

The Bay Watch Leg

A quarterly publication for Tampa Bay Watch partners

Spring 2021



Did you know. . .

The Tampa Bay Area is a mecca for bird-watchers year round. But spring is particularly special, when Florida's native species are joined by large numbers of other birds migrating north.



EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

May 16: Wedding Stroll

May 27: Virtual FMAP Workshop

June 11: Tarpon Rodeo

June 14: First day of Estuary EDventures summer camp

GENEROUS SUPPORT BRINGS NEW FACILITY NAME

~ **TIERRA VERDE MARINE EDUCATION CENTER BECOMES AUER MARINE EDUCATION CENTER**

~ **NEW TERRAPIN EXHIBIT AT THE DISCOVERY CENTER**

Tampa Bay Watch is thrilled to announce that the Auer Family has generously funded the program and building improvements to the Tampa Bay Watch education center in Tierra Verde. The building currently named *Tampa Bay Watch Marine Education Center* will now be known as "**Auer Marine Education Center.**" The Marine Education Center is the base for the established Estuary EDventures educational program.

The funding provided by the Auer Family will help Estuary EDventures continue to enhance and evolve the program's reach and capacity, provide resources to run existing programming and staff, and also allow the **creation of new STEM and Citizen Science programming and curriculum** for both on-site and off-site participants. This critical support will allow Estuary EDventures to continue offering free and reduced-cost programming to Title I and academically at-risk schools and community members, which currently accounts for more than 50% of Estuary EDventures programming.

The Auer Family's donation will also provide resources to help with the upkeep, management, and enhancement of the 2500 sq. ft. educational classroom space that includes observation tanks, including Palm—our resident animal



ambassador, which is an ornate diamondback terrapin—as well as the outdoor wet lab and collective 10,000-gallon open-air observation tanks, as well as our 32-foot Beach Cat classroom vessel, all of which are critical components to the success of the Estuary EDventures programming.

In addition to the enhancements to our education building and programs, the Auer Family also has funded a **new terrapin exhibit at the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center** on the St. Pete Pier.

Stay tuned for more information on the opening of the terrapin exhibit this summer!



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JOIN US FOR AN EDUCATIONAL ECO-TOUR BY BOAT

Starting in May, our new floating classroom will be launched from the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center.

Moored at the St. Pete Pier, *The Discovery*, a 45'-foot USCG-certified catamaran, will provide on-the-water school field trips in the mornings and will be utilized for family-friendly public ecotours in the afternoons.

Tours and activities will include a fisheries trawl, bird spotting and species traits identification, and dolphin and manatee identification and behavior education—all while enjoying a relaxing cruise on Tampa Bay.

Look for more details soon at tbwdiscoverycenter.org.



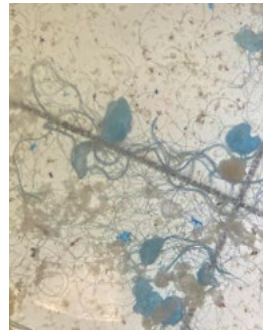
LOG IN TO LEARN ABOUT MICROPLASTICS

Mark your calendars for a virtual microplastics workshop on May 27 at 3 PM via a Zoom Webinar!

The Florida Microplastic Awareness Project (FMAP) engages volunteers throughout the state in sampling and analyzing local waters for plastic. This virtual FMAP Workshop hosted by Tampa Bay Watch Tierra Verde educators includes an informative lecture and microplastic sampling demonstration.

Learn more about plastic pollution, its impact on the environment, and how you can be a part of the change.

Register online at tampabaywatch.org.



Florida Microplastic
AWARENESS PROJECT



EARTH DAY EXTRAVAGANZA

In honor of Earth Day, Tampa Bay Watch hosted environmental projects at four sites around Tampa Bay, all taking place on Saturday, April 24, in partnership with the City of St. Petersburg, City of Clearwater, and Hillsborough County.

Thank you to all of our volunteers who came out to support this effort to improve the health of the bay!



