

Summer 2021 Issue

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Tampa Bay Watch Wins Two Golden Mangrove Awards

PROJECTS FUNDED BY TARPON TAGS

Tampa Bay Watch was recently honored with two Golden Mangrove awards for excellence from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP) for our Vertical Oyster Garden and Little Bird Key projects funded by Bay Mini-Grants.

The first project involved the installation of 500 Vertical Oyster Gardens or at the docks of the Gulfport Marina in 2019 to create a hard substrate

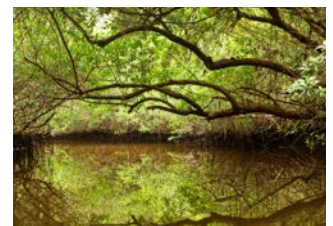
where juvenile oysters can attach and develop. VOGs are oyster shells strung onto rope which are suspended from docks. The project's goals are to train volunteers to be long-term "stewards of the bay" and to help clean the water. This project was so successful that it is being adopted by our partners in Manatee County!

In the second winning project we worked alongside the Friends of the TBNWR to install 500 oyster reef balls on the island which is part of the Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge. Little Bird Key is adjacent to the main channel of Boca Ciega Bay where boat traffic has caused



changes in currents and erosion. The reef balls were installed along the shoreline to assist with erosion control, provide habitat for marine life including beneficial oysters to assist in water quality, protect and increase mangrove habitat for avian nesters, and protect the nearby seagrass beds of the bay.

Both of these projects were supported by TBEP Bay Mini-Grants which are entirely funded by sales from the Tampa Bay Estuary specialty license plate. Next time you renew your vehicle registration consider purchasing a Tarpon Tag! You will directly fund environmental restoration and education projects right here in Tampa Bay.



Did you know. . .

Mangroves are an important protective nursery habitat. Their roots offer shelter to fish and other creatures until these juvenile animals are large enough to avoid most predators. Mangroves also provide protection from storms, clean our water, and even capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.



Upcoming:

September 18:
National Estuaries
Week Cleanup



First place, Guardian division: Team Bonefish Grill and Capt. Jared Simonetti.

16th Annual Tarpon Rodeo Winners

Thank you to all of our sponsors and anglers who made Tarpon Rodeo 2021, presented by Great Bay Distributors, a huge success! More than \$93,000 was raised for our programs and mission, and a total of eleven tarpon were caught during the all-release tournament!

Congratulations to our 2021 tournament winners:

First place, Guardian division: Team Bonefish Grill and Capt. Jared Simonetti (pictured)

First place, Sport division: Team Tampa Bay Yacht Management

Second place, Guardian division: Team Hancock Whitney and Capt. Kyle Applefield

Third place, Guardian division: Team Scooter Foundation and Capt. Steve Barron

Thank you to this year's event participants! **Mark your calendars for our 17th Annual Tarpon Rodeo and Castaway Soirée on June 10 and 11, 2022!**



Community Members Participate in Successful Mid-summer Cleanup

Our July 10 cleanup motivated 53 community volunteers to remove a combined total of 500 pounds of trash from Grandview Park and Booker Creek Park!

Thanks to Ocean Conservancy for support of our marine debris initiatives! Kudos to the City of St. Petersburg for partnering with us to clear marine debris before it enters our waterways.



Corporate Members Demonstrate Environmental Citizenship

Tampa Bay Watch corporate members are active partners in our efforts to protect and restore the unique Tampa Bay estuary. To become a corporate member, Email Nina Ardle at nardle@tampabaywatch.org or call 727-867-8166, x249.

Current corporate members:

4 th Street Family Dentistry	Ferman Auto	Foundation
400 Beach Seafood & Tap House	Florida Info Guide	Reef Innovations, Inc.
Affinity CPA	Florida Pure Sea Salt	Resort Realty
Alden Suites	General Dynamics	S.A.L.T. Payroll Consultants Inc.
American Strategic Insurance	Go Black Fin	Sabal Trust
Amuni Financial, Inc	Grand Central Brewhouse	SaltyScales
Argos USA LLC	Great Bay Distributors	Sand Dunes Beach Services
ARS Wealth Advisors	Greenacre Properties, Inc.	Saunders & Walker, P.A
Baldwin Krystyn Sherman Partners	Gulf Eagle Supply	Southern Pension Services
Bloomin' Brands	Healthcare IQ	Southpoint Financial Services
Calhoun International	Holehouse Insurance	St. Petersburg Distillery
Carmelita's Rum	Honest1 Auto Care	Sweetwater Brewing Co.
Catalina Marketing	Jabil	Tampa Bay Parrot Heads
COMANCO Environmental Corp	Kahuna's	Tampa Bay Pilots Association
Cooper's Hawk Winery	Kahwa Coffee	Tampa Bay Rays
Coppertail Brewing Company	Kennedy Investments / DAK Corporation	Tampa Bay Yacht Management
Courtesy Valet	Konica	TECO Energy
Covanta	Lewis, Longman & Walker	Tennant Special Risk
Directed Capital	Limelight Photography	TJM Properties
Diversified Telecom Services, Inc.	McNichols Company	Tradewinds
The Don CeSar	Mosaic	TruGreen Commercial
Drift Local	Mullen Corporation	Wilcox Nursery & Landscape
DSK Law	Paradise News	Wireless Time Partners
Electric Supply, Inc.	Paradigm Learning	Wiss
Elite Watersports	Pascia & Pascia Dentistry	WRB Enterprises
FairWarning	Paul J. Skipper Inc	Xenegrade
	Phoenix Venture Philanthropy	



Saltmarsh Snake

NERODIA CLARKII



LENGTH: 15-30 inches

IDENTIFICATION: Adults can be gray, grayish-olive, brown, tan, or rusty orange, with variable patterns of dark stripes or bands down the body.

