

Winter 2022 Issue

- 🐚 Lassing Park living shoreline project
- 🐚 New organizational strategic plan
- 🐚 Guardians acknowledgment
- 🐚 Guardian Spotlight
- 🐚 Wedding Stroll
- 🐚 Summer camp registration
- 🐚 Ghost Trap Rodeo results
- 🐚 Thanks to Neptune Flood
- 🐚 New board members
- 🐚 One Tampa Bay award

Lassing Park Living Shoreline Project

FORTIFYING ONE OF ST. PETERSBURG'S TREASURES

Tampa Bay Watch kicked off a multi-year living shoreline project in partnership with the City of St. Petersburg at Lassing Park in December, with our amazing volunteers deploying 250 oyster reef balls in just two hours!

The project is designed to help stabilize approximately 700 feet of severely eroding shoreline. It also provides hard-bottom habitats for fish and wildlife resources and promotes water quality improvements. During avian migration season, Lassing Park is a feeding ground and rest stop for many species of shorebirds, including the federally threatened Red Knot.



Lassing Park is one of the few remaining undeveloped shorelines in St. Petersburg. It has been part of the St. Pete park system since 1924! But over time, the shoreline of Lassing Park has seen severe erosion due to decades of impacts from large wind-driven waves and wake from passing boats and ships. The park is also bordered to the north and south by hardened concrete shorelines that amplify the intensity of waves and wakes hitting the shoreline.

Creation of a living shoreline project, including oyster reef balls, oyster shell reefs, and coastal wetland plants will prevent further erosion of Lassing Park, restore lost habitat systems to the bay, and improve water quality through natural biological filtration.

Join us this Earth Day, April 22, to be a part of this restoration effort at Lassing Park!

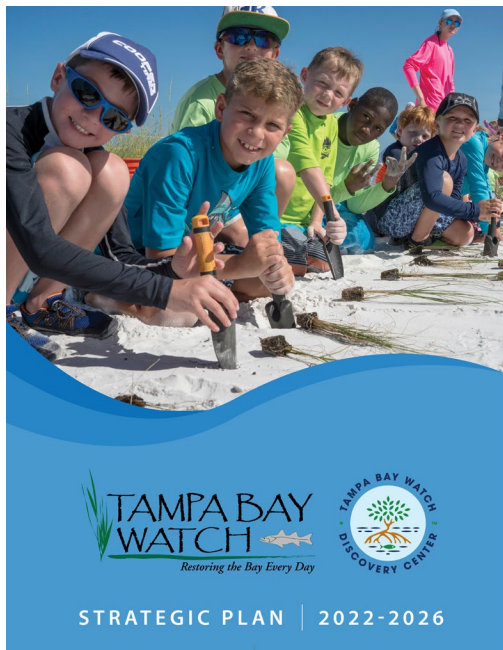


Did you know...

Evidence shows that during major storms, a living shoreline performs better than a hardened shoreline such as a seawall. *Source: noaa.gov*

Upcoming:

- MARCH 26** Planting at Robinson Preserve
- APRIL 1-2** Lassing Park reef ball installation
- APRIL 13-14** Lassing Park shell bar installation
- APRIL 20** Earth Day plant harvest
- APRIL 22** Living Shoreline project
- APRIL 22** Earth Night celebration at Discovery Center
- MAY 17** Mono Clean-a-thon
- MAY 19-20** 2D Spoil Island shell bar



Looking Ahead

Tampa Bay Watch more than doubled our organization's size in July 2020 by opening the Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier.

With the Discovery Center now open, our staff and board members identified this time as ideal to develop a new five-year strategic plan to address the growth and needs of our operation. Our enhanced vision and mission statements reflect our goal to enact impactful change in support of the organization, our community, and the environment.

The intent of the strategic plan is to guide Tampa Bay Watch through the next phase of growth, addressing needs and infrastructure to ensure it will be an environmental mainstay for many generations to come.

We are proud to share this new five-year strategic plan with you. It is available for viewing and download on our website or by scanning this QR code to go directly to our website *Publications* page.



Guardians Pledge 3-Year Support for Tampa Bay

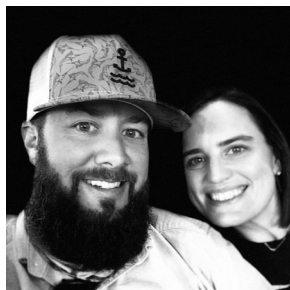
If you're reading this, you're likely interested in knowing how you can make a real difference. By joining the Tampa Bay Guardians program, your annual pledge between \$1,000 and \$9,999 will sustain weekly restoration projects, daily marine science education, and local volunteer efforts in your own community for the next three years. **We'd like to thank our Tampa Bay Guardians for their very generous support:**



Kathryn Boeckman Howd
Paul and Pat Brown
Jonathan and Nikki Day
John and Beth England
Jerry Fletcher and Liza Carter
Russell and Susie Bolton
James T. Pascia, DDS
Harold and Janet Hurwitz

Craig Jordan & Elaine Koziar-Jordan
Erik Lieberman
Mike and Rita Wilson
Jeff and Linda Carbiener
Christopher French
Frank X. and Dana Dalton
Bobby and Elena Bussey
Drs. Janet and Eli Rose

William and Dyresse Sweeney
Eric Hull and Bryan Baldwin
Steve and Mary Stanley
Kevin Kelso
James Parent
Doug Sokolowski
Pete and Sharon Dagostino
Mary Ann and Gary Renfrow



Guardian Spotlight: Jonathan and Nikki Day

Welcome and thanks to our newest Tampa Bay Guardians, Jonathan and Nikki Day! The Days explain why they've chosen to support us in this significant way: "We both grew up coastal—Jonathan off the shores of Savannah, GA, and Nikki right here in Tampa Bay. We believe the health of our bay is essential to our quality of life. We feel so honored to be able to support TBW!"

Email myepez@tampabaywatch.org to be welcomed as the newest Tampa Bay Guardian!



Rufa Red Knot

CALIDRIS CANUTUS RUFA

WINGSPAN: 20 inches | **DIET:** Includes small bivalves, clams, mussels, shrimp | **STATUS:** This shorebird is a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act

The rufa red knot is particularly vulnerable to climate change and coastal development. The bird is one of the longest-distance migrants in the animal kingdom. Some knots fly more than 9,300 miles from south to north every spring and repeat the trip in reverse every autumn! *Source: allaboutbirds.org*



Summer Camp Launches Soon!

ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 7

Join us this summer for an unforgettable camp experience immersed in the Tampa Bay estuary! Camp sessions are offered at our Estuary EDventures Summer Camp in Tierra Verde and Discovery Center Summer Camp on the St. Pete Pier.

Each camp provides an opportunity for children to participate in a fun-filled, hands-on learning adventure focused on marine ecology. Under the guidance

of our professional education staff, campers will participate in boating trips, snorkeling, exploring native habitats, and collecting unique species inhabiting the estuary. This is an experience that your child will not want to miss!

Registration opens March 7 at 9 AM. Become a Tampa Bay Watch member to enjoy 10% off summer camp registration!

A Wave of Support from Neptune Flood

We're thrilled to announce that Neptune Flood has awarded us with a grant to support our oyster habitat program.



Neptune is committed to protecting the environment and giving back to our community. Their team can't wait to start volunteering on restoration projects throughout Tampa Bay!

Headquartered in downtown St. Petersburg, Neptune explained that Tampa Bay Watch was a natural fit to receive their first grant of \$50,000. We look forward to our partnership and making a difference for current and future generations of bay neighbors.



5th Annual

Afternoon Wedding Stroll

You're invited to an afternoon wedding show **Sunday, March 13** at Tampa Bay Watch in Tierra Verde. We will host wedding vendor professionals from all over the Tampa Bay area including caterers, florists, DJs/entertainment specialists, and photographers—just to name a few!

Attendance will be limited to 60 guests per hour for the duration of the event. Register to attend at tampabaywatch.org.



Exorcising Ghost Traps a Team Effort

Our thanks go out to the 102 volunteers who participated in the Ghost Trap Rodeo on January 22, pulling derelict—or “ghost”—traps out of Tampa Bay. This event was held in partnership with Ocean Aid 360, Clearwater Marine Aquarium, Coastal Conservation Association, and Coastal Impact Fund.

In this chilly one-day event, volunteers collected 4,480 pounds of marine debris, including 27 derelict crab traps at Fort De Soto Park and Belleair Boat Ramp.

The goal of this event is to reduce unnecessary bycatch of marine animals and prevent marine debris. Blue crab traps become derelict when owners may no longer be able to locate their traps if the float becomes separated from the trap, or if the trap itself moves (by storm events or human activities). Once the float and/or trap line have been lost, crab traps are difficult to see from the water's surface. Tampa Bay Watch conducts semi-annual cleanups of an area to prevent the traps from becoming hazardous to the environment.



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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** for their sponsorship of the Bay Watch Log!

Welcome to the Board!

CAROL MARKS AND TERRY MCCARTHY



Carol Marks

Tampa Bay Watch recently welcomed two key members of the community to our board of directors.

Carol and Terry bring a variety of skills, experience, and diversity to Tampa Bay Watch's board composition.

"I am very proud of and excited about our new board members," said Dwayne Virgint, Chief Executive Officer of Tampa Bay Watch.

"They are professional individuals that contribute personally and professionally to Tampa Bay Watch as we continue to increase awareness of our mission to restore the bay through restoration projects, environmental education programs, and the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier."



Terry McCarthy



One Tampa Bay

Tampa Bay Watch is proud to be selected as a 2021 *One Tampa Bay* honoree by the Tampa Bay Business Journal!

These awards bring together the region's nonprofit organizations with the companies going above and beyond when it comes to giving back to the community.

We are grateful to be recognized along with fellow nonprofits and corporate partners making a significant impact in Tampa Bay.

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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