

## Little Sarasota Bay Condition Report for 2014



# PASS



3 out of 3  
indicators were  
rated as **PASS**.

All three  
indicators must pass for the bay to be rated as **PASS**.

### Summary:

The overall health of Little Sarasota Bay is good, and all three water quality metrics improved in 2014. Chlorophyll *a* is the most variable and shows seasonal increases during times of high rainfall. Dissolved oxygen concentration again declined very slightly, but is still adequate for healthy fish and wildlife populations. Light attenuation decreased slightly, a positive trend that bodes well for seagrass growth.

*Water Quality:* As in 2013, all three water quality indicators (chlorophyll *a*, nitrogen, and phosphorus) were rated as pass (below the threshold). Chlorophyll *a* concentration was dramatically improved, at 0.0069 mg/l well below the target value of 0.0082 mg/l, and as a result its rating improved from "Good" to "Excellent". The mean nitrogen concentration increased very slightly to 0.0563 mg/l, but the steep upward trend seen in 2013 has flattened out and the bay's nitrogen rating remains at "Good". Phosphorus concentration decreased, and continues to be very low (0.088 mg/l) compared to the target of 0.180 mg/l, earning the bay an "Excellent" rating for



**Bays included in this report:**  
**Blind Pass, Dryman Bay,**  
**Little Sarasota Bay**

phosphorus. The mean for chlorophyll *a* was calculated as an arithmetic mean and the means for nitrogen and phosphorus were calculated as geometric means (per the Numeric Nutrient Criteria outlined in the Florida Administrative Code, section 62-302.532).

*Biotic Indicator:* Measurement of the biotic indicator, seagrass, was performed in 2014 by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. In recent years, total seagrass acreage in Little Sarasota Bay has held steady and, at 999 acres, is well above the target level of 702 acres.

## Water Chemistry Ratings

Total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and chlorophyll *a* levels are monitored carefully by water resource managers and used by regulatory authorities to determine whether a bay meets the water quality standards mandated by the Clean Water Act. The trend graphs for these indicators are shown below, along with their target and threshold values. A target value is a desirable goal to be attained, while a threshold is an undesirable level which is to be avoided. An individual indicator receives an "Excellent" rating if its mean value is below the target, a "Good" rating if its mean value is above the target but does not exceed the threshold, and a "Caution" rating if the mean value exceeds the threshold.

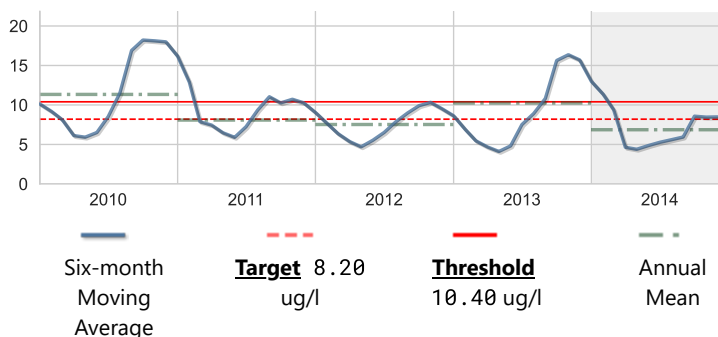
The charts below illustrate the general trend of water quality parameters. They show a six-month running average, which moderates high and low values in the data.



### Chlorophyll a

**Score:** Excellent

Units: ug/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	26.69	57.75
<b>Mean</b>	6.86	7.63
<b>Low</b>	2.28	0.06
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1292

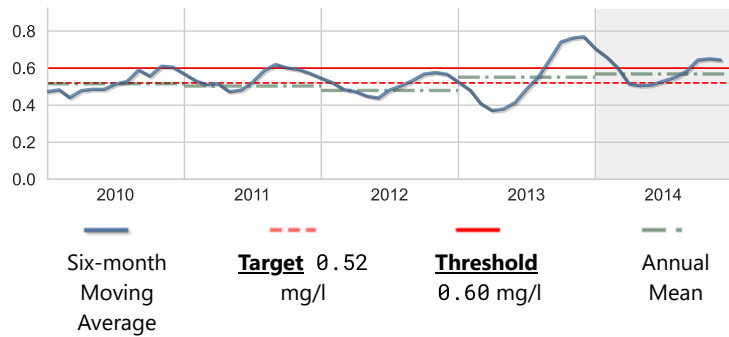


N

**Nitrogen, Total**

Score: Good

Units: mg/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	0.935	1.175
<b>Mean</b>	0.568	
<b>Low</b>	0.365	0.055
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1284

