



# BAY REFLECTIONS

Restoring Our Bays

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Newsletter

Summer 2009

## Successful Launch of Pooches for the Planet Campaign Clean Waters! Clean Yards! Clean Shoes!

### Protect public health and the Bay - Pick up after your pet!

On Saturday, August 1st the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and Tampa Bay Estuary Program launched their partnership with Manatee County Animal Services, Sarasota County Animal Services, Humane Society of Manatee County and the Humane Society of Sarasota County to promote the Pooches for the Planet pet waste education campaign and pet adoptions through local shelters!

From August 1st through October 31st anyone who adopts a dog at a local shelter will receive a free Pooches for the Planet adoption kit. The eco-friendly Pooches for the Planet reusable shopping bags are filled with valuable information and free goodies for you and your new family member including:

- A Bags on Board pet waste bag dispenser that clips to a leash
- A Photo Pal magnet with the Pooches for the Planet message
- A listing of county dog parks
- An immunization schedule card

**ADOPT A DOG**  
**GET FREE STUFF**  
and Help the Environment!

**VISIT THE SHELTER  
FOR ADOPTION SPECIALS**

**Scoop that Poop!**  
FORWARDS FOR THE PLANET

**TAMPA**  
Estuary Program

**SARASOTA BAY**  
ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Discount coupons for a many pet services (grooming, pet sitting, etc)
- Treats and toys donated by local and national pet care companies

A big BOW WOW and thank you to our sponsors of the Pooches for the Planet adoption kits!



For more information about Pooches for the Planet and links to animal shelters and humane Society websites in Manatee and Sarasota County visit <http://www.sarasotabay.org/poochesfortheplanet.html> OR [www.tbep.org/help/scoop.html](http://www.tbep.org/help/scoop.html)

To watch a video about how pet waste pollutes our waterways visit [www.stormwater.ucf.edu/research/petwaste.htm](http://www.stormwater.ucf.edu/research/petwaste.htm)

## Upcoming Events

### **Saturday August 8, 2009 BAY PARTNERS GRANTS AVAILABLE**

Bay Partners Grants to promote environmental education, awareness and stewardship that improve the overall quality of Sarasota Bay and its tributaries are available. Download application at [www.sarasotabay.org](http://www.sarasotabay.org). Deadline for receipt is October 29, 2009.

### **Saturday September 26, 2009 NATIONAL ESTUARIES DAY**

For the 9th consecutive year SBEP will partner with MOTE and Bay Explorers to offer a special package rate to visit MOTE Aquarium & experience an educational cruise on Sarasota Bay. For more information contact [info@sarasotabay.org](mailto:info@sarasotabay.org)

## 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](mailto:info@sarasotabay.org).

**Dec 16th - Neal Preserve:** West side of Highway 64 (Manatee Ave) on north 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 north 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.

## Alerts

### **You can help Protect Endangered Beach Nesting Wildlife**

From May 1 through October 31, it's up to you to protect Sarasota Bay's threatened beach nesting wildlife! Sarasota Bay and the Gulf beaches provide critical habitat for endangered wildlife year round. But in the summer, nesting activities of these endangered species makes our region even more special. Being aware and respectful of these endangered species and their nesting activities is critical for the continued existence of these species.

### **Sea Turtle nesting season is May 1 through October 31**

From May 1 through October 31 sea turtles nest on our local beaches. Species such as the Kemp's Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys kempi*) and the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) reproduce at night on our Gulf beaches. Here is what you can do to protect these ancient creatures:



*Baby seaturtle*

*photo courtesy of Deborah Chapman*

- Turn off the beachfront lights by 9pm (Lights visible on nesting beaches) or shield the lights from the beach.
- Pick up litter, fill in holes, and never leave furniture or debris laying on the beach.
- Tint windows that face the beach.
- Use Turtle Safe Lighting. These red lights emit a very narrow portion of the visible light spectrum, which is less intrusive to nesting sea turtles and hatchlings.
- If disoriented hatchlings are found away from the sea, call local law enforcement.
- Close opaque curtains or blinds after dark to cover windows visible from the beach.

For more info on how you can help protect threatened beach nesting wildlife visit <http://www.sarasotabay.org/tourism-responsible.html>

### **Beach Birds nesting season is from February through August**

From February through August threatened species such as snowy plovers, Wilson's plovers, least terns and black skimmers nest on our local beaches. Due to human interference and vandalism these nests have not been successful in the last few years. This is a serious problem for the continued existence of these protected species. Here is what you can do to protect beach nesting birds:



snowy plovers

- Pick up litter, fill in holes, and never leave furniture or debris laying on the beach
- Keep dogs and pets off the beach
- Respect posted nesting areas
- NEVER FEED WILDLIFE. Gulls, crows and racoons prey on eggs and chicks. When you feed them you draw them to near-by nesting sites in great numbers.
- Avoid flying kites or throwing balls near designated beach-nesting bird areas. The nests and chicks are very well camouflaged. You may trample nests and birds without even knowing it!
- Stick close to the water's edge and avoid the vegetated upper beach and dune areas. Stay on established paths when crossing vegetation. The birds nest in, near and around the vegetated dune areas of the beach. Again very well camouflaged chicks and nests make them very hard to see!
- Promote sharing the beach with other species. Talk to friends and neighbors about this issue. Volunteer!



least terns

To report violations call 1-888-404-FWCC (3922). Most beach nesting wildlife are threatened species and protected by the State of Florida.

## Success Stories

### Watershed Mobile Phone Audio Tour features SBEP

To help create public awareness about the watershed and the importance of this natural system, the Science and Environment Council of Sarasota County (SEC), with partial funding from the Southwest Florida Water Management District developed the free audio tour. 15 unique watershed-related topics are highlighted on the tour and narrated by staff at the different SEC member organizations.

Easily accessed from any cell phone, the Watershed Mobile Phone Audio Tour is the first of its kind in Sarasota County. Dial **(941) 926-6813** and listen to SBEP's audio message about the impact of pet waste on the Sarasota Bay watershed. For more information visit [www.secsc.org](http://www.secsc.org).

## Interactive Gulf Coast Heritage Trail map

Visit <http://www.sarasotabay.org/tourism-ght.html> and experience the new interactive on-line version of the Gulf Coast Heritage Trail map. Information about the 127 destinations on the interactive map is accessible by clicking on the individual dots to visit each destination's website. You can also download a pdf of the map or get a hard copy by contacting the Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau at (941) 957-1877 or [info@sarasotafl.org](mailto:info@sarasotafl.org)

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program was at the forefront of recognizing the economic value of linking and promoting Sarasota Bay's cultural, historical, and environmental heritage. The Gulf Coast Heritage Trail was the culmination of this recognition and was the first regional eco-heritage based tourism trail program within the state of Florida.

## Restoration

### Bird Colony Islands Shoreline Protection Project Update

The Bird Colony Islands Shoreline Protection Project, located in Roberts Bay, Sarasota County, Florida, was completed in February of 2008. It was designed to protect three small mangrove islands from ongoing erosion by boat wakes and storm waves. These small mangrove islands just south of the Siesta Key Bridge were eroding due to heavy wave action from boats in the intracoastal waterway that runs right past this productive bird rookery. As a result of this location waves striking the islands were removing sand from beneath the existing red mangroves. This process was slowly shrinking the tree canopy available for nesting and resting.

"Before the shoreline protection was installed, the islands were a third of the size that they were historically and the mangrove canopy much smaller," explains Dr. Ann Hodgson, Audubon of Florida Sanctuaries Manager. "The installation of the breakwater did exactly what it was intended to do as it immediately stopped further erosion of the islands along the intracoastal waterway. Since the construction the mangrove canopy has been thickening and the trees are expanding towards the beach area. Ultimately the goal is to increase nesting substrate that will support a larger



and more diverse bird rookery."

The island complex is the most significant coastal bird rookery in the Sarasota Bay system, and provides nesting and resting habitat for as many as 15 different species of birds, including several State-listed species.



## Other



### Partnership Promotes Pooches for the Planet on WUSF-FM 89.7

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and its sister program the Tampa Bay Estuary Program are co-sponsoring a partnership with WUSF-FM 89.7 Public Broadcasting which consists of a rotating schedule of promotional spots on Market Place, Morning Edition, All Things Considered, Weekend Edition, and Weekend All Things Considered. This co-sponsorship adds up to over 100 spots to run on WUSF 89.7 from August through October to promote Pooches for the Planet and pet waste education. For more information visit [www.sarasotabay.org](http://www.sarasotabay.org)

### New Law Allows Florida-Friendly Landscaping, Despite Home Owner's Associations

A new law signed by Gov. Charlie Crist promotes the installation of Florida-friendly landscaping. The law states that homeowners associations (HOAs) may not prohibit a homeowner from installing Florida-friendly landscaping on their property, or create any requirement or limitation in conflict with state law. The law also states that HOAs may not fine homeowners for brown lawns when the homeowner is abiding by water shortage rules such as the Water Management District's water shortage orders that restrict residents to watering their lawns one day per week.



Florida-friendly landscaping emphasizes nine easy-to-accomplish principles that, when practiced, can have a significant positive impact on yards and the environment. By following Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ practices, homeowners use a low-maintenance approach to landscaping that conserves water and reduces chemical and fertilizer use. Homeowners also spend less time maintaining their lawns and more time enjoying them.

The concept was developed by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and is based on the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program that was originally created by the Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay and Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Programs. "Because homeowners can no longer be prohibited from following Florida-friendly landscaping practices, they will have more freedom to choose the type of plants and turf that are right for their property," said Sylvia Durell, Florida-friendly landscaping project manager for the Southwest Florida Water Management District. "This is a great opportunity for homeowners to get know their yard's sun, soil and moisture conditions and put the right plant in the right place." To learn more about Florida-friendly landscaping visit [www.FloridaYards.org](http://www.FloridaYards.org) or <http://www.sarasotabay.org/nar-bayfriendly.html>

## SBEP in the News

**April 24** Press alert about Bay Buddies Event at Quick Point Nature Preserve 5/2

**April 30** coverage Pelican Press - Bay Buddies Event at Quick Point Nature Preserve

Press alert about WUSF sponsorship

**May 14** front page article Pelican Press "Seagrass Bed Coverage Increases in Sarasota



Bay" (Paul Roat) [http://pelicanpressonline.com/content/1011\\_1.php](http://pelicanpressonline.com/content/1011_1.php)

**May 17** front page HT article "A Meadow Beneath the Waves" (Doug Sword)  
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090517/ARTICLE/905171042/1/archive?Title=Seagrass-in-Sarasota-Bay-makes-big-comeback>

**July 10** - Distributed Guest Column "Pooches for the Planet - Clean Water! Clean Yards! Clean Shoes!"

**July 13** - Distributed Media Alert "Clean-up at Bowlees Creek Island Bird Sanctuary"

**July 15** - Anna Maria Sun coverage "Boat launch gets funding approval" - SBEP announces grant approval for non-motorized boat launch at Herb Dolan Park / quotes from CAC member Lisa Marie Phillips (Tom Vaught)

**July 16** - Pelican Press guest column by Burch on editorial page "Protect public health, bay: Pick up after your pet!" [http://www.pelicannews.com/content/1193\\_2.php](http://www.pelicannews.com/content/1193_2.php)

**July 16** - News Briefs BOWLEES SANCTUARY CLEAN-UP SET FOR SATURDAY (Zimmerman) [http://pelicanpressonline.com/content/1200\\_1.php](http://pelicanpressonline.com/content/1200_1.php)

**July 16** - HT coverage "Sowing seeds of hope" about Sarasota County Parks and Recreation Environmental Camp in Nokomis; quote from Burch (Rose)  
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090716/ARTICLE/907161037>

**July 22** - The Islander coverage "Grant approved for Kayak Launch" grant approval for non-motorized boat launch at Herb Dolan Park - mentions funding partner SBEP / quote from CAC member Lisa Marie Phillips (Lisa Neff)

**July 22** - The Islander - cartoon about kayak/canoe launch Herb Dolan Park (Egan)

**July 22** - front page local section HT "Grasses Grow Deep in the Bay" has quotes from Alderson (Sword) <http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090722/ARTICLE/907221027/-1/archive?Title=Grasses-grow-deep-in-the-bay#>

**July 28** - The Bradenton Times coverage "County helps promote Pooches for the Planet" (Vincent Safuto) <http://www.thebradentontimes.com/index.php?cid=198018&src=news&refno=444&category=Local>

**July 30** - Herald Tribune guest column by Burch on editorial page "To protect the bay, pick up after your pet" [www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090730/COLUMNIST/907301017/2080/OPINION](http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090730/COLUMNIST/907301017/2080/OPINION)



## Sarasota Bay Buddies Events

### Clean-up at Bowlees Creek Island Bird Sanctuary



On Friday, July 17 the SBEP Bay Buddies and Florida Audubon removed exotic plants and trash from the 3 acres Bowless Creek Island Bird Sanctuary. Seventeen participants collected a wide range of trash that was hauled off the island including pieces of an illegal gill net, fishing line and tackle, plastic bottles, lumber, several tires, a television and chairs. While Bowlees Creek is too close to the mainland to be an important bird nesting colony, it is used by a number of different species to roost for the night, as a place to forage on the fruiting plants and insects, and as a stop for birds migrating through the area that need to rest and feed. The sea grass flats and oyster beds around the island provide an additional foraging opportunity for many different species of birds.

## Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Member Profile

## Chris Warn

Chris Warn grew up in Sarasota and spent most of his free time boating and surfing in Sarasota's water bodies. After high school he joined the U.S. Navy and served as a Naval Air crewman where he spent many hours remote sensing the world's oceans. "I had always been interested in the marine environment, but my technical training in the Navy really peaked my interest in a career in science," says Warn. After receiving his degree in Earth System Science and Policy with an emphasis in Marine Ecology from California State University Monterey Bay, Chris became an environmental consultant.



Warn returned to Sarasota with his family after spending ten years in California developing his professional career. After crossing paths with SBEP's scientist at a stormwater conference and attending SBEP TAC meetings his interest in the program grew and he applied to become a member of the CAC. Chris has been a member of the

CAC since 2006 and currently serves as its vice-chair. "My family has always been very connected to the marine environment and I am glad to provide environmental stewardship to such an important asset to our community."

Chris' professional career has been focused on watershed and coastal studies. Currently he works for Weston Solutions, Inc., a national environmental consulting firm where he serves as a member of their Natural Resource Management team and leader of their Southern Division Seaports Program.

## Congratulations to CAC member Yvette Little

for being chosen as the Grand Prize Winner of the Together Green Community Passport Contest through Audubon for her volunteer hours.



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