



For immediate release
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Tampa Bay Watch Announces Executive Staff Changes

Tierra Verde, FL - Tampa Bay Watch is excited to announce changes to its executive-leadership staff. Dwayne Virgint has been promoted to the CEO position, and will be responsible for the organizational leadership and implementing the strategic direction of Tampa Bay Watch. Peter Clark will continue as President & Founder for Tampa Bay Watch with a new focus on major development activities, community outreach, and bay restoration initiatives for Tampa Bay Watch.

Dwayne Virgint began work as Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier in 2019. As CEO, Mr. Virgint looks forward to addressing the growth and demands of the operation, as the organization has more than doubled in size over the last year. He has a goal to enact impactful change, in support of the organization, our community and the environment. Dwayne will be guided by TBW's new strategic plan and is committed to moving Tampa Bay Watch to the next level of growth, addressing needs and infrastructure to ensure it will be an environmental mainstay in the area for next generations.

"I am pleased and excited by the opportunity to expand my role at Tampa Bay Watch and enhance our commitment to the regional watershed," said Virgint. "Peter Clark has created an organization that has achieved incredible results, supported by a passionate staff and dedicated community. Surges in Red Tide and the loss of marine life demonstrate our work is needed now, more than ever."

Dwayne earned a bachelor's degree in advertising from the University of Bridgeport. He brings more than 35 years of award-winning experience in leadership, operations, development and management of mission-based organizations including zoos, aquariums, and museums. He served over twelve years as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Indian Pueblos Marketing and its affiliated companies in Albuquerque, NM.

Peter Clark founded Tampa Bay Watch and has led the organization for 28 years. As President and Founder, Peter will now focus on major gifts and development; a skill he has successfully developed over the years. He wants to apply this expertise to develop a new capital campaign and fundraise to create additional restoration and education programs in our community. Peter will also work on community outreach and advocacy, as well as provide guidance for restoration, education and development. Peter is excited by this shift in duties and looks forward to focusing on ways to support Tampa Bay Watch for the long-term and ensure its legacy.

"Tampa Bay Watch has grown tremendously over time, requiring that our organization evolve in order to address the current and future demands of restoring and protecting the Tampa Bay estuary," said Clark. "Providing operational and strategic leadership, Dwayne will be able to help take our organization to the next level, and together our goal will be to ensure its environmental and community impact for the next 100 years."

Under Peter's watch, the organization has coordinated more than 250,000 volunteers, students, and campers, installed 15,000 oyster reef units and 2,500 tons of oyster shell to create more than two miles of oyster shell reef communities, planted more than 1,000,000 salt marsh grasses to restore 250 acres of coastal tidal ponds to Tampa Bay. In 2005, Tampa Bay Watch completed construction of the \$4 million Marine and Education center in Tierra Verde, and in 2019 the new \$3 million Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier. Until 1993, Mr. Clark served as Director of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's Agency on Bay Management,

an alliance of agencies charged with protecting the Bay. Mr. Clark has a BS in Marine Biology and over fifty professional publications on natural resource restoration, water quality and environmental planning. Mr. Clark also initiated the nomination, which ultimately led to the designation, of Tampa Bay into the EPA's National Estuary Program. Mr. Clark holds a US Coast Guard Master Captains License, received the Outstanding Environmentalist of the Year award from the Florida Marine Research Institute Environmental Excellence Awards program in 1994, and the NOAA Fisheries / American Fisheries Society Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award in 2005.

Tampa Bay Watch is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the marine and wetland environments of the Tampa Bay estuary through scientific and educational programs. Incorporated in 1993, Tampa Bay Watch performs habitat restoration and protection activities throughout the year, relying heavily on the efforts of community volunteers. Their programs seek to build citizen awareness, concern and participation through educational outreach. Tampa Bay Watch opened a second facility at the new St. Pete Pier entitled the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center which opened in July of 2020. The Discovery Center has a public Exhibit Gallery to showcase the economic and ecological value of the Tampa Bay estuary to residents and visitors, and a classroom to expand educational outreach programs to Tampa Bay area schools. *For more information, visit www.tampabaywatch.org, or call 727-867-8166.*

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