities with a snapshot of how our coasts and landscape are likely to change with projected sea level rise in future decades. Photos of local coastlines, flooded roads, pipes, and ponds are being posted on the SBEP Facebook page and on Flickr at Florida Tide Watch.

Sarasota Sportsmen's Association Donates \$5,000 to Help Support the SBEP Artificial Reef Program



The Sarasota Sportsmen's Association (SSA) recently donated \$5,000 to SBEP to support the organization's artificial reef program. The non-profit group has donated more than \$42,500 to the program since 2003. Its mission is to educate area youth about outdoor activities while promoting conservation of local natural resources and land management.

Artificial reefs provide marine habitat while increasing and enhancing recreational fishing and scuba diving opportunities. SBEP and its partners have placed nearly 3,000 habitat modules on nine new artificial reef sites within Sarasota Bay since 2000.

SBEP developed an artificial reef master plan in 1996 that identified 20 potential sites for new reefs.

According to a recent Florida Sea Grant study, southwest Florida artificial reefs are used extensively by residents, visitors and private boaters who spend nearly \$275 million annually. The economic impact includes costs for food, lodging, fuel, tackle, and other necessities related to Gulf Coast reef excursions.

Free Bay Wise Kayak Tours to Launch December 3

SBEP will kick off its annual season of free guided kayak tours of Sarasota Bay on December 3. Brad Tanner will lead the tours with two trips to Neal Preserve on December 3 and December 17. Brad is an American Canoe Association Instructor, naturalist and the education program manager for Mote Marine Laboratory. He's also a member of the SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

The Bay Wise Kayak Tour Program will consist of two trips each month from December through April. Future trips include Leffis and Jewfish Key in January, South Lido Mangrove Tunnels in February, Blind Pass in March, and Lyons and Blackburn Bay in April. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Upcoming trips:

Neal Preserve December 3 [Click here](#)

Neal Preserve December 17 [Click here](#)

Leffis and Jewfish Key January 7 [Click here](#)

Leffis and Jewfish Key January 21 [Click here](#)



Visitors to National Estuaries Day learning about kayaking.

Citizen Advisory Committee Member Profile: Damon Moore's Bay Connection Spans Generations



Damon Moore feels a strong connection with Sarasota Bay. His passion for the environment began as a child when his parents, Kathy and Dave, took him and his brothers to local parks regularly. "They helped to instill the importance of natural areas and local history", he said.

"I grew up within walking distance to Bowlees Creek and I used to go fishing in the Bay. My interest in ecology and restoration was inspired in part by Reinhardt Badow, a science teacher at Bayshore High School who taught marine biology and environmental sciences".

For Damon, the affinity for Sarasota Bay even touched his love life. His first date with his wife Alex was on a dock on Sarasota Bay. The couple was married on the shore of the Bay at the Crosley Estate. Damon earned his degree in Biology from Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia. He also played baseball for his college team.

He has been an ecologist for Stantec Consulting the past 8 years. He works closely with Gary Comp, a member of

SBEP's Technical Advisory Committee. "My focus at Stantec is on habitat restoration design, natural resource permitting, and adaptive management strategies for restoration and mitigation projects", he explained. "I've been the Project Ecologist for several local restoration projects including Bennett Park, Ungarelli Preserve and Perico Preserve."

Damon joined the CAC about two years ago although he was involved with some of the early planting projects such as Leffis Key when he was in the eighth grade. He also does a lot of behind the scene volunteer work in support of SBEP such as selecting plants for Bay Guardian outings as well as prescribed burning of exotic species on Bowlees Creek Island.

Damon supports volunteering as a way of making a difference while learning more about local ecology. "My own career path and sensibilities about the importance of restoration was influenced by my experience as a youth volunteer with SBEP," he added.

SBEP News Briefs

Youth Ocean Conservation Summit November 12

This unique conference will be held at Mote Marine Laboratory for area youth interested in conservation methods in support of marine ecosystems and wildlife. Local marine scientists and resource managers will participate as speakers. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Sarasota Bay Watershed Symposium

The local buzz in building for the Water Symposium scheduled for February 15-17 at Sudakoff Center on the campus of New College of Florida. See the January edition of Bay Reflections for more details. [Click here](#) to learn more about the program including sponsorship opportunities.

Creating a Living Shoreline

SBEP has launched a new web page presenting practical information about Bay-friendly living. [Click here](#) to see the first document focused on Creating a Living Shoreline. Other guidelines will be added in the months ahead.

PowerPoint Presentation

SBEP welcomes opportunities to present its new PowerPoint presentation about its mission, programs and collaborative projects. SBEP also has a unique EnviroScape model showing the impact of stormwater pollution. It's a helpful interactive tool for students studying science or current issues. Please contact Sara Kane at sara@sarasotabay.org to suggest speaking venues.

SBEP Facebook Page

[Click here](#) to "like" SBEP on our Facebook page. We continue growing each month and we also feature links to many other Bay-friendly organizations.

Visit These Bay-Friendly Links

[Click here](#) to see hundreds of photos from local events and programs.

[Click here](#) for more than 55 websites of other Bay-friendly organizations.

[Click here](#) to visit more than 31 websites of SBEP's habitat restoration project partners.

[Click here](#) to visit a digital map showing completed, current and planned restoration projects.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the 23-members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

[Click here](#) to learn more about the 23-members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

Final Reflection

This image of a black-necked stilt was taken by wildlife photographer Maxis Gamez of Sarasota. This shorebird can be found in both freshwater and saltwater habitats. The bird ranges between 13-16 inches in size and its call is a repetitive series of piping notes.

[Click here](#) to see more images of birds, aquatic life and other wildlife. New artistic content continues to be added to the Creative Expressions Gallery as a way to showcase the passion many people feel about the beauty and importance of Sarasota Bay.

Coming soon will be our first wildlife photography contest. Additional contests focused on art, poetry and essays will be featured throughout 2012.

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