



For immediate release
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Volunteers Needed for Oyster Reef Installation at Fantasy Island

Riverview, FL - Tampa Bay Watch is recruiting volunteers to install oyster domes and a series of oyster shell bars off the shoreline of Fantasy Island on March 1 through 4. Approximately eighty volunteers are needed to accomplish the project on each day. The meeting location is Williams Park Boat Ramp, 8749 U.S. 41, Riverview, FL 33578. Interested volunteers should register online at tampabaywatch.org or contact Rachel Arndt at (727) 867-8166 x233.

Fantasy Island has severely eroded since it was created in the 1970s due to changes in currents and sand distribution, mainly since it is close to the heavily used shipping channel. Creation of a series of oyster dome fields and shell bars is an effort to restore lost habitat systems to the bay, prevent further erosion of Fantasy Island, and improve water quality through natural biological filtration. This project is in partnership with the Florida Aquarium, Port Tampa Bay, the Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund, CCA's Building Conservation Trust, the Frank E. Duckwall Foundation and CCA Florida, and the Mosaic Company Foundation.

The Fantasy Island project has two components, the first of which involves the shoveling fossilized shell into mesh bags, and then transporting and installing the shell bags to create a series of oyster reefs. The second component of this project is the installation of a series of oyster domes along the shoreline to further buffer it from the severe erosion that is occurring. The goal of Tampa Bay Watch's Community Oyster Reef Enhancement (CORE) program is to increase the oyster population in Tampa Bay and at the same time, provide habitats for small organisms, prevent erosion, improve water quality and promote fish and wildlife habitats. In addition, this project benefits the Tampa Bay community by promoting environmental awareness and offering hands-on experience in habitat restoration.

For more information about the project, visit our website at tampabaywatch.org.

***Tampa Bay Watch** is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) stewardship program dedicated exclusively to the charitable and scientific purpose of protecting and restoring the marine and wetland environments of the Tampa Bay estuary encompassing over 400 square miles of open water and 2,300 square miles of highly-developed watershed. Tampa Bay Watch involves more than 10,000 youth and adult volunteers each year in hands on habitat restoration projects. For more information, visit www.tampabaywatch.org, or call 727-867-8166.*

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