

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program



**SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM**
Restoring Our Bays



COMMUNICATION PLAN 2019-2024

September 2018

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INTRODUCTION

This Communication Plan is a supplement to the 2019 Update of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Sarasota Bay. The Communication Plan is intended to guide public engagement and education initiatives of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) for the 2019-2024 time frame and beyond.

The Plan incorporates feedback from key public outreach partners of the SBEP, who participated in a Visioning Workshop in July 2018. They identified priority needs, issues and audiences, and helped to craft a [Mission Statement](#) for SBEP's Communication initiatives. Additional input from partners, volunteers and citizens interested in the health of Sarasota Bay was solicited through an online poll completed by 224 respondents in June-July 2018.

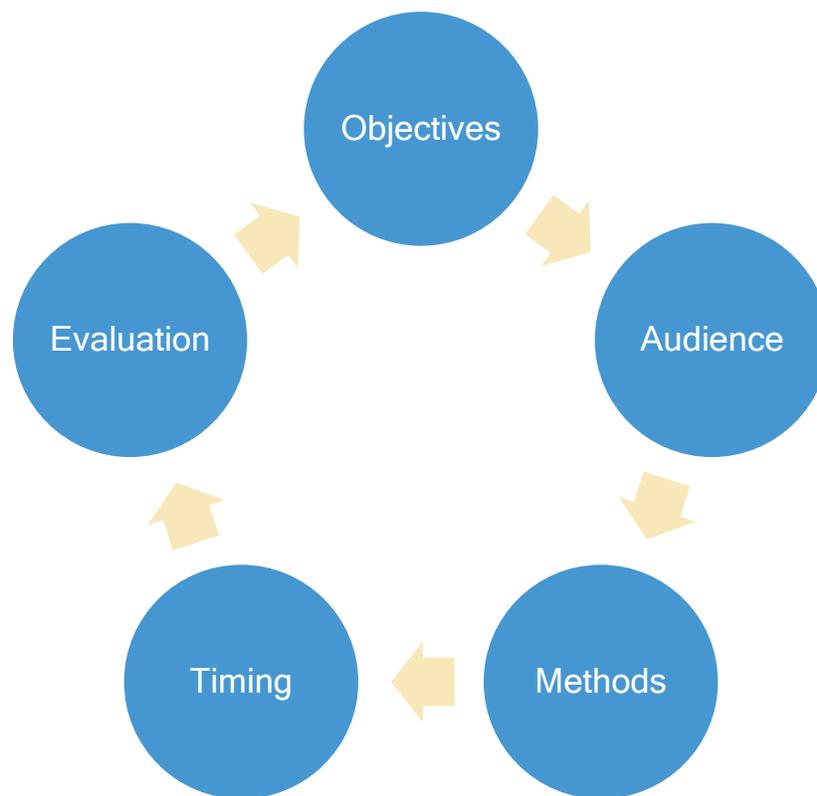
MISSION STATEMENT

SBEP's public engagement strategy maximizes collaborative partnerships to create science-based solutions that avoid duplication, produce measurable results and are inclusive and accessible for the community.

This document presents a framework to assist SBEP staff and partners in allocating the Program's finite resources effectively and efficiently. It positions SBEP to continue delivering quality programming for the Sarasota Bay community by articulating an overall vision and key guiding principles. The Actions identified in this document reflect SBEP priorities for the period from 2019-2024. However, the framework that supports the actions the Communication Cornerstones and Mission Statement is intended to serve the Program for the next decade.

Communication tools and tactics are constantly evolving with time and technology. Since the last major revision of the CCMP in 2010, use of social media networks has skyrocketed, printed materials have increasingly been replaced by web-based

platforms, and mobile devices - from cell phones and tablets to glasses and watches - are now the preferred on-demand purveyors of information for consumers of all ages. A decade from now, technologies such as Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence, may allow new generations to interact with the natural environment in ways we can't even envision now – presenting both opportunities and challenges for those charged with fostering appreciation and stewardship of Sarasota Bay.



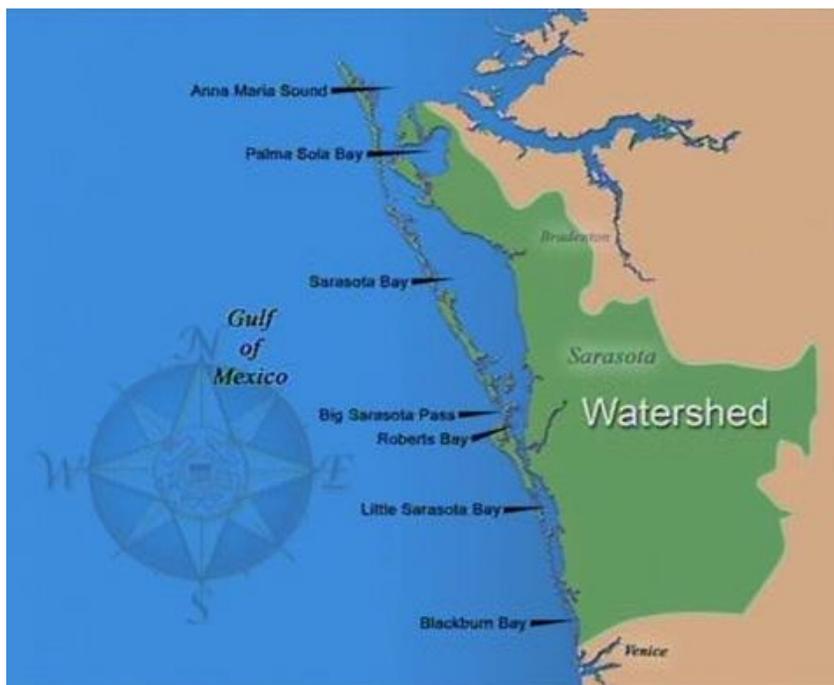
Elements of a Communication Plan

BACKGROUND:

Watershed at a Glance

The Sarasota Bay watershed comprises the counties of Sarasota and Manatee; the major cities of Sarasota, Bradenton and North Port; and numerous smaller cities and towns including Longboat Key, Holmes Beach, Anna Maria, and Bradenton Beach.

Sarasota Bay proper is about 35 square miles in size; the watershed is approximately 250 square miles, or about seven times larger than the bay itself.



