Keeping Sarasota Bay Healthy Repairing Mosquito Blue Heron Control Ditches Roseatte **Spoonbill**

the Bay.

YESTERDAY IN CORTEZ

County Uses Dragline To Fight Mosquitoes



Manatee County Anti-Mosquito Control District's specially designed dragline is shown in action digging drains in the Bradenton Beach area as part of the long-range program to keep down mosquitos. Standing beside the machine is Bob Kerap, director of mosquito control work. Fred Eason is at the controls of the dragline, while Ed Eason drives the half track. The Bradenton Herald, October 18, 1951.

The stream nearby is an example of Florida's fight against mosquitoes. During the 1950s and 1960s, Florida tried to interrupt the mosquito lifecycle with dragline ditches carved into the tidal wetlands. This enabled small fish to reach and eat the mosquito larvae. This was a good concept, but the planning and implementation was flawed.

The ditches disrupted the natural flow of water in the wetlands, creating areas that were either too wet (in the ditches) or too dry (where they piled the dirt). This damaged the habitat of fish, crustaceans, birds and other wildlife. The ditches made it harder for wetlands to do their important job of filtering out pollution before water reached

TODAY IN CORTEZ

We are fixing damaged wetlands by restoring tidal creeks and re-establishing tidal flushing. These shallow areas are crucial nurseries for snook, snapper, sheepshead, and tarpon, and also provide food for wading birds, oysters, and shrimp. When wetlands are properly leveled, they're better at filtering out pollution before it reaches Sarasota Bay. As water flows across the flat wetlands, plants and sediments absorb nutrients and other substances, protecting both marine life and the people who enjoy the Bay. The new tidal creeks in the Cortez F.I.S.H. Preserve are a great place for kayaking to observe the natural environment.

Keeping Sarasota Bay Healthy signs are a Cortez Village Historical Society project, funded with a grant from the Sarasota Bay Estuary **Program with additional support from the** Florida Maritime Museum. 2024

FOR A BETTER TOMORROW... What you can do to keep Sarasota Bay healthy



Practice responsible landscape management. Replace pavement with porosity: stones and shells permit rainwater reabsorption. Reduce runoff of fertilizers, chemicals, and waste. These can overtax the coastal wetlands' vital role in filtering water entering our Bay.



Be a safe boater. No discharges (fuel, chemicals, waste), avoid anchoring and running through shallow seagrass beds.



Protect mangroves and seagrass by reducing runoff and supporting natural habitats like the FISH Preserve.



Improve wastewater treatment. Make sure public officials understand the importance of upgrading wastewater treatment facilities to accommodate population growth.



Visit the FISH Preserve and other Florida wildlife areas on foot or by paddling to see nature in action and to learn more about these critical environments.

Educate others. Follow the QR code to read up on how to keep Sarasota Bay healthy, and share what you have learned about the important work of coastal wetlands preservation.





Español al otro lado