



For immediate release
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Tampa Bay Watch partners with Manatee County to plant native grasses at Robinson Preserve

Bradenton, FL - Tampa Bay Watch will partner with Manatee County for a native planting at Robinson Preserve on Saturday, March 26. Approximately forty volunteers from around the Tampa Bay area will plant Black Needlerush or *Juncus roemerianus* to prevent erosion and create habitat.

“Manatee county has done an exceptional job with Robinson Preserve. This planting is an opportunity for community members to spend a day at a beautiful park and take part in the process of restoring once degraded habitat,” said Paige Lansky, Native Planting Programs Coordinator for Tampa Bay Watch.

Robinson Preserve comprises 682 acres of preserved mangroves, tidal marsh, and former agricultural lands that were once slated for residential development. The restoration work at Robinson Preserve represents an incredible partnership between numerous local, state, and national agencies. “We could not have accomplished this without the help of thousands of volunteers over the last 15 years, and we are excited to continue restoring this important place with the help of Tampa Bay Watch,” said Sarah Denison, Education and Volunteer Program Manager for Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Department.

The planting of native plants protects and stabilizes low lying coastal lands and provides protection and food sources for estuarine and coastal fishery food chains of many species of fish and marine mammals. Salt marsh and other coastal habitat populations have declined more than 80% over the past 100 years -- due mostly to the dredging, construction and waste water discharges. This loss has damaged a crucial link in the bay’s food chain for fish and wildlife resources, significantly impacting the bay’s fisheries.

Tampa Bay Watch, Inc., 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. The Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier is a significant new addition to the education and conservation efforts of Tampa Bay Watch and is integral to the advancement of the organization’s mission. The Discovery Center is an interactive visitor experience showcasing the economic, ecological and recreational value of the Tampa Bay estuary to residents and visitors as well as an academic component that expands environmental and educational outreach programs to Tampa Bay area schools, residents, and visitors.

Tampa Bay Watch is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) stewardship program dedicated exclusively to the charitable and scientific purpose of protecting and restoring the marine and wetland environments of the Tampa Bay estuary encompassing over 400 square miles of open water and 2,300 square miles of highly- developed watershed. Tampa Bay Watch involves more than 10,000 youth and adult volunteers each year in hands on habitat restoration projects. For more information, visit www.tampabaywatch.org, or call 727-867-8166.