



For immediate release
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Catalina Day of Service to benefit Tampa Bay Watch for Earth Day

Tampa, FL - Tampa Bay Watch will create new oyster shell reef habitat along the shoreline of McKay Bay on the morning of Friday, April 21. A group of forty team members from Catalina will assist with the project for their Day of Service in celebration of Earth Day.

“Tampa Bay Watch has long been impressed with Catalina’s commitment to giving back to the community,” said Peter Clark, President of Tampa Bay Watch. “Earth Day is the perfect occasion to volunteer at a local level to improve our environment.”

Catalina’s CFO, Shelly Schaffer, is the Executive member sponsoring this event, which includes a \$5,000 donation from Catalina.

McKay Bay is an ecologically important estuary located in the heart of a heavily industrialized area in the City of Tampa that has suffered from many years of impacts from dredge and fill construction, urban and industrial runoff and dredged material disposal. McKay Bay provides habitat to over 200 bird species and historically supported healthy fisheries. The bay has suffered from many years of developmental impacts, including dredge and fill construction, urbanized and industrial stormwater runoff, industrial contamination and dredged material disposal.

Restored oyster bars – essentially a man-made reef of natural fossilized oyster shells – will provide a solid surface for young pioneering oysters to attach to and grow their own shells. Living oysters that settle on the fossilized shells provide multiple benefits to Tampa Bay, including cleansing up to ten gallons of water per hour by each oyster through their filter feeding, providing a valuable food source for a myriad of water life, stabilizing the bottom sediments and reducing wave energy action against the island’s shorelines.

This project is generously funding by Mosaic, TBERF, EPC Pollution Recovery Fund, Bloomin' Brands, and RBC Blue Water Leadership Grant.

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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