**Nature and culture set the stage at the 2023 EcoSummit and Green Living Expo**

For more than two decades, the Science and Environment Council (SEC) – a not-for-profit consortium of the 40 leading science-based environmental nonprofit and government organization in Sarasota and Manatee counties – has convened discussions, informed policy, and enhanced public awareness about science-based conservation and sustainable practices to protect and restore our natural environment. In early December, the SEC will run the largest environmental event series ever produced on the Suncoast designed to delight and inspire the community to connect on environmental issues and engage in more sustainable practices in their homes and businesses.

 The **Green Living Expo** will highlight green solutions for energy conservation, waste reduction, water protection, local food, and nature conservation. It’s a two-day trade-show loaded with ideas and demonstrations about how to reduce our impacts on the environment. It runs December 2-3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium. Free with advance registration; $5 per group at the door.

The **EcoSummit** will feature lively, solutions-oriented lectures, panel discussions, storytelling, and music. Dozens of national, regional, and local experts will share fascinating insights and future-forward innovations for recharging our environment and reducing our impacts – crucial to sustaining our coastal community’s environment-based quality of life.

Award-winning Americana songwriter **Karen Jonas** and her band will weave dazzling threads of their dreamy Alt-Country music through the tapestry of stories over two days. Networking coffee breaks, lunches, lunchtime wellness and guided walks, and professional continuing education credits all included.

 The EcoSummit kicks off **December 4, 5-8 p.m. at The Bay Park Nest** with a free outdoor screening of the film **“2040”** with the film’s creator, award-winning Australian documentary filmmaker and EcoSummit keynote speaker **Damon Gameau.** The event continues December 5-6, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall (777 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota).

 The evening of December 5, 7-9 p.m. features **Florida Stories with Carl Hiaasen**, an unforgettable evening with Florida’s most savagely funny, riotous, and cathartic storyteller, with emcee (and award-winning journalist) Craig Pittman, local storytellers, and musical guest Karen Jonas. A Florida native, Hiaasen has been writing about the Sunshine State since his father gave him a typewriter at age 6. Thirteen books and nine national bestseller books later, his fiction is not far from the bizarre truth he found in his Florida reporting for the *Miami Herald* from 1985 until 2021.

 EcoSummit ticket options are $155/Standard, $185/Premium (includes the Hiaasen event), and $285/VIP to add on the Hiaasen pre-show reception and premium seating. Standalone tickets to see Hiaasen are $85/general admission, $185/VIP Experience, which includes pre-show reception and premium seating.

“Over the past century in Florida, population growth and development patterns have increased pollution and decreased the environment’s capacity to process it,” said Dr. Jennifer Shafer, SEC’s co-executive director. “Our natural environment is the foundation of our economy and quality of life; by working together to educate and activate the community, we hope to bolster efforts to conserve and restore our treasured natural resources—and protect quality of life for generations to come.”

Other associated events include the family-friendly **Ever-GREEN Days at The Bay Sarasota, with a week-long schedule of interactive and eco-friendly (and free!) experiences – such as guided tours, hands-on eco-education, family friendly activities and much more – from November 30-December 6.**

Presenting Sponsor for the event series is Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation; EcoSummit Lead Sponsor is Elizabeth Moore; Florida Power & Light is lead sponsor of the Expo; Gulf Coast Community Foundation is sponsoring the Florida Stories session with Carl Hiaasen; and the Venue Host is the City of Sarasota. Numerous sponsorships are available; to learn more and register, visit eco-summit.org.

**PHOTO IDs:**

Renowned Florida author Carl Hiaasen will be featured during ‘Florida Stories with Carl Hiaasen’ the evening of December 5

A screening of Australian filmmaker Damon Gameau’s film ‘2040’ will kick off the EcoSummit on December 4