



The Bay Watch Leg

A quarterly publication for Tampa Bay Watch partners

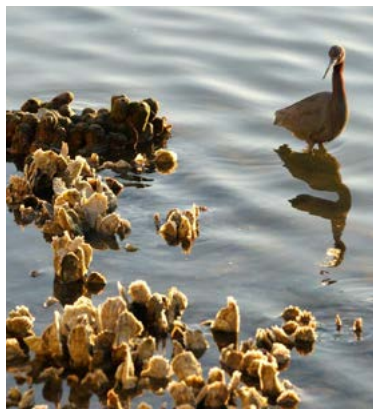
Summer 2019



A New Kind of Gardening:

ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR OUR FIRST VERTICAL OYSTER GARDEN WORKSHOP

Innovative technique will improve water quality in urbanized settings



Did you know. . .

Oysters are natural filters, cleaning an average of 2-5 gallons of water per hour. More oysters mean a cleaner bay!



Our first Vertical Oyster Garden (VOG) building project brought community volunteers together on June 29 to build 1,150 VOGs in just 2.5 hours. Busy hands worked to string oyster shells—recycled from local restaurants—onto rope.

“500 VOGs will be suspended from docks at Gulfport Marina to create a hard substrate where juvenile oysters can attach and develop. Water quality measurements will be taken just before installation, then trained citizen volunteers will again measure at six- and twelve-month points,” said Eric Plage, Tampa Bay Watch Environmental Specialist. The data collected during the first year will be shared with Tampa Bay Watch as part of our ongoing research.

VOGs can last for several years and do not require special permitting. Each 3-foot long VOG encourages from 50 to 100 juvenile oysters to attach, where they can grow to adulthood.

Oysters provide multiple benefits to the bay. They are a food source for birds and fish. Many small fish, crabs, shrimp, and other critters live among oysters, providing food for large fish and wildlife. Oyster habitats are a great place to catch fish. Most importantly, oysters are natural filters, cleaning an average of 2-5 gallons of water an hour. More oysters mean a cleaner bay!



Upon request, Tampa Bay Watch provides free VOGs to homeowners with docks. Contact Eric Plage at eplaye@tampabaywatch.org or 727-867-8166, ext. 229, if you'd like VOG(s) of your own.

Thank you to our friends at the Tampa Bay Estuary Program for providing us with a mini-grant to make this workshop—and our year-long VOG monitoring program—possible.



EVENTS ON THE HORIZON:

- August 9:** Last day of summer camp
- August 24:** Great Bay Scallop Search
- September 21:** National Estuaries Day Cleanup
- October 9:** Paint night at TBW with Kelly of the Wild
- October 24:** Pumpkins on the Porch
- November 2:** Evening for the Bay



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Discovery Center News:

NEW ECO-VESSEL FUNDED FOR TAMPA BAY WATCH DISCOVERY CENTER

Tampa Bay Watch is thrilled to announce that a family foundation from Hillsborough County has funded a new eco-vessel for the Discovery Center at the new St. Petersburg Pier. Tampa Bay Watch will model the new boat after their very successful classroom vessel at the Tampa Bay Watch Marine Center in Tierra Verde (as seen in picture).

Once constructed, the new vessel will call the St. Pete Pier home and operate along the waterfront and Northshore Park. Tampa Bay Watch anticipates using the vessel for school field trips with students of all ages, as well as adult eco-adventures, with a goal to explore and discover Florida's flora and fauna while learning valuable practices to preserve our environment.

Eco-tours aboard this new U.S. Coast Guard-certified vessel will focus on Tampa Bay history and species population studies with activities such as fisheries trawls, bird species identification and behavior, and dolphin dorsal identification research.

Rounding 'em up:

GHOST TRAP RODEO REELS IN DERELICT CRAB TRAPS

181 derelict—or “ghost”—traps were removed from local waters during the Ghost Trap Rodeo July 13. Thank you to all volunteers, Ocean Aid 360, Clearwater Marine Aquarium, and Coastal Impact Fund for their support. This successful day of trap removal was prompted by the 10-day regional closure of blue crab fishing by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

“This event is important because it gets community volunteers involved in helping to preserve and protect the bay by removing debris and keeping marine life from needlessly getting caught and killed in abandoned traps,” said Serra Herndon, Habitat Restoration Director for Tampa Bay Watch.



Celebrating our local partnerships:

RAYS AND JABIL GO TO BAT FOR BAY RESTORATION AND EDUCATION

We are extremely grateful to the Tampa Bay Rays and Jabil for supporting bay restoration and education! Tampa Bay Watch was presented with a generous \$15,000 check to support our mission at the Rays game on April 20 in honor of Earth Day and in celebration of our partnership.

