

The Bay Watch Log

News and events from
**TAMPA BAY
WATCH**
Restoring the Bay Every Day

Fall 2023



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More Shells for Shorelines



SHELLS FOR SHORELINES
OYSTER SHELL RECYCLING PROGRAM

We're thrilled to announce new funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which will allow us to expand our Shells for Shorelines oyster shell recycling program! \$1,141,971 over three years will support two full-time employees dedicated to the program with a goal to recycle 100 tons of shell annually and expand from seven to twenty participating restaurants by 2026.

The funds are a result of our partners at Restore America's Estuaries' efforts to pass a bipartisan infrastructure law and create the Gulf of Mexico Community Based Oyster Recycling and Reef Restoration Network. This collaboration brings together five organizations in the Gulf of Mexico to support oyster restoration, shell recycling, and community engagement. A special thanks to Representatives Vern Buchanan and Kathy Castor for supporting this proposal.

Tampa Bay Watch has recycled 100,759 pounds of waste oyster shell from local

restaurants since launching the program in 2022. Not only does this initiative keep material out of landfills, the shell is used to create Vertical Oyster Gardens and living shorelines to restore lost habitat systems to the bay, prevent further erosion of the shoreline and improve water quality through natural biological filtration.



Participating Restaurants:

Crabby Bills Indian Rocks Beach & St Pete Beach	CoCo's Crush North Beach
The Island Grille & Raw Bar	Hookin' Ain't Easy
The Oyster Bar	The Tides Seafood Market & Provisions
The Helm	PJ's Oyster Bar
Oystercatchers	Bar Fly Safety Harbor

Do you have a recommendation for a restaurant to recycle oyster shells with us? Contact Rick Radigan at rradigan@tampabaywatch.org.



Fall Giveaway: Win a Family Four-Pack of Eco Boat Tour Tickets!

Explore the unseen corners of Tampa Bay, learn about the flora and fauna that make it unique, and enjoy the crisp bay breeze with family against the area's breathtaking backdrops.

Scan the QR code and enter to win!



Upcoming Events:



NOVEMBER 15 & 16 Oyster shell project at 2D Island

NOVEMBER 18 & DECEMBER 16 Liquid to Land: Discover St. Pete's Waterfront History

NOVEMBER 25 Fishing Workshop

NOVEMBER 30 Reef ball installation at Abercrombie Park

SELECT DATES IN DECEMBER Holiday on the Bay Sunset Cruise

DECEMBER 7 & 8 Oyster shell project at MacDill AFB

DECEMBER 12 Mono Clean-a-thon



Discovery Delivered

The Discovery Center recently launched a partnership with the City of St. Petersburg Housing Authority (SPHA) to deliver experiential STEM education programs to underserved communities in our area. "After learning that it can be difficult for families to travel the beach or pier and cover the associated costs, we arranged for educators to travel via van to present engaging activities and facilitate interactions with a variety of animal ambassadors," said Zoe Caraffi, Discovery Center Education Coordinator.

"Tampa Bay Watch brought delight to our families when they visited us on our

public housing property! It was a new experience for our youth to be able to touch and interact with nature. The event brought families together and taught them a different way of thinking about animals and our environment," said Abby Everingham, SPHA Director of Social Services.

This partnership is part of Marine Science on the Move, an initiative to overcome transportation barriers by bringing meaningful learning opportunities directly to students at their location.



A Tribute to Dick Jacobs

The Tampa Bay Watch crew is saddened by the recent loss of Richard O. (Dick) Jacobs. Dick was a long-term supporter of our efforts by serving on our Advisory Council, participating in our special events, and contributing to the growth of our organization through our Bay Guardians and Founding Membership programs.

A lawyer by training, he was also a renowned nature photographer and environmental advocate. Dick used breathtaking images from his travels to encourage us to be "Planeteers" or people who make the world a better place by our love of nature. He was a firm believer in getting kids outside and appreciated our efforts to learn about the bay by getting muddy hands and wet feet. Dick

lived near our headquarters in Tierra Verde and he and his wife were often seen walking Pinellas Bayway picking up debris.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Dick's wife, Joanie, and his family.



Eastern Oyster

CRASSOSTREA VIRGINICA

The Eastern oyster is a keystone species which provides essential habitat for many different organisms - large and small. Oysters are filter-feeders and one oyster can clean up to 50 gallons of water in one day.

Source: FWC & NOAA

SIZE: Average 3–5 inches in length; can grow up to 8 inches

LIFESPAN: Up to 20 years

RANGE: occurs in coastal waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, from Canada to Mexico. These bivalves are primarily found in areas in estuaries.

Corporate Members Support Bay Restoration

Our corporate members and partners 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 our corporate members for their support:

4th Street Family Dentistry
Affinity CPA, P.A.
Amuni Financial
Argos
AVPro Global Holdings
Bloomin' Brands
BlueWave Products
Dolman Group
The Don CeSar
DSK Law
ECOmersions
Edge Marine Construction

Elite Watersports
Florida Nomad
Florida Pure Sea Salt
Freedom Boat Club
General Dynamics
GPZ Services, Inc
Grand Central Brewhouse
Great Bay Distributors
Greenacre Properties, Inc.
Gulf eagle Supply
HH Insurance Group, LLC
Honest 1 Auto Care

KMW Legal
MC Consulting LLC
McNichols Company
Mosaic
Power-Pole
Precision Painting Group
Premier Sotheby's
International Realty,
Brittany Ranew
Randy Wayne White - Doc
Ford's Book Series
Resort Realty

Southern Pension Service
Southport Financial Service
Tampa Bay Parrot Heads in
Paradise Club
Tampa Bay Rays
Tier 1 Pest Solutions
TJM Properties
TradeWinds Resort
Winter & Yonkers
Wireless Time Partners



Did you know...

The Eastern Oyster was once abundant in Tampa Bay with estimates as high as 2,000 acres of oyster reefs found throughout the estuary prior to the 1940s. Due to numerous human-related activities, it is estimated that 171 acres of oyster habitat remain which represents an 85% loss in area.



32 Scallops Found in Great Bay Scallop Search

It was a great day on the bay for the 28th Annual Great Bay Scallop Search on August 19! Despite expanding the event this year, a grand total of 32 scallops were found. There are several factors that influence local scallop populations: seagrass extent, water quality, predator-prey relationships, and recreational harvest. With only one egg out of twelve million surviving to adulthood and a lifespan of only one year, achieving a stable, sustainable population of these blue-eyed beauties will take time, effort, and community support!

Thank you to all of the boaters, kayakers, and snorkelers who participated in this important citizen science event. A special thanks to the Tampa Bay Estuary Program who partnered with us to run the event and sponsored the commemorative shirts.



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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!

Lessons Learned from Sharks

Our Director of Education, Katie Mastenbrook, had an amazing opportunity over the summer by participating in a 7-day field course at the Bimini Biological Field Station Foundation Shark Lab. The goal of the program is to provide an opportunity to educators who can reach students that otherwise have no connection to the ocean. Katie swam and interacted with several species of sharks during the field course including, nurse sharks, juvenile lemon sharks, black nose sharks, and Caribbean reef sharks. She related the up close interactions to what our students may be experiencing by getting into the estuary for the first time. Whether they are nervous or curious, having the opportunity to learn beforehand with a connection to a hands-on experience is invaluable. Not only did Katie strengthen her own knowledge, but she gained lesson plans and activities to bring to our education program. Ultimately she enjoyed connecting to educators to ensure that our team is providing the best learning opportunities for students, campers, and lifelong learners!



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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