Population

Sarasota..... 419,119
Manatee.....385,571

Population per Square Mile

Sarasota.....682
Manatee.....434

Median Age

Sarasota.....54.5
Manatee.....47.1

SOURCE:

U.S. Census Bureau 2017

Sarasota County's population rose 10.5 % from 2010-2017; Manatee County's population rose 19.4 % for the same period. Together, the two counties ranked as the 10th fastest growing metropolitan area in the U.S. in 2017.¹

¹ [U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts](#)

Demographics

The population of both Sarasota and Manatee counties has continued a “graying” trend, with 39% of Sarasota County and 29.6% of Manatee County residents aged 62 and older.² Seasonal residents are a significant proportion of the overall population – adding as many as 100,000 residents to Sarasota County in the winter and spring months.³

While both counties are predominantly White, both are also experiencing increasing populations of Hispanic and Latino residents. In Manatee County, about 16% of the 2017 population was Hispanic or Latino, with 9% in Sarasota County. Blacks or African-Americans comprised 4.8 % of Sarasota's population and 9.2% of Manatee County's.⁴

Economy

Tourism-related industries (lodging, restaurants, etc.) are the most important economic sector in the region. Health care, construction, manufacturing and agriculture (especially in Manatee County) are also pillars of the region's economy.

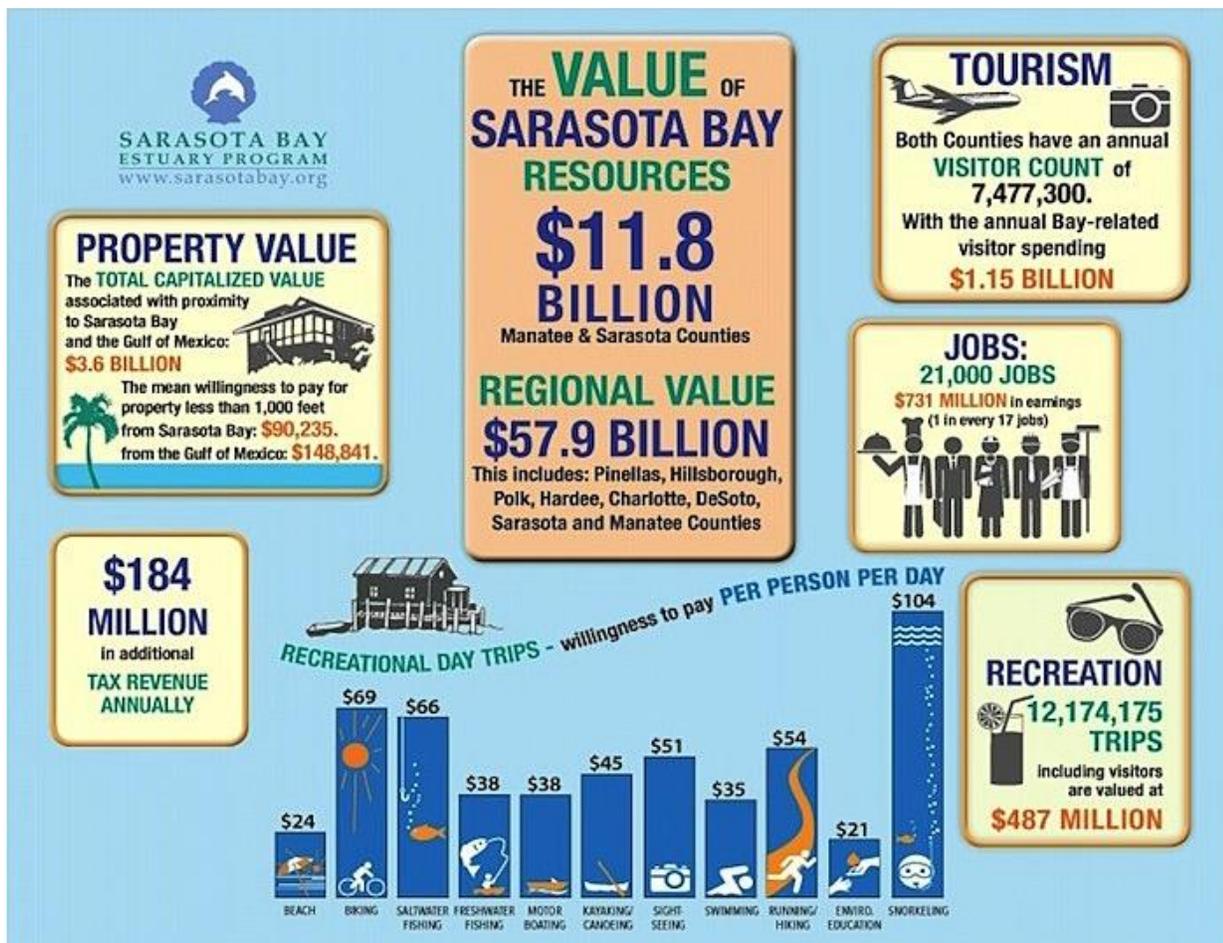
An economic valuation study sponsored by SBEP found that Bay-related activity generated a regional economic impact of \$1.94 billion – about 4 percent of the gross regional product. Factoring in the value of waterfront real estate, as well as recreational fishing, boating, and eco-tourism, a healthy Sarasota Bay is worth about \$11.8 billion to the region. The study also estimated that Bay-related visitor spending supports about one in every 17 jobs in the two-county region. ⁵

² [2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#)

³ [Sarasota County Planning and Development](#)

⁴ [U.S.Census Bureau Quick Facts](#)

⁵ [Sarasota Bay Economic Valuation](#)



The value of Sarasota Bay to the region is estimated at \$11.8 billion, including bay-related visitor spending and recreation. One in every 17 jobs is dependent on a healthy bay.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

SBEP is one of 28 community-based coastal management programs created by Congress and administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Program is an intergovernmental partnership of local governments and regional, state and federal agencies. SBEP implements research, restoration and education strategies described in a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) that is regularly updated to assess progress and reflect new or emerging concerns.

Strengths of the Program include:

- ✧ A science-based approach to identifying and addressing threats to Sarasota Bay.

- ✧ A wide-angle perspective that encompasses the entire bay watershed from freshwater tributaries far inland to the salty Gulf of Mexico.
- ✧ An emphasis on collaboration and engagement that fosters trust among diverse stakeholders.
- ✧ Local funding and leadership, including local elected officials who are responsive to the needs of the community.

A major challenge facing the Program is uncertain funding, especially at the federal level where Congressional authorization is required. The Program also is at risk of wavering local support if citizens do not understand, appreciate or value its unique role in galvanizing bay restoration.



COMMUNICATION CORNERSTONES

An Opinion Poll and Visioning Workshop in summer 2019 helped to define the following [Communication Cornerstones](#) for SBEP's public education and engagement strategy:



- ✦ Science-based Solutions
- ✦ Measurable Results
- ✦ Innovative Partnerships
- ✦ Avoiding Duplication
- ✦ Inclusivity and Accessibility



Science-Based Solutions

SBEP's most valuable "community currency" is its reliance on sound science to guide recommendations about the management, restoration and protection of Sarasota Bay. Stakeholders trust the outcomes of SBEP-sponsored research. They look to the Program for unbiased examination and assessment of problems, and innovative, science-centered solutions. SBEP is uniquely positioned to provide clear communication about complex and often controversial issues such as sea level rise and recurring algal blooms.



Measurable Results

The CCMP for Sarasota Bay establishes environmental targets by which to measure progress in bay restoration. Those indicators clearly show an improving estuary, but do not capture the full impact of education and outreach efforts in contributing to the bay's recovery. Metrics such as reach, participation and

pre/post gains in knowledge, can be augmented by benchmarks that quantify what people do with the information provided by SBEP. Measuring these individual or collective changes in behavior, when possible, ensures that outreach efforts are effective and serves as a powerful validation of their value.



Innovative Partnerships

Partnership is a cherished hallmark of SBEP. In addition to the government and agency partners that oversee the Program's activities and expenditures, SBEP works with myriad organizations, industries and interest groups to implement CCMP actions. SBEP is a highly regarded outreach partner for local cities and counties, community non-profits, and research and education institutions. The Program's future public communication initiatives could be amplified by collaboration with non-traditional partners, especially bay users and businesses such as restaurants, realtors, and homebuilders whose livelihoods are dependent upon a healthy bay and who often have the ear and attention of policymakers.



Avoiding Duplication

Limited resources require organizations to appraise their strengths and focus with precision on what they do best. Where multiple organizations are providing similar programs and activities, SBEP should carve out a unique niche that fills an unmet need, or concentrate instead on areas and issues that aren't being successfully addressed by others. SBEP should give priority to initiatives with measurable outcomes and the greatest potential benefit for the bay. SBEP's Bay Guardians volunteer workday program is an example of filling a particular niche; although many groups in Sarasota-Manatee recruit volunteers for environmental clean-ups, Bay Guardians uniquely focuses its workdays on removal of invasive plants and creation of Living Shorelines.



Inclusive and Accessible Programming

Environmental organizations often struggle to involve communities of color for whom environmental issues historically have not been a priority. SBEP has made meaningful progress in promoting diversity in youth education, through funding of the Protection, Involvement, Education, Restoration (P.I.E.R.) field trips for K-12 students; and through school and community recipients of the Bay Partners grants. SBEP should strive to expand outreach to community members that frequently are underserved, including African-American and Hispanic/Latino residents. Other underserved or overlooked residents include those dealing with physical or mental disabilities, and even seasonal and “mature” residents with time and interest in contributing to the community.



EXISTING PROGRAMS

Program Snapshots

SBEP's primary [Public Education and Engagement Programs](#) are funded through the annual Citizens Action Plan budget, developed by the Public Outreach Manager as for the SBEP Workplan with input from the Citizens Advisory Committee. Current programs and FY 2018-2019 budget allocations include:

❖ **Protection, Involvement, Education, Restoration (P.I.E.R.)**

Contractor-led field trips for public, private, home-schooled students.

Audience: K-12 public, private & home-schooled students

FY 2018-19 Budget: \$25,000

Reach: 2,000 students and educators/year

Evaluation: Pre/Post testing of knowledge gain



❖ **Bay Guardians**

Half-day workdays utilizing volunteers for habitat restoration and clean-up

Audience: All

FY 2018-19 Budget: \$5,000

Reach: 250-300 people/year

Evaluation: In 2017-2018, 226 volunteers removed more than 3,400 pounds of trash, 1,600 pounds of invasive plants and planted 3,325 native plants, for a volunteer contribution valued at \$11,159.

❖ **Bay Partners**

Competitive grant program awarding maximum of \$3,000 to businesses, schools, neighborhoods, and community groups for projects to restore habitat, improve water quality or enhance awareness and appreciation of bay

Audience: All

FY 2018-19 Budget: \$20,000

Reach: 200 people/year

Evaluation: More than \$112,000 awarded to 25 Sarasota-Manatee organizations from 2012-2017. In 2017 alone, Bay Partners Grants directly involved more than 2,000 youth, college students and adults. More specific metrics are needed to assess environmental results.

❖ **BayWise Kayak Tours**

Free, expert-led kayak tours focused on bay ecology.

Audience: All

FY 2018-19 Budget: \$3,500

Reach: 50 people/year

Evaluation: Participant surveys conducted in beginning of program; need to be repeated.



❖ **Teacher Workshops**

Professional development workshops for Sarasota and Manatee teachers focused on bay-related lessons and activities for their classrooms.

Audience: K-12 educators

FY 2018-19 Budget: \$5,000

Reach: 50 teachers/year

Evaluation: Pre/Post testing of knowledge gain and follow-up surveys to assess classroom usage and reach are needed.

❖ **Public Engagement (General)**

This broad category encompasses general Communications and Communications Support tasks, including Website, Newsletter, Video Production, Printing, Community Events, CAC Support, and Graphic Design.

Audience: Youth, College, Homeowners, Bay Users, All

FY 2018-19 Budget: \$30,000

Reach: See specific metrics for communication tools below

Evaluation: Where metrics are available (i.e., e-newsletter, social media), incorporate into annual Communications Plan

SBEP uses a variety of [Communication Tools](#) to deliver and promote information about specific initiatives and overall Program accomplishments:

✧ **[Bay Reflections](#) Quarterly E-Newsletter**

Reach: 2,500 subscribers

Open rate 17%-20% (430-500 people per edition)

✧ **[Sarasotabay.org](#) Website**

Reach: 5,788 users from Aug. 2017-Aug. 2018

83% new site visitors, 17% returning visitors

Average time on website = 35 seconds

Pages Visited: 1.29 pages per session



✧ **MailChimp E-Mail Marketing**

Free platform for sending newsletters as well as information about workdays, special events and meetings.

Reach: 2,500 subscribers.

Overall Open Rates:

General SBEP Contacts (2,479): 19.5 %

❖ Social Media Platforms

SBEP maintains [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts

Reach:

Facebook: 1,589 Fans; Avg. reach of posts Aug. 2017-Aug. 2018 = 93 people

Instagram: 614 Followers; Average 24 “likes” per post Aug. 2017-Aug. 2018

Twitter: 838 Followers; 118 tweet “likes” Aug. 2017-2018

❖ Publications

SBEP produces or supports production of educational materials and guides, including the [Bay Roamers Guide](#), [Living on the Water's Edge](#) brochure, and annual [State of the Bay](#) reports

Reach: Unknown. Distribution primarily via events and partners. Some materials also available in high-traffic venues such as Tax Collector's offices and tourist info centers.

Popular print materials also can be downloaded on SBEP website.

SBEP's Outreach Manager also leads two [Special Initiatives](#):

❖ Living Shorelines

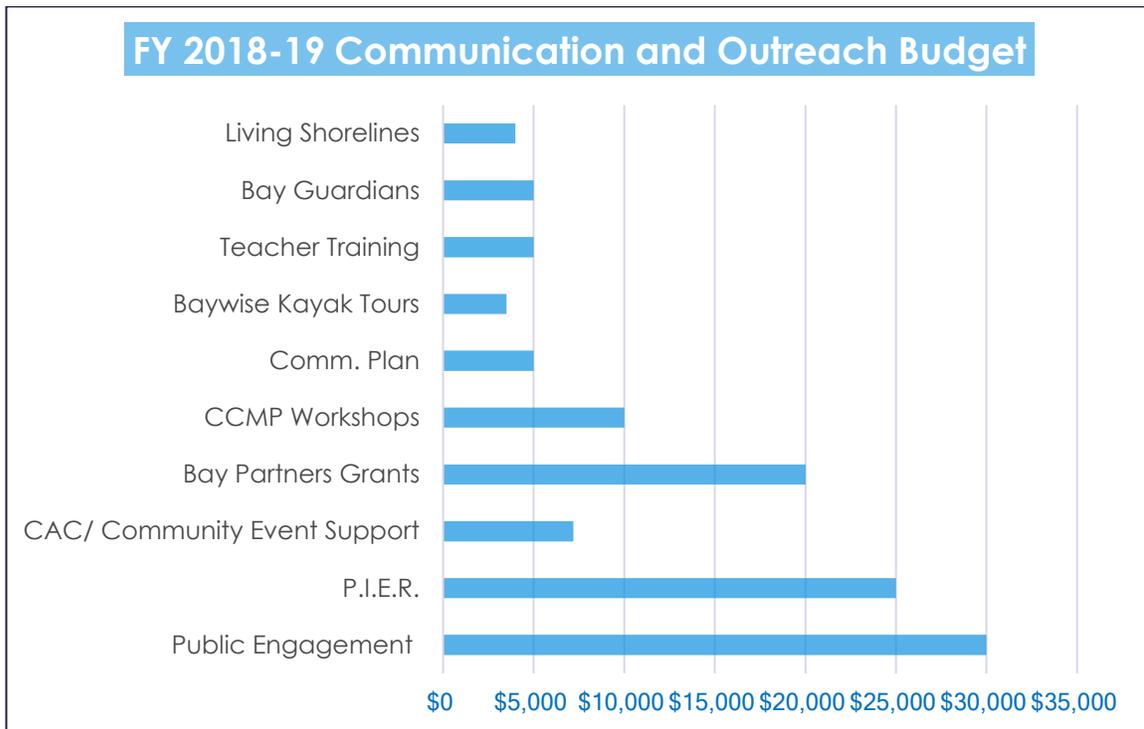
Status: Priority area of focus for SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee and Bay Guardians workdays



Living Shoreline at
Sarasota's Bayfront Park

❖ Climate Change Education

Status: [Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment](#) for CCMP published 2018; video [“Restoring Our Bays: Preparing Sarasota Bay for Sea Level Rise”](#) completed 2018; Program coordinates King Tide photo-documentation project; Outreach Manager serves on regional climate change workgroups and coordinates SBEP messaging about impacts and mitigation/adaptation strategies, such as Living Shorelines.



TOTAL: \$114,700

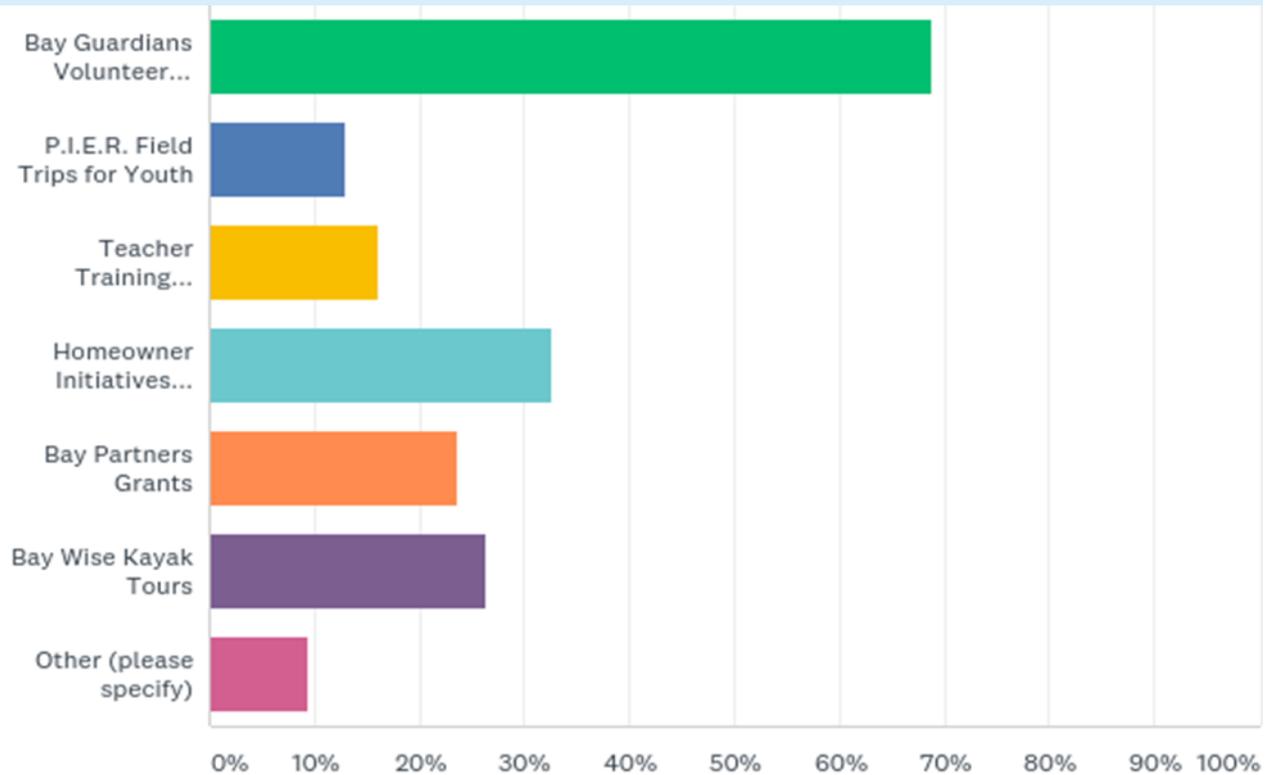
Discussion and Analysis

Internal and external feedback solicited for this Plan has defined areas where SBEP excels, chief among them hands-on opportunities to experience the beauty of the bay and assist in restoration, cleanup and monitoring programs. Nearly 70% of respondents in an online Opinion Poll conducted in summer 2018 ranked the Bay Guardians volunteer workdays as the most successful outreach activity for SBEP. Following that were Homeowner initiatives, BayWise Kayak Tours, and Bay Partners grants, with Teacher Training and P.I.E.R. field trips for students selected by the fewest respondents.

