

Summer 2023 Issue

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Native Wetland Planting Program Expands into Community

Our restoration team is expanding our native planting program by developing wetland plant nurseries in public locations, in collaboration with key restoration partners. Earlier this year, we established two community nurseries at Robinson Preserve, in partnership with Manatee County's Natural Resources Department staff, and finished planting the nurseries in May. Our native plantings help to restore valuable wetland habitats that provide numerous benefits for our water bodies, promote biodiversity, improve water quality, and provide unique habitats for wildlife.

We are excited to announce the establishment of a new school wetland nursery at Autism Inspired Academy! Being a part of the program provides the opportunity for students to participate in hands-on restoration of degraded wetland habitats around the Tampa Bay watershed. Students are



responsible for the maintenance of their on-site salt marsh nursery, as well as transplanting to a restoration site and recycling the nursery to begin the cycle again.

"Native plants sustain the incredible variety of natural habitats in the Tampa Bay area and are highly valued by the native wildlife that have adapted to live with these plants.

Our native planting projects are a tool for helping to restore that balance and restore lost habitats that play a vital role in maintaining the health of our environment," states Tara Kok, Tampa Bay Watch Native Planting Program Coordinator.

A big thank you to all the AIA students and staff, Manatee County staff, and the volunteers who helped to construct and plant these newly established nurseries, and for taking part in our native planting program to help restore the health of Tampa Bay.



Did you know. . .

Natural coastal habitat can result in huge savings when it comes to storm protection. According to coastalresilience.org, 0.5 square miles of restored wetland habitat will avert approximately \$37-252 million in damages in the Tampa Bay area.

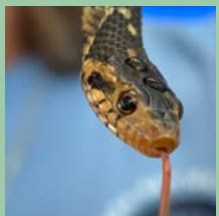
Upcoming:

JULY 15 Ghost Trap Rodeo

AUGUST 19 Great Bay Scallop Search

OCTOBER 21 Evening for the Bay

SLITHERING IN SOON: The Discovery Center's newest exhibit, Snakes of the Esstuary, opens in July! Tampa Bay Watch members are invited to meet and greet a variety of native species at our special launch event. Keep an eye on your Email inbox for details.



August is National Make-A-Will Month



Make restoring the bay part of your legacy. Tampa Bay Watch has recently partnered with FreeWill to give all of our supporters the opportunity to write a legally valid will online, completely for free. FreeWill can take less than twenty minutes to complete and makes it simple to leave your legacy with Tampa Bay Watch. By including Tampa Bay Watch through a provision in your will, your Stock, IRA, or bequest gifts will directly contribute to coastal restoration and marine science education for generations. As our gift to you, a Legacy Reef Ball with your inscribed message will become part of a living shoreline in Tampa Bay.

Ready to get started? Contact Michelle Yopez at (727) 867-8166, ext. 249.



18th Annual Tarpon Rodeo Best Yet

Congratulations to Team Directed Capital who brought home the perpetual trophy and first place in Guardian Division of 2023 Tarpon Rodeo by safely releasing two fish! **A grand total of \$128,370 was raised which will allow us to continue to protect and restore our waterways** through scientific volunteer projects, as well as educate locals and visitors about the importance of our fresh and brackish waters.

Invertebrates in Tow

The Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center is excited to announce a new partnership with the St. Petersburg Housing Authority to **deliver engaging marine science education programs to children** in our community.

In June, environmental education specialists Brianna Varner and Dana Donkle visited the Jordan Park neighborhood with a variety of live animal ambassadors and biofacts to share with students on summer break. Dozens of residents visited our Marine Science on the Move van to interact with and learn about crabs, sea stars, live shells, and other common invertebrates found in Tampa Bay.

"Many kids in Jordan Park rarely get to visit the beach, so we're grateful to be able to bring a little piece of it to them," said Donkle. "Our hope is that seeing some of these fascinating creatures will spark curiosity and inspire people to help take care of our natural resources."



A Splashin' Good Time on the Sandbar

Departing every Saturday from the St. Pete Pier!

Join the Discovery Center's eco-vessel crew for a sandbar snorkeling excursion to Mermaid's Cove. This sandy slice of paradise is shallow and calm, offering the perfect environment to practice your snorkeling skills. Our team of knowledgeable marine biologists will teach you everything you need to know. You'll spot small fish and invertebrates as they go about their day in the bay, and we'll even scoop a few in our nets so you can take a closer look.

Not so sure about snorkeling? Guests are also welcome to swim, wade, or lounge in the shade aboard our comfortable catamaran. "This is a great way for locals and visitors of all ages to spend time on the water this summer," said Eco-Vessel Coordinator Savannah Gandee. "We'll do our very best to make sure everyone enjoys the outing and has a chance to observe some of our favorite local species." Visit tbwdiscoverycenter.org/eco-tours for more information.



False Arrow Crab

METOPORHAPHIS CALCARATA

CHARACTERISTICS: Rough triangular carapace and spines at their leg joints.
HABITAT: Found in the Gulf of Mexico and its bays.

Crew members aboard Tampa Bay Watch's eco-vessel recently found a false arrow crab. True arrow crabs—or yellowline arrow crabs—are found on coral reefs and have yellow lines on their smooth carapace.

Join us for an eco-tour of Tampa Bay to see local marine life up close! Learn more at tbwdiscoverycenter.org.



Guardians of the Bay

Tampa Bay Guardians sustain habitat restoration projects, marine science education programs, and volunteer efforts through an annual contribution of their choosing. Email myepez@tampabaywatch.org to be welcomed as the newest Tampa Bay Guardian!

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

Susie Bolton
Paul and Pat Brown
Bobby and Elena Bussey
Dana and Frank Dalton
Jonathan and Nicole Day
Beth and John England
Jerry Fletcher and Liza Carter
Christopher French

Kathy and Roger Herrnsteen
Kathryn Howd and Edward Rucks
Harold and Janet Hurwitz
Erik and Julia Lieberman
Pam and Tom O'Brien
James and Leslie Parent
Dr. James Pascia
Drs. Janet and Eli Rose



Legacy Society Spotlight: Patricia Schmieg

"The reason why I became a legacy donor is very similar to the reason that I began volunteering with Tampa Bay Watch. Every time I visit the TBW facility in Tierra Verde or the Discovery Center, I **learn something new** from the excellent staff about all the wonderful things that are happening through the efforts of TBW to restore and protect Tampa Bay. Seeing and learning these things made me want to extend my participation in a lasting way beyond volunteering and attending events.

I believe that as the community becomes more aware of TBW that they will consider making a lasting donation to protect and restore our area and our waters in a lasting way as I have," expresses Dr. Patricia Schmieg.



Logan's Love Funds Six Scholarships

Our sincerest thanks to Logan's Love for raising \$2,135 for our 2023 summer camp scholarship fund! Logan's Love is a

local nonprofit founded in memory of Logan Helene Renshaw to encourage positive change, focusing on the development of children, building strong communities, and improving the environment.

On an annual basis, Tampa Bay Watch offers free camp tuition to 28 campers per season awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. The goal is to provide high-quality, inclusive summer camp programs for children ages six to fifteen.

Mark your Calendar for the Great Bay Scallop Search!

Tampa Bay Watch will be recruiting volunteers to participate in the Great Bay Scallop Search on **Saturday, August 19** by snorkeling selected sites within Boca Ciega and Lower Tampa Bay for bay scallops. The goal of the event is to monitor and document the health and status of the bay scallop population.

We mainly recruit volunteers with shallow draft boats, but have limited spots for canoes and kayaks. We also accept registrations from snorkelers without boats, but participation depends on a boater having room for you aboard their vessel. Watch for online registration coming soon at tampabaywatch.org.





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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 Evening for the Bay 2023

New date and location!

Join us **October 21 at the Tampa Museum of Art**. The 2023 gala will be an unforgettable evening as we highlight the efforts of the community over the past 30 years, and set the stage to raise critical funds to continue *Restoring the Bay Every Day*.

The Reef Ball
EVENING for the BAY
Presented by
Honest1
AUTO CARE

OCTOBER 21, 2023 **NEW DATE & LOCATION**

TAMPA MUSEUM OF ART
120 Gasparilla Plaza, Tampa, FL 33602

Join us for this momentous occasion as Tampa Bay Watch celebrates 30 years and the Pearl Anniversary of coastal conservation.

Reserve tickets at tampabaywatch.org/efb

CELEBRATING THE PEARL ANNIVERSARY OF COASTAL RESTORATION

RESTORING THE BAY EVERY DAY FOR
30
YEARS
TAMPA BAY WATCH

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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