

Bay Post

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An e-newsletter featuring Tampa Bay news and updates from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program
www.tbep.org



TBEP Board Endorses Model Fertilizer Ordinance

TBEP's Policy Board in November approved a model ordinance regulating urban fertilizer use in the Tampa Bay region. The ordinance is intended to reduce nitrogen pollution from stormwater flowing into the bay and other surface waters.

Local governments are encouraged, but not required to adopt the ordinance, which:

- Restricts application of Nitrogen and Phosphorous on lawn and landscape plants from June 1-September 30, the summer rainy season.
- Prohibits application of Nitrogen or Phosphorous fertilizer within 10 feet of a water body.
- Restricts the retail sale of lawn fertilizers containing Nitrogen and Phosphorous during the summer.
- Establishes a licensing and certification program for lawn care professionals.
- Urges local governments to provide information about the nitrogen content of reclaimed water to customers using reclaimed for lawn irrigation.

Nitrogen is the primary pollutant in Tampa Bay. Residential runoff, including fertilizer residues, accounts for about 32% of the total amount of nitrogen carried in stormwater to the bay. TBEP research indicates that a compliance level of 50% with the ordinance could reduce the bay's nitrogen burden by 84 tons per year.

The model ordinance, and supporting documents, can be viewed at <http://www.tbep.org/Fertilizer/FertilizerHomePage.html>

Support the Tampa Bay Estuary Program This Holiday Season



Don't forget TBEP when you're tucking gifts in that Christmas stocking!

Individual and corporate donations are vital to our work. Please consider a tax-deductible contribution that will support our outstanding education and outreach activities (like those you're reading about in this newsletter) and our innovative bay restoration projects.



It's easy to join our team: Just click on the "Donate Now" button at www.tbep.org. Donations are processed through PayPal, a secure online payment processing system.

The TBEP staff wishes all our friends and partners the happiest of holidays, and a very BAY-FRIENDLY New Year!

2009 Bay Mini-Grants Put "People Power" to Work For The Bay



TBEP will award \$144,682 to 26 community organizations for projects that help to restore Tampa Bay or educate citizens about the bay. Projects range from a kayak-based stewardship program for troubled youth to a neighborhood-supported scallop restoration effort.

Projects awarded through the Bay Mini-Grants program will begin in January and must be completed by December 2009. The grant recipients were selected by members of TBEP's Community Advisory Committee and approved by the Program's Policy Board.

Community groups typically may receive up to \$7,500 for bay restoration or education projects. This year, a matching grant from the Pinellas County Environmental Fund allowed TBEP to offer special grants up to \$10,000 for habitat restoration projects.

Projects awarded in this category include eradication of Brazilian pepper in the Ballast Point area of Tampa and restoration of coastal wetlands at the George McGough Nature Park in Largo.

And, for the first time this year, TBEP offered \$500 Teacher Support Grants to pay for classroom supplies, field trips or training for public and private school teachers. A complete list of the 2009 grant recipients can be found at www.tbep.org/NewFiles/PressRelease2008_09BayMiniGrants.pdf



TBEP Director Receives Award

TBEP's Executive
Director Holly

Greening was honored recently by the Tampa Bay Partnership for her work in helping to promote the "One Bay" regional visioning effort.

Holly received an award for "Excellence in Regionalism" for



serving on the One Bay executive committee. The other committee members honored were Dave Moore, director of the Southwest Florida Water Management District; Manny Pumariega, director of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council; Dan Mahurin, Chairman of SunTrust Bank; and Scott Shimberg, President of Hyde Park Builders.

"One Bay" is continuing the regional visioning effort begun in 2007 with Reality Check Tampa Bay, seeking consensus on a sustainable growth strategy for the Greater Tampa Bay region for the next 50 years. For more info, visit www.myonebay.com



TBEP Funds Canoe Trail Markers

Two newly marked paddling trails in Upper Tampa Bay were created with financial support from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program.

TBEP purchased signs for the “Double Branch Run” and the “Nature Center Run,” to help canoeists and kayakers

navigate through the maze of mangrove islands that surround Hillsborough County’s popular Upper Tampa Bay Park. Together the trails offer 2 miles of scenic paddling opportunities

“These two trails will make life easier for boaters and attract additional paddle enthusiasts who take advantage of the waters of our beautiful Tampa Bay,” said Mark Thornton, Director of Hillsborough County’s Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department.

Canoeing and kayaking are increasingly popular ways to experience our aquascapes. TBEP also has financed canoe trail marking in the Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve and recently purchased markers for a soon-to-be-marked paddling trail in the Little Manatee River.



Give A Day For The Bay

TBEP’s “Give A Day For The Bay” team of volunteers descended on Little Bayou Park in south St. Petersburg in late October to continue removing invasive plants and replanting the area with native shrubs, trees and flowers. This is the second workday TBEP has conducted at the small bayfront park.

The 35 volunteers planted pine trees, removed invasive vines, hand-pulled Brazilian pepper seedlings and flagged native plants that are emerging naturally at the site

as it undergoes restoration. TBEP provided lunch and t-shirts for the volunteers, while work activities were led by Ray Wunderlich, a Native Plant Society member who lives near the park and serves on TBEP’s Community Advisory Committee.

TBEP Policy Board Member Jamie Bennett, a St. Petersburg City Councilman, also donated some “sweat equity” to the workday.

The next “Give A Day For The Bay” workday will be Jan. 17 at E.G. Simmons Park in Ruskin. To sign up, e-mail nanette@tbep.org



Estuary Academy 2008 Explores Bay Wildlife

Some 75 citizens from throughout the Tampa Bay region attended the 6th Annual Estuary Academy at Weedon Island Preserve on November 8. In keeping with this year's theme, "Wildlife in the Watershed," participants learned about a variety of creatures that live in, on and around Tampa Bay, from tarpon and scallops to bats and toads. The day featured a series of brief lectures and hands-on workshops both indoors and outside on the bay itself.

Many thanks to all the wonderful speakers and workshop instructors who helped make Estuary Academy a success!



Participants in the Diamondback Terrapin workshop took turns assembling a terrapin shell from smaller pieces



This yellow bat was one of the stars of the "Bats in Our Backyard" workshop



Attendees in the Wading Bird workshop simulated various wading bird feeding techniques using common household items

TBEP Receives Nearly \$750,000 in Grants

TBEP was recently awarded several competitive grants from local and national organizations to pursue research in bay projects and restoration in Tampa Bay. The projects will involve numerous TBEP partners and will help to support the program's many goals. The grants include:

Feather Sound Tidal Wetland Restoration Project - With \$346,090 from the Pinellas County Environmental Fund and \$40,000 from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, TBEP and partners will develop restoration plans and obtain permits to restore 50 acres of degraded tidal wetlands along Feather Sound. Initial restoration of 5 acres may involve filling ditched canals and re-directing runoff from the nearby watershed. Volunteers will help by planting salt marsh in restored areas.

Development of a Coordinated Approach to Compensatory Mitigation in the Bay Watershed - With \$250,000 from EPA Region IV, TBEP will explore whether mitigation performed by private entities can be used to advance the habitat restoration goals in the Tampa Bay watershed. Currently, areas restored as part of mitigation requirements do not count towards TBEP's overall habitat goals.

McKay Bay Sediment Quality Action Plan Development - TBEP will receive \$55,000 from the Hillsborough County Pollution Recovery Fund to define "hot spots" of sediment contamination in McKay Bay and develop actions plans to remediate those areas.

TBEP Bay Mini-Grants - The Pinellas County Environmental Fund will provide \$50,000 to support the Bay Mini-Grants program by funding community-driven habitat restoration projects.