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Press release : 2016 : 11 : 15 : Students Host Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Unveil 'Bayboro Food Forest'

University of South Florida St. Petersburg, Office of University Advancement.
Students Host Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Unveil ‘Bayboro Food Forest’

Students, faculty and staff celebrated the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new permaculture-designed “Bayboro Food Forest” on Nov. 14. The Food Forest, located behind Residence Hall One (RHO), is a collaborative effort of the Student Government Department of Sustainable Initiatives, the Student Environmental Awareness Society, the Garden Club, and the USFSP Office of Sustainability.

The food forest, which they broke ground on in February, includes trees, a small pond, and a gazebo for students to enjoy the outdoors. The pond is powered by a 1-kilowatt solar system consisting of six 170 watt panels. There are a few outlets that connect to the system for students who want to pull up a chair to study or relax in the garden to plug into to charge phones or play music. A proposed greenhouse, co-sponsored in collaboration with the nearby Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI), may be added to the site in the future.

“It’s amazing, and I feel so privileged to be a part of this,” said Alana Todd, 21, a senior double major in Anthropology and Environmental Science who has helped to facilitate the creation of the garden as lead of the Department of Sustainable Initiatives in Student Government. “There has been so much hard work, and a lot of students have put so much time into this. To know that this is going to last for years to come, and future students are going to be able to come here and pick the fruits and grow their own vegetables, that’s just such a rewarding experience.”

The Bayboro Food Forest is open to all students, staff, and faculty who wish to work on it and participate in the project.

“What’s special about this garden is that it’s not just students growing a few plants,” said Brian Pullen, sustainability planner in the Office of Sustainability at USFSP. “It has been permaculturally designed towards being a sustainable and self-sufficient garden, meaning that the diverse fruit trees planted such as the papaya, jack fruit, guava, etc. will replenish themselves over the course of the years and continue to offer healthy food for future students.”

“It’s amazing to see the change from the ‘before’ pictures to seeing how it looks now, and to know that the students were involved in every phase, every aspect of making this happen,” said Dr. Pati Helton, regional vice chancellor of Student Affairs. “It gives me a lot of hope for the future. The environmental sustainability initiatives that the students are involved with here are pretty amazing.”

View more photos from the event in the USFSP Facebook photo gallery.

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From left: Laraine Ruiz, acting president of Student Government; Brian Pullen, sustainability planner for the USFSP Office of Sustainability; Sebastian DeGeronimo, deputy of the Student Government Department of Sustainable Initiatives; Anamaria Quintero, garden leader; Karla Alvarado, treasurer of the Garden Club, and James Scott, acting president of the Student Government Senate.
Dr. Patti Helton speaks to those in attendance at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Bayboro Food Forest.
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