



STRATEGIC PLAN | 2022-2026



Tampa Bay Watch has grown tremendously over the last twenty-eight years of operation. Our mission has been focused on mobilizing the Tampa Bay community to participate in restoration and education programs. We have coordinated more than 250,000 volunteers, students, and campers, installed 15,000 oyster reef ball units and 2,500 tons of oyster shell to create miles of oyster shell reef communities, planted more than 1,000,000 salt marsh grass plants to restore 250 acres of coastal tidal ponds to Tampa Bay and we still have much more to accomplish!

As an organization, Tampa Bay Watch more than doubled our size in July 2020 by opening the Discovery Center on the new St. Pete Pier. We've expanded our mission to inspire visitors to become stewards of their own environment by sharing the story of the recovery and ongoing restoration of Tampa Bay. The goal of the Discovery Center is to advance environmental stewardship by engaging, informing, and inspiring visitors to the St. Pete Pier about the recovery of Tampa Bay.

With the Discovery Center now open, our staff and board members identified this time as ideal to develop a new strategic plan to address the growth and needs of our operation. The new vision and mission statement reflect our goal to enact impactful change in support of the organization, our community and the environment. The intent of this plan is to take Tampa Bay Watch to the next level of growth, addressing needs and infrastructure to ensure it will be an environmental mainstay for many generations to come.

Mark Chmielewski, Board Chair
December 2021



This report provides a strategic roadmap for Tampa Bay Watch (TBW) for 2022 to 2026. The updated strategic plan clearly communicates shared programmatic priorities and intended outcomes, as well as provides a framework that guides decisions about how to align personnel and financial resources with the program’s mission in ways that maximize the program’s impact on Tampa Bay recovery. It also identifies and recommends action for operational and organizational issues identified through the strategic planning process.

This report is based on interviews conducted with staff, directors or partners, a two-day workshop, and meetings with leadership and program staff. This document has been reviewed and was approved by the board of directors on December 8, 2021.

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BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE

Mike Wilson, Mark Chmielewski, Mary Ann Renfrow, Larry Weiner, Chip Webster, and Lari Johnson.





Tampa Bay Watch Strategic Focus Areas, Objectives, Actions, and Measures

These define a general direction in which the organization wants to head into the future.

THIS STRATEGIC PLAN IS BUILT AROUND THREE FOCUS AREAS:

1. **Restore a healthy Tampa Bay** using science-based solutions to benefit fish, wildlife and the community.
2. **Tampa Bay Watch will provide engaging and immersive educational programs** focused on the Tampa Bay ecosystem and its interconnectedness to our daily lives and the world's oceans.
3. **Community outreach, stewardship, and volunteer engagement** to increase collective awareness and support for a healthy Tampa Bay.

FOR EACH, THE PLANS DEFINE:

- **Organizational Objectives:** what the organization wants to accomplish.
- **Priority Actions:** actions that describe what the organization will do to accomplish its objectives.
- **Measures:** the metrics the organization will use most often to quantify, manage, and communicate results



Focus:

Restore a healthy Tampa Bay using science-based solutions to benefit fish, wildlife, and the community.

THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Tampa Bay is an invaluable resource that is fundamentally important to maintain and sustain for future generations.
- It fosters and expands partnerships and collaborations to advance ecologically important projects.
- A healthy Tampa Bay estuary is an important economic engine for our region.
- It provides an opportunity for community involvement in hands-on restoration projects for the benefit of Tampa Bay.
- The Tampa Bay estuary is a critical environmental and economic resource.
- It will create and restore lost habitat.



OBJECTIVES

- Design and implement community-based restoration in regard to expressed community needs and desires for a healthy Tampa Bay.
- Identify areas for ecologically impactful and meaningful projects.
- Use science as the foundation of our restoration efforts, allowing for evolution and evaluation of successes and challenges.
- Cultivate partnerships that allow for collaborative and impactful projects.
- Develop the critical resources and funding necessary to implement community-based restoration in Tampa Bay.
- Mitigate and communicate about coastal resiliency and climate impacts efforts through our environmental programs and outreach activities.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Implement projects including those focused on living shorelines (oyster reefs, coastal/wetland plantings), Bay Grasses in Classes (BGIC), marine debris removal, seagrass restoration, scallop search.
- Implement the North Shore Seagrass Mitigation Bank project and, if successful, pursue additional mitigation banking opportunities.
- Generate an evolving list of potential restoration projects for the next three to five years for the purpose of project planning and identifying funding needs.
- Cultivate, expand, and create new partnerships and opportunities with agencies and organizations that provide high quality science and facilitate future projects.
- Provide the resources to current and future staff to improve and expand the best practices for TBW projects.
- Continue to seek grant funding that aligns and supports TBW efforts while also expanding development opportunities (foundations, individual supporters, corporate sponsors, etc.)
- Coordinate with partner organizations and agencies to evaluate opportunities to participate and define TBW's role in regional resiliency and climate impact issues.

MEASURES

- An approved annual list of priority restoration projects, partnerships, and funding opportunities to be undertaken over the next three to five years.
- Implement: annually two or three living shorelines projects (including reef balls, oyster shell bars, wetland plantings) and approximately 10 marine debris removal efforts; and engage 10-15 schools in the BGIC program and other priority projects.
- Obtain, permit, construct, manage and maintain the North Shore Seagrass Mitigation Bank.
- Develop an organizational position paper on climate impacts and resiliency that will define Tampa Bay Watch's role in addressing these issues (climate impacts and resiliency) and quantify the benefits of its restoration projects.

RESILIENCY

TBW recognizes the importance of increasing the bay's resiliency. To understand this issue and position the organization to have the greatest impact across its three strategic focus areas, TBW will:

- Develop a position paper that spells out organization priorities.
- Partner with existing and new partners from whom we can learn and with whom we can work on these priorities.
- Review the program portfolio to ensure resiliency and mitigation is included in our programs, projects as well as facilities and outreach.



Focus:

**Tampa Bay Watch
will provide
engaging and
immersive
educational
programs focused
on the Tampa Bay
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oceans.**



WE DO THIS TO:

- Provide education materials and resources through experiential programming opportunities for all.
- Help people better understand the importance of the TB estuary, its role in their daily lives, and its interconnectedness to the surrounding environment.
- Encourage an opportunity to create a personal connection to the environment, specifically the TB estuary and help foster future bay area leaders and stewards.
- Help people better understand TBW’s organizational role and responsibilities and how we are helping to ensure Tampa Bay remains a healthy, sustainable ecosystem for future generations.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

- Evaluate current and future programs to identify means/needs in respect to physical space, cohesiveness, collaboration, and resources.
- Analyze current and planned future programming to ensure it increasingly includes STEM and standards-focused curriculum.
- Establish research standards and possible collaborators for internal programming, then share findings with other organizations and the broader community.
- Enhance and expand our programming for underrepresented community members.
- Identify and increase public program opportunities at TV and DC.
- Collect data on, analyze, and establish metrics for program evaluation and success.

MEASURES

- Create existing and future programming that incorporates STEM and state standards by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.
- Review current partnerships and update standards and reporting methods.
- Identify programming opportunities beyond the existing on-site programming for underrepresented communities.
- Create a master database for all educational programming.



Focus:

Community outreach, stewardship, and volunteer engagement to increase collective awareness and support for a healthy Tampa Bay.



TBW WILL ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE BAY’S HEALTH. THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- It helps the community understand our vision and mission.
- Encourages our members and donors and the broader community to take ownership of and advocate for a healthy Tampa Bay.
- Creates personal connections between TBW and our members, donors, and the Tampa Bay community.
- Education and outreach are critical to creating engagement and involvement.
- Encourages the community to do their part to support a healthy Tampa Bay.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

- Increase awareness of TBW within the Tampa Bay region.
- Review existing and identify new sources of support.
- Utilize the entire TBW organization to leverage its brand and story.
- Expand media outreach.
- Develop an overall outreach strategy centered around resiliency.
- Continue and expand advocacy and institutional relationships.

MEASURES

- Grow the number of all new members by 25% annually.
- Grow the annual number of DC attendees by 5%.
- Maintain a membership retention rate of 80%.
- Gain three new corporate members per quarter.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Tampa Bay Watch is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. To make real progress on this important, companywide theme, we will incorporate DEI throughout these three strategic focus areas, and all our programs and projects. Specifically, we will:

- Continue to learn and apply the principles and practices of an organization that is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Diversify our audience to include underrepresented communities and develop off-site educational programming that better serves these communities.
- Diversify our workforce through a strategic hiring and recruitment strategy to better reflect the places where TBW works and the region's population overall.
- Consider how the organization selects its subcontractors and sets targets for accessing and supporting companies that are minority and/or women owned.
- Increase TBW board diversity by re-assessing its policies and its criteria for board recruitment; and actively seek board candidates from the communities where TBW works.



Program funding and capacity needs

Tampa Bay Watch anticipates a growth rate of 10-20% on an annual basis. Staff has identified funding and capacity requirements to fully realize the objectives and actions outlined above. These both assume that current funding continues in a steady state, and the necessary capacity, internal systems and physical infrastructure can be added to support this growth. The organization will develop a detailed five-year forecast that provides additional detail.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

All Tampa Bay Watch staff has provided input on operational issues which are impediments to successfully implementing the strategic goals. The strategic planning team has agreed to actions to make progress on resolving each of the following issues:

- Maintain consistency in branding throughout all Tampa Bay Watch departments to communicate one unified mission.
- Develop a succession plan and implement a Chief Executive Officer role to strengthen organizational leadership and streamline operations.
- Create an infrastructure plan for both physical and virtual platforms in order to improve technology, provide a conducive working environment and provide space for the addition of new staff.
- Invest in people and build capacity that can meet future demand through the expansion of Human Resources support, increasing professional development offerings, and regularly gauging staff satisfaction.
- Clearly identify roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors.





VISION

Ensure Tampa Bay remains a healthy, sustainable ecosystem for future generations.

MISSION

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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