HABITAT: Commonly found along the coast in brackish and saltwater estuaries, salt marshes, and tidal mud flats.

This snake is harmless and non-venomous and is only found in Florida. This snake in this photo was spotted in the salt marsh behind Tampa Bay Watch in Tierra Verde.

Source: floridamuseum.ufl.edu



Discovery Center Offering Ecotours by Boat

VISIT THE ST. PETE PIER AND TAKE A TOUR BY CATAMARAN

The Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center brought a brand new USCG-certified catamaran to the St. Pete Pier!

This 45-foot eco-vessel will provide on-the-water family-friendly public eco-tours and school field trips every day, four times per day, seven days a week!

Eco-tours explore Tampa Bay history and the marine life you'll find in and above the bay. Activities include a fisheries trawl, bird spotting and identifying

specific traits, and dolphin and manatee identification and behaviors, all while enjoying a relaxing bay cruise.

Our professional marine biologists provide insights into the local waters and resident species while conducting scientific research.

Visit the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center at the St. Pete Pier to book your tickets, or visit tbwdiscoverycenter.org.

Come and meet Ruby & Bertha!

NEW EXHIBIT AT THE DISCOVERY CENTER

We are pleased to announce our newest exhibit, *Ornate Diamondback Terrapins*, is now open at the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier!

Sponsored by Sheila and John Auer, the 240-gallon terrapin exhibit is home to Bertha and Ruby, two rare Ornate Diamondback Terrapins, classified as vulnerable species.

The exhibit teaches you all about terrapins and what makes them different from turtles and tortoises. The diamondback terrapin is the only turtle in the U.S. that inhabits estuaries, tidal creeks, and salt marshes where the salinity often comes close to that of the ocean. It thrives in estuaries like Tampa Bay where it can dine on crabs, snails, shrimp, fish, mussels, clams and other crustaceans.

Join us daily for our program, *Date with the Diamondbacks*, offered every day at 1 PM; free with admission.



Charity Navigator Awards TBW 4-star Rating

We're excited to have received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's premier independent charity evaluator. This rating indicates that we adhere to good governance and other best practices that minimize the chance of unethical activities and consistently execute our mission in a fiscally responsible way.



DSK Law Joins the Ranks of TBW Corporate Members

We're thrilled to welcome DSK Law into our corporate member family!

DSK Law is full-service law firm located in Tampa that is focused on commercial and business litigation. The firm opened its Tampa office in 2005 and is led by managing partner Bart Valdes—a bay supporter and a decade-long volunteer in our annual Great Bay Scallop Search.

Why become a corporate member? According to Valdes, "I grew up fishing and exploring in Tampa Bay. DSK Law fully supports Tampa Bay Watch's mission so that my kids—and the entire next generation—can enjoy this amazing estuary."





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



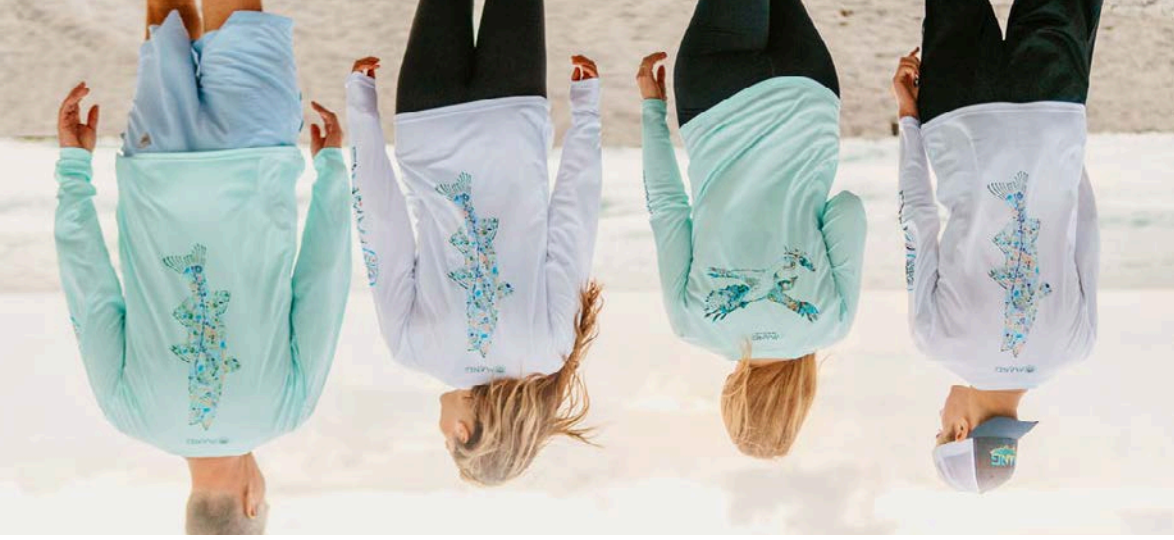
Thank you to **George and Isabel Adams** and **ESI** for their sponsorship of the Bay Watch Log!



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MANG Gear Launches TBW Collection

YOUR PURCHASE MEANS A DONATION TO TBW + A PLANTED MANGROVE



We're thrilled to announce a new co-branded MANG Gear apparel collection which highlights our shared mission of education, restoration, and preservation of our waterways in Florida. In addition to MANG donating 10% of all proceeds

from this collection to Tampa Bay Watch, their company's mission is to plant one mangrove with the purchase of each merchandise item! Since 2015, they have planted over 300,000 mangroves! Check out the collection at manggear.com.

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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