

Red Tide Talk



Recently, red tide has hurt our environment and local economy, creating a negative public perception of the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach area as a tourist destination. Thankfully, recent reports indicate that red tide is subsiding and we're excited to remind the world that Our Best Side is Outside. Keep in mind, visitor and resident safety is our utmost concern and we won't launch any marketing indicating that "it's safe" until authorities (FWC, NOAA, Health Department) indicate so.

However, while red tide has marred what should have been a beautiful summer for our entire destination, the spread of misinformation and inaccurate reports continue to hurt all of us, including areas not directly affected by red tide. Therefore, the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) is providing local businesses with the tools necessary to stop the spread of incorrect red tide information. Below are helpful resources concerning red tide, how to respond to visitor and media inquiries, as well as information on the VCB's post-red tide recovery action plan.



Red Tide Information Resources:

- **OurSafeTravel.com** – Access up-to-date, accurate information on beach and water conditions in Charlotte County. This is an excellent resource to direct visitors and locals, with access to the the latest red tide status report by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, same-day beach updates from Mote Marine/SoCool, recent sampling reports from the Florida Department of Health and more.
- **PureFlorida.com/Red-Tide** – Information on support and programs for area tourism businesses affected by red tide. This includes information on the VISIT FLORIDA Red Tide Recovery Marketing Program, the Florida Business Damage Assessment Survey, and a downloadable Red Tide Facts and Information handout with invaluable, topline information perfect to hand out to visitors and staff. These handouts are also available at the Visitor Information Center.
- While we hope you'll stay as informed as possible on developments in red tide, we understand you won't be able to answer all questions. The VCB encourages you to direct any and all media inquiries to our office, care of Jennifer Huber at 941.743.1900 or Jennifer.Huber@charlottecountyfl.gov

Red Tide Recovery Action Plan

Once the FWC and VISIT FLORIDA have given the all clear, the VCB plans on implementing our post-red tide recovery plan to attract visitors back to our beaches and waterfront businesses. This is a unified effort by the community to spread the word that we are “**Beach Ready**,” assuring potential visitors that area beaches, offshore coastal islands, and boating and fishing environments are once again pristine and enjoyable.

Funded in part by a VISIT FLORIDA grant, the VCB will launch a multi-channel campaign including digital, social and public relations to promote our “Beach Ready” message. Additionally, the VCB will have an in-market “selfie trail” promotion focusing on sharing real-time photos on social media.



How can you participate?

- Become a local ambassador! Once the all clear is given, share real-time photos of the waterways on your social channels, utilize Facebook Live, and use our hashtag (TBD – Visit FL using #FloridaNow)
- Get creative! Come up with deals, discounts or themed packages for your business or work with partner businesses to create these together. Then, share with the VCB and we will promote them on **PureFlorida.com/Special-Offers**.
- Help us promote the selfie trail by encouraging visitors and locals to participate in this fun promotion.
- We will be hosting travel journalists, bloggers and social influencers in the months following the all clear and will be calling on local partners to assist with accommodations, tours, meals, etc. By helping us show these influential visitors that Our Best Side is Outside, you'll be putting your business in front of their audience of millions of attentive followers.