



Sarasota Bay Reflections

Protecting Our Water Heritage

Newsletter of the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program

Winter '04
Volume VIII Number 3

Table of Contents

1

SBNEP Assists the FISH Preserve

John Stevely, Florida SeaGrant

2

Letter from the Director

Mark Alderson, SBNEP

3

SeaTrek

Elizabeth Metz, Mote Marine Laboratory

3

National Estuaries Day

4

Florida Native Plant Society

Karen Fraley, Around the Bend Nature Tours

5 - 6

Grants

Brie Willett, SBNEP

6

Sarasota Water Atlas

Linda Larsen, Sarasota County

7

SBNEP Volunteers

8

Florida Seafood Recipe

Grouper with Scallions and Ginger

8

Upcoming Events

SBNEP Assists The FISH Preserve

Photo Credit: Jack Elka/Elka Photography



Cortez Village and The FISH Preserve

The 22nd Annual Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival – the primary funding source for the purchase of The F.I.S.H. Preserve, will be partially sponsored by the SBNEP as a part of the Citizens Action Plan. The Festival, organized by the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (FISH; a not-for-profit, community-based organization), is a celebration of the commercial fishing heritage of the historic village of Cortez and a citizen led drive to protect a piece of the remaining undeveloped Sarasota Bay shoreline.

The FISH Preserve includes 95 acres (72 acres of mangrove wetlands) of environmentally sensitive land immediately adjacent to Cortez and Sarasota Bay. FISH purchased the land in 2001 for \$250,000. Approximately three-quarters of the money has been raised thus far. Approximately 150 volunteers help in making the annual Festival and purchase of the FISH Preserve a reality.

The Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program has a history of working with the Cortez community in restoring Sarasota Bay habitats. An ambitious habitat restoration project adjacent to the 1912 Cortez School House was just completed. Habitat restoration will be planned for the FISH Preserve property.
- John Stevely

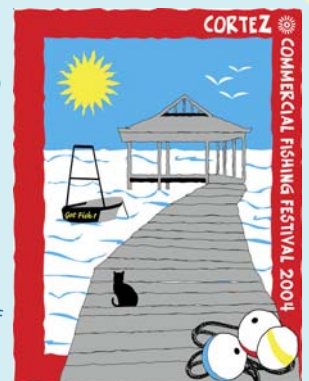
The 22nd Annual Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival

Saturday, February 21, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
& Sunday, February 22, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Come on down to the waterfront and learn more about the heritage of Cortez and enjoy a wide variety of fun educational activities – music, seafood, boat rides, displays of local marine life and a beautiful view of Sarasota Bay. Stroll past almost 100 historical homes in a village that is now on the National Register of Historic Places. As a bonus, you can help protect the Sarasota Bay shoreline for future generations. The 22nd Annual Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival has been endorsed by Jean-Michel Cousteau and the Ocean Futures Society.

Come see what Florida looked like before Orlando was a twinkle in Walt Disney's eyes!

Admission is \$2.00 for adults, children under 12 free. Just head west towards the beaches on Cortez Road (44th Ave.) you can't miss it. Limited parking is available in the village. Remote parking is available at Coquina Beach.





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Sarasota Bay Reflections is a publication of The Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program (SBNEP), a partnership between federal, state and local governments, scientists and citizens working together to protect and restore the natural resources of Sarasota Bay and its watershed. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide information about issues related to the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program.

The SBNEP is sponsored by the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Sarasota County, Manatee County and the City of Sarasota.

The viewpoints expressed here do not necessarily represent those of US EPA, FL DEP, SWFWMD or the counties and cities mentioned above, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or causes constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

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Dear Friends of Sarasota Bay,

The Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program (SBNEP) is approaching an exciting chapter in the Program's history with the possible establishment of an independent agency under Chapter 163 of state law. The establishment of the new agency is a natural "growing" process that was recommended by US EPA in 2002 as a part of their triennial review of the SBNEP for continued federal funding.

The Program currently operates as a Department of the City of Sarasota with agencies contributing to the program through grants and reimbursement contracts. The new agency will have an independent Board of Directors including elected officials from the City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Manatee County, Sarasota County and the Town of Longboat Key; as well as officials appointed by the Governor from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Federal agencies will continue to participate on a Management Committee recommending actions to the Board of Directors for approval.

The agency will be established through the signing of an Inter-local Agreement that will solidify the commitment of the government entities to the preservation and enhancement of the area's greatest natural asset - Sarasota Bay and its watershed.

