Pinellas County Environmental Fund

Annual Report 2006

Funding Partnerships for Tampa Bay

Pinellas County Environmental Fund

Least Tern hatchlings waiting for parents' return.

Photo credits:
Cover: Bryon Chamberlin Photography
Inside cover: Nature's Lore Photography

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About the Pinellas County Environmental Fund (PCEF)

A Pinellas County-based funding program helping to restore and revitalize one of America's top ten estuarine habitats.

Our Mission

To conserve, restore, and enhance the natural resources of the Tampa Bay area for its citizens and visitors through education and innovative, sustainable conservation partnerships.

Right: Kayaking in Weedon Island's mangrove trails, one of Tampa Bay's treasures.

PCEF is a unique partnership between the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. These three groups share the common goals of actively pursuing the protection, restoration, and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat around Tampa Bay. PCEF is funded by the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and corporate and individual sponsors. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation administers all grant awards on behalf of PCEF. Projects funded by PCEF support the Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (see www.tbep.org). For funding priorities from PCEF and how to apply, visit **www.nfwf.org/pcef.**

Pinellas County Environmental Fund

Proof of PCEF Success

The proof is in the numbers. Funding generated in Tampa Bay goes right back into Tampa Bay.

Endangered Wood Stork finds a resting spot.
Photo courtesy of Bryon Chamberlin

15

projects funded in 2006, ranging from habitat restoration to environmental education.

1.9 million dollars were committed in 2006 to support Tampa Bay-focused efforts.

Action = Impact

2.7

million dollars were leveraged in addition to the $1.9 million provided by PCEF.

4.6

million dollars in total conservation investments in 2006.

2.4:1 cumulative return on investment in 2006.

Visit www.pinellas.wateratlas.usf.edu.

In 2006, $37,700 was applied toward the completion of the Pinellas County Water Atlas, an interactive website that provides information on local water resources, watershed planning, environmental events, and school curriculum. Year one of the Pinellas County Water Atlas project was funded in part by PCEF, allowing the web site to go live.

Tampa Bay Defined:

Salt Water Meets Fresh Water

Submitted by Nanette O'Hara, Tampa Bay Estuary Program

From a waterway battered by pollution in the 1970s, to its amazing recovery beginning some 25 years ago and continuing today, the Tampa Bay story is one of resilience and rebirth.

Together, we have made great strides in restoring the bay. For example:

Seagrasses have been increasing at the rate of 250-300 acres in recent years, thanks to improved water quality.

Water clarity is as good as it was in the 1950s in most of the bay.

About 2,350 acres of marshes, mangroves and other critical habitats were restored in the Tampa Bay ecosystem over the last decade.

Islands in the bay continue to support large and diverse colonies of wading and shorebirds. As many as 26,000 pairs of 25 different species nest here each year.

An estuary on the mend...

But there is still much to be done! The coming years will bring a host of new challenges as well as ongoing threats. With your support, the Pinellas County Environmental Fund will help to keep Florida's largest open-water estuary on the road to recovery.

Belted Kingfisher with a catch.
Photo courtesy of Bryon Chamberlin

You can help: Go to www.nfwf.org/give to donate and commit to helping Tampa Bay.

To learn more about the Pinellas County Environmental Fund, please visit www.nfwf.org/pcef.

Vice Admiral Lautenbacher

NOAA and PCEF:

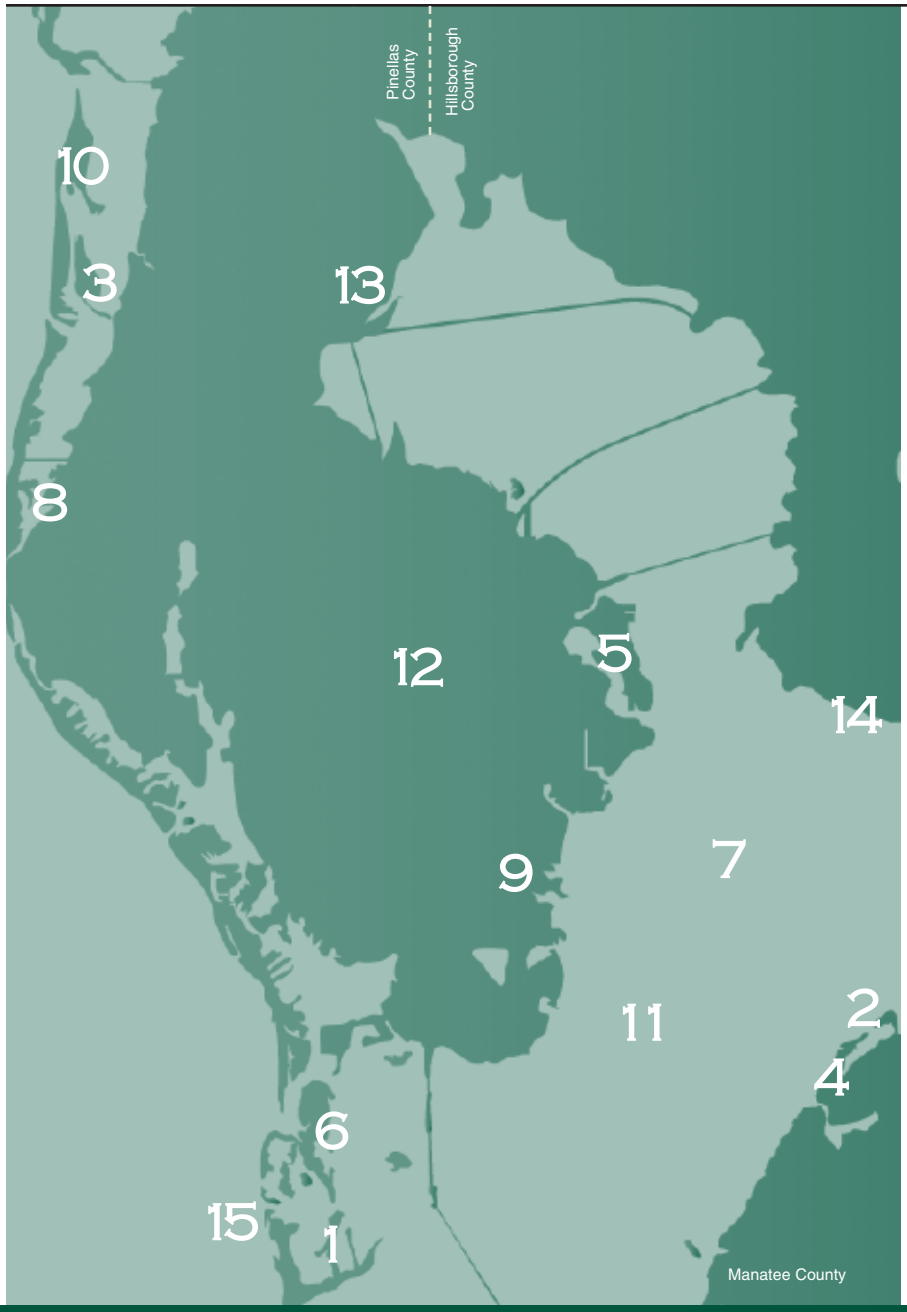
A Partnership of Commitment

I applaud the Pinellas County Environmental Fund for their accomplishments in helping to restore, protect and conserve the natural resources of Tampa Bay. These efforts are essential to the future health and sustainability of our nation's coastal resources and fisheries, and I am proud that NOAA is a partner in this endeavor.

- Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., NOAA Administrator, retired Navy Vice Admiral

Grant Award Locations
2006 Tampa Bay Projects

Project type:
- Education
- Habitat
- Applied Research
- Species



1 Mullet Key Seagrass Scar Restoration
2 Wolf Branch Creek Habitat Restoration
3 Clearwater Invasive Species Removal-II
4 Assessing Wetland Restoration Success
5 Effects of Saltern Restoration-III
6 Tampa Bay Stewardship Initative-III
7 Youth for a Change-IV
8 McKay Creek & Chesnut Park Restoration
9 Tropicana Field Storm-water Enhancement
10 Monitoring Key Bird Nesting Colonies-III
11 Pinellas County Water Atlas-II
12 Pinellas County Classroom Teacher Grants-IV
13 Environmental Distance Learning-V
14 Tampa Bay Longshore Bar Seagrass Restoration
15 Assessment of Seagrass Restoration-II

To learn more about the Pinellas County Environmental Fund, please visit www.nfwf.org/pcef, or to donate, visit www.nfwf.org/give.

PCEF Funding Details

2006 Grant Awards

Symbol legend:
- PCEF award
- Grantee match
- Funding grant total

1 **Mullet Key Seagrass Scar Restoration**
University of South Florida
$71,234 $76,061 $147,295
Restore approximately one kilometer of seagrass in prop scars near Mullet Key.

2 **Wolf Branch Creek Habitat Restoration**
Preserving the Environment through Ecological Research, Inc.
$25,000 $28,500 $53,500
Restore 5-6 acres of critical freshwater habitats utilized by wildlife.

3 **Clearwater Invasive Species Removal - II**
City of Clearwater
$100,000 $100,000 $200,000
Removal and control of exotic vegetation from approximately 105 upland acres.

4 **Assessing Wetland Restoration Success**
Eckerd College
$89,777 $89,777 $179,554
Conduct study to determine restoration success of wetland functionality to five mangrove sites in Tampa Bay.

5 **Effects of Saltern Restoration - III**
Preserving the Environment through Ecological Research, Inc.
$42,520 $45,000 $87,520
Monitoring and public awareness for saltern restoration (vegetation and wildlife).

6 **Tampa Bay Stewardship Initiative - III**
Tampa Bay Watch, Inc.
$135,080 $136,600 $271,680
Community-based restoration in Tampa Bay, including seagrass, scallops, bird nesting, and derelict crab trap removal.

7 **Youth for a Change - IV**
Earth Force, Inc.
$136,200 $136,200 $272,400
Continue supporting local educators with year-long professional development program that will provide students with hands-on environmental education.

8 **McKay Creek and Chesnut Park Restoration**
Pinellas County Culture, Education & Leisure Department
$345,875 $913,210 $1,259,085
Restore native scrub at McKay Creek Greenway and Chesnut Park.

9 **Tropicana Field Stormwater Enhancement**
Rays Baseball Foundation
$225,000 $280,000 $505,000
Create exhibit area featuring native vegetation to educate stadium visitors.

10 **Monitoring Key Bird Nesting Colonies - III**
Audubon Florida
$139,000 $252,310 $391,310
Manage 40 coastal islands as habitat for 50,000 nesting pairs of 30 waterbird species.

11 **Pinellas County Water Atlas - