



SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM
Restoring Our Bays

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
UPDATED – September 9, 2011

Photo Option – The Sarasota Ski-A-Rees Water Ski Show Team will perform 2pm.

Local National Estuaries Day Celebration Set for September 24 at Ken Thompson Park; Sarasota Ski-A-Rees Water Ski Show Team to Perform

SARASOTA, FL – The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) and Around the Bend Nature Tours are hosting a National Estuaries Day celebration Saturday, September 24 at Ken Thompson Park near Mote Marine Laboratory. The free event will present fun learning activities and exhibits for adults and children from 9am to 2pm. One of the highlights is a performance by the Sarasota Ski-A-Rees Water Ski Show Team beginning 2pm.

Visitors can also pick up a discount ticket at the event for admission to the popular Mote Aquarium. Around the Bend Nature Tours will provide dip nets to give visitors an up close encounter with aquatic life as well as guided tours on the boardwalk through the mangrove forest. Brad Tanner, the SBEP Bay Wise kayak tour guide and a staff member at Mote Marine, will provide a series of Paddling 101 courses for visitors interested in learning more about recreational paddling. Visitors can bring their own kayak and some extra kayaks will be available.

Bryan Moore, a professional disc golf player sponsored by Team Discraft, will provide free lessons and a putting clinic. Local artist Patti Cross and her daughter Amber will be available for face painting. A group of interns with Mote Marine Laboratory will present an aquatic version of bean bag toss.

Area paddlers and any other groups that enjoy Sarasota Bay are encouraged to use the event as a meet up venue. Don't forget your closed toe water shoes, reusable water bottle and sunscreen. Dogs are welcome, but must be kept on a 6-foot leash at all times.

Exhibitors include Mote Marine Laboratory, Island Style Water Sports, Manatee County Natural Resources Department, Sarasota Audubon, Florida Underwater Sports, Friends of Tampa Bay

Wildlife, Florida Native Plant Society, Save our Seabirds, Sarasota County Extension, Seafood Savvy, Mote Marine High School Intern Program, and Stow-it Fishing Line Bins.

The SBEP Bay Guardian volunteers will also be on hand early in the morning to clean up the area as part of National Coastal Cleanup Day. All of the area's Bay Guardian volunteers are encouraged to attend the event even if they cannot be part of the cleanup.

Groups interested in participating with a family-friendly activity should contact Karen Fraley with Around the Bend Nature Tours at karen@aroundbend.com.

The designation of a national estuaries day underscores the importance of estuaries as a vital habitat for juvenile fish and shellfish. An estuary is a water body where freshwater mixes with salt water from the sea. The estuaries in the U.S. provide vital habitats for a wide variety of fish and shellfish species. 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.

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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 protected estuaries in the U.S. The SBEP was founded in 1989 and its partners include Sarasota County, Manatee County, City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.