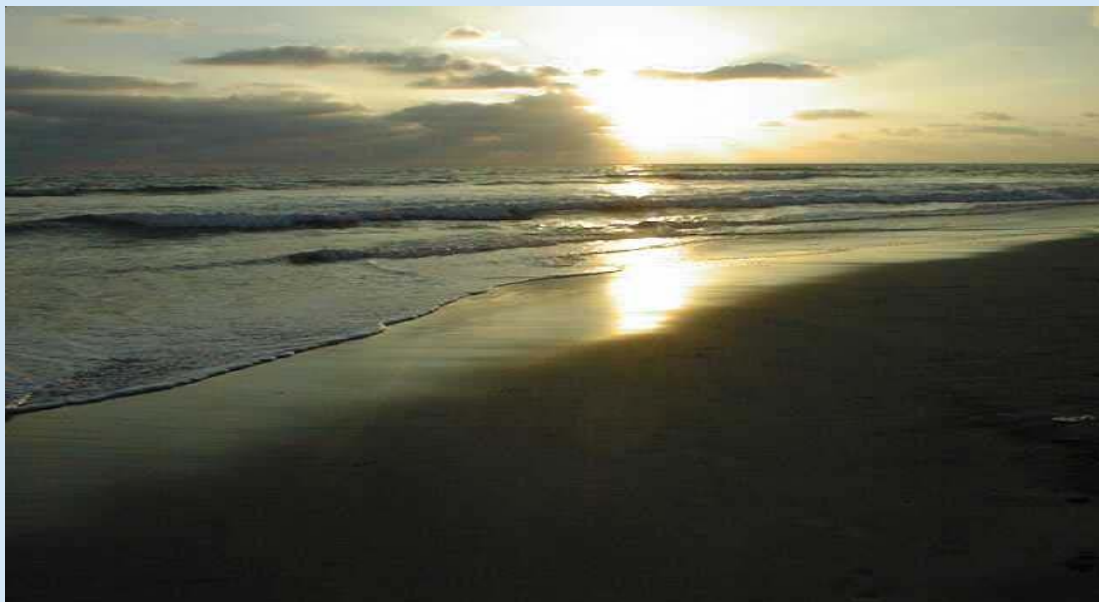
The bay's overall health is improving and the community is becoming aware and taking action of environmental issues such as stormwater prevention, native landscaping, habitat preservation and boaters' safety and concern for aquatic wildlife.

Work conducted by the SBNEP indicates that major Bay segments listed as "impaired" on the 1998 State/Federal 303(d) list are "no longer impaired" - Anna Maria Sound, Palma Sola Bay, Sarasota Bay and Roberts Bay. However, the database used to evaluate impaired waters is just now being updated with more recent data from Sarasota County for Sarasota Bay. It is anticipated that at least seventeen (17) of the twenty-two (22) segments in the Sarasota Bay region listed as "impaired" for fishable-swimmable water quality standards in 1998 will be delisted.

With much progress over the past 14 years, Sarasota Bay is becoming the beautiful and historical place that we call home. With partners, advocates, environmentalists, educators and citizens like you, Sarasota Bay will continue to improve. Thank you for your continued support of Sarasota Bay and the SBNEP.

Best Fishes,

Mark Alderson
Executive Director



SeaTrek - Coastal Habitats

Where's a good place for young children to live? What about young fish? What would happen if everyone in your class at school had the same name? And – if fertilizer is good for plants – why isn't it good for our coastal environment?

These questions, among many others, were posed to middle and elementary school students through educational programs using videoconferencing technology. These live, highly-interactive programs were designed to inspire students to think about issues important to our coastal habitats – such as nursery areas for wildlife, diversity of species, and clean water. The videoconferences, created by Mote Marine Laboratory's SeaTrek Distance Learning Program, were funded by Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program in order to strengthen community awareness and knowledge of our fragile coastal environments.

During the Spring of 2003, the videoconferences were delivered by SeaTrek educators Kasey Gaylord and Jason Robertshaw, to students at local schools that are equipped with videoconferencing systems. Students participated in a wide variety of interactive activities. Media, taped interviews with Mote scientists, and a physical model of a working watershed were used in the program. Students participated in a game called "Who Done It?" to learn about the effects of habitat loss, invasive species, pathogens, hydrologic modifications and eutrophication. Many students had questions of their own to ask, which they could do throughout the program. The videoconference closed with the "Top 10 Things You Can Do To Protect Estuaries." To keep the students' attention and make the message fun and memorable, Kasey enlisted the support of the mythical "Skunk Ape" from Myaaka – the equivalent of a swamp Bigfoot. The Skunk Ape was actually a technician dressed in an ape suit who actively modeled environmentally conscious behavior. This was a big hit with the students who chimed in with "Skunk Ape Does!" for each eco-friendly behavior demonstrated. SeaTrek educators, in collaboration with Around the Bend Nature Tours, also created an extensive supporting curriculum package, which is available at no charge from

Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program and is also on the SeaTrek website (www.seatrek.org). Field trips conducted by the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program took students to local coastal sites, complementing the classroom experience with hands-on investigations. SeaTrek continues to offer the videoconference program, titled "Coastal Habitats" in area schools.
- Elizabeth Metz



Photo credit: Jason Robertshaw/ Mote Marine Laboratory

Fifth Graders at Gulf Gate Elementary School learn about Coastal Habitats through distance learning.

