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# Community, experts weigh in on horses in Palma Sola Bay



WWSB ABC7 Good Morning Suncoast - Weekdays at 5am

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BRADENTON, Fla. (WWSB) - If you've ever driven by Palma Sola Bay in Bradenton you may have seen some animals that you don't typically see in the waters here.

C Ponies has 28 horses that they use for beach horseback riding.

What makes C Ponies so special is that 90 percent of their horses were rescued after being purchased in horrible conditions.

Tour guide Myah Manning says, "All of these horses have come a very long way. Some of them have been abused, neglected, and starved. To see the transformation and for them to be able to do this every day is so rewarding."





Beach horseback riding is a unique activity that many people choose to do on the Suncoast, but not everyone appreciates the horses in the water.

Some say the horses are contaminating the water and damaging the seagrass. We reached out to David Tomasko who is the executive director of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program.

After monitoring water quality in the Bay, he says the overall health of the area continues to be in "good shape."

The horses can damage the seagrass, but so do people and boats.

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There also are elevated levels of fecal indicator bacteria, but it's not specific to humans, mammals or even humans. The cause has still not been identified and Tomasko acknowledges more research is needed.

Carmen Hanson, Owner of C Ponies says they clean up after their horses to help prevent contamination.

Hanson says, "Palma Sola Bay is the cleanest water in all of Sarasota area. That means from St Pete to Sanibel. Our beach right here scored the highest of any beach around. So obviously, the horses aren't doing any damage. We will continue to follow the latest updates, but for now the horses are here to stay."

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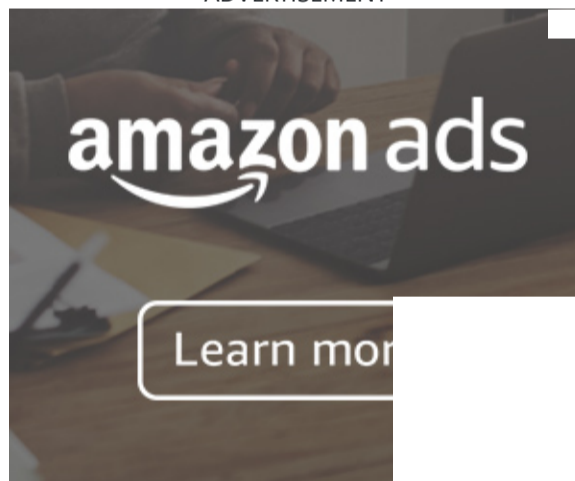
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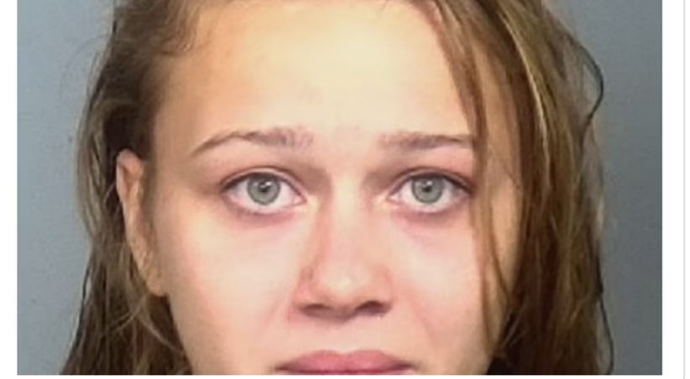


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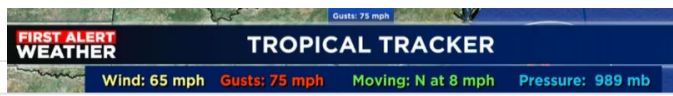
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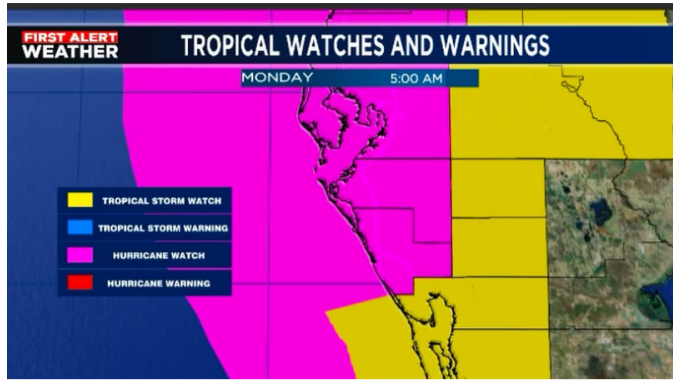
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