Less quantifiable is the long-term impact of SBEPs outreach activities on individual behavior. Does enthusiasm for enjoying the bay translate into personal action to protect it? Although the impacts of education and engagement are never easy to measure, program partners who attended the July 2018 Communication Visioning

Workshop listed [measurable results](#) as a key cornerstone of SBEP's communication strategy going forward.

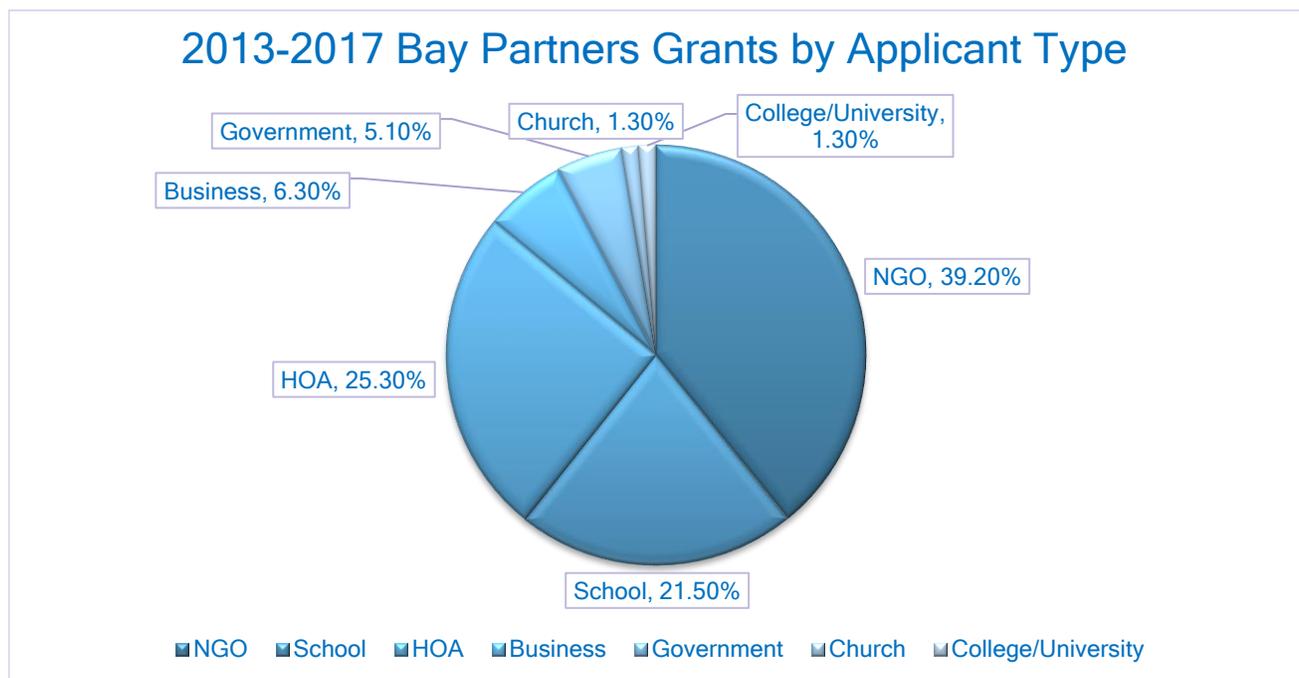
Most successful SBEP outreach and education programs (excerpt from Bay Opinion Poll, 224 respondents)



The demographic profile of the watershed also is an important consideration. The population of Hispanic and Asian residents has increased in the past two decades; these communities should be engaged in bay stewardship. There is also a growing population of young professionals. However, the watershed remains overwhelmingly White and older. Both Sarasota and Manatee counties are retirement meccas; the influx of part-time seasonal residents in Sarasota can swell the county's population by as much as 25% in the winter. Active seniors – with time and energy to devote to their community – could be more aggressively integrated in SBEP's public engagement efforts, where they might also serve as a bridge to younger generations. [Inclusive and accessible programming](#) was also identified as critical to future communications during the Visioning Workshop.

Assessing the cost-effectiveness of outreach programs presents some insight into areas where SBEP provides greatest “bang for the buck” and can assist in avoiding duplication of services, another cornerstone value. For example, SBEP annually directs \$5,000 to its Bay Guardians workdays, involving about 300 citizens per year. Based on an estimated value of \$23.33 an hour for volunteer labor in Florida,⁶ the workdays provide a 4.2-to-1 return on investment (ROI). If environmental benefits were factored into the equation the ROI would be even higher.

The Bay Partners grants also have a substantial ripple effect. SBEP awards \$20,000 in these grants annually, through individual awards of up to \$3,000 to schools, non-profits, neighborhoods, and other community groups. About 200 people are directly involved in the grants each year, but their community and environmental benefits are often amplified many times over. Since 2015, for example, grant recipients have installed a demonstration bioswale at a wetland bird sanctuary; removed 4,920 linear feet of monofilament line from Sarasota Bay; and eradicated invasive plants from four acres of land along Phillippi Creek.



⁶ [The Value of Volunteer Time/State and Historical Data](#)

Measuring the cost-effectiveness of some SBEP outreach initiatives is more difficult. The Program's annual teacher training workshops, for example, could benefit from follow-up surveys to find out how many teachers use the information and lesson plans, and to what extent. Modifying the workshops to focus on one of SBEP's priority issues areas, such as tidal stream protection or climate change resilience, would more fully integrate the Program's research, restoration and education initiatives.

Similar challenges arise in evaluating the P.I.E.R. field trips, currently the largest single expenditure of outreach funds. P.I.E.R. allows about 2,000 Sarasota and Manatee County K-12 students to personally see and learn about the bay watershed, for a per-student cost of \$12.50. Although pre- and post-tests assess what students learned from the trips, the qualitative impact of the experience is unknown. Do the students share what they have learned with others, such as family members? Do they make any changes in their own behavior, such as reducing use of plastics, or properly disposing of pet waste, as a result? Asking the students to pledge to take specific actions, or encouraging them to implement a small environmental improvement project after their field trip (such as planting a native wildflower garden or organizing a campaign to promote reusable water bottles), could extend the reach of the field trips and inspire permanent lifestyle changes to benefit the bay. One respondent in the online Opinion Poll noted that a P.I.E.R. field trip ignited a lifelong love of nature that led him to a career in habitat restoration.

Participants in the Visioning Workshop did not rank K-12 students as a top-priority audience, suggesting that numerous, highly qualified local organizations already fill this space and SBEP should focus instead on audiences not being reached by others, particularly [innovative partnerships](#) with business and community leaders. Realtors, seafood restaurant owners, contractors, homebuilders and fishing guides are all among the interest groups who directly impact the bay and who have a vested interest in protecting and improving it. These business owners are often civic

leaders with access to policymakers, and could be instrumental in building support for funding and policies that advance CCMP goals.

COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED DURING VISIONING WORKSHOP

Priority Issues/Activities	Priority Audiences
Habitat Creation/Restoration	Local Business & Community Leaders
Climate Change Education	Recreational Users
Community Grants	Underserved/Minority Communities
Citizen-Science Opportunities	Seasonal Residents/Retirees

SBEP could continue to educate and motivate the next generation of bay stewards by supporting partners already providing experiential bay-related education, and updating its Teacher Training workshops to provide classroom modules addressing the importance of tidal streams, or local impacts of sea level rise, as mentioned above.

SBEP's strong commitment to [science-based solutions](#), the final communication cornerstone, logically positions it as a leader in education about complex issues for residents of all ages and backgrounds. SBEP should leverage its reputation as a trusted source of empirical information to foster science literacy that leads to lasting benefits for Sarasota Bay.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

➤ A. Align Outreach Strategies with SBEP Research and Restoration Priorities

ACTION A. 1

Create an annual communications plan that reflects priorities established in the CCMP, annual Workplan, and Long-Range Communications Plan. Identify priority messages, target audiences, budget and delivery mechanisms (social media, traditional news media, brochures, events, etc.). Identify benchmarks for evaluating programs and activities.

Budget: \$5,000 or less

Potential costs: Primarily staff time; possibly assisted by contractor if budget allows.

Target Audience: All residents of watershed.

Timing: Beginning in FY 2019-2020, annually thereafter

Partners: SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee, cities and counties, UF/IFAS Extension, Florida Sea Grant, Mote Marine Lab, Science and Environment Council

Measuring Success: Develop metrics for all key programs and report annually in Communications Plan

Deliverables: Annual Communications Plan

ACTION A.2

Allocate a portion of Bay Partners Grants each year to SBEP research and restoration priorities, such as Living Shorelines, Tidal Stream Restoration or Climate Change Education.

Budget: \$6,000 of total \$20,000 Bay Partners funding

Potential costs: Up to \$6,000 per year (equivalent of two grants of \$3,000 each

Target Audience: Schools, neighborhood associations, NGOs, city and county government partners, colleges/universities, churches, businesses, service clubs.

Timing: Annually beginning in FY 2020-2021

Partners: SBEP, SBEP Citizens Advisory Committee

Measuring Success: Number of grants awarded, residents directly and indirectly engaged/educated, and environmental benefits. Report results annually.

Deliverables: Annual grant reports submitted by recipients using standardized form; grant matrix and summary updated annually by SBEP Outreach Manager and available on SBEP website.

ACTION A.3

Update teacher training workshops and materials to focus on SBEP priority issues.

Budget: \$5,000 or less

Potential costs: \$5,000 to revise and pilot existing workshop curriculum or create new modules.

Target Audience: Formal and informal K-12 educators in Sarasota Bay watershed.

Timing: Instructional modules to be revised in FY 2020-2021. Updated teacher workshops to begin in FY 2021-2022.

Partners: SBEP, New College, Science and Environment Council

Measuring Success: Pre-post knowledge gain assessments; Number of teachers completing workshops; number of teacher using one or more lesson plans in classroom; number of children reached through teachers annually.

Deliverables: Workshop summary submitted annually by contractor.

ACTION A.4

Direct volunteer programs to activities that support and provide opportunities for communicating key research and restoration priorities, such as creation of Living Shorelines and tidal creek cleanups. (See Objective A).

Budget: No additional cost

Potential Costs: Staff time only

Target Audience: All ages, backgrounds and interests, reflective of the Bay Guardians workday teams.

Timing: Ongoing through Bay Guardians, Adopt A Park and Citizen-Science initiatives

Partners: SBEP, cities and counties, Florida Sea Grant, Mote Marine Lab, Sarasota Bay Watch, Keep Manatee Beautiful

Measuring Success: Number of volunteers, value of volunteer labor, environmental benefits. Results reported annually.

Deliverables: Report annually via written summary or infographic summarizing volunteer activities that advance research and restoration priorities.

➤ B. Expand opportunities for citizen participation in restoration and monitoring programs

ACTION B.1

Sponsor a minimum of six Bay Guardians workdays a year. Expand number of workdays as budget or sponsorships allow.

Budget: \$7,000

Potential costs: Contractor, supplies, promotional giveaways and lunch. All or part of this cost could be offset by sponsorships from area businesses.

Target Audience: All ages, backgrounds and interests. Consider organizing workdays to recruit volunteers from specific groups, such as college students, service clubs, minority youth or area businesses.

Timing: Workdays held Fall-Late Spring

Partners: SBEP (Lead), city and county parks and preserves

Measuring Success: Number of Volunteers, volunteer hours and environmental metrics for each workday (invasive plants removed, cubic yards of oyster reefs installed, length of shoreline cleaned).

Deliverables: Report results annually via written summary, video, slideshow or infographic.

ACTION B.2

Create an ongoing “Adopt A Park” program for volunteers who want to go “beyond Bay Guardians.”

Budget: \$5,000 or less

Potential costs: Supplies, equipment, branded volunteer items such as shirts, hats or water bottles; possible development of mobile app to recruit and coordinate volunteers and report completed tasks.

Target Audience: Seasonal Residents/Retirees; Homeowners; College Students; High School Students. Consider organizing Adopt A Park teams in minority communities, in conjunction with community organizations, churches or businesses. (See Objective E).

Timing: Year-round

Partners: SBEP (Lead), Sarasota and Manatee County parks and preserves staff, community organizations or businesses.

Measuring Success: Establish targets for success. Assess methods for recruiting and retaining volunteers (newsletter, social media, press releases, etc). Track number of volunteers and work completed through online data forms submitted by volunteers or team leaders. See related Actions A.4, D.2 and E.1

Deliverables: Press releases and e-blasts about program at start-up; Ongoing communication with volunteers via e-blasts, Facebook group or other tools. Report results annually via written summary, video, slideshow or infographic.

ACTION B.3

Empower and train citizen-scientists to contribute observations and data to research and monitoring programs that support CCMP implementation.

Budget: \$5,000 or less

Potential costs: \$2,500 for supplies, training, and equipment.

