

# Study called Magic Jet Ski could help reduce red tide along beaches, scientists say

By Kimberly Kuizon | Published March 17, 2023 5:47PM | Updated 6:35PM | Red Tide | FOX 13 News |

## Lawmakers meet with scientists to discuss red tide solutions

Kimberly Kuizon reports

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**ANNA MARIA ISLAND, Fla.** - Instead of finding a lot of dead fish along [Sarasota](#) and [Manatee County](#) beaches, you'll find a [beach full of spring breakers](#).

[Red tide](#) remains, but in low counts. Local leaders are working to find a solution for the future. At a meeting on Anna Maria Island, scientists discussed what they're doing to try and improve conditions.

Congressman Vern Buchanan was among those who want long-term solutions for the problem that's evaded them, so far.

"We want to find a way to work together. Wherever the science takes us, we have to deal with it and do the right thing," Buchanan said.

The director of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program said there is a solution.

"You want to reduce red tide? Then get ahold of the nutrient loads and make them less than they are right now," Dr. David Tomasko said.

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The nutrient loads come from local wastewater and storm water spills tainted with fertilizers.

Scientists say the Caloosahatchee River and Lake Okeechobee are also tainted, fueling red tide.

"Water quality is the top issue we have in this region," Buchanan said. "Red tide is a natural occurrence, but at the end of the day, we are aggravating it even more so."

As lawmakers work on funding, the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is studying solutions. The current research is nicknamed the Magic JetSki. It works much like the name sounds.

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A Jet Ski-like device could be deployed to a patch of red tide.

Water could be pumped through the system and injected under high pressure with ozone, killing red tide cells and toxins.

"Something like a Jet Ski that can produce 1,000 or 2,000 gallons per minute, if we can ozonate the seawater as quickly as it comes out of the back, then we would have the ability to produce something that could reduce red tide at a scale that is suddenly management relevant," Dr. Tomasko explained.

#### **Scientists use clay to stop effects of red tide**

Two years after scientists first field tested a clay mixture to mitigate red tide, they are looking back on what they learned in Sarasota County and preparing for a new field test.

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The Magic Jet Ski wouldn't reduce a massive amount of red tide, but it could help along the coast when red tide patches move through.

"It's a Band-aid, but sometimes you need a Band-aid," Dr. Tomasko said.

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is waiting on permits to test 10-acre plots in the bay.

Dr. Tomasko said a field investigation could happen within the next few months. Results of the experiment will be open to the public, including any adverse impacts to humans and animals.

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