National Estuaries Day!

National Estuaries Day, September 27th, 2003, was a fun filled day for all! Highlights from the celebration included boat tours of Sarasota Bay on board the Sarasota Bay Explorer; a restoration planting session at Perico Bayou, and our 2nd Annual Florida Native Plant Sale.



Boys & Girls Club volunteering at restoration planting at Perico Bayou

The Sarasota Bay Explorer departing the docks



2nd Annual Native Plant Sale at Longwood Run Park



Mote SeaTrek educator, Kasey Gaylord, presents to a 5th grade class at Phillippi Shores Elementary School.

Photo credit: Jason Robertshaw/ Mote Marine Laboratory

The Florida Native Plant Society - Serenoa Chapter



Are you interested in learning about what you can grow in your yard that is beautiful, tolerant of your conditions, and will attract birds and butterflies? Then come to the Serenoa Chapter's Florida Native Plant Society meetings, 7:00pm the 3rd Monday of each month September through May at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota.

The mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. Membership is on a state level, with a portion of the membership coming to the Serenoa Chapter. These funds are used locally to educate our government leaders and the public of the function of native plants and native plant communities in our lives.

The Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society represents Sarasota, Manatee, Hardee and DeSoto Counties. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. Meetings feature brief announcements of upcoming events and a featured speaker on some aspect of local native gardening or habitat restoration. After a question & answer period, we get down to the real reason most people come to our meetings:

THE NATIVE PLANT RAFFLE. Member growers donate beautiful plants and the raffle goes on until all are given away. Some months there are 30-40 plants available to award. One member said recently "We have landscaped our entire yard with plants from the Florida Native Plant Society raffle!"

Every Saturday after each meeting there is a field trip to a site relating to the topic of our meeting. Below is a calendar of the upcoming speakers and field trips.

Every October, the Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, in conjunction with the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program, conducts a Native Plant Sale and educational seminars for homeowners. The event takes place at Longwood Run Park, a Sarasota County Park located on the county line between Sarasota and Manatee, off University Parkway, just west of I-75. This location is central to all, and the response to the first two sales has been tremendous. This year over 1200 native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers were sold. These native plants will help return habitat to our backyards.

"As wilderness shrinks and backyard acreage increases, the ecological importance of home gardeners grows ever greater"
Janet Marinelli, Brooklyn Botanical Garden.

February 21: 8:30am Field Trip to North River Road – this site is not yet open to the public. Walk through oak hammocks along the Myakka River.

March 15: Speaker Danny Smith, Manatee County Conservation Lands Division Manager, will speak about restoration work in Manatee.

March 20: 8:30am Field Trip to Duette Park including areas not generally open to the public.

April 19: Speaker Steve Woodmansee, Biologist for the Institute for Regional Development in Miami will give a workshop on how to identify plants using a descriptive key.

April Field Trip deferred – We will have a plant sale at Earth Day at Oscar Scherer State Park.

May 17: Bruce Holst, Herbarium Director at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, will highlight coastal plants and restoration at Longboat Key parks.

May 22: Wholesale Nursery Tours! 8:30am Pine Lily Nursery in Hardee County and 12:30 pm Sweet Bay Nursery, Parrish, Manatee County. Short hikes available at each nursery. Buy a few plants to take home!



Photo credit: Dario Varga

A Florida Yard on display at Sarasota County's Florida House.

Bay Partnership Grants

The Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program announced its small grants program, Sarasota Bay Partnerships, in early September with grant applications due by October 1, 2003. The purpose of the grant is to support Sarasota Bay improvement projects while addressing one of the following focus areas: storm water runoff and pollution protection; wildlife habitat restoration and protection; recreational use and access; Bay education and awareness; and wastewater treatment and reclamation.

SBNEP had \$20,000 to distribute in grant funds this year. Each applicant could apply for as little as \$500 or as much as \$3,000. A review panel, consisting of Citizens Advisory Committee members, county employees, SBNEP staff and marketing consultants, met on to evaluate the applications. Below are descriptions of each grant project. Grant recipients were selected based upon how they plan to address local environmental issues and projects.

