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Sarasota County sends seagrass survey success story to Ozello

Sarasota County's seagrass survey program has experienced so much success over the past two years that Florida's Department of Environmental Protection has asked them to present their operational model to the citizens of Ozello in Citrus County. On Friday, Dec. 5, county staff joined members of FDEP to help launch the program in the Crystal River area.

According to one of Friday's presenters, Sarasota County Water Resources' Amanda Dominguez, seagrass is vital to maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems, improving water quality, stabilizing shorelines and providing food and cover for a variety of wildlife. "In addition, it's directly responsible for bringing in millions of dollars to the state of Florida annually from out-of-state and resident recreational and commercial fishermen," says Dominguez.

Sarasota County's mapping program staff members have been submitting their survey findings to the Southwest Florida Water Management District's existing seagrass mapping effort since 2006.

"It's actually quite rewarding to know that this fairly simple task can help, and that it truly is playing a profound role in what we know about seagrass," adds Dominguez. "We've had great success with our program because of our volunteers and individuals who have helped promote the program within boating and fishing associations."

To learn more about Sarasota County's seagrass mapping project, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000.

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