TBEP is a good return on your investment!

For your annual base funding support of $33,397 over the past 3 years, TBEP has leveraged almost $6.2 Million in additional funding to implement projects that benefit Tampa Bay.

TBEP leveraged $61 for every $1 contributed by St. Petersburg!

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.
Accomplishments in St. Petersburg for 2016

Community Mini-Grants Benefit St. Petersburg

Over the last 3 years TBEP has awarded $65,331 in community improvement Bay Mini-Grants to benefit the City of St. Petersburg including:

- Wetland Enhancements at Crescent Lake
- Reducing Microplastics education program
- Building a Basic Observation Buoy to study water, wind and salinity at Canterbury School of Florida

Sales of the Tampa Bay Estuary specialty license plate fund the grant program. $1.6 million has funded 330 community restoration and education projects for Bay improvement since 2000.

Wild and Wonderful Tampa Bay: Summer Camp Instructor Training Module and Workshops

A Tampa Bay-focused summer camp module, targeting children in grades K-3 attending traditional summer camps offered by our local government Parks & Recreation Departments, was developed. The module contained activities that recreation departments can provide throughout the course of a week, or as one entire day of learning. Programming included resources for instructors, hands-on, age-appropriate activities that teach about fish, wildlife, habitats, and simple ways to keep the bay healthy through positive behavior changes.

Service and Social Sharing Programs Benefit St. Petersburg

TBEP lead students from Eckerd College’s Into the Streets Service Learning group on a journey through the Booker Creek watershed to show how storm water runoff can affect water quality in Tampa Bay. Students also cleaned up trash along the Booker Creek shoreline—before it entered the Bay.

TBEP also recently developed a new social sharing campaign to foster awareness and stewardship of Tampa Bay. Share a photo or digital postcard on a popular social media site and show how you love Tampa Bay.

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

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TBEP is a partnership of Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas counties; the cities of Clearwater, St. Petersburg and Tampa; the Southwest Florida Water Management District; the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the US Environmental Protection Agency.