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# Sarasota County to begin red tide cleanup efforts

Wednesday, August 4th 2021, 5:24 PM EDT

**By Valezka Nava**

SARASOTA COUNTY - As the red tide bloom persists throughout the Suncoast, Sarasota County is stepping up to help mitigate the effects.

"We did start cleaning today and we will have operations through the rest of the week," said Sarasota County Parks Recreation & Natural Resources Director, Nicole Rissler.

Sarasota County has gotten the green light to begin the cleanup of dead fish and other debris related to red tide on all county beaches

"It was really important for us to confirm with both DEP and FWC because it's also turtle nesting season, if we had the okay within our current permits to move forward with that cleaning in the situation that we're in," said Rissler.

Cleanup efforts were put on hold because no local or state of emergency was in place in Sarasota County.

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Director David Tomasko, says the removal of fish does not make red tide go away, but it can lessen other problems down the road since nitrogen serves as a food source for the bloom.

"If you did ten tons of fish you might get 140 pounds of nitrogen out the system," said Director of Sarasota Bay Estuary Program, David Tomasko.

"A pound of nitrogen can give you about 300 pounds of algae so 140 pounds of nitrogen that is no longer in the bay is a lot less algae that you can grow in the bay," said Tomasko.

Tomasko says red tide should come as a teachable moment for all.

"It reminds us, let's not make this worse, we're always going to have red tide, we're not going to stop it, it's always going to be here but when it comes into our waters and their artificially primed full of nitrogen from waste water and storm water, it will be bigger, and that's what the science tells us, red tide will be bigger when we add nutrients to our waters, so let's not do it," said Tomasko.

For more information on how to check daily beach conditions you can visit Mote Beach Conditions Reporting System website [here.](https://www.visitbeaches.org/map) (https://www.visitbeaches.org/map)

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