

RED TIDE

Solutions to Avoid Red Tide Launches Regional 'Healthy Ponds Collaborative'

The new collaborative aims to help more neighborhoods upgrade their ponds, more effectively remove red-tide causing nutrients, and cost-share the improvements.

By [Staff](#) • September 15, 2021



IMAGE: MATT KREISLER

Building on a successful pilot program that helped about a dozen Sarasota County communities bolster and beautify their stormwater retention ponds, Solutions to Avoid Red Tide (START) has secured a \$250,000 grant from the [Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation](#) to develop a regional "Healthy Ponds Collaborative" initiative.

According to START, stormwater contributes to 65 percent of the nitrogen in Sarasota Bay, which feeds red tide and causes other damage to water quality and wildlife. The more than 6,000 bodies of water in Sarasota County are all manmade and only operate at 40 percent to 60 percent efficiency in removing the excess nutrients that contribute to water pollution. The new collaborative aims to help more neighborhoods upgrade their ponds and cost-share the improvements. It also will create and distribute a step-by-step pond enhancement guide, host educational focus groups, and do follow-up monitoring of pond enhancements.

Partners include START, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Sarasota County's Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team, the UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County, and the Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida. The work was in part inspired by Gulf Coast Community Foundation's *Water Quality Playbook*.

For more information, click [here](#).

