Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve: Successful Partnerships for the Environment

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About Tampa Bay

• Largest open-water estuary in Florida
• Encompasses nearly 400 square miles
• Watershed covers a land area of about 2,200 square miles
• More than 100 tributaries drain into Tampa Bay
What Impacts Our Bay

- Coastal Development
- Wastewater treatment plants and industrial discharges
- Widespread dredging and filling
- Shipping channels
- Stormwater Runoff
What’s Making the Difference?

• Dredging the Tampa ship channel completed in 1981
• City of Tampa improved wastewater management practices in the mid-'80s
• Wetlands protection (controls on dredging and filling, stormwater treatment) in 1982
• Community education
• Youth stewardship
• Habitat restoration
Restoration in Action

- Salt Marsh Plantings
- Oyster Domes & Bars
- Fishing Line Recycling
- Coastal & Bird Nesting Island Cleanups
- Stormwater Runoff Awareness
- Derelict Crab Trap Removal
- Seagrass Transplanting & Monitoring
- Bay Scallop Monitoring
- Cockroach Bay Oil Boom Program
- Native Plants & Invasive Plant Removal
Restoration: Salt Marsh

- **Problem(s):**
  - Coastal erosion
  - Loss of fish habitat
  - Loss of feeding habitat (birds)

- **How we Help:**
  - **BAY GRASSES IN CLASSES:**
    - Schools build and maintain their own plant nurseries
  - **COMMUNITY SALT MARSH PLANTINGS:**
    - To stabilize shorelines from erosion and introduce restored habitat

6 months **AFTER 2012**  BEFORE
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Early History of Cockroach Bay

- What’s in a name?

- Most pristine section of Tampa Bay.

- Public concern in late 1950’s established the aquatic preserve system of today.

- In 1969 a 40 foot shipping channel was built for Port Manatee.
Early History of Cockroach Bay

- Purchased by Hillsborough County-ELAPP in 1991.
- Series of farm fields and shell mining pits.
- Part of multi-agency partnership coordinated by Southwest Florida Water Management District’s Surface Water Improvement and Management program.
- Construction of restoration efforts began in 1996.
Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve

- 875 acres originally purchased by Hillsborough County-ELAPP in 1991.
- Over the years 500 acres of wetlands, uplands, and coastal habitats have been restored.
  - 220 Uplands
  - 280 wetlands
- Total acreage of the Preserve is 1,027 that is managed by the State and County.
Flashback

1938

1969

1989
To Now

- Estuarine wetlands restoration 2012
- Freshwater wetlands restoration 2011
- One-Armed Pond restoration 1997
- Braided tidal creek restoration 2005
- Palustrine marsh restoration 2003
- Salt barren restoration 2010
- Marsh restoration 2004
- Stormwater pond restoration 1997
- Mt. Cockroach

Boat Ramp

Cockroach Bay Road
Partners of Success

AmeriCorps
City of St. Petersburg
City of Tampa
Coastal America*
Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve Program
Cockroach Bay User’s Group
Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission*
Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
Florida Department of Environmental Protection*
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Hillsborough County Stormwater and Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program*
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)-
National Marine Fisheries Service
Peninsula Design and Engineering Inc.

Scheda Ecological Associates, Inc.
Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD)*-
SWIM, Operations, and Survey Depts.
State of Florida*
Tampa Bay Estuary Program
Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
Tampa Bay Watch
Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority*
Tampa Port Authority*
University of South Florida
United States Army Corps of Engineers
United States Environmental Protection Agency*
United States Geological Survey
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
And over 2,500 Community Volunteers

*Provided project funding.
Tampa Bay Watch Involvement

Stormwater
Tidal Creek

One Arm
Pond with Creek

Braided
Tidal Creek

Leisey Pit
Stormwater Tidal Creek

- Construction was finished in 1996.
- Work was done by SWFWMD crews.
- Tampa Bay Watch started planting in 1999.
Stormwater Tidal Creek

Before

After
Stormwater Tidal Creek

Volunteer Planting
Stormwater Tidal Creek

- Construction began in 1996.
- 1,010 volunteers planted 87,000 plugs.
- 24.5 acres
One Arm Pond with Creek

- Construction was completed in 1997 for one armed pond.
- Construction was completed in 1999 for tidal creek.
- Work was done by SWFWMD crews.
- Tampa Bay Watch planted in 1999.
One Arm Pond With Creek

Before of Creek

After of Creek
One Arm Pond With Creek

Before of One Arm Pond

After of One Arm Pond

1995

2012
One Arm Pond with Creek

Volunteer Planting
One Arm Pond with Creek

- 260 volunteers
- 24,000 plugs
- 55.8 acres
Braided Tidal Creek

- Construction was completed in 2005.
- Tampa Bay Watch began planting in 2005.
Braided Tidal Creek

Before

1995

After

2012
Braided Tidal Creek

Before construction

After construction
Braided Tidal Creek

- 289 volunteers
- 34,400 plugs
- 17 acres

2006

2012
Leisey Shell Pit

- Construction began in 2011.
- Tampa Bay Watch began planting in Dec. 2011.
Leisey Shell Pit

Before 1995

After 2012
Leisey Shell Pit
Leisey Shell Pit

Before
Leisey Shell Pit

After
Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve: Successful Partnerships for the Environment

- Total Acres Restored: over 209 acres
- Total Volunteers: 1,842 community volunteers
- Does large scale restoration work?
- Lesson Learned
Thank you for your support!

www.tampabaywatch.org