



BAY REFLECTIONS

Restoring Our Bays

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Newsletter

Fall 2009

1st Place Gulf Guardian Award for Partnership Awarded to Sarasota Inter-local Partners and Citizens for Restoring Seagrasses in Sarasota Bay



From left to right. Mark Alderson, SBEP; Sara Peatrowsky, SBEP;
Dr. Stan Meiburg, U.S. EPA Region 4; Bryon Griffith, GOMA;
Dave Parker, U.S. EPA Region 4; Seth Blitch, FDEP

Seagrass recovery was a major element of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Sarasota Bay, Florida. In 1995, a pollutant loading reduction goal of 48% for total nitrogen was set by the Sarasota Bay community with the intent of reestablishing seagrass in the Bay. The results have

been impressive. Approximately 4,040 acres of new seagrass habitat has been created with an additional 5,158 acres converted from patchy seagrasses to continuous covering beds in Sarasota Bay. Recent data indicates that the seagrass levels are presently 30% above the 1950 levels. The Bay has had a 50% reduction in nitrogen pollution.

Scallops returned to Sarasota Bay in 2008. Now 50-60% of the wastewater from wastewater treatment plants is currently reclaimed for alternative use depending on annual rainfall as wastewater discharge is progressively being eliminated. Stormwater projects have also been implemented regionally to reduce pollution. Citizens Action Plans have been developed and implemented annually by the Citizens Action Committee supporting pollution reduction. Fertilizer ordinances have been passed restricting Nitrogen and Phosphorus application during the summer rainy season. Watershed stewardship actions are being conducted in the region supporting the Florida Yards and Neighborhood concepts, and to reduce stormwater pollution.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program partners instrumental in this recovery include Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Manatee and Sarasota Counties, City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, City of Bradenton Beach, City of Holmes Beach and Anna Maria Island. Funding has been contributed by all partners and residents to achieve the pollutant reductions and seagrass levels now present in Sarasota Bay. Sarasota Bay is an Estuary of National Significance, and Outstanding Florida Water Body and a designated State of Florida Surface Water Improvement Management Area.

The Gulf of Mexico Program initiated the Gulf Guardian awards in 2000 as a way to recognize and honor the businesses, community groups, individuals, and agencies that are taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful and productive. The Award exemplifies what the Gulf of Mexico Program is all about; innovative solutions that come about when we pool resources and look for creative ways to positively impact our quality of life and economic well being. The partnership of the Gulf of Mexico Program seeks to improve the environmental health of the Gulf in concert with economic development.

Upcoming Events

Bay Partners Grants 2009-2010 Application Deadline:

The purpose of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Bay Partners Grants is to promote environmental education, awareness, community involvement and stewardship, and to improve the overall quality of Sarasota Bay and its tributaries. To further these goals, funding is available for projects that focus on Bay Education, Bay Restoration or Bay-Friendly Landscaping. **Applications must**

be received at the SBEP offices by 4:00pm Tuesday, December 15, 2009.

Download application at <http://www.sarasotabay.org/nar-grants.html>.



FREE Educational Paddles Around the Bay



The popular ***Bay Wise Kayak Tour*** program will be offered again beginning in December through April. Retired marine biologist and SBEP Citizen Advisory Committee member Dr. Jack Taylor will lead the educational kayak tours in Sarasota Bay waters. Discover the plants, animals, habitats and other features that make Sarasota Bay an Estuary of National Significance. This program is sponsored by the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and is FREE to the public. Participants must bring their own kayak and gear.

For more program information, kayak rental information or for reservations please contact the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program offices at 941-955-8085 or info@sarasotabay.org.

Dec 16th - Neal Preserve: West side of Highway 64 (Manatee Ave) on south side of road at east end of bridge to Neal Preserve and return.

Dec 19th - Neal Preserve: West side of Highway 64 (Manatee Ave) on south side of road at east end of bridge to Neal Preserve and return.

Jan. 13rd - Leffis and Jewfish Key: from Coquina Beach Bayside to Leffis and Jewfish Keys and return.

Jan 16th - Leffis and Jewfish Key: from Coquina Beach Bayside to Leffis and Jewfish Keys and return.

Feb. 17th - South Lido Mangrove Tunnels: Ken Thompson Park to South Lido Key Park and return.

Feb 20th - South Lido Mangrove Tunnels: Ken Thompson Park to South Lido Key Park and return.

Mar 17th - Whitaker Bayou: Bay Front Park to Whitaker Bayou and return.

Mar 20th - Whitaker Bayou: Bay Front Park to Whitaker Bayou and return.

Apr 14th - Lyons and Blackburn Bay: North jetty at Venice Inlet to Lyons and

Blackburn bays and return.

Apr 17th - Lyons and Blackburn Bay: North jetty at Venice Inlet to Lyons and Blackburn bays and return.

Success Stories



National Estuaries Day a Great Success!

On Saturday, September 26th for the 9th consecutive year SBEP partnered with Mote Marine Laboratory and Sarasota Bay Explorers to offer a special package rate for National Estuaries Day. Locals and visitors had the opportunity to experience an educational cruise on Sarasota Bay with Sarasota Bay Explorers and visit MOTE Aquarium. All tours were sold out for this fun and educational day.

Other

Sara Peatrowsky Joins SBEP as Public Outreach Coordinator

SBEP is very pleased to welcome our new Public Outreach Coordinator Sara Peatrowsky. Prior to joining SBEP, Sara worked for TKW Engineering Consultants as an environmental scientist and field team leader for a seagrass research project funded through the South Florida Water Management District.

