



**SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM**

Restoring Our Bays

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photo by Randy Moore:

Bay Guardian volunteers Jenn Greenan and her 8-year-old daughter Kassie were part of the team of 60 volunteers that planted 2,065 native plants at North Lido Beach Park on Saturday.

BAY GUARDIANS PLANT 2,065 NATIVE PLANTS AT NORTH LIDO BEACH PARK

SARASOTA, FL – The SBEP Bay Guardian volunteers in cooperation with Around the Bend Nature Tours and Sarasota County planted 2,065 native plants at North Lido Beach Park on Saturday, July 9. It was one of the largest volunteer plantings ever held in the region. The plants were donated by the American Littoral Society and Sarasota County. Some of the plants being used were grown at Mote Marine Laboratory's Mote Aquaculture Park. Lunch was provided by The Florida Native Plant Society.

The new tidal tributary at North Lido Beach Park was completed in March. The restoration project improved 30 acres on the 70 acre site. The effort removed non-native vegetation, excavated the tidal wetland, contoured the upland area, created dunes, and planted thousands of native plants. The tidal wetland was created to provide essential habitat for estuarine dependent fish species, according to SBEP staff scientist Jay Leverone, PhD.

Florida Native Nursery planted more than 8,000 plants on the newly created shores in the spring. Major funding for the restoration project comes from Southwest Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Individuals and organizations supporting the project include the Lido Shores Property Owners Association, Lido Key Residents Association, Sarasota Audubon Society, and Captain Jeffrey Karr with the Sarasota Police Department.

Since its inception in 1989, SBEP has been involved with more than 200 projects related to habitat or water improvement within the Sarasota Bay watershed spanning Sarasota and Manatee County. A dozen projects are currently in planning, permitting or construction phase.

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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." Partners include Sarasota County, Manatee County, City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.