



# Tampa Bay Estuary Program: A Partnership for a Healthy Bay

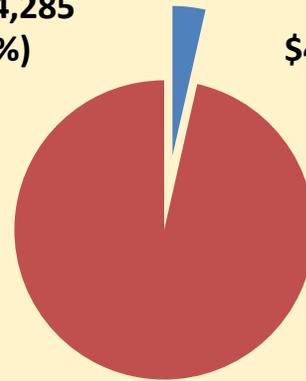


## TBEP is a good return on your investment!

For your annual base funding support of \$138,335 over the past 3 years, TBEP has leveraged almost **\$6 Million** in additional funding to implement projects that benefit Tampa Bay.

**Return**  
**\$5,814,285**  
**(93%)**

**3-Year Investment**  
**\$415,005**  
**(7%)**



*TBEP leveraged \$14 for every \$1 contributed by SWFWMD!*

## TBEP Highlights and Accomplishments for 2016

### Tampa Bay Seagrasses Continue to Surpass Recovery Goal

Seagrasses in Tampa Bay increased by more than 1,360 acres, or nearly 3.3%, since 2014, adding to the record-breaking gains reported two years ago, according to survey results. Overall, seagrasses cover 41,655 acres of bay bottom, a number that continues to surpass the 38,000-acre goal set by TBEP, and sets a new record for the highest amount of seagrass documented since 1950. However, the aerial surveys that form the basis of the seagrass estimates were conducted during the winter of 2015-2016 – before the torrential rains of last summer caused emergency sewer discharges into portions of the bay.

The seagrass surveys are coordinated by scientists with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). Aerial photos are taken every two years in winter, when bay waters are clearest.



The seagrass assessment is bolstered by results from monthly water quality sampling conducted by the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County. All major bay segments met water quality targets in 2016.

The combination of water quality and seagrass information gives bay managers a valuable set of tools to assess the bay's overall health, tracking long-term progress in restoring the bay and serving as an early-warning system for potential problems.

| Year | Old Tampa Bay | Hillsborough Bay | Middle Tampa Bay | Lower Tampa Bay |
|------|---------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1974 | No            | No               | No               | Yes             |
| 1975 | No            | No               | No               | Yes             |
| 1976 | No            | No               | No               | Yes             |
| 1977 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1978 | No            | No               | No               | Yes             |
| 1979 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1980 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1981 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1982 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1983 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1984 | Yes           | Yes              | No               | Yes             |
| 1985 | No            | No               | No               | Yes             |
| 1986 | No            | No               | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1987 | No            | Yes              | No               | Yes             |
| 1988 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1989 | No            | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1990 | No            | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1991 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1992 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1993 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1994 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1995 | No            | No               | No               | Yes             |
| 1996 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1997 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 1998 | No            | No               | No               | No              |
| 1999 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2000 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2001 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2002 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2003 | No            | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2004 | No            | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2005 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | No              |
| 2006 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2007 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2008 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2009 | No            | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2010 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2011 | No            | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2012 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2013 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2014 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2015 | No            | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |
| 2016 | Yes           | Yes              | Yes              | Yes             |

# Accomplishments for SWFWMD in 2016

## Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund

The Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund (TBERF) is an annual competitive grants program with goals to restore Tampa Bay and its watershed. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program and the national non-profit organization Restore America's Estuaries encourage contributors from public and private sectors to participate. In the first three years (2013, 2014 and 2015), over \$2M was contributed by 12 public and private sector partners, providing support for 26 competitively-awarded projects which will result in measurable environmental benefits including:

- more than 1,050 acres and 1,000 linear feet of coastal habitat restoration
- more than 15,000 square feet of oyster reefs
- 466 acres of freshwater wetland restoration
- 200 acres of seagrass
- 112 acres of coastal uplands restoration
- treatment of urban runoff from 500 acres of highly urbanized areas



**SWFWMD Cooperative Funding is a cornerstone contributor to TBERF.**

## Rock Ponds Ecosystem Restoration Project

Years in the making, the Rock Ponds restoration site is one of the largest single coastal ecosystem restoration project in Tampa Bay. With 274,144 cubic yards of soil excavated to create 38 acres of tidal channels, lagoons, intertidal islands and meandering shorelines, this project transformed barren agriculture land into a mosaic of environmentally beneficial habitats. After contractors did the heavy lifting, volunteers were enlisted to populate areas with native plants.



Nearly 400 volunteers installed 40,000 plugs of marsh grass in 2 hours! Rock Ponds was a collaborative effort of multiple public and private entities and funded in part by the Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund.

## Volunteer Clean-Up Furthers Rock Ponds Restoration

TBERF's popular Give-A-Day for the Bay program partnered with SWFWMD's Rock Pond Restoration managers to bring 40 volunteers to Rock Ponds for a clean up. Nearly 1 ton of trash and debris, including popular items like discarded plastic bottles, cups, old tires and wood, were removed.



**Thank you for your continued support of this proven partnership program!**

263 13th Ave S, Suite 350 • St. Petersburg, FL • 33701 • (727) 893-2765  
Executive Director: Holly Greening • hgreening@tbep.org • www.tbep.org