Timing: Seagrass Survey held annually; other citizen-science opportunities to be identified beginning in FY 2020-2021.

Target Audience: Tweens, teens, college students, working adults and retirees throughout the watershed.

Partners: SBEP (lead), Mote Marine Lab, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Sea Grant, UF/IFAS Extension
 Measuring Success: Track number of volunteers and data collected.
 Report results annually.

Deliverables: Press release, e-blasts and e-newsletter articles highlighting citizen-science opportunities. Report results annually for each citizen-science initiative via written summary, video, slideshow or infographic available on website and/or in State of the Bay report.

➤ C. Strategically utilize digital engagement to advance SBEP outreach goals

ACTION C.1

Create an annual digital engagement plan that encompasses email campaigns, social media, the Bay Reflections e-newsletter and other digital communication tools. The plan should reflect the Communications Cornerstones identified in the Long-Range Communications Plan and be presented as a separate section within the annual Communications Plan.

Budget: \$5,000 or less

Potential costs: \$1,000-\$5,000 annually if contractor support desired for specific aspects of digital management

Target Audience: Residents of all backgrounds, ages and interests.

Timing: Create plan and schedule for social media by end of 2020.

Revise annually and adapt strategy as needed to incorporate new tools or delivery methods.

Partners: SBEP

Measuring Success: Establish targets for growth in users, frequency of posts, and engagement rates for each platform. Monitor success.

Deliverables: Report results in digital engagement section of annual Communications Plan.

➤ D. Reach beyond traditional partnerships to engage new stakeholders and advocates

ACTION D.1

Enlist business owners and interest groups with a vested interest in a healthy bay as partners in relevant education campaigns or collaborative partnerships (i.e. Realtors or Homebuilders for Living Shorelines; Physicians for health-related impacts of Harmful Algal Blooms).

Budget: \$5,000-\$10,000

Potential costs: Production/design of promotional messaging, support for events and monitoring dependent on specific partnership program or educational campaign.

Target Audience: Specific business, industry or user groups appropriate for each campaign.

Timing: Beginning in FY 2020-2021

Partners: SBEP, Local Businesses and Community Groups such as Chambers of Commerce, or professional associations

Measuring Success: Establish targets for participation and success for each relevant campaign or program. Establish behavior change targets where applicable and measurable.

Deliverables: Summary report for each campaign; include in State of the Bay reports.

ACTION D.2

Leverage the desire and energy of the region's retired and/or seasonal residents to contribute to the community.

Budget: \$500-\$1,000

Potential costs: Primarily staff time, plus design and production of any promotional materials to reach target audience

Target Audience: Active residents 55 years of age and older

Timing: Ongoing.

Partners: SBEP, Community organizations

Measuring Success: Number of volunteers, number of work sessions, environmental impacts. See related Actions B.2 and E.1.

Deliverables: Press releases, newsletter articles for senior-oriented publications or retirement community newsletters or websites. Possible

rack card to recruit volunteers that can be strategically distributed at large retirement communities, fitness centers, or via community partners and community events. Report participation of 55+ target audience as part of Bay Guardians, Adopt A Park and Citizen-Science annual summaries.

➤ E. Ensure that programs and activities are inclusive and accessible to all community members

ACTION E.1

Connect with underserved communities in ways and places that are relevant and meaningful to them. Partner with community centers, businesses, churches, recreation centers or other organizations that already engage minority communities to sponsor volunteer workdays, field trips or learning workshops.

Budget: \$1,000

Potential Costs: \$500-\$1,000 for coordination of 1-2 workdays/workshops each year

Target Audience: Underserved and/or minority populations.

Timing: Initial partnership project launched in FY 2020-2021; annually afterward.

Partners: SBEP, UF/IFAS, Sarasota and Manatee counties and cities, community centers, businesses, churches, recreation centers or other organizations

Measuring Success: Number of participants, number of repeat participants, value of volunteer labor (for workdays); pre- and post-knowledge gain (for field trips and workshops), environmental benefits.

See related Actions B.1, D.1 and D.2

Deliverables: Flyers, brochures, radio PSAs, or newsletter articles for distribution at community and recreation centers, neighborhoods, businesses, libraries and through other partner organizations. Report annually in Communications Plan or State of the Bay report.

➤ F. Regularly assess programming to avoid duplication and improve evaluation

ACTION F.1 Assess both reach and effectiveness of all major SBEP engagement and education programs.

Budget: No additional cost

Potential Costs: Staff time only

Timing: Beginning in FY 2019-2020.

Target Audience: All residents who receive information from SBEP regularly or participate in SBEP programs. All partners who collaborate with SBEP on outreach activities.

Partners: SBEP, all program partners including Around The Bend Nature Tours, New College, UF/IFAS Extension, Florida Sea Grant, Science and Environment Council, Mote Marine Lab, cities and counties

Measuring Success: Establish benchmarks and targets for success for objectives and actions included in Long-Range Communications Plan. Measure behavior change and/or environmental results where applicable.

Deliverables: Standardize and summarize annually as part of annual communication planning or State of the Bay report.



APPENDIX 1

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Opinion Poll

1. Where do you live (city or county)?

2. What is your age range?

21-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65 or older

3. Which best describes your relationship with Sarasota Bay Estuary Program? (Choose 1)

Volunteer

Community Education Partner

Advisory Committee Member

Formal or Informal Educator

Citizen interested in the health of Sarasota Bay

Other (please explain)

4. How do you usually learn about Sarasota Bay Estuary Program activities, events and/or workshops? (Please select all that apply)

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

Email

Newsletter

Website

Radio

Television

Newspaper

Other (please explain)

5. In your opinion, what are the best ways to inform the public about how they can be involved in Sarasota Bay restoration and protection? (Choose 3)

Facebook

Twitter

YouTube

Instagram

Website

Community Events/Festivals

Workshops

Emails and E-Newsletters

Radio

Television

Newspaper

Group presentations by SBEP representatives

Other

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being Strongly Agree and 1 being Strongly Disagree, rate the following statement:

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is a regional leader in educating and involving residents in protecting Sarasota Bay.

7. Please give some examples of ways the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program has been successful in promoting bay restoration and protection.

8. In your opinion, which of these is SBEP's greatest strength with regard to public engagement and education? (Choose 1)

- Creating new and innovative ways to educate citizens about Sarasota Bay
- Supporting existing partnerships that educate citizens about Sarasota Bay, such as serving on regional advisory groups or providing funding for regional programs
- Providing seed money to community groups for bay improvement activities
- Providing hands-on volunteer opportunities for citizens to improve the bay

9. In your opinion, which SBEP outreach and education programs have been most successful? (Choose 2)

Bay Guardians Volunteer Program

P.I.E.R. Field Trips (Protection, Involvement, Education, Restoration) for Youth

Teacher Training and Classroom Modules

Homeowner Initiatives (Bay-Friendly/Climate-Friendly Landscaping, Living on the Water's Edge, Pooches for the Planet)

Bay Partners Grants

10. What do think is the biggest threat to Sarasota Bay's health today? (Choose 1)

Urban and Agricultural Runoff

Sea Level Rise/Climate Change

Oil/Gas/Chemical Spills

Habitat Loss Due To Development

Invasive Plants and Animals

Municipal Sewage/Wastewater Spills

Recreational Impacts (propeller scarring, wildlife impacts, fishing, etc.)

Algae blooms

Marine Debris

Other

11. What do you think will be the biggest threat to Sarasota Bay's health 10 years from now? (Choose 1)

Urban and Agricultural Runoff

Sea Level Rise/Climate Change

Oil/Gas/Chemical Spills

Habitat Loss Due To Development

Invasive Plants and Animals

Municipal Sewage/Wastewater

Recreational Impacts (propeller scarring, wildlife impacts, fishing, etc.)

Algae blooms

Marine Debris

Other

12. Are there any additional comments you'd like to make about SBEP's education and outreach activities?

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Visioning Workshop (held July 3, 2018)

Attendees: Darcy Young (SBEP), Mark Alderson (SBEP), Jay Leverone (SBEP), Christine Quigley (SBEP), Nanette O'Hara (O'Hara Comm.), Michelle Leahy (Manatee County Parks and Nat. Resources), Brad Tanner (Mote), Angela Collins (FL Sea Grant), Lesley Fleming (SBEP CAC), Lou Newman (SBEP CAC), Sara Kane (UF/IFAS Sarasota Extension), Alyssa Vinson (Sarasota County) EPD), Tommy Vaughan -Birch (SBEP CAC), Stevie Freeman-Montes (City of Sarasota), Jennifer Shafer (Shafer Consulting), Sean Sellers (SBEP CAC), Abbey Tyrna (UF/IFAS Sarasota Extension), Nicole Iadevaia (Sarasota County Stormwater), Armando Ubeda (FL Sea Grant)

PROCESS:

Participants received an overview presentation with background on SBEP's structure, mission, existing public engagement initiatives, and potential future activities for inclusion in a Communications Plan. The presentation also included a summary of a brief Public Opinion Poll that was complete online by 224 people, including SBEP partners, volunteers, CAC members and the general public.

Participants were then guided through a series of exercises to identify priority audiences, issues, programs and, finally, guiding principles for a future public engagement strategy. They identified additional important potential audiences of teachers in training and people of influence (key interest groups, business/corporate leaders, and community leaders who can influence policy makers).

Exercise #1: Journaling

Participants were asked to complete the following sentences:

- A. *With more money, time and staffing, SBEP could ... (fill in the blank)*
- B. *With less money, time and staffing, SBEP should ... (fill in the blank)*

A. "More of Everything" Responses included:

- Build an environmental center
- Hire a staff member to coordinate multicultural outreach
- Increase opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in hands-on restoration
- Provide more community grants

- Develop a Social Marketing campaign linking quality of life to the health of the bay
- Sponsor more SBEP-branded events that enhance appreciation of bay, such as a cross-bay swim

Activities/Goals Mentioned by More than One Participant:

- Reach more diverse audiences
- Implement more hands-on volunteer opportunities
- Fund more community grants
- Expand/enhance K-12 environmental education

B. "Less of Everything" Responses included:

- Focus on activities that reach the most people and have greatest impact on bay
- Build more partnerships to maximize reach and combine resources
- Reduce teacher training (other organizations do this)
- Maintain newsletter, website, Bay Guardians and Bay Partners
- Focus on public engagement connected to SBEP research and restoration projects and priorities
- Use metrics to determine most effective programs and focus on those
- Focus on education addressing climate mitigation and adaptation

Activities/Goals Mentioned by More than One Participant:

- Continue to offer hands-on volunteer opportunities
- Focus on activities that reach the most people and have greatest impact on bay
- Reduce effort expended on projects that might be better implemented by partners
- Continue with core communication mechanisms (website, newsletter)
- Concentrate on science literacy

Exercise #2: Identification of Priority Issues/Activities

Participants discussed and selected the four issues/activities they believe most important for SBEP to address through public engagement and education. The top 4 were:

Habitat Creation/Restoration

Community Grants

Climate Change Education

Citizen-Science Opportunities

Participants noted significant overlap and connectivity between these issues, as well as other potential activities and issues on the list of issues offered by the facilitator and expanded by the workshop participants.

Exercise #3: Identification of Priority Audiences

Participants discussed and selected the four audiences they think they believe are most important for SBEP to reach through public engagement and education. The top 4 were:

Local Business Owners (i.e. Realtors, Restaurant Owners, Contractors, Nursery Owners)

Recreational Users

Underserved Communities (i.e. Minority Communities, Physically-challenged populations)

Seasonal Residents/Retirees

Others that garnered 5 or more votes were Other Recreational Users (paddlers, birders, etc.); Youth (especially middle-school students); and Waterfront Property Owners.

Exercise #4: Building A Framework For The Future

Participants discussed and selected key principles or values to guide SBEP's decisions about how best to allocate public engagement and education resources in the future. Their top choices were:

Science-based Solutions

Measurable Results

Partnership

Avoid Duplication

Also receiving significant support was Inclusive/Accessible

These values can be used to create a mission statement that will guide engagement/education in the next decade, such as:

SBEP's public engagement strategy maximizes collaborative partnerships to create science-based solutions that avoid duplication, produce measurable results and are inclusive and accessible to the entire community.

Next Steps

Feedback from workshop participants will be incorporated into the SBEP Communication Plan to be submitted by mid-September 2018.

Appendix 3

Organizational Crosswalk

	Teacher K-12 Field Trips	Workshops & Lesson Plans	Volunteer Cleanups/ Restoration	Citizen-Science Opportunities	Community Grants Program	Targeted Education- Boater/Angler	Targeted Education- Homeowners	Social Marketing/ Behavior Change Campaign	Materials/ Programs in languages other than English	Sponsor Community Events, Festivals	Sponsor Learning Workshops
SREP	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x
Sarasota County	x		x	x	x		x	x		x	x
City of Sarasota										x	x
Manatee County	x	x	x	x		x			x	x	x
Bradenton										x	x
Mote Marine	x	x	x	x				x		x	x
Selby Gardens	x									x	x
South Florida Museum											x
FWC				x		x			x		
FL Sea Grant	x	x		x		x	x	x		x	x
IFAS Extension Science & Environment Council	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x