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



BUILDING OYSTER REEFS

With the help of community volunteers, Tampa Bay Watch crew installed 265 oyster reef balls and 110 feet of oyster shell reef in March and April along the shoreline of Whiskey Stump Key in Hillsborough Bay.

The oyster reef will assist in stabilizing the shoreline, providing hard substrate for oysters to colonize, and

providing habitat for fish and wildlife.

This multi-year project will be wrapped up in May with an additional oyster shell bar installation.



Looking out for our bay:

TAMPA BAY GUARDIANS

Tampa Bay Guardians support our mission to restore and protect the Bay with a three-year pledge of at least \$1,000 annually. If desired, Tampa Bay Guardian gifts can be designated for habitat restoration programs, the Estuary EDventures environmental education program, or the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center.

To become a Guardian member, please contact Nina Ardlé, Development Director, at (727) 867-8166, x249.

We'd like to thank our Tampa Bay Guardians for their very generous support:

Stewards (\$5,000 - \$9,999 annually):

Eric Hull & Bryan Baldwin

Advocates (\$2,500 - 4,999 annually):

Bobby & Elena Bussey
Jeff and Linda Carbiener
Frank and Dana Dalton
Christopher French
James T. Pascia, DDS
Mary Ann & Gary Renfrow

Leaders (\$1,000 to \$2,499 annually):

Pat & Paul Brown
Peter & Sharon Dagostino
Kathryn Boeckman Howd
Janet & Harold Hurwitz
Craig Jordan & Elaine
Koziar-Jordan
Erik Lieberman
Steve & Mary Stanley
Bill & Dyreese
Sweeney
Mike & Rita Wilson



EARTH DAY CLIMATE CHANGE PANEL

The Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center hosted an exciting discussion about climate

change on Earth Day. The panel included author and marine scientist Ellen Prager, scientist and explorer Jason Gulley, and ABC Action News Meteorologist Greg Dee. Ellen dove into her fun, new science-adventure novel for young readers, *Escape Greenland*. Jason spoke of his experience with climate change research in Greenland. And Greg helped us understand how climate change impacts our weather— particularly here in Florida.



Trace This Place



Does this place look familiar to you?

Be the first to name this place in an email to Rachel Arndt at rarndt@tampabaywatch.org and win a TBW ball cap!

One entry per person.



Painted Bunting PASSERINA CIRIS

This bird in this image was spotted at Fort De Soto park while visiting for spring migration. Painted Buntings are often caught and sold illegally as cage birds, particularly in Mexico and the Caribbean, a practice that puts pressure on their breeding populations. *Source: allaboutbirds.org*

SIZE: SPARROW-SIZED OR SMALLER AT A MAXIMUM OF 5 INCHES IN LENGTH
HABITAT: DURING MIGRATION AND WINTER THEY FAVOR DENSE, WEEDY HABITATS.



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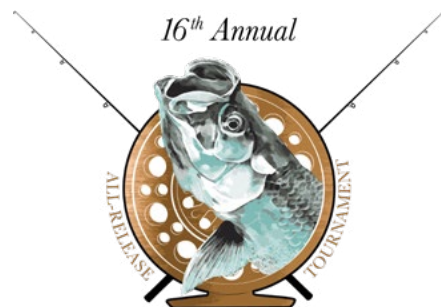
Save the date:

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 2021

Join us for the 16th Annual Tarpon Rodeo honoring Ed Alber on Friday, June 11!

Spend a day on beautiful Tampa Bay as your team embarks on a mission to find the silver king during this popular all-release tournament, all while supporting our programs and mission.

Tarpon Rodeo 2021 is generously presented by Great Bay Distributors. To inquire about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Nina Ardle at nardle@tampabaywatch.org or 727-867-8166 x249



**TAMPA BAY WATCH
 TARPON RODEO**

HONORING ED ALBER

PRESENTED BY



**TAMPA BAY WATCH
 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
 & ISABEL
 ADAMS and
 ESI for their
 sponsorship of
 the 2021 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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