



SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM
Restoring Our Bays

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SBEP Bay Guardians to Complete Bioswale Project at Celery Fields
November 7

SARASOTA, FL – The SBEP Bay Guardian volunteers will enhance a bioswale with native plants at the new bird center at Celery Fields Saturday, November 7. Project partners include SBEP, Around the Bend Nature Tours, Sarasota Audubon, and Sweetbay Nursery.

SBEP is supporting the project with a Bay Partners Grant. Awarded in 2015, the grant supports the efforts by Sarasota Audubon and the Florida House Institute to educate residents about stormwater pollution, native plants, water conservation, and the Phillippi Creek watershed. Interpretative signs will be installed to support public education. SBEP Bay Partner Grants support local projects focused on Bay Education, Bay Restoration and Bay-Friendly Landscaping.

The Bay Guardians will visit Robinson Preserve Saturday, December 12 to complete a morning Oyster bagging project. This is a joint effort with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP). Project partners include SBEP, TBEP, Around the Bend Nature Tours, and the Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Department.

Coming in the first quarter of 2016 will be three Air Potato Roundup events to get rid of more of the invasive species at North Water Tower Park on January 16, Red Bug Slough on February 27, and Phillippi Estate Park on March 12. Native plants are resilient to local environmental conditions and attract wildlife. Invasive species like the air potato compete with native plants, which can disrupt the balance of the bay's ecosystem.

The award-winning Bay Guardians Program is managed by SBEP in partnership with Around the Bend Nature Tours. The group has donated many thousands of hours supporting restoration projects along the bay and in area parks and preserves. The volunteers complete at least six projects in Sarasota and Manatee County each year. Each outing includes environmental education and a picnic lunch following the morning project. Please contact Darcy Young at info@sarasotabay.org if you are interested in becoming a Bay Guardian.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is dedicated to restoring the area's greatest natural asset—Sarasota Bay. Its unique program strives to improve water quality, increase habitat and enhance the natural resources of the area for use and enjoyment by the public. Sarasota Bay is one of 28 protected estuaries in the U.S. The SBEP was founded in 1989 and its partners include Sarasota County, Manatee County, City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.