

# The Bay Watch Log

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*Peter Clark at Cunningham Key prior to the construction of the Marine Center in 2005.*

## Celebrating 30 Years of Bay Restoration and Education

We're proud to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and kick off a year full of community events and initiatives to honor the partners, donors, and volunteers who have contributed to our mission over the past three decades!

Peter Clark established Tampa Bay Watch as a nonprofit organization in 1993 in order to provide a way for community members of all ages to get involved with hands-on habitat restoration projects and inspire children to be future stewards through education programs. In 2005, Tampa Bay Watch dedicated its Tampa Bay Watch Marine Education Center, clearing a path for Estuary EDventures field trips and summer camps to educate thousands of children. We doubled our size in July 2020



by opening the Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier to further access to marine-based learning and by sharing the story of the ongoing restoration of Tampa Bay.

Looking forward, we have set ambitious goals to continue to protect and restore the bay for the years to come and we need your help.

We must advocate for measures to ensure the Tampa Bay region is prepared to maintain and improve water quality well into the future. Each volunteer, member, partner, and sponsor plays a key role in the

important work that we do at Tampa Bay Watch.

Thanks to anonymous donors, our ongoing 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign is having a real impact. Donate today on [tampabaywatch.org](http://tampabaywatch.org).



### Did you know...

Pinellas County and the State of Florida Greenways Program worked together to secure the Cunningham Key property with the goal of establishing it as the base for Tampa Bay Watch's environmental protection and restoration programs in 2000.

### Upcoming:

**MARCH 5** Wedding Stroll

**MARCH 6** Summer Camp Registration Opens

**MARCH 18:** Great American Cleanup

**APRIL 1, 13 & 14** Oyster Shell Project at 2D Island

**APRIL 19** Mono Clean-a-Thon

**APRIL 20** Earth Night

**APRIL 22** Earth Day Living Shoreline Project

**MAY 18** Cheers and Beers to 30 Years

**JUNE 16** Tarpon Rodeo



## Summer Camp Registration Opens March 6!

We're ready to see your kids this summer for an unforgettable camp experience immersed in the Tampa Bay estuary! Camp sessions are offered at Estuary EDventures in Tierra Verde and the Discovery Center 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. Set your alarm as registration opens at 9 AM on March 6! Tampa Bay Watch members get a ten percent discount on summer camp fees.



## 49,087 Pounds of Oyster Shell Recycled in 2022!

A big thanks to our restaurant partners who contributed to a successful pilot year of the Oyster Shell Recycling Program!



33,768 lbs.



15,095 lbs.



224 lbs.

The waste oyster shell is used to create vertical oyster gardens—structures suspended from docks to create a hard substrate to which juvenile oysters can attach. The shells will also create oyster shell bars to restore lost habitat systems to the bay, prevent further erosion of the shoreline and improve water quality through natural biological filtration.

In January 2023, Crabby Bill's St. Pete Beach and Crabby Bill's Indian Rocks Beach joined the program, so we hope to double our shell intake this year! #EatMoreOysters

Our sincerest thanks to the sponsors of the Oyster Shell Recycling Program: Neptune Flood Insurance and Duke Energy Foundation.



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## Snakes of the Esstuary Slithering in Soon

The Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center is set to launch **Snakes of the Esstuary**, sponsored by Rob and Diane Klingel, in late spring 2023. The exhibit will feature a variety of snakes native to the Tampa Bay region. Species on rotation will include a red corn snake, a yellow rat snake, a scarlet kingsnake, a banded water snake, and others.



Nicole White, Animal Husbandry Specialist, handles a scarlet kingsnake, Jack.

Exhibit signage and tactile artifacts will be designed to educate visitors about snakes' importance to the local ecosystem, species identification techniques, and related research projects. The Discovery Center will also offer related public programs and field trips.

