

City of Venice
October 24, 2018

Presentation By:

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH &
EDUCATION FOUNDATION
(EREF)**

Mac Carraway, Executive Director



Who is EREF?

- We are a nonprofit industry group with stakeholders in the green industry:
 - Professional lawn-care
 - Sports turf
 - Golf
 - Turf production
 - Affiliated suppliers

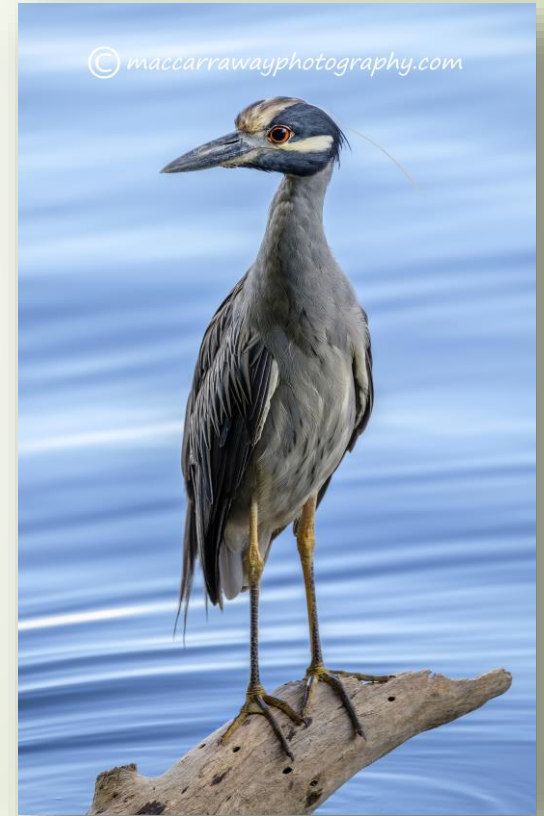


Who is EREF?

- My background as an environmental advocate and water policy advisor:
 - Served on SWFWMD's Manasota Basin Board by appt of two strong environmental governors – Bush and Crist; chaired their Basin Board Education Committee.
 - Served over 20 years on SWFWMD Ag/Green Industry Advisory Committee – Current Co-Chair.
 - Recipient of Ag Environmental Leadership Award.
 - Served on the Florida Chamber Water Task Force in 2005.
 - Involved in water-quality and nutrient issues for 10 years+.



Who is EREF?



Goal of the Presentation

- To offer a positive assessment of the current water-quality in SWF as it relates to nutrients.
- To promote evidence-based efforts to manage nutrients responsibly, consistent with critical regional water-quality goals.

Setting the Stage

- This year's red tide.
- Calls for drastic action.

An Overview of Fertilizer Regulation

- The Florida Consumer Fertilizer Task.
- Florida's Urban Turf Rule.
- SWF local summertime blackouts; no state preemption.

SWF – A Nutrient Management Success Story

- SWF is well-known in the scientific and policy communities for its success in nutrient management.
- Example #1: Tampa Bay nutrient management and seagrass bed recoveries.
 - TBO.com; March 22, 2014 – based on the TBEP timeline, the targeted seagrass bed recoveries were achieved AHEAD of schedule and BEFORE the implementation of blackouts.
 - Marine Pollution Bulletin; October 9, 2017 – “[Tampa Bay’s] Seagrasses have since recovered to percent cover levels not seen since the 1950’s, and is a globally recognized case study of a restored estuary.”; and...

SWF – A Nutrient Management Success Story

- Example #2: Sarasota Bay nutrient management and seagrass bed recoveries.
- Marine Pollution Bulletin; October 9, 2017 –
 - *“Sarasota Bay’s seagrass coverage in 2014 exceeded coverage in 1950 by 30% (SWFWMD, 2015), and the Bay meets State of Florida Impaired Water’s List Numeric Nutrient Criteria for nitrogen and phosphorus.”*
- Both of these recoveries continue to this day.
- How did that come to be?

SWF – A Nutrient Management Success Story

- The blackouts were simply a non-factor.
- Spend some time with the massive FDEP Nutrient Study at this link to understand better why this is so.
<https://wfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/turfgrass-science/nutrient-management-research/fdep-funded-study/>
- Comparison: Indian River Lagoon

The Science and the Evidence

- Recoveries results offer a hopeful perspective.
- Red tide counts today – highest in Pinellas and Sarasota.
- **Tampa and Sarasota Bays are NOT impaired for N and P according to FDEP.**

The Science and the Evidence



FORT GEORGE ISLAND.

4/22

1878: Florida's first protracted period of red-tide episodes begins and continues for 10 years.

The Science and the Evidence

- What are we really worrying about?
 - Phosphorus?
 - Nitrogen?
- N is not just one thing.

The Science and the Evidence

- Fertilizer bans only address the last one.
- How much is there?
- What about those studies?
- Total Nitrogen = Total Highway Traffic.

The Science and the Evidence

- Only one?
- How can that be?

The Challenge

- Establish independent testing that identifies specific N sources!
- The Green Industry does not fear the results.
- Punishing the innocent is NEVER good public policy.

Conclusions

- The City of Venice is making the effort to lead.
- Let's all agree on:
 - Supporting increased funding for statewide research on red tide, including on mitigating its effects.
 - Encouraging increased educational efforts on the causes and management of urban pollution.
- Real leadership means a collaborative, education-forward approach, and getting it right, based on the evidence.

THANK YOU