Her education and outreach experience include teaching marine science and scuba courses and assisting with "green" community events. As senior coordinator for Efest 2008, she built relationships with numerous for-profit and non-profit organizations united in their regard for sustainability practices and green living awareness. She has also worked at Mote Marine Laboratory as a scientific research diver focusing on artificial reef habitats. Sara is a graduate of Texas A&M University where her studies focused on ocean and coastal resources, environmental policy, and scientific diving research.



SBEP in the News

August/Summer Bay Soundings - News Brief about Pooches for the Planet expansion into Manatee county and WUSF radio sponsorship promoting picking up after your pet.

August Florida Community Association Journal magazine - Cover story highlights "Pelican Cove - Community of Excellence Environmental Winner"

August 1 - Bradenton Herald coverage "Program aims to keep pouch poop out of waterways" front page local section (Walter)

August 1 - North River News coverage "Manatee County partners to promote Pooches for the Planet"

August 22 - Herald Tribune editorial "What's in the water? Polluting bacteria aren't welcome at the beach" <http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090822/OPINION/908221009> SBEP mentioned

September 7 - HT feature in Business Weekly "A Contract with Nature" mentions SBEP restoration projects www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090907/ARTICLE/909071046/2413/BUSINESS

September 26 SOLD OUT National Estuaries Day Event - Sarasota Bay Explorers Cruise/MOTE package (six tours throughout the day)

October 1 - Pelican Press front page article "More seagrasses, more critters in Sarasota Bay" quotes Alderson (Paul Roat) http://pelicanpress.org/content/1426_1.php

October 2 - Bradenton Herald "Indigenous plants among the stars at local plant shows this weekend" quotes Peatrowsky and mentions SBEP sponsorship (Sara Kennedy) http://www.bradenton.com/news/local/stor/1748114.html?story_link=email_msg

October 14 - Biz941 Daily e-newsletter "Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Names New Public Outreach Coordinator"

November 5 - Herald Tribune "Volunteer's 323 hours recognized" showcases Yvette Little as winner of award from National Audubon for volunteer hrs; mentions SBEP. <http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20091105/ARTICLE/911051054>

November 12 - Pelican Press coverage "Bay Estuary Program Offers 2010 Grants"



Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Member Profile

Wanda Kerr (Former CAC Chair)

Wanda's love of water resources comes naturally. She was born on an island in Canada where the family homestead was on a small lake. It was an early childhood experience that awakened her interest in the environment. She recalls how a neighbor had thrown out their pet gold fish into the lake, thinking nothing of it. A few years later the lake was overrun with gold fish and its natural balance changed.

Her environmental awareness was further honed when she moved to Sarasota. But it wasn't until she had the opportunity to join the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's CAC that she truly realized how vulnerable Sarasota Bay and our water resources are and the importance of educating the public about the consequences of their everyday



actions. As a valued member of the CAC, she has been working to preserve and improve the health of Sarasota Bay for eight years. In 2006 she served as Chair of the CAC.

Wanda believes that Sarasota Bay is one of the best assets we have in our community. As a Realtor she knows that one of the primary things that draws people to this area is the beautiful water resources. "It's no accident that Bay front and Gulf front properties are so desirable and bring top dollar, " says Kerr. "We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful place. Let's do our part to keep it that way."

Florida Energy and Climate Commission

Nick Gladding (Current CAC Chair)

In December, 2008 Governor Charlie Crist appointed Nick Gladding, who Chairs the SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee and in whose "day job" he is an Environmental/Energy lawyer in private practice, to a one year term as a Commissioner on the newly-formed Florida Energy and Climate Commission (FECC). There are nine Commissioners on the FECC who are tasked with developing and recommending to the Legislature and to the Governor all Florida energy and climate policies, and who are responsible for administering millions of dollars of federal and state funds under a variety of programs, including those designed to create green jobs through renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts.



Nick was subsequently appointed to be the liaison from the FECC to the Florida Energy Systems Consortium (FESC), which consists of all the renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development programs of Florida's largest 11 universities. He also serves on the Steering Committee of FESC and helps guide R & D efforts among the state university system. "Having an opportunity to visit universities across Florida has been particularly inspiring," says Gladding. "There are more than 70 research projects currently underway that address a myriad of renewable energy and energy efficiency topics including bio-fuels, new solar technology, ocean currents and algae."

In July 2009, Governor Crist recognized Nick as a Point of Light award recipient for his volunteer efforts on behalf of the State regarding energy matters, and in September the Sarasota County Board of Commissioners awarded him a Certificate of Recognition based upon his volunteer efforts. After being nominated for a second term as a Commissioner on the FECC by the Public Service Nominating Council, the Governor reappointed Nick to a second three-year term on the Commission effective October 1, 2009.

In addition to his volunteer work for the state and for the SBEP, Nick is also on the Mote Marine Laboratory Advisory Board and serves as the Chair of the Board of the

Florida House Foundation of Sarasota, Inc.; as Chair of the Board of SCOPE (Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence) where he was the Chair of the Summit for Environmental Action; and as a Board Member and Chair of the Government Issues Committee of the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce.

"It has been a tremendous privilege to be involved in so many important issues on the local, regional and state level," explains Gladding. "I would not be able to meet the challenge of keeping all of the balls in the air if it weren't for the dedicated support staff in my various endeavors."

In his free time, Nick loves to fish, read and catch an occasional movie. His love for marine activities began in Hawaii where he grew up and if you can't find him in Sarasota or Tallahassee, he may be on the beach in Maui.



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