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Photo Option: Gottfried Creek

**SBEP and Mote Marine Laboratory Provide Workshops
to Develop Management Program for Sarasota Tidal Creeks**

SARASOTA, FL – The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) and Mote Marine Laboratory are conducting a series of workshops to identify key elements of a science-based management program that would support 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 water quality objectives.

The first workshop was held in June and focused on tidal creek geography and geology. The second workshop on August 19 discussed creek hydrology, or how water moves into and through these systems. The next workshop on September 16 will focus on water quality and primary producers such as phytoplankton, algae and seagrass. A workshop on October 14 will address fish, wildlife and ecosystem processes. A final meeting on November 4 will integrate the information into a report that can be used by local resource managers.

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.

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About SBEP:

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.

About Mote Marine Laboratory:

Founded in 1955, Mote Marine Laboratory is an independent nonprofit (501(c)3) marine research dedicated to advancing the science of the sea through the study of marine and estuarine ecosystems, through the public Mote Aquarium and through an education division that provides unique programs for all ages. Mote has seven centers for scientific research focusing on sharks, sea turtles and marine mammals, coral reefs, the study of toxins in the environment and their effect on human health, aquaculture, coastal ecology and fisheries enhancement. Showcasing this research is Mote Aquarium, open from 10am to 5pm 365 days a year. Learn more at mote.org.