

# Reel Time: Brunch for the Bay 2022

By **Rusty Chinnis** - October 10, 2022



*Suncoast Waterkeeper's actions seek to prevent degraded water that leads to harmful algae like this bloom in Sarasota Bay.*  
- Rusty Chinnis | Sun

Brunch for a cause with Suncoast Waterkeeper at the group's annual Brunch for the Bay fundraiser.

This year's brunch will be held at the Bradenton Yacht Club on Saturday, Oct. 15 from noon to 3 p.m. Monies raised from the event will go to help fund Suncoast Waterkeeper's (SCWK) mission to protect and restore the Florida Suncoast's waterways through enforcement, fieldwork, advocacy and environmental education.

The group uses the funds raised to advance water quality enforcement actions and campaigns like their Eyes on the Suncoast and Sick of Sewage campaigns. SCWK has been effective in educating the public about man-made pollutants (stormwater and sewage) and enforcement with legal challenges to municipalities on Sarasota Bay and surrounding waters. Their investigation of Sarasota County's sewage system revealed a shocking pattern of longstanding, systematic infrastructure failures and disregard for public health and water quality.

To consolidate its sewage system, the county had decommissioned two tertiary, or advanced wastewater treatment (AWT) plants, to better centralize their operations. However, the remaining plants that Sarasota County leaders increasingly relied upon employed only secondary treatment, leaving billions of gallons of highly nitrogenated wastewater as a byproduct.

At the same time, demand for the reclaimed irrigation water from the county was disappearing as developers, in managing nitrogen in their stormwater runoff, turned to less

polluted options, such as well water or highly treated reclaimed water from the city of Sarasota.

Most recently, SCWK filed a successful challenge requiring the city of Bradenton to fix its wastewater system to prevent the continued release of millions of gallons of partially treated wastewater to the Manatee River.

Reports from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program point to the section of Sarasota Bay covered by the Sarasota action as one bright spot in an otherwise troubled bay.



You can help support the group's efforts and learn about their ongoing campaigns in the Suncoast region by attending the fundraising event. This year SCWK is celebrating 50 years of the Clean Water Act by looking back at the group's successes under the law and looking ahead at some immediate challenges.

The Clean Water Act allows Suncoast Waterkeeper's members to bring citizens suits against polluters which benefits all of the citizens and businesses that depend on a healthy bay.

At the event, participants will meet the group's new Executive Director, Abbey Tyrna. Justin Bloom, founder of Suncoast Waterkeeper, will discuss the importance of these cases in restoring the bay and SCWK's plans to continue to advocate for the enforcement of pollution laws.

Also speaking at the event is Ph.D. candidate Nick Castillo, representing the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust. His talk is entitled, "Does the Clean Water Act protect you from prescription drugs?" Castillo will educate participants on how prescription drugs make their way into Florida waters and eventually into the fish many of us eat.

There has been a lot of news about plastics in our water recently, but we're just starting to see coverage about the threat of the so-called "forever chemicals," like PFAS and PFOS. University of Florida Assistant Professor Dr. John Bowden will be in attendance to discuss his research on the subject. Bowden was recently hired by the Holmes Beach Clean Water Ad-hoc Committee and tested tap water on Anna Maria Island that is served by the Manatee County water utility. Meetings are open to the public and everyone is encouraged to attend and hear what was discovered in your drinking water and what it might mean for your health.

Anglers can learn how the group's efforts are supporting an environment conducive to healthy fisheries, now and for future generations.

Please purchase your tickets today for the annual Brunch for the Bay by visiting the [SCWK website](#).

The Bradenton Yacht Club is located at 4307 13th St. W. on Snead Island.

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