

JANUARY 19, 2023 | NEWS

Sarasota Bay Watch's New President Says Join "Scallopalooza" – To Help Save Local Waters

SARASOTA, FL – As Sarasota faces water quality threats ranging from red tide to fish kills, a local attorney is stepping up to make a difference. Brandon Taaffe, a millennial and lawyer at the Shumaker law firm, will serve as the new President of the Sarasota Bay Watch Board.

Sarasota Bay Watch (SBW) is an action-based, grassroots, nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring coastal ecosystems through citizen participation. This includes restoring native shellfish and vegetation, removing marine debris from waters and habitats, and fostering youth education and leadership development. Since 2017, Brandon has served on the SBW Board and has also led a series of Shumaker and SBW bayfront cleanups.

"Brandon grew up in Siesta Key, and as an avid rower, he's passionate about protecting our waters. Furthermore, he has the professional ties to help expand Sarasota Bay Watch. And as a millennial, he will most certainly attract a new generation of members," said Sarasota Bay Watch Executive Director Ronda Ryan.

"I am honored to serve in this leadership role and am excited to get my hands dirty cleaning up Sarasota Bay—building on the great momentum Sarasota Bay Watch has going into the new year," said Brandon.

Brandon will kick off his presidency at "Scallopalooza, Welcome to the Clam Jam!" at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota on February 11 at 6 p.m. This event is critical because it provides funds to support the SBW mission throughout the year. Shumaker is a table holder and the 2023 photo booth sponsor, but tickets and sponsorships are still available on the [Sarasota Bay Watch website](#).

"The time to act is now. It's going to take a community to do the work needed, and Scallopalooza is a fun way to be part of the solution," Brandon added.

The funding that Scallopalooza provides makes an impact:

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Brandon M. Taaffe

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- Sarasota Bay Watch has placed nearly two million clams in local waters to reduce excess nutrients, mitigate red tide, and clear the water, allowing more sunlight to penetrate the water and promote seagrass growth—a food source for manatees.
- In 2022, Sarasota Bay Watch was honored to receive the state's first underwater aquaculture lease for restoration purposes. The lease will allow for the establishment of a population of native clams to filter water in the bay while allowing for future distribution to other potential sites.
- In 2023, Sarasota Bay Watch is purchasing an additional one million clams to filter water while inviting scientific research for aquaculture and water quality studies.