



SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM
Restoring Our Bays

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2011

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(Note: Group photo showing adult and children volunteers.)

**BAY GUARDIAN VOLUNTEERS REMOVE 1,000 POUNDS OF DEBRIS
FROM BOWLEES CREEK ISLAND AUDUBON SANCTUARY**

SARASOTA, FL – The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program’s Bay Guardian volunteers in collaboration with Around the Bend Nature Tours and Audubon of Florida removed 33 bags of debris April 16 at Bowlees Creek Island Audubon Sanctuary. The removed debris was estimated to weigh 1,000 pounds.

The effort supports an island-wide habitat restoration project funded by the SBEP and carried out by Stantec/Wilson-Miller. Funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Audubon Society also contributed to the restoration project design, coordinated by the SBEP, Audubon’s Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries and Scheda Ecological Services.

Bowlees Creek Island Audubon Sanctuary is a small mangrove island surrounded by seagrass beds and oyster bars located near the mouth of Bowlees Creek on the northeast side of Sarasota Bay in Manatee County. The Sanctuary provides foraging and roosting bird habitat for wading birds and migrant songbirds. Audubon manages the island to protect the mangroves, seagrasses, and oyster bars that are used by fish, crabs, birds, and other Sarasota Bay wildlife.

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. The Bay Guardians

program is a fun way to volunteer while learning more about the Bay. Inquires about Bay Guardians are welcome at 941-955-8085 or sara@sarasotabay.org.

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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.

Audubon is dedicated to protecting birds and other wildlife and the habitat that supports them. Our national network of community-based nature centers and chapters, scientific and educational programs, and advocacy on behalf of areas sustaining important bird populations engage millions of people of all ages and backgrounds in conservation.