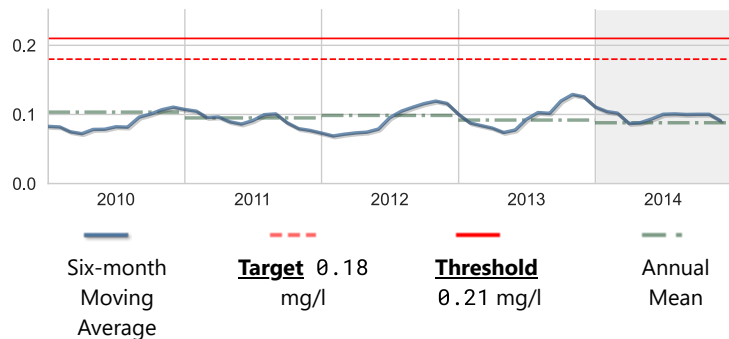


P

**Phosphorus, Total**

Score: Excellent

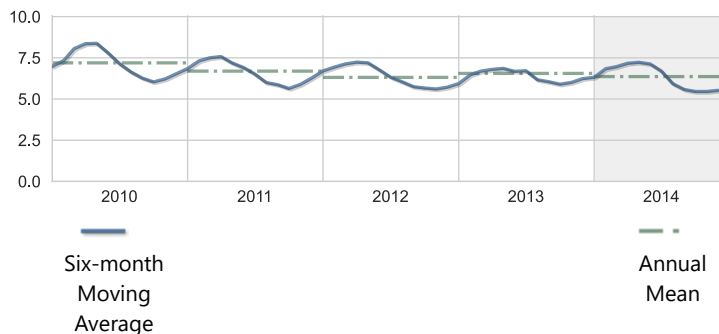
Units: mg/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	0.150	0.699
<b>Mean</b>	0.088	0.137
<b>Low</b>	0.050	0.050
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1323

**Other Measures of Bay Health**

In addition to nutrient levels and chlorophyll concentration, dissolved oxygen levels, and water clarity are also objective indicators of bay health. These have complex interactive cycles which are affected by rainfall, temperature, and tidal action, as well as other factors. High nutrient levels (nitrogen and phosphorus) can stimulate excessive growth of marine algae (indicated by chlorophyll *a* level), resulting in reduced water clarity (and increased light attenuation) and depleted oxygen levels. Both plants and animals in a bay need oxygen to survive, and the seagrasses which provide food and cover for bay creatures need light for photosynthesis.

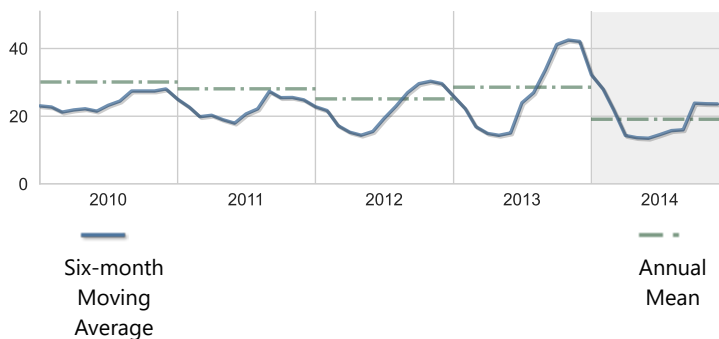
## Dissolved Oxygen

Units: mg/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	8.80	11.60
<b>Mean</b>	6.36	6.55
<b>Low</b>	2.80	2.80
<b>No. of Samples</b>	72	1433