Pictured at right; from left: Jennifer Tran, Vice President of Tampa Bay Rays Human Resources & Organizational Engagement; Stephen Thomas, Executive Director of Rays Baseball Foundation; Bill Wiener Jr., Vice President of Tampa Bay Rays Employee and Community Development; Andrew Gallo, Jabil Global Communications Program Manager; Peter Clark, Tampa Bay Watch President; Kevin Milkey, Milkey Family Foundation; Pamela Arbisi, former Tampa Bay Watch Director of Development; Marion Clark, Tampa Bay Watch; and Jeanne Milkey, Milkey Family Foundation.



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

CORPORATE MEMBERS DEMONSTRATE ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

Tampa Bay Watch relies upon corporate members to be active partners in protecting and restoring our estuary. Their support makes Tampa Bay a healthier, more desirable place to work and play by funding essential habitat restoration and education programs. We would like to acknowledge all of our current corporate members below. To become a corporate member, contact Nina Ardle at 727-867-8166, ext. 249 or Email nardle@tampabaywatch.org.



400 Beach Seafood & Tap House
Alden Suites
American Strategic Insurance
Amuni Financial, Inc
Argos USA LLC
ARS Wealth Advisors
Baldwin Krystyn Sherman Partners
Bloomin Brands
Calhoun International
Carmelita's Rum
Catalina Marketing
COMANCO Environmental Corp
Cooper's Hawk Winery
Coppertail Brewing Company
Courtesy Valet
Covanta
Directed Capital
Diversified Telecom Services, Inc.
Don Cesar
Electric Supply, Inc.
FairWarning
Ferman Auto
Florida Info Guide

General Dynamics
Go Black Fin
Great Bay Distributors
Greenacre Properties, Inc.
Gulf Eagle Supply
Healthcare IQ
Jabil
Kahuna's
Kahwa Coffee
Kennedy Investments / DAK Corporation
Konica
Lewis, Longman & Walker
Limelight Photography
McNichols Company
Mosaic
Mullen Corporation
Paradise News
Paradigm Learning
Pascia & Pascia Dentistry
Paul J. Skipper Inc
Phoenix Venture Philanthropy Foundation

Reef Innovations, Inc.
Resort Realty
S.A.L.T. Payroll Consultants Inc.
Sabal Trust
Salt Pines
Sand Dunes Beach Services
Saunders & Walker, P.A
Southpoint Financial Services
St. Petersburg Distillery
Sweetwater Brewing Co.
Tampa Bay Parrot Heads
Tampa Bay Pilots Association
Tampa Bay Rays
Tampa Bay Yacht Management
TECO Energy
Tennant Special Risk
TJM Properties
Tradewinds
TruGreen Commercial
Wilcox Nursery & Landscape
Wiss
WRB Enterprises
Xenegrade

Corporate Member Spotlight:

TAMPA BAY YACHT MANAGEMENT

Why does Tampa Bay Yacht Management, one of our new corporate members, choose to support our cause? Captain Sean McClash states, "We support Tampa Bay Watch because of the positive impact it has on the place we call home: Tampa Bay. Without preserving this natural resource that the residents of Tampa Bay actively enjoy on and off the water, we would see a negative impact economically as well as with our quality of life. Our company, Tampa Bay Yacht Management, takes a proactive approach on our clients boats with the main focus on preventative maintenance to minimize issues. We believe our organizations have parallel goals of keeping residents and visitors enjoying the water as well as protecting our environment."



American Oystercatcher

HAEMATOPUS PALLIATUS

HABITAT: SHORELINES AND NEAR SALT MARSH GRASS
DISTINGUISHING FEATURE: LONG, BRIGHT-ORANGE BILL
DIET: BIVALVES AND MOLLUSCS, INCLUDING OYSTERS

These stunning birds visit Florida year-round and nest along the shoreline during the spring and summer months *Source: allaboutbirds.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.

WANT TO GO PAPERLESS?

If you wish to receive an electronic copy of this newsletter to save paper, time, and resources, please notify Rachel Arndt at **rarndt@tampabaywatch.org** to request electronic-only delivery.



Boaters needed:

IT'S THE GREAT BAY SCALLOP SEARCH!

Saturday, August 24 from 9 am to 1 pm

Dust off your snorkels and fins and sign up quickly for this fast-filling annual event! We need your help to monitor and document the health and status of the bay scallop population.

Tampa Bay Watch is recruiting 40 volunteer boaters and 180+ participants to search selected sites within Boca Ciega and Lower Tampa Bay for bay scallops. We mainly recruit volunteers with shallow draft boats, but have limited spots for canoes and kayaks, as well as volunteer snorkelers without boats.

The event takes place Saturday, August 24 from 9 am to 1 pm. Meet up at the Fort De Soto Park boat ramp in Tierra Verde.

Thank you Sea World Busch Gardens Conservation Fund and Tampa Bay Estuary Program for sponsoring this event.



Thank you to GEORGE & ISABEL ADAMS and ESI for their sponsorship of the 2019 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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