

Sister Keys Refreshed by Sarasota Bay Watch

The gorgeous nature preserve of Longboat Key - Sister Keys - was revitalized by Sarasota Bay Watch and friends on April 28, 2018. Over 75 hardy volunteers paddled and were shuttled to the Keys to remove trash, tear out invasive plants and have a good time together on a perfect Saturday morning.



Special Thanks to Larry Beggs of Reef Innovations who brought a gigantic barge to shuttle people to and from the island and haul a 1,300-pound mountain of debris back to land. There was also an additional 800 pounds of recyclables captured. Town Manager, Tom Harmer and his delightful wife Dee Dee came by to take part in the activities.



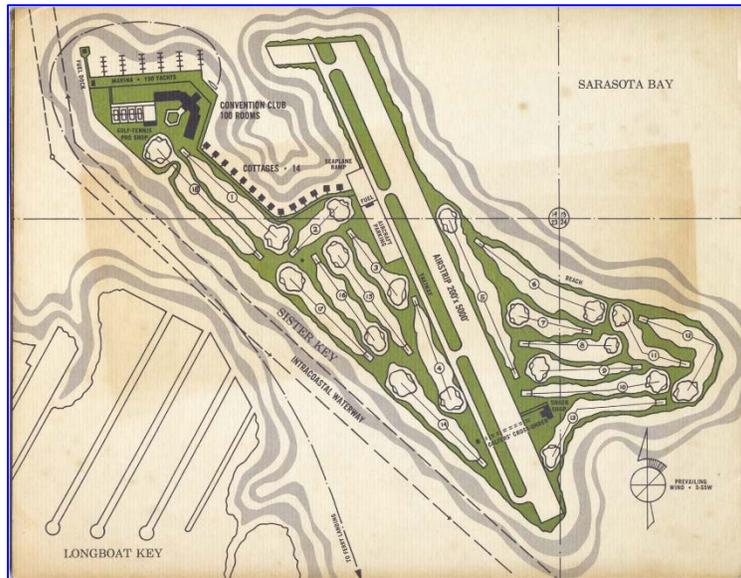
Ronda Ryan and Tracy Sweat built a mermaid from marine debris and brought it to the event. Many a selfie was taken posed next to our nasty lady of the sea. Thanks to LBK marine officer Nick Reno who kept passerby boat speeds safe and slow. James Linkogle and the guys from Public Works also did a lot of legwork to make this special event happen.



Back in 1992, the town of Longboat Key bought the four islands, totaling 74 acres, after a grass-roots citizen's group formed the Sister Keys Conservancy to lobby for their protection. The islands were restored with native plants, wetlands, salt marsh and gopher tortoise habitat. It is one of the rare places where the natural abundance of SW Florida is still in full bloom.



In the 1960s, a plan was hatched to build Shangri Isles on Sister Keys. It would have included a conference center, golf course and an air strip. Thanks to the Conservancy and wise action by the Town, the islands are an environmental preserve today that can be enjoyed forever by generations to come.



Ed Chiles, Owner of the Mar Vista Restaurant, once again generously donated a delicious lunch for everyone involved. Sharing a meal together while meeting new people was the ideal ending to the day.



See you next time !