

Foundation working on water quality

Gulf Coast publishes guide to help H2O around region

STAFF REPORT

VENICE — A new resource guide has been published by Gulf Coast Community Foundation in its effort to “to transform environmental water quality” in the region, it said in a news release.

“Sarasota County’s economy and reputation depend on protecting and restoring our natural waters,” Gulf Coast Community Foundation Senior Vice President Jon Thaxton said in a news release.

Thaxton chaired the initiative that created the publication.

“This Community Playbook for Healthy Waterways focuses, prioritizes, and coordinates critical activities we must undertake to realize our community’s vision for clean and healthy waters,” he said.

Called the “Community Playbook for Healthy Waterways,” it is available at www.WaterQualityPlaybook.org.

The news release calls it a “comprehensive online manual of recommended activities to reduce and remove manmade nutrient pollution in the region’s waterways and sustain those improvements in the future.”

It notes it focused on



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Volunteers with the Venice Area Beautification Inc. are reforesting an industrial corridor adjacent along the Venice Intracoastal Waterway.

Sarasota County but can be adapted to many other coastal communities in Florida.

It brought together science, community education and public policy to “more effectively manage nutrient pollution, specifically nitrogen, in the region,” it said.

It hopes to gain readers, including local leaders in government, nonprofits and businesses, among others.

“Everything we do on the land impacts our Bay and our creeks,” Sarasota Sustainability manager Stevie Freeman-Montes said. “Everybody has an intersection point into this resource.”

The Playbook has 10 chapters and 43 recommended activities “for improving regional water quality,” the news release said.

“The strength of the Playbook is that it’s a ‘do

list,” according to Sandy Gilbert, chairman/CEO of Solutions to Avoid Red Tide, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group. “The key now is for organizations like mine and the government and others to start doing the things in the list to improve water quality,” she said in the news release.

It is seen as a “living document” that can be added to through the years.

“The Playbook is a completely new innovation,” Sarasota County Environmental Manager John Ryan said in the news release. “It won’t be like an old book with bad references. It will be fresh — and it will be current.”

For more information, visit www.GulfCoastCF.org.

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