



For Immediate Release
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City Council Approves Tampa Bay Watch to operate Education Center at the St. Pete Pier™

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – Today, St. Petersburg City Council approved a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a lease agreement with Tampa Bay Watch for the development and operation of an education station and wet classroom at the new St. Pete Pier™ for a five-year term.

In September 2017, Tampa Bay Watch, Inc. submitted a proposal to the City to lease, operate, and manage the Education Center, which would include programs focused on marine and environmental education presented to families and tourists during summer camps, afternoon and evening sessions, and utilized as an event venue for corporate meetings and special events.

“Tampa Bay Watch is thrilled to be able to expand our youth education and community outreach programs to the new St. Petersburg Pier, says Peter Clark, President and Founder. The new facilities will advance our mission to protect and restore the Tampa Bay estuary by involving our kids and the community in stewardship and educational activities.”

Tampa Bay Watch’s vision for the Pier District Education Station will be to offer a wide array of citizen science programs to expand public involvement in scientific discovery. School field trips will occur on weekday mornings, inviting students of all ages to come explore and discover Florida’s natural history, flora and fauna, while learning valuable practices to preserve our environment. Community based, informative science walks and talks, and water-based ecotourism activity options for the general public will be available in the afternoon, evenings, and weekends. Tampa Bay Watch also anticipates offering family friendly eco-tours aboard a new US Coast Guard certified vessel that will focus on Tampa Bay history and species population studies with activities such as fisheries trawls, bird species identification and behavior, dolphin dorsal identification research, and/or relaxing leisure cruises. The public open air exhibit center will also allow the opportunity to showcase the resources and restoration activities within the Tampa Bay with a goal community outreach for special events, corporate events, weddings, or other public/private opportunities.

Tampa Bay Watch currently manages Estuary EDventures, an environmental education program, which empowers students to act as stewards of the Tampa Bay estuary by providing field experiences that combine classroom resources with hands-on environmental field experiences at the Tampa Bay Watch Marine Education Center in Tierra Verde. The field experiences give the students and teachers the opportunity to learn about the critical issues that face the Tampa Bay estuary. Since 2007, over 33,500 students and teachers from over 150 schools have participated in our field trips.

Additional information about the St. Pete Pier™ is available on the Pier website at:
<http://www.newstpetepier.com>

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.