BAY REFLECTIONS

Restoring Our Bays

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Newsletter Winter 2009

Special Tribute to our Friend & Associate

"Power is the Knowledge to unlock the magic of Nature,
and the Wisdom to use it with caution". **The Way of Wizards**

Thomas Jess Cross
Feb. 8, 1954 - Dec. 27, 2008

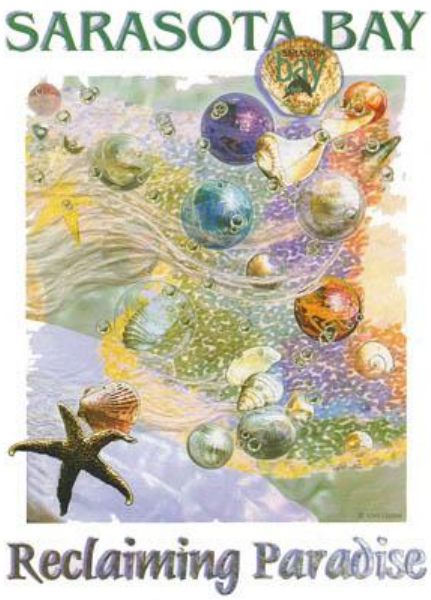
Tom Cross, a 35-year resident of Sarasota was an artist, author, designer and friend to the environment. He was a well-known local environmental instructor and activist and an internationally known artist specializing in fantasy art. The Osprey resident died on Dec. 27, 2008 after a courageous 5-year battle with cancer. "Tom was a real community champion for the environment," says Mark Alderson, Executive Director of SBEP, "and one of the most unique individuals I've ever met. He always had a positive outlook on life and the future...even after he was diagnosed."

Tom and his wife Patti, a graphic designer, contributed most of the artistic and design concepts for all SBEP major documents since the inception of the Program in 1989; including all the State of the Bay reports (1990, 2000, 2006), Framework for Action 1993 and the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) 1995. "His artistry set a new standard for quality for NEP reports throughout the country," remembers Alderson. "Tom and Patti made a good team in art, business and life."

Tom moved to Sarasota in 1974 after receiving a zoology degree from the University of Florida. He sat on the original blue ribbon panel to address Midnight Pass and taught a popular barrier island ecology course through the Sarasota County Technical Institute. He was also a nationally recognized specialist in the study of coastal barrier

island ecology and has been honored with awards for his environmental activities and has served as a contributing author and artist for such organizations as the Cousteau Society, the National Estuary Program, the Nature Conservancy and the American Littoral Society.

Tom truly was a gift from the sea and shared his sense of wonder and magic with all of the lives that he touched. He will be remembered as a respected environmental leader in our community who used cutting edge and innovative computer technology to bring dazzling life and beauty to his wonderful art and glorious writings. To see more of Tom's art go to www.tomcross-artist.com.
Cross is survived by his beloved wife of 19 years Patti and 14-year old daughter Amber.



Upcoming Events

Bay Wise Kayak Eco-tours

March 7, 9am to Noon - Turtle Beach Park to Jim Neville Marine Preserve and return
April 4, 9am to Noon - Blackburn Point Park to Oscar Scherer State Park and return
May 2, 9am to Noon - Casperson Beach Park to Alligator Creek and return

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. Space is available for the May 2 trip and the waiting list for March 7 and April 4.

Sarasota Bay Buddies

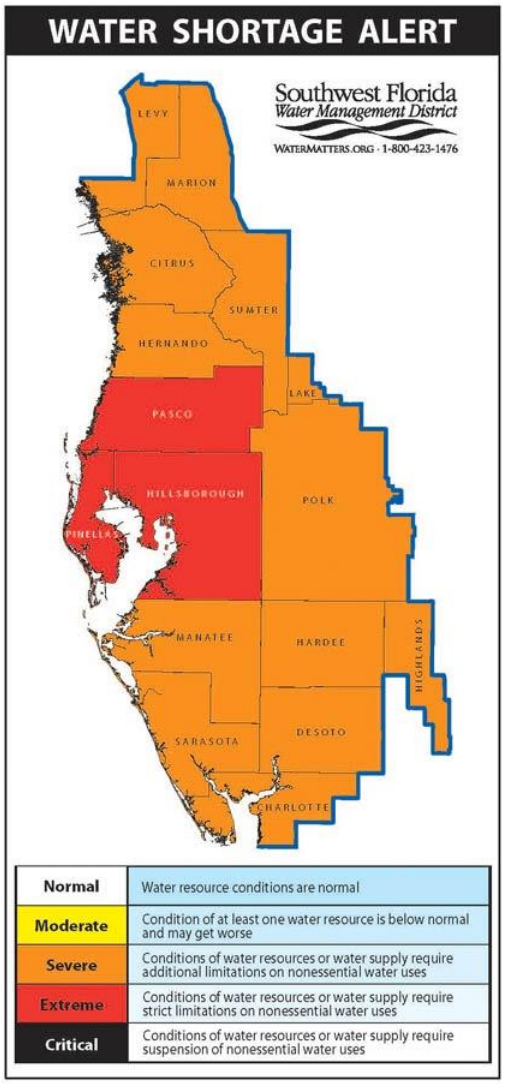
Sat, February 28, 8:30am - 12:00pm @ Pinecraft Park in Sarasota.
Join the Bay Buddies and Sarasota Audubon Society to remove air potato and trash from this birding park. For more info or to register visit www.baybuddies.org.

Sat, March 21, 8:30-12:00pm @ Emerson Point Preserve in Manatee County. Join the Bay Buddies and Manatee County Natural Resources to plant native plants. For more info or to register visit www.baybuddies.org.

Bradenton Beach Eco Expo

Sat, March 21, 9am - 1pm @ Bradenton Beach City Hall, 107 Gulf Drive North, Bradenton Beach Fifth annual Eco Expo and native plant sale. Learn about water quality, landscaping, wildlife and ways to "green up" your life. Public event. Come join us!

Alerts



West-central Florida Remains on Water Shortage Alert

Despite some recent rainfall, a continuing drought is keeping the 16 counties of the Southwest Florida Water Management District on a Water Shortage Alert. The District identifies four possible levels of water shortage, beginning with "moderate" and increasing in intensity through "severe," "extreme" and "critical." With river flows, aquifer levels, and lake levels remaining far below normal, the region's water shortage status ranges from "severe" to "extreme." The District's color-coded Water Shortage Alert Map graphically identifies the status for each county in the District.

Snook Season Closed

Beginning December 1, 2008 and ending March 1, 2009, Snook cannot be harvested from any of Florida's Gulf of Mexico, Everglades National Park or Monroe County coastal and inland waters.

The closed harvest seasons protect Florida's valuable Snook populations during the colder months, when Snook are most vulnerable, and help sustain and improve the fishery for the future.

Success Stories

SBEP Sponsors Science Teacher Training Workshop

Twenty-four area teachers attended the Saturday, February 7th science teacher training workshop offered by Sandra L. Gilchrist, Ph.D., Chair of the Natural Sciences Department at New College of Florida. Teachers from all grade levels attended the workshop whose focus is improving teaching skills and understanding how to teach science. This is the third year that SBEP has sponsored the workshops based on the SBEP PIER program "Coastal Habitats" curriculum guide.

Dr. Gilchrist remarks, "teachers comment that the hands-on experiences working with organisms is interesting and that they like the way that we weave Florida history into the workshops." In addition to learning ways to improve teaching skills, the participating teachers also learn to network and to write grants for themselves from resources and activities that are done in the workshops.

The science teacher training workshops are offered three times a year as part of the PIER (Protection, Involvement, Education, Restoration) program. Teachers from all grade levels are encouraged to attend the workshops. Workshops run a full day on Saturdays thereby offering teachers the opportunity to earn continuing education credits. Curriculum areas include: Introduction to Estuaries, Waves and Currents and Coastal Fire Ecology

For more information about the March 2009 workshop contact Dr. Gilchrist at gilchrist@ncf.edu

SBEP in the News

November 9 coverage in HT about Bay Buddies/Audubon clean-up at FISH Preserve

November 9 coverage in Anna Maria Island Sun about Bay Buddies/Audubon clean-up

at FISH preserve

November 30 front page/upper fold coverage in HT "In A Clearer Sarasota Bay, Clearer Signs of Life" quotes Alderson, Estevez (Doug Sword) http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20081130/ARTICLE/811300358/2055/NEWS

January 6 HT IN BRIEF about volunteers needed to conduct winter seagrass survey

January 26 HT front page local section "County and City see 'Jewel' in Newtown" about SBEP role in Whitaker Bayou shoreline restoration project (Sword) http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090126/ARTICLE/901260335/2055/NEWS

January 30 HT editorial "Protecting a Generation of Progress" supports funding of Whitaker Bayou shoreline restoration project (Sperling) http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090130/COLUMNIST/901300311

Sarasota Bay Buddies Events

Photos by rustychinnisimages.com

Clean-up at Sister Keys Islands

On Saturday, February 7 the Sarasota Bay Bay Buddies teamed up with Sarasota Bay Watch volunteers, the Town of Longboat Key and Florida Audubon to remove trash and debris from Sister Keys islands. Participants were shuttled to Sister Keys by boat and after a very successful clean-up returned to the Mar Vista Restaurant for a post event lunch sponsored by Sarasota Bay Watch.
The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program sponsored the 20 person Bay Buddies boat for this event.

Bay Friendly Grants Awarded

Pelican Cove condominium volunteers restoring community pond with aquatic and upland plants

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.

Bay Partners Grant 2009 Awards

Fully Fund Request

Island Village School $2000 - *Island Village Community Bay Education Project.* Fifth andsixth grade students attend sea camp in spring 2009 to learn coastal ecology. Students apply what they learned to the local community, develop educational program to be used at school with other grades and families.

Fairway Bay $2000 - *Bay Friendly Re-landscaping Project*. Using native plants and bioswales to address runoff, erosion and habitat degradation issues along shoreline. Demonstration project for other parts of community and other phases of the development. Hold public seminars and lectures about project.

Palma Sola Botanical Park $1113 - *Palma Sola Bay Pond Improvements*. Native aquatic plant and pond beautification demonstration at Botanical Park. Develop public outreach as part of project.

City of Bradenton Beach $1205 - *Plastic Pollution Eradication Program*. Produce plastic bag educational signage and brochures for eradication campaign. Enhances public education program.

Foxfire West $2000 - *Foxfire West Pond Restoration Project*. Restoring large community ponds through native plantings and educational programs for residents and maintenance contractors. Hold public seminars and lectures about project.

Lakeridge Falls $1000 - *Lakeridge Falls Florida Friendly Demonstration Project*. Planting littoral shelves with native aquatics and replace turf with Florida Friendly and native upland species. Hold public seminars and lectures about project.

Southgate Community Assoc $2000 - *Invasive Removal and Native Planting*. Removal of invasive species along Phillippi Creek shoreline. Planting native plants. Hold public seminars and lectures about project.

City of Holmes Beach $2000 - *Native Landscaping and Rain Barrel Demonstration*. Native landscaping and rain barrel installation major street corner area with at bus stop. Develop public outreach as part of project.

Bay Haven Elementary School $950 - *Safely Exploring and Saving Our Bay*. 50 student fieldtrip aboard Aquarian Quest schooner. Learn about plankton, water quality, wildlife and safe boating.

Partially Fund Request

Village in the Pines $500 - *Beautification of Auburn Court & North Village Court Circle*. Plant round-abouts with Florida-friendly plants.

Mission Estates $1000 - *Exotic Removal of Mission Estates Phase 1*. Brazilian pepper removal.

Calusa Lakes $500 - *Brazilian Pepper Eradication*. Removal of Brazilian pepper trees in community common areas.

Windward Bay $500 - *Windward Bay Naturalization Project*. Remove turf and create buffer zone between parking areas and shoreline with native plants.

Simply Green Solutions $1000 - *Village on the Bay : Waterways Past, Present and Future.* Planning and design of educational display in newly renovated General Store.

Mote Marine $1000 - *Mote Island Quest*. Experiments, games and crafts at Mote Aquarium and at City Island parks.

Sarasota Audubon $1000 - *Engaging the Public in Efforts to Conserve Sarasota's Beach Nesting Birds*. Buy equipment for viewing and publish brochures to help educate the public about threatened beach nesting birds. Funding to be used for educational materials only.

Citizen Advisory Council Member Profile

Rene Janneman

Rene Janneman grew up in Sarasota where much of his activities revolved around the water whether it was fishing, windsurfing in the bay, or at the beach surfing. His love of the water led him to join the Navy where he served as a Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician and had the opportunity to serve as a marine mammal handler for the Dolphin and Sea Lion Program. Although it was a controversial program, it gave Janneman exposure to a variety of environmental issues. After his service he returned to Sarasota and earned a degree in Environmental Science from USF.

"I grew up in this community and regularly enjoy all that the bays and beaches have to offer," explains Janneman, "After attending a few CAC meetings I realized that I'd found a group of like-minded "doers" that wanted to tackle environmental issues that affect our community and decided to became a member in December 2007."

Rene currently works for Sarasota County's Environmental Services Water Resources Department as an Environmental Specialist. He is the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) coordinator, project manager for multiple scallop projects and conducts sediment & erosion control inspections on construction projects. In addition he provides support to the County's Seagrass Surveys, Water Quality Monitoring, Oyster Monitoring & Mapping Projects and Tidal Creek Index.

Thank You Kathleen King

SBEP and the CAC would like to thank Kathleen King for the outstanding leadership she has provided the CAC over the past two years as our Chair. Our Committee is much stronger thanks in no small part to her leadership.

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