

The Bay Watch *Leg*

A quarterly publication for Tampa Bay Watch partners

Fall 2016



FALL AT TAMPA BAY WATCH MEANS THAT IT'S OYSTER SEASON!

Tampa Bay Watch is gearing up for a very busy oyster season this fall! We will be wrapping up an oyster shell project at McKay Bay and we're beginning projects at Fantasy Island and 2D Island. Additionally, we'll be building oyster domes at our facility throughout the fall. We will need a lot of support from the community, so check out our fall schedule on our website (tampabaywatch.org/volunteer) to lend us a hand!

At Fantasy Island, we will plant native grasses along the shoreline to complement the installation of oyster domes and shell bar. This comprehensive ecosystem restoration plan will slow erosion and provide invaluable habitat and food source for wildlife. The island has severely eroded since it was created in the 1970s due to strong currents and wave action, mainly since it is close to the main Port Tampa Bay ship channel.

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.

Thank you to our generous partners on these projects: Florida Aquarium, Port Tampa Bay, the Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund, CCA's Building Conservation Trust, the Frank E. Duckwall Foundation, CCA Florida, the Mosaic Company Foundation, Bloomin' Brands, EPC's Pollution Recovery Fund, Coca-Cola Foundation, CITGO, SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, and USFWS Coastal Program.

Interested volunteers should register online at tampabaywatch.org or contact Rachel Arndt at rarndt@tampabaywatch.org.



Thank you to Bloomin' Brands who kicked off our Fantasy Island project by assisting us through their Annual Community Service Day.



Did you know...

Eastern oysters typically reach about three inches long in 18-24 months and 5.9 inches long in five or six years. They can apparently live up to 25-30 years according to biologists. source: myfwc



EVENTS ON THE HORIZON:

Specific Fall weekday mornings:
Oyster dome construction at Tampa Bay Watch

October 25-28: Oyster dome installation and native planting at Fantasy Island

October 27: Pumpkins on the Porch

November 5: Evening for the Bay

November 17-18: Oyster shell project at 2D Island

December 8-9: Oyster shell project at McKay Bay



IN THIS ISSUE:

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Thank you to The Castle Group for donating the proceeds of their 1st Annual St Pete Beach Poker Run to Tampa Bay Watch!

Corporate member focus:

CASTLE REAL ESTATE GROUP

As local business professionals and water enthusiasts, **The Castle Real Estate Group** has a great appreciation for the many benefits a clean Tampa Bay has created for our local area.

As a service to the community, the company decided to start volunteering and fundraising for Tampa Bay Watch. They had their first successful fundraising drive organizing the St. Pete Beach Charity Poker Run in May. Feeling that one fundraiser was not enough, they have chosen to volunteer their time promoting the corporate sponsorship program by contacting corporations not yet aware of the great work Tampa Bay Watch has done to restore the bay habitat. These corporations in turn will donate much-needed proceeds and materials.

As an added contribution, The Castle Group will donate 5% of commissions earned from any real estate transactions that are created from our involvement with Tampa Bay Watch. Thank you to The Castle Group for their commitment to restoring the bay!



JOIN US FOR PUMPKINS ON THE PORCH!

Gussy up in your favorite Halloween garb and stop by October 27 from 5-7:30 pm. Prizes for best costumes, family fun, pumpkin carving, and a showing of *"It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown!"*



2016 GREAT BAY SCALLOP SEARCH RESULTS

Thank you to all who participated in the Great Bay Scallop Search on August 20! It was a beautiful day to be on the bay.

174 volunteers and staff—including a record 39 boats and 14 canoes and/or kayaks—snorkeled lower Tampa Bay to find a total of 54 scallops.

This year's number is down from last year's 233, but we're happy with it since it is in line with Florida Fish & Wildlife's recent survey of scallops in the bay and they were spread out pretty evenly throughout the survey area.

The number is down due to red tide last winter when scallops are spawning. Additional factors include the recent heavy rains due to El Nino and wastewater overflow into the bay.

A special thanks to our sponsors SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, RBC, and Tampa Bay Estuary Program, who supported the event.

A shoutout to Hot Mess Food Truck, who fed us a delicious lunch, and Lealman Fire Department, who kept us all going with music, popcorn, and sno-cones.



Help us protect Florida's largest open-water estuary!



TAMPA BAY GUARDIANS SUPPORT BAY RESTORATION

The Tampa Bay Guardians support Tampa Bay Watch's mission to restore and protect the bay with a three-year pledge of at least \$1,000 annually. If desired, Tampa Bay Guardian gifts can be designated for habitat restoration programs or the Estuary EDventures environmental education program. To learn more about the Tampa Bay Guardians, call Jamie Serino at 727-867-8166, x222.

Tampa Bay Watch thanks the following members of the Tampa Bay Guardians for their very generous support!

Baldwin Krystyn Sherman Partners
 Biltmore Construction
 Matt & Joanne Bissett
 Pat & Paul Brown
 Bobby & Elena Bussey
 Peter & Sharon Dagostino
 Dan & Elaine DiLoreto
 Genevieve Dimmitt
 Bill & Patricia Griffiths
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 Jim & Leslie Parent
 Mary Ann & Gary Renfrow
 Douglas & Joellen Sokolowski
 Robert & Terry Stote
 TJM Property Mangement
 United Capital Funding
 United Capital Of Tampa Bay
 Larry Weiner & Yvonne Grimm
 Mike and Rita Wilson

One more for the books...


SUCCESSFUL ROCK PONDS PLANTING

Thank you to our hard-working volunteers who helped harvest and plant 7,700 *seashore paspalum* to restore the Rock Ponds in August!

The Rock Ponds is the largest coastal ecosystem restoration project in Tampa Bay. The site was historically agriculture fields, shell mining pits, and surrounded by non-native and nuisance plant species. These native coastal upland plants will provide habitat for wildlife and shoreline stabilization.




Trace This Place



Does this place look familiar?

Be the first to name this place in an email to Rachel Arndt at rarndt@tampabaywatch.org and win a TBW visor!



One entry per person.



Lesser Scaup AYTHYA AFFINIS

IDENTIFYING FEATURE: BLUE BILL WITH SMALL BLACK TIP
 WINGSPAN: 27-31 INCHES
 HABITAT: FOUND ON LAKES AND PONDS. WINTERS IN FRESH OR BRACKISH WATER.

The Lesser Scaup is one of the most abundant and widespread of the diving ducks in North America. This duck can be seen in Tampa Bay between October and March and tend to flock off the Howard Frankland bridge. *Allaboutbirds.org*

Photo: audubon.org



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TAMPA BAY WATCH MISSION:

Tampa Bay Watch is dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Tampa Bay estuary through scientific and educational programs.

OUR VISION:

To support healthy populations of fish and wildlife resources, Tampa Bay Watch envisions restoration of the Tampa Bay estuary to its 1950s levels.

OUR VALUES:

Strong leadership, community-driven, hands-on, science-based, impactful.



Thank you to GEORGE & ISABEL ADAMS and ESI for their sponsorship of the 2016 issues of the *Bay Watch Log!*



The Bay Watch Log is a quarterly newsletter designed to inform and educate the volunteers, members, partners, and sponsors of Tampa Bay Watch about environmental events, restoration opportunities, agency activities, and other environmental stewardship information.

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