The Aquarian Quest, Inc. received \$3,000 to provide four 3-hour hands-on environmental education field trips for students from Emma E. Booker Elementary School with experiences of sailing a tall ship on Sarasota Bay and assisting with the various "Learning Stations" focusing on plankton, fish, water quality, navigation and boat life. The project will develop an attitude of responsible stewardship, which will result in promoting restoration, protection and enhancement of the watershed and Sarasota Bay environments.

Around the Bend Nature Tours received \$1,000 for wildlife habitat restoration and protection as well as marine education and awareness. The funding covered Emerson Point Park spud-busting and nature search field trips for students in grades 4 - 8. The funding would provide four field trips for up to 50 students each. The participating students will help with the removal of the exotic Air Potato plant from Emerson Point. Students will also learn about native plants and how essential they are for native wildlife.

The Boys & Girls Club of Manatee County received \$3,000 for the Searching for Solutions Environmental Camp – known as Enviro Camp. Enviro Camp would like to expand its one-week sessions to two intensive 3-week long sessions in the Summer of 2004. Enviro Camp provides education to the participants, and restoration, protection and enhancement of Sarasota Bay and its interwoven, dynamic estuary system. Enviro Camp has several projects during the course of the program. Some of the projects are conducting habitat improvement such as coastal clean-ups, learning and using GPS to track the Asian green mussel and exposure to native and non-native plants through restoration plantings.

G.WIZ received \$3,000 for their Water Workshop Program that will reach three hundred 6th, 7th and 8th graders from Sarasota and Manatee Counties. The program will focus on water quality, pollution, and what individuals can do to protect our water resources and local ecosystems. The goal of the program echoes the mission of G.WIZ: to make sciences relevant, technology understandable, and learning an interactive adventure. The program intends to excite students about science and nature by offering a program in an informal educational setting that encourages curiosity and understanding through hands-on activities.

Harlee Middle School received \$2,500 for the "Science is Cool" After School Program that will provide Bay education and awareness as well as habitat improvement. The Science is Cool Program will take students on a journey to the estuary and mangrove forests. After the visit to the mangrove forests and estuary, students will create a living laboratory where other classes can visit and learn about the importance of Sarasota Bay and this valuable resource within their community.

Keep Manatee Beautiful, Inc. received \$1,500 for a project that will provide bay awareness as well as protection from stormwater run-off and other pollutants. The grant will provide car litter bags to eight government buildings and three Chamber of Commerce offices in Manatee County. The goal of this simple yet effective environmental campaign is to distribute litter bags to the public as an alternative to throwing trash in the roadside or directly into the bay and tributaries.

Mote Marine Laboratory received \$3,000 for a Bay Family Program that will provide Bay education and awareness. The program will focus on the people and animal families of the Bay and their interactions. The programs will involve hands-on discovery learning both out on the Bay and at Mote Marine Aquarium exhibits. Families are targeted for these programs in order to teach them how to responsibly appreciate the Bay. The program hopes to increase awareness about their impact on the environment, which will hopefully lead to future stewardship of the Bay.



Photo Credit: Faith Bradburn Kelley/ Mote Marine Laboratory

Looking for critters after sampling New Pass



Students enter water quality data after collecting samples from Sarasota Bay.

The School in the Park received \$3,000 for the Science In the Park GLOBE Hydrology Project. The project will provide bay education and awareness while promoting the need for restoration, protection and enhancement of Sarasota Bay. The project will expose students to the fragility of ecosystems through direct, hands-on investigations. Students will conduct hydrology research projects aboard the *Daniel Webster Clement* Schooner. The students will answer scientific questions such as, how do water chemistries differ between samples collected from shore and samples collected from deeper water?, or are there correlations between seasonal changes in population size and hydrological fluctuations? Using hydrology and water quality test kits, students will collect and analyze pH, nitrate, nitrite, ammonia levels, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, coliform levels, concentrations of metals (iron and lead), salinity levels and diversity of microorganisms. Students will share their data with other students, scientists and interested parties.