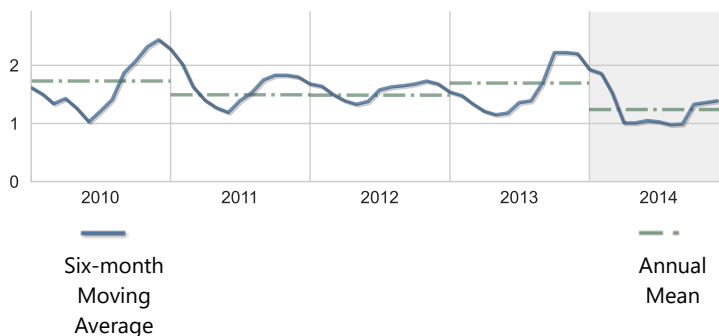
## Apparent Color

Units: PCU	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	100.00	140.00
<b>Mean</b>	19.11	24.94
<b>Low</b>	5.00	4.00
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1323



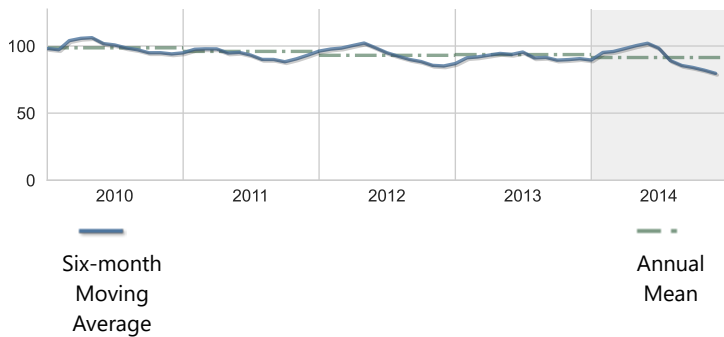
## BOD, Biochemical oxygen demand

Units: mg/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	3.40	6.50
<b>Mean</b>	1.24	1.70
<b>Low</b>	0.50	0.50
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1177



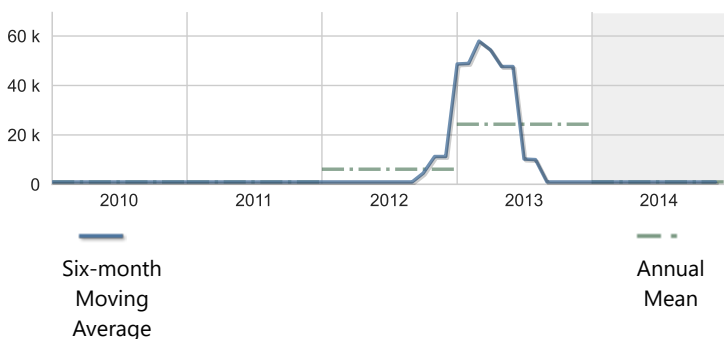
## Dissolved oxygen saturation

Units: percent (%)	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	130.00	167.00
<b>Mean</b>	91.43	94.67
<b>Low</b>	45.00	45.00
<b>No. of Samples</b>	72	1434



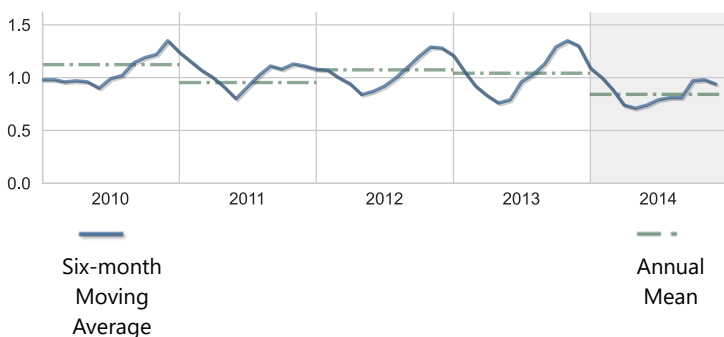
## Karenia brevis ("red tide")

Units: #/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	1000.00	2603000.00
<b>Mean</b>	1000.00	17232.38
<b>Low</b>	1000.00	1000.00
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	667



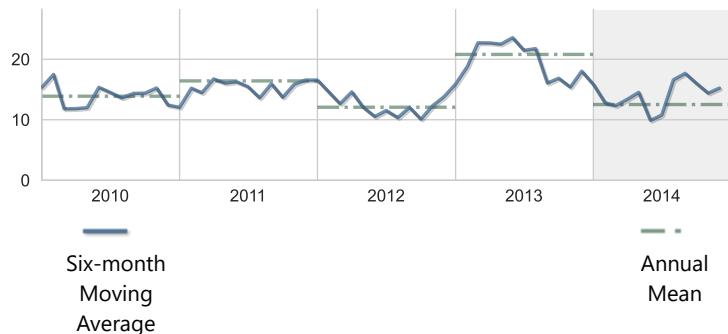
## Light Attenuation

Units: K(1/m)	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	2.48	2.98
<b>Mean</b>	0.84	1.00
<b>Low</b>	0.29	0.08
<b>No. of Samples</b>	72	1197



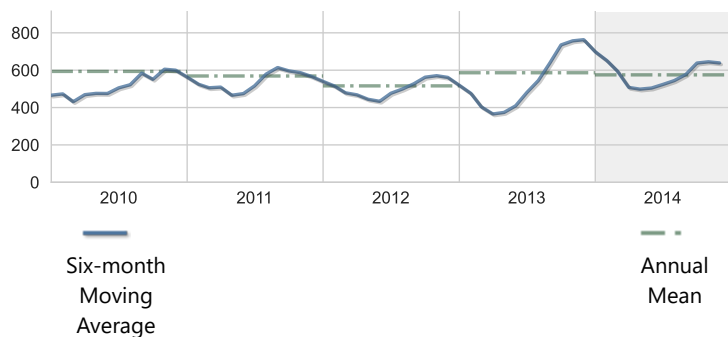
## Nitrogen, Ammonia + Ammonium as N

Units: ug/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	71.00	203.00
<b>Mean</b>	12.51	16.61
<b>Low</b>	5.00	5.00
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1295



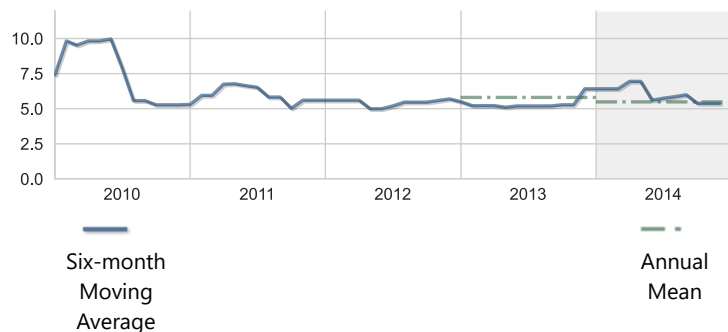
## Nitrogen, Kjeldahl

Units: ug/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	930.00	1240.00
<b>Mean</b>	575.00	500.28
<b>Low</b>	360.00	0.05
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1323



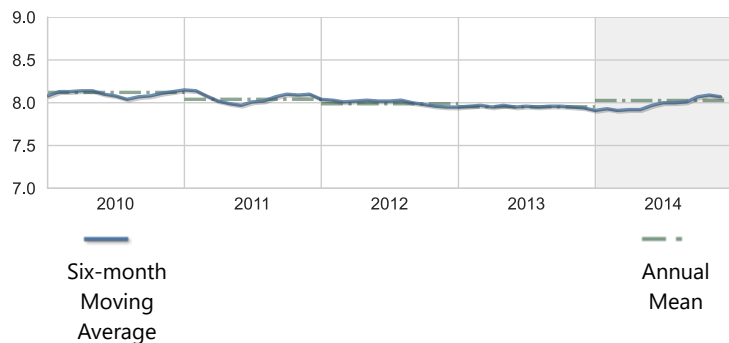
## Nitrogen, Nitrite + Nitrate as N

Units: ug/l	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	27.00	536.00
<b>Mean</b>	5.49	9.30
<b>Low</b>	5.00	5.00
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1880



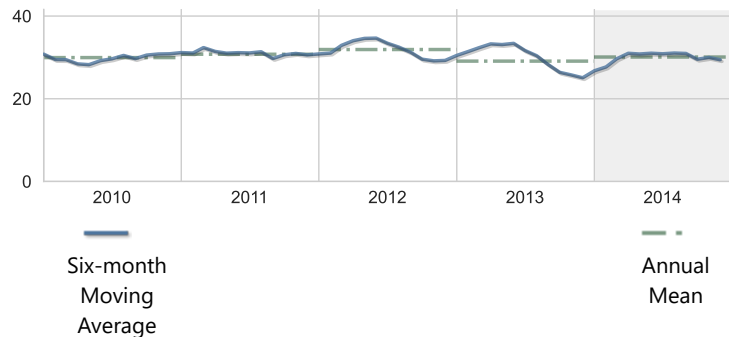
## pH

Units: None	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	8.40	8.50
<b>Mean</b>	8.03	7.96
<b>Low</b>	7.80	6.20
<b>No. of Samples</b>	72	1434



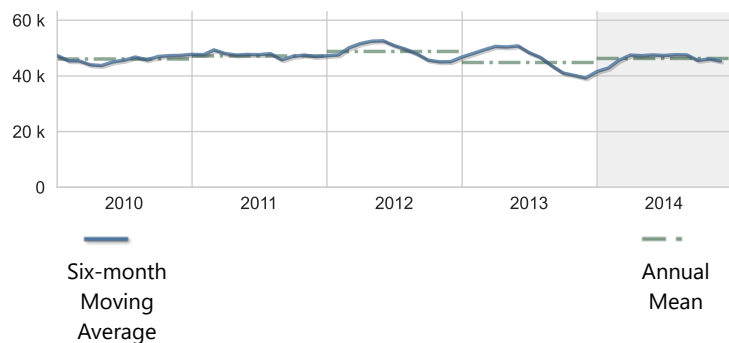
## Salinity

Units: PSS	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	34.40	39.50
<b>Mean</b>	30.09	30.76
<b>Low</b>	19.30	7.30
<b>No. of Samples</b>	72	1433



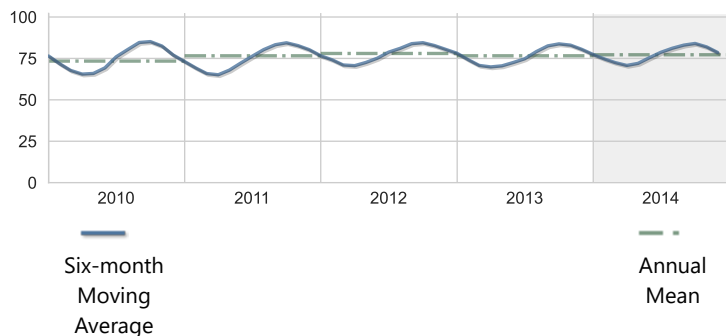
## Specific conductance

Units: umho	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	52110.00	59030.00
<b>Mean</b>	46262.22	47158.54
<b>Low</b>	31050.00	12670.00
<b>No. of Samples</b>	72	1434



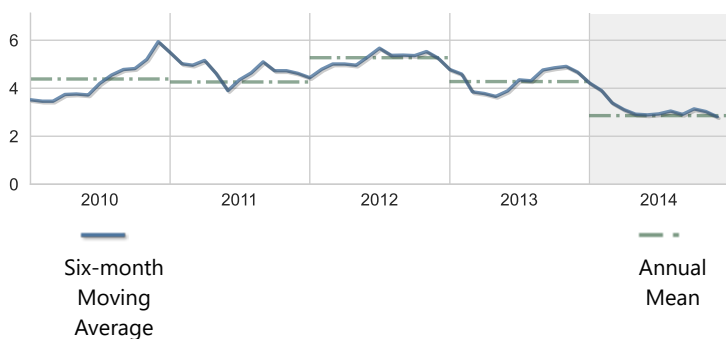
## Temperature, water

Units: deg F	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	89.42	92.12
<b>Mean</b>	77.20	76.96
<b>Low</b>	66.92	47.48
<b>No. of Samples</b>	72	1433



## Turbidity

Units: NTU	Year 2014	Historical period of record
<b>High</b>	6.10	16.00
<b>Mean</b>	2.86	3.92
<b>Low</b>	0.95	0.60
<b>No. of Samples</b>	74	1292



## Annual Averages

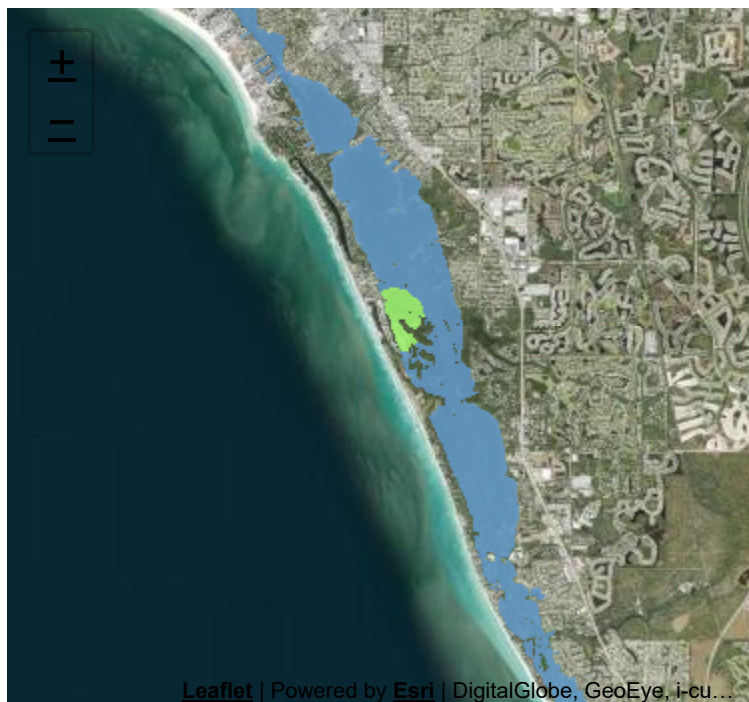
Indicator	Units	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Trend
Dissolved Oxygen	mg/l	7.19	6.69	6.31	6.55	6.36	
Dissolved oxygen saturation	percent (%)	98.64	95.99	93.07	93.63	91.43	
Light Attenuation	K(1/m)	1.12	0.95	1.07	1.04	0.84	
Salinity	PSS	29.96	30.77	31.91	29.10	30.09	
Turbidity	NTU	4.39	4.26	5.27	4.28	2.86	



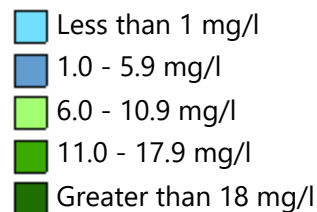
## Bay Contour Maps (2014)

Contour mapping is one of the best ways to visualize spatial differences in coastal water quality. The interactive map shown below presents monthly data for one selected water quality indicator atop an aerial view of the bay. Choose a different water quality parameter from the list at the top to change the map.

Showing 2014 Monthly Contour Maps for: Chlorophyll a  
January



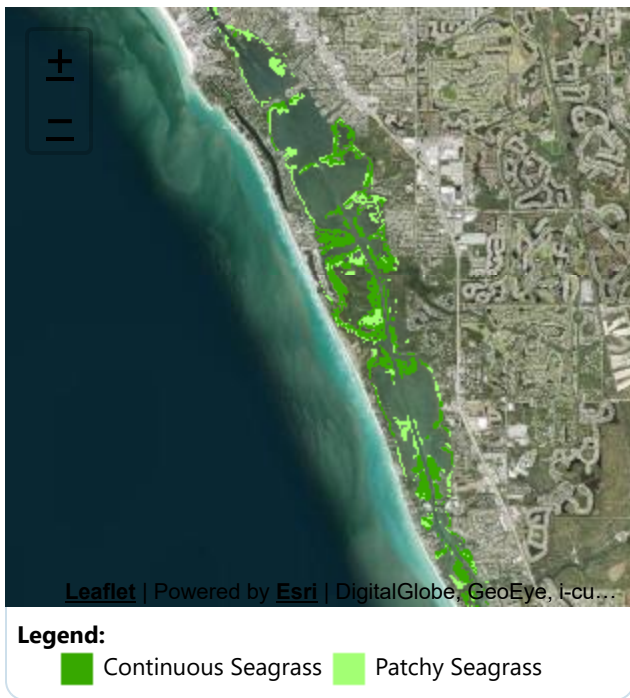
### Contour Legend:



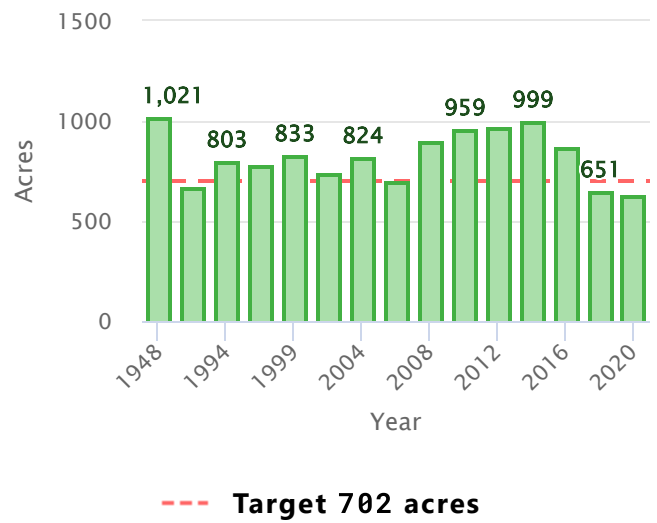
## Seagrasses

Among the most important habitats in Florida's estuarine environments, seagrass beds are indispensable for the role they play in cycling nutrients, supplying food for wildlife, stabilizing sediments, and providing habitat for juvenile and adult finfish and shellfish. Use the interactive map below to observe the size, density and location of seagrass beds from year to year. The graph shows how the total amount of seagrass in the bay has changed over time. Seagrass calculations are aggregates of patchy and continuous seagrass measurements only. Recordings of attached algae are not included in these summaries.

Showing Seagrass Coverage for 2020:



### Seagrass Acreage Variation within Little Sarasota Bay



## Impervious Features

Rain that falls on land that is in a natural state is absorbed and filtered by soils and vegetation as it makes its way into underground aquifers. However, in developed areas, "impervious surfaces" impede this process and contribute to polluted urban runoff entering surface waters. These surfaces include human infrastructure like roads, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots that are covered by impenetrable materials such as asphalt, concrete, brick and stone, as well as buildings and other permanent structures. Soils that have been disturbed and compacted by urban development are often impervious as well.

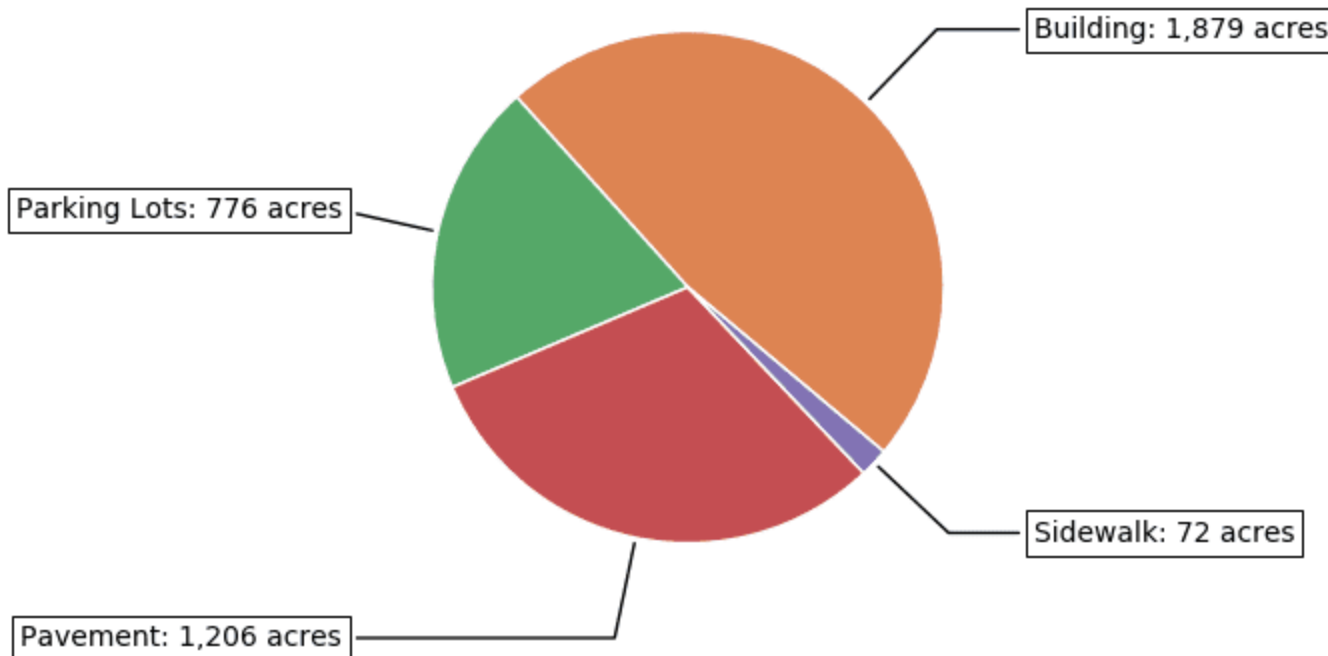


**14%** of the land area within the **Little Sarasota Bay Watershed** is covered by

impervious surfaces

## 2014 Impervious Surface Coverage by Type

in acres, within the Little Sarasota Bay Watershed








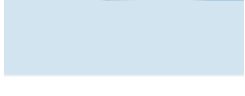

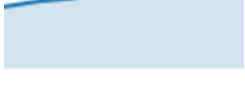
### Land Use / Land Cover

Land use within a bay's watershed has a major effect on its water quality. In general, less development means better water quality. Land Cover/Land Use classifications categorize land in terms of its observed physical surface characteristics (upland or wetland, e.g.), and also reflect the types of activity that are taking place on it (agriculture, urban/built-up, utilities, etc.). Florida uses as its standard a set of statewide classifications which were developed by the Florida Department of Transportation.

Little Sarasota Bay is located within the Little Sarasota Bay Watershed. The chart below shows the land use / land cover characteristics for Little Sarasota Bay Watershed within the boundary of this Water Atlas. **[View details about the Little Sarasota Bay Watershed](#)**  
 >>

**Acreeage and Percentage within each Land Use / Land Cover Category for Little Sarasota Bay Watershed**

2014 Bay Conditions Report for Little Sarasota Bay

Land Use Classification	1990	2005	2011	2014	2017	2020	Trend
<b>Urban &amp; Built-up</b>	8,943 31.9%	11,834 42.2%	12,102 43.1%	12,162 43.3%	12,777 45.5%	13,343 47.5%	
<b>Agriculture</b>	3,550 12.6%	3,228 11.5%	3,258 11.6%	4,223 15%	3,124 11.1%	2,837 10.1%	
<b>Rangeland</b>	825 2.9%	1,822 6.5%	1,474 5.3%	579 2.1%	1,233 4.4%	877 3.1%	
<b>Upland Forests</b>	7,098 25.3%	3,066 10.9%	2,981 10.6%	2,725 9.7%	2,687 9.6%	2,603 9.3%	
<b>Water</b>	3,429 12.2%	4,123 14.7%	4,147 14.8%	4,175 14.9%	4,227 15.1%	4,337 15.5%	
<b>Wetlands</b>	3,490 12.4%	3,133 11.2%	3,191 11.4%	3,227 11.5%	3,121 11.1%	3,120 11.1%	
<b>Barren Land</b>	62 0.2%	18 0.1%	19 0.1%	20 0.1%	6 0%	6 0%	
<b>Transportation and Utilities</b>	675 2.4%	841 3%	892 3.2%	952 3.4%	898 3.2%	948 3.4%	

## 2020 Land Use / Land Cover for Little Sarasota Bay Watershed

as a percentage of land area for this watershed