"I hope guests will walk away with an enhanced awareness of how critical snakes are for a healthy ecosystem and the crucial role they play to keep things balanced. I want them to leave the Discovery Center feeling more positive about snakes and ready to serve as ambassadors for the species on display," said Nicole White, Animal Husbandry Specialist. Follow [@tbwdiscoverycenter](https://twitter.com/tbwdiscoverycenter) on social media or visit [tbwdiscoverycenter.org](https://tbwdiscoverycenter.org) for more information.



### Corn Snake

PANTHEROPHIS GUTTATUS

**SIZE:** Approximately 24 to 72 inches long

**NATIVE HABITAT:** Most abundant in Florida and other southeastern states.

**LIFESPAN:** Corn snakes live up to 23 years in human care, but their lifespan is shorter in the wild.

Corn snakes are slender, orange or brownish-yellow snakes with a pattern of large red blotches outlined in black down their backs. Their name may have originated from the markings on this snake's belly, which resemble maize, or Indian corn. *Source: nationalzoo.si.edu*



## Corporate Members

Our corporate members support the programs and projects vital to Tampa Bay Watch. The Tampa Bay watershed drives the local economy and is a primary factor in the quality of life for the region. Contact Molly Robison at 727-867- 8166, x232 to learn more about corporate giving opportunities!

### Thanks to these Corporate Members who Restore the Bay Every Day:

4 <sup>th</sup> Street Family Dentistry	Great Bay Distributors	Resort Realty
Affinity CPA, P.A.	Greenacre Properties, Inc.	Southern Pension Service
Amuni Financial	Gulfeagle Supply	Southport Financial Service
Argos	HH Insurance Group, LLC	Tampa Bay Pilots Association
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The Don CeSar	McNichols Company	The Florida InfoGuide
DSK Law	Mosaic	Tier 1 Pest Solutions
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GPZ Services, Inc	Doc Ford's Book Series	
Grand Central		
Brewhouse		

## Donor Spotlight: George & Isabel Adams



George and Isabel Adams have generously sponsored the Bay Watch Log since 2012 to offset printing expenses. They've expressed why they've chosen to support us: "Having lived near Tampa Bay all of our lives, we share a deep love for these waters and the creatures that live in them. We remember when the bay was far less healthy, so we are committed to doing everything we can to sustain, improve and protect this beautiful body of water that gives us so much pleasure."

## An On-Screen Invasion

The Discovery Center's education team completed the development and launch of a first-of-its-kind Virtual Invasive Lionfish Dissection app in late 2022. Hands-on lionfish dissections with real fish harvested during invasive species tournaments are popular among Discovery Center guests and field trip groups; however, not all students are able to visit the St. Pete Pier to participate. The iPad-based app was created to increase accessibility and expand opportunities for the community to learn about invasive species that impact Tampa Bay and surrounding areas.

Although the app is freely available to the public to download, the program is designed to pair with an engaging, in-person lesson led by a Discovery Center educator. This lesson supplements the virtual dissection with activities and additional information about anatomy, physiology, and invasive species. The virtual dissection is now available to classes in Pinellas County as part of the Discovery Center's Marine Science on the Move mobile education initiative.



*Discovery Center Education Coordinator Zoe Caraffi demonstrates the virtual lionfish dissection to children at the New Hope Christmas Holiday Festival.*

## Save the Date:



Get Hooked on the Silver King  
June 16, 2023





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#### OUR MISSION:

Tampa Bay Watch is dedicated to fostering a healthy Tampa Bay watershed through community-driven restoration projects, education programs, and outreach initiatives.



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

## Save the Date for Earth Night 2023

Save the Date! The Discovery Center's annual party, Earth Night, will be held Thursday, April 20, 2023 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Tampa Bay Watch in Tierra Verde. This year, the event will feature sustainable seafood growers, chefs, and craft beverage producers from the Tampa Bay region. Guests will be invited to sample ocean-grown products prepared by talented faces from our area's culinary scene, paired with drinks chosen to complement the flavors and spirit of each dish. The event is a celebration of local food, and an opportunity to taste and learn about environmentally friendly Florida aquaculture. Ticket details will be available soon.



The Bay Watch Log is a 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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