

An Estuary of National Significance

Estuaries are places where freshwater mixes with salty water from the sea. Teeming with life, our nation's estuaries provide vital habitats for 80 percent of the world's fish and shellfish species. Estuaries are one of our nation's most valuable natural resources, creating more food per acre than the richest farmland.

Sarasota Bay is one of 28 estuaries in the United States that have been named by the U.S. Congress as an "estuary of national significance." Established in 1989, the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is committed to restoring and preserving Sarasota Bay.

About the Bay

Sarasota Bay is a coastal lagoonal system formed by a necklace of barrier islands to the west and the mainland of Manatee and Sarasota Counties to the east. This coastal lagoon, with its unique ecological character of small embayments, tidal tributaries and small creeks, coves, inlets and passes, stretches from Anna Maria Sound to just north of the Venice Inlet.

Embayments and Tributaries

Sarasota Bay is made up of a series of seven smaller bays or embayments. Each is nourished by fresh water tributaries that gather stormwater from the adjacent lands (watershed). Each of the embayments is unique. They differ in overall size, shape, water depth, shoreline features, habitat and sediment characteristics. Because of these differences, each embayment must be analyzed and managed independently from the others while at the same time recognizing their connectivity.



Get Involved

Connecting partners and creating relationships to preserve Sarasota Bay and its natural and cultural heritage has never been more critical. The preservation of Sarasota Bay and its natural resources is inextricably linked to the economic drivers of our community and our quality of life.

For more information about becoming involved in the restoration of Sarasota Bay please visit our website at www.sarasotabay.org



Citizen participation in restoring and protecting Sarasota Bay and its tributaries is critical.

FUNDING PARTNERS

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program has engaged in a number of partnerships over the years to accomplish Bay restoration goals. Agency and organizational co-operative efforts will continue to help achieve SBEP goals. When the community contributes its time and efforts, even more can be achieved.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
www.dep.state.fl.us

Southwest Florida Water Management District
www.swfwmd.state.fl.us

Sarasota County Government
www.scgov.net

Manatee County Government
www.mymanatee.org

City of Sarasota
www.sarasotagov.com

City of Bradenton
www.cityofbradenton.com

Town of Longboat Key
www.longboatkey.org

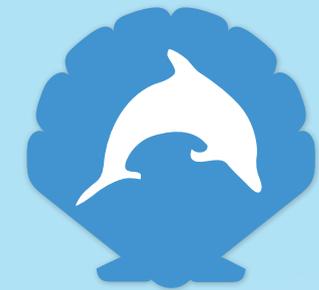


**SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM**
Restoring Our Bays

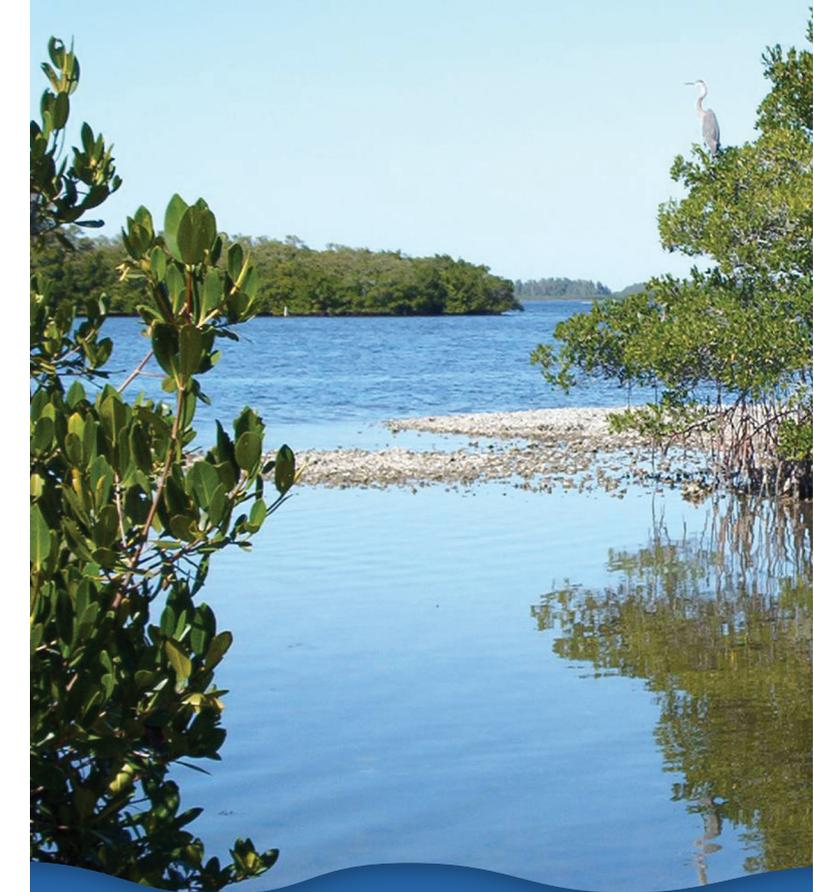
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**SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM**
Restoring Our Bays



The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is dedicated to restoring the area's greatest and most important natural asset—Sarasota Bay.

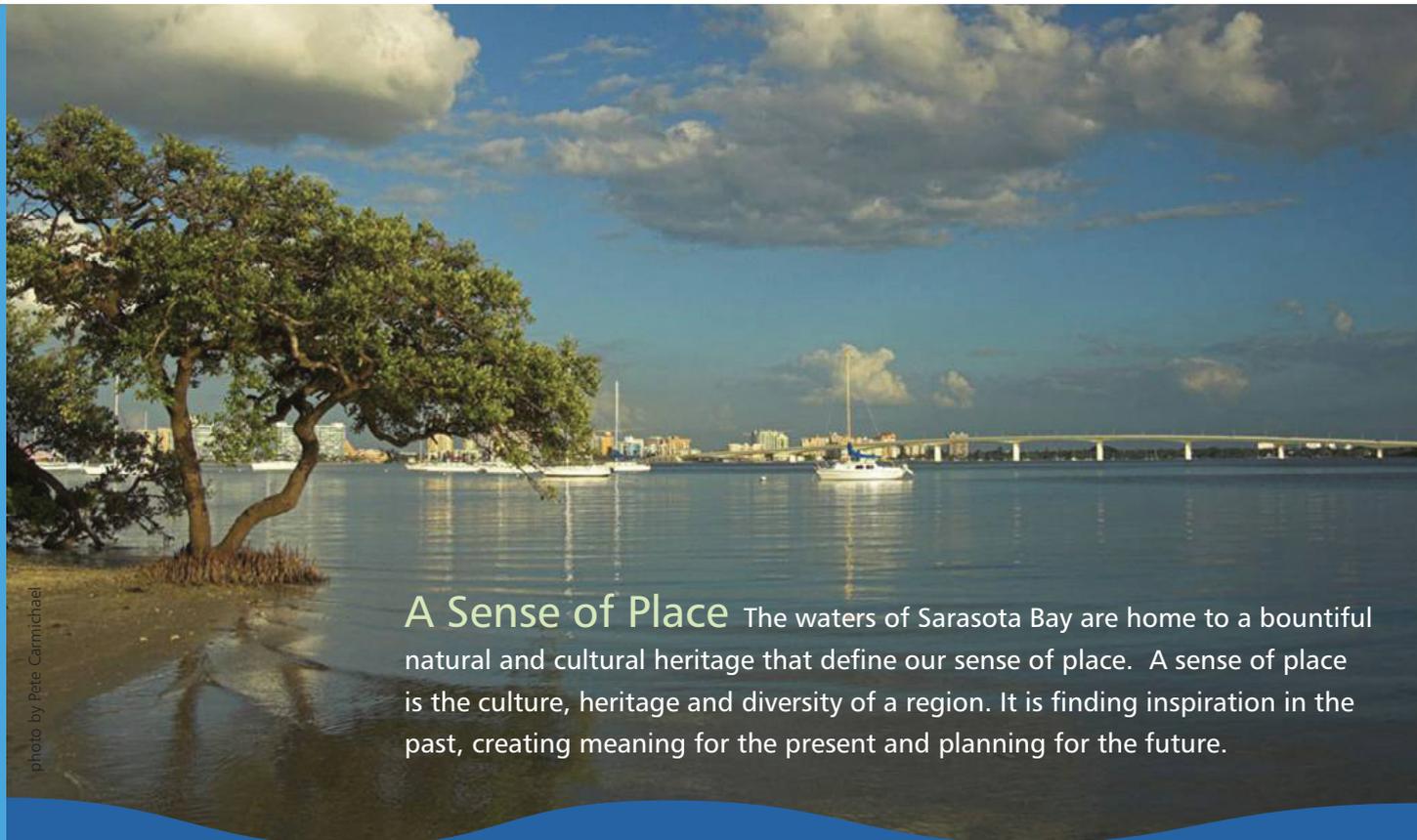


photo by Pete Carmichael

A Sense of Place The waters of Sarasota Bay are home to a bountiful natural and cultural heritage that define our sense of place. A sense of place is the culture, heritage and diversity of a region. It is finding inspiration in the past, creating meaning for the present and planning for the future.



ECOTOURISM

The Gulf Coast Heritage Trail connects those special places that weave together the fabric of our history



EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Engage, educate and encourage



ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Acquiring the necessary data to make informed management decisions

Vision for Action

Since 1989 the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and its partners have had a vision....a vision of a Sarasota Bay with clear waters and abundant habitat supporting a rich diversity of aquatic life...of people experiencing that abundance while soaking in its natural beauty....and a commitment through education to engage the community to become our partner in cultivating this vision of a healthy Sarasota Bay.



HABITAT RESTORATION

Restoring the historic balance of native wetland and intertidal habitats



NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION CENTER

Protecting the health of Sarasota Bay begins in your yard



THE WATER CONNECTION

You are the solution to stormwater pollution

Celebrate our Accomplishments

- Water quality has improved in all bay segments
- Seagrass beds are recovering
- Bay scallops have returned
- Restored wetlands and artificial reefs are creating new habitat for marine life
- Recreational fishing is excellent
- The community has upgraded wastewater treatment plants and initiated stormwater run-off prevention projects