

Suncoast celebrates Planting Day at Tom Bennett Park



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By ABC7 Staff

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SARASOTA, Fla. (WWSB) - 75 volunteers came to Tom Bennett Park in Bradenton on the morning of Feb. 25 to plant thousands of native plants along the shoreline of a brackish pond to benefit the wildlife in the region.

The area is host to a number of plant, fish and bird species that are important to the ecosystem.

The native plants help stabilize the shoreline and keep the pond from eroding away.

They also benefit birds, fish and other species in the area that rely on these type of habitats for finding food and cover.

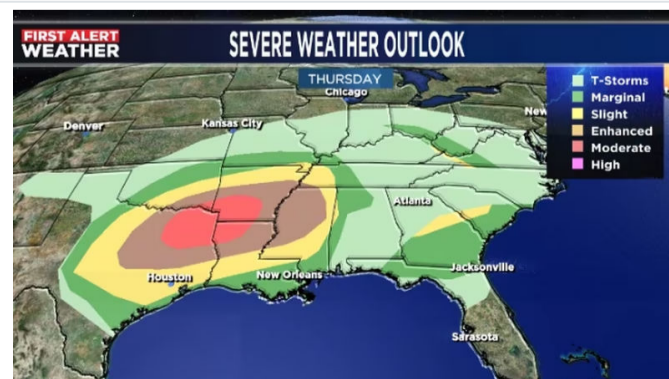
"This is an important nursery area for a lot of important fish in our region," said Shaun Swartz, an environmental specialist with Manatee County. "Commercially and recreationally important fish rely on this backwater areas where native plants are prevalent as a place where they can hide and raise their eggs and rear their young and move out into other portions of the Tampa Bay region."

This event was a group effort between the Manatee County Natural Resources and Sports and Leisure Services Department and the Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay Estuary Programs.

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