



The Bay Watch Leg

A quarterly publication for Tampa Bay Watch partners

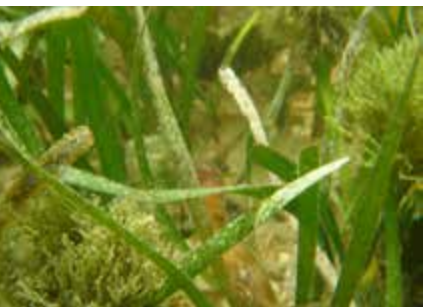
Summer 2016



Tampa Bay Watch to Develop First Seagrass Mitigation Bank in Florida

We are excited to announce that the City of St. Petersburg is contracting with Tampa Bay Watch to develop Florida's first seagrass mitigation bank. The city-owned project area encompasses 161 acres of submerged lands east of North Shore Park and bordered by the Coffee Pot Bayou entrance channel and Tampa Bay.

A public referendum on November 3, 2015 gave the City Council the authority to place permanent use and development restrictions on the site, a critical first step for creating a conservation easement over the area. The purpose of the bank is to generate city-owned mitigation credits by enhancing, restoring, maintaining and protecting seagrass within the project area. The credits generated by this environmental project can be sold to offset future development activities that impact seagrass communities in Tampa Bay and possibly other areas of West Central Florida. These funds can be used to support other environmental and green initiatives within the city as well as educational programs at the new St. Petersburg Pier District.



Did you know...

Seagrasses capture and store carbon, dampening the effects of climate change.



EVENTS ON THE HORIZON:

- August 19:** Native planting at Rock Ponds
- August 20:** Great Bay Scallop Search
- September 15-16:** Oyster shell project to restore Fantasy Island
- September 18:** 3rd Annual Winemaker Dinner at Maritana Grille
- September 23-24:** Fall Open House and *Watermarks* Photography Show
- September 24:** National Estuaries Day Cleanup

The creation of the bank involves the restoration of areas that previously had seagrass, such as the 34-acre dredge hole, the 8-acre sandy "enhancement" area (see aerial photo), and propeller scars. This project will generate environmental benefits and improvements to the Tampa Bay estuary, economic benefits to the city, and educational opportunities for youth and adult programs in our community.



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New Funding for Fantasy Island

Thank you to Coastal Conservation Association of Florida, Builders Conservation Trust and the Duckwall Foundation for providing a \$75,000 check to match Mosaic Foundation and Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund funds to construct a living shoreline restoration project on the south side of Fantasy Island.

Fantasy Island is a historical spoil island that has severely eroded due to changes in currents and sand distribution, primarily from shipping traffic and storm events. 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. The layers of restoration will recreate a living shoreline that will protect itself from wave action.

Look for volunteer opportunities at Fantasy Island this fall beginning in September!



Tarpon Rodeo Recap

Thank you to Great Bay Distributors and the generous sponsors, fishing teams, Tampa Bay Watch friends, family & volunteers who made the 11th Annual Ed Alber Tarpon Rodeo the best on record! We are proud to announce that the event grossed \$150,000 for bay restoration and education!

TradeWinds Island Resort hosted a fantastic evening for The Captain's Banquet on Thursday, June 2. Beautifully set and with world class service, 300 guests came together for a night of exciting live and silent auctions and bidding for the Ed Alber Education Fund.

Congratulations to Great Bay Distributors for taking first place in the Great Bay Guardians Division with five tarpon, and Team Behnke for taking first place in the Sport Division with five tarpon as well. 29 teams safely released at least 36 tarpon during the Friday tournament!



Save the Date!

Watermarks Photography Show & Tampa Bay Watch Fall Open House

Tampa Bay Watch's Fall Open House and Photography Show! Organizations from across the bay present interactive activities at the Open House on Friday 5-9 pm along with music, food trucks, and a donation bar. The Photo Gallery remains open to the public 10 am - 2 pm on Saturday. A portion of proceeds benefits the mission of Tampa Bay Watch.

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



Corporate Members Support Bay Restoration and Education

According to a recent study by Tampa Bay Estuary Program and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, a clean bay contributes about \$22 billion to the region's total economic activity. Additionally, one in every five jobs in the Tampa Bay watershed depends on keeping the bay healthy.



Tampa Bay Watch Corporate Members are active partners in restoring the Tampa Bay estuary through their generous support. Contact Jamie Serino at 727-867- 8166, x222 to become a corporate member!

We would like to acknowledge the support of our 2016 corporate members:

360 Vodka
 400 Beach Seafood & Tap House
 Alden Suites
 American Strategic Insurance (ASI)
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 Baldwin Krystyn Sherman Partners
 Biltmore Construction
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 TECO Energy
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New Blue Carbon Study

The results of the Tampa Bay Blue Carbon Assessment are in! This study, led by Restore America's Estuaries, along with partners including Tampa Bay Watch, collected local carbon and sequestration data from Tampa estuaries and models the impact of sea level rise for Tampa habitats for the next 100 years.

The study reinforces the importance of restoring coastal habitats in Tampa Bay and around the nation to buffer the effects of rising seas and a changing climate.

By the year 2100, seagrasses, marshes and mangroves in Tampa Bay are expected to remove 74 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere—an amount equivalent to removing 160,000 cars off the road every year until 2100.

Visit estuaries.org to read the complete study.

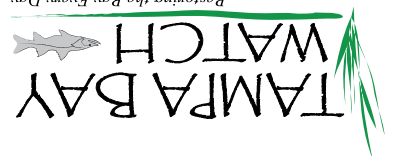


Loggerhead Sea Turtle

CARETTA CARETTA

WEIGHT: 253 LBS. (AVG.)
 AVERAGE LIFESPAN IN THE WILD: MORE THAN 50 YEARS

Sea turtles can move through the water at speeds of up to 15 miles per hour. Loggerhead turtles are the most abundant of all the marine turtle species in U.S. waters. *Source: nationalgeographic.com*



Restoring the Bay Every Day

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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.



an ESOP company

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

August 20 is the Great Bay Scallop Search!



Participate in the Great Bay Scallop Search where we snorkel to count the number of scallops in lower Tampa Bay! The goal of the event is to monitor and document the status of the bay scallop population. Over the last three years of the event, the total number of scallops found has doubled, which is a great indication for the health of the scallop population in Tampa Bay. We are optimistic for the trend to continue this year!

We are recruiting 200 volunteers to participate in the event which takes place on Saturday, August 20 at 9:00 am at the Fort De Soto Boat Ramp. Volunteers with shallow-draft boats are mainly needed, but we also accommodate 16 volunteers with kayaks or canoes. Volunteers without boats are also accepted, but space is determined by boaters having room aboard their boat. Registration is required at tampabaywatch.org.

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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