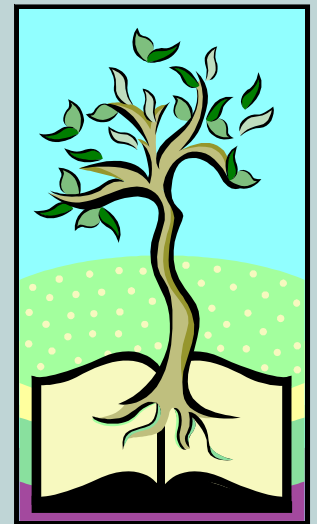
- Brie Willett

Florida Yards & Neighborhood Grants

The Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program is offering small grants up to \$2,000 for florida-friendly neighborhood beautification proposed by communities in Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

Applicants are to submit a grant proposal for a project that will preserve character and value. Examples are florida-friendly landscaping practices and techniques to public land; create trails or enhance existing trails to promote environmental recreation.

Grant requests from \$500 - \$2,000 will be considered. Neighborhood associations, homeowner associations, civic associations, schools, churches/temples and ad-hoc community groups are encouraged to apply. The Part 1: Preliminary Application is available on-line at www.sarasotabay.org. The application is posted on the website's Document Page of the section titled, "Scientist's Lab." If you are unable to download the application and would like an application emailed, faxed or mailed to you, please call or email Brie Willett at 941-951-3650 or brie_willett@sarasotagov.com. The deadline for submitting the Part 1: Preliminary Application is 5:00 p.m., Monday, March 1, 2004.



The Sarasota Water Atlas - Coming Soon to a Computer Near You

www.sarasota.wateratlas.org



The Sarasota Water Atlas is your gateway to Sarasota County water information. If it has to do with water, it's on the Atlas.

- Search for information about bays, estuaries, creeks, lakes, and watersheds
- Check Gulf alerts and conditions
- Track water quality indicators
- View maps and photographs of water bodies
- Learn about local fishing and water sports



The Sarasota Water Atlas is your gateway to water information in Sarasota County. If it has to do with water, it's on the Atlas.

The Sarasota Water Atlas is for: Citizens

The Atlas provides easy access to the latest water quality and pollution information, fishing reports, gulf alerts and tide conditions, maps and historical photographs.

Professionals

The Atlas provides easy access to a data warehouse of water resources information from multiple quality-assured sources.

Students

The Atlas provides information in an easy to use format for school projects. Learn about about bays, estuaries, creeks, lakes, and watersheds.



Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program's Wonderful Volunteers!

Beth Andrews

Karen Bell

John Blaser

Megan Blomberg

Dave Bulloch



Boys & Girls Club of Manatee

Brent David

Carol David

Katelyn Derstine

Joan Dropkin

Charles Edwards

Christa Ellis

Ryan Ellis

Sherry Emigh

Jackie Endaya

Karen Fraley

Allen Garner

Bernice Gehrls

Lindsey Gehrls

Shannon Gentile

Stephanie Grekowicz

Eric Halloy

Katie Herleman

Carol Hilliard

Charlie Hunsicker

Brett Hunter

Kim Justice

David Kapp

David Landers

Linda Larsen

J.B. Leeming

Chris Leon

Johnathan Lopez

Jen Mamazza

Phil Milan

Carol Miller

Kristen Monsen

Sarah Morrison

Gene Penner

Taryn Piana

Dick Powers

Martha Powers

Rose Poyner

Tom Price

Tom Ries



David Robinson

Dianne Rosensweig

Cynthia Roust

Janet Ruesch

Cara Sawyer



Robin Schoch

Sandy Scheda

Anne Marie Shields

Nicole Smith

Rick Smith

David Somodi

Saretta Sparer

Barbara Tag

Shelbi Weaver

Rosie Wiley



Florida Recipe

Grouper with Scallions and Ginger

1lb. black or gag grouper
(2 filets)

1/3 cup sherry or vermouth

3 tablespoons soy sauce

2 teaspoons sesame oil

1/4 cup finely chopped scallions

1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger

1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic

Preheat oven at 400 F.

Mix the sherry/vermouth, soy sauce, sesame oil, scallions, ginger and garlic. Place the grouper filets in roasting pan or dish and pour the ingredients over the grouper. Place the pan on the middle rack and cook in the oven for 12 minutes or until grouper is moist and flakey. Serves 2.



Upcoming Events

February 19

SBNEP Management and Policy Committees Meetings

February 21 & 22

22nd Annual Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival for F.I.S.H.

February 28

Volunteer Restoration Planting Session at G.WIZ Bayfront

March 1

Florida Yards & Neighborhood Preliminary Grant Application Due

March 6

Mote Marine Laboratory's 18th Annual "Run for the Turtles"

March 14

Fourth Annual Aquarian Quest Water and Wooden Boat Festival

March 26

SBNEP Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

April 12

Florida Yards & Neighborhood Final Grant Application Due

April 22

Earth Day

May 3

SBNEP Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting



Protecting Our Water Heritage

Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program
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