

Estuary Program Awards \$85,000 in Community Grants for 2016

The Tampa Bay Estuary Program has awarded more than \$85,000 to 17 community groups for projects that directly involve citizens in restoring and improving Tampa Bay.

This year's Bay Mini-Grant program attracted 21 applicants. Members of the Estuary Program's Community Advisory Committee evaluated the grant proposals, recommending 17 for full or partial funding. Grant requests were eligible for as little as \$500 up to \$10,000.

Funds for the Mini-Grant program come from sales of the Tampa Bay Estuary license plate – also known as the "Tarpon Tag."

The 2015-2016 award recipients, by county where activities will occur, are:

Hillsborough County

Community Stepping Stones

Achievement Through Leadership in Arts and Science (ATLAS)

\$5,000.00

Ten teens from the Sulphur Springs neighborhood will take part in the "Water Tour" program, a comprehensive water education module that combines science and art. Participating teens will learn about the region's water resources through in-depth weekend sessions, and then create a graphic novel about water incorporating what they have learned, for distribution to kids throughout the community.

Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful

Environmental Education Program

\$5,000.00

This education initiative expands the STEM curriculum per the Florida Standards. The partnership with STEM includes in-classroom presentations & field trips to the Florida Learning Garden (FLG) at the Florida State Fairgrounds. Presentations & field trips supply students with the opportunity to engage in hands-on service learning about sustainable agriculture and landscaping.

Lowry Park Zoological Society of Tampa, Inc.

Teens4Tampa Bay: Protecting Water Resources with Rain Gardens

\$4,280.00

The Zoo will involve 25 of their Teens4TampaBay club members in an exploration of the region's natural ecosystems, their relationship to community health, and water resources

protection through field trips and after-school sessions. Students will then put their knowledge into practice by creating a small rain garden at the Zoo, including interpretive signs they will design.

Stewart Middle Magnet School

From the Source to the Sea

\$5,000.00

Funds will be used to remove invasive plants, build a portable platform to bridge the shoreline to the river so students can have access to the river, buy native plants and provide learning field experiences to compare and contrast ecosystems that are part of the Tampa Bay Estuary.

Tampa Bay Watch

Fantasy Island Native Vegetation Planting

\$10,000.00

Tampa Bay Watch, in partnership with the Florida Aquarium and Port Tampa Bay, is proposing to expand the existing living shoreline stabilization project along the southern shoreline of Fantasy Island, located in Hillsborough Bay. In addition to stabilizing the shoreline, native vegetation will provide habitat and food sources for wildlife, improved water quality, and offering hands-on volunteer opportunities.

Tampa Shores Special District #60

Tampa Shores Storm Water Filtration System Improvement

\$5,000.00

This grant will expand the initial effort begun in 2013-14 by installing and maintaining five more stormwater inlet catch baskets in this waterfront community in the Town n' Country area of Upper Tampa Bay. The catch baskets capture lawn clippings, trash, and oils and greases before they enter the bay, to reduce pollution from storm water runoff.

Terrace Community Middle School

Stewardship Science

\$3,500.00

Parent volunteers, teachers and students will improve a modified wetland area at this middle school in Thonotosassa. The wetland will serve as an outdoor classroom and will provide various hands-on science investigations, observation stations, and community participation in restoring a natural habitat.

Manatee County

Manatee School for the

Arts

ration, education through field work and aquaculture

Explo

\$2,000.00

Students will become stewards of Florida's largest estuary through field trips to Tampa Bay Watch as well as maintaining an on-campus aquaculture tank which will be used to help promote conservation of local fish species by raising juvenile redfish.

Anna Maria Island Turtle Watch

Shorebird Monitoring Educational Toolkit

\$4,450.00

Grant funding will provide education about protecting nesting sea turtles and shorebirds. Volunteers will teach classes using the Flippers and Feathers Activity Book. Two new door hangers will be designed, one for sea turtles and one for shorebirds, using images created by local elementary school children.

Around the Bend Nature Tours

Protecting our Watershed through Bird Education

\$4,970.00

Manatee County third graders will take field trips to Felts Preserve, where they will rotate through three a series of activities to learn about native wildlife species in the bay watershed.

ArtCenter Manatee

Low-Impact Landscaping

\$5,000.00

The ArtCenter will partner with the University of Florida IFAS Extension to design and install low-impact landscaping at the highly visible entrance to the Center in Bradenton. Students in the FFA program at a local high school will participate in the project, and learn about the benefits of eco-friendly landscaping to reduce stormwater runoff, conserve water and provide wildlife habitat.

Anna Maria City Pier Park

Anna Maria City Pier Park Development

\$10,000.00

Project will restore parkland surrounding the pier, now six city-owned lots, using native, salt-tolerant plant species that existed on the site more than a century ago.

Palma Sola Botanical Park

Interpretive Signs and Botanical Markers

\$4,200.00

Volunteers will plant native plants around three ponds to reduce erosion and attract bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Identification signs and markers will be installed throughout the park to designate native vs. non-native plants.

Pinellas County

Blue Turtle Green Bird Society**Vote with Your Butts****\$933.68**

Four “voting stations” will be installed at locations identified as problem areas for improper cigarette butt disposal, where the butts are likely to end up in a waterway (such as fishing piers, boat ramps, beaches, campgrounds, etc.). Stations will give participants opportunities to choose one side of an issue or the other by depositing cigarette butts.

Friends of Boyd Hill Nature Preserve**Kayaks for Education and Cleanups****\$5,000.00**

Funds will purchase eight tandem kayaks and sixteen paddles for litter cleanup projects, exotic plant removal, & environmental education programs on Lake Maggiore, Lake Eli & Clam Bayou Preserve. New kayaks will enhance programs that Boyd Hill has been successfully operating for more than two decades.

Keep Pinellas Beautiful**We all Live Downstream – A community watershed assessment and litter removal program****\$6,616.56**

Watershed litter assessments will be conducted and coordinated through expanded residential and shoreline adoption programs. Participants will collect data about the types of quantity of trash they collect, to facilitate better source-tracking and focused education to reduce litter.

UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County**Soil Moisture Sensor Education and Assistance Program****\$4,575.00**

Homeowners in a neighborhood in the Lake Tarpon watershed will receive a soil moisture sensor (SMS) to be installed on their irrigation system by a qualified contractor. SMS devices have been shown to reduce irrigation water by 50% in a research setting. The project will provide education about Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ to HOA residents with focus given to the connection between stormwater runoff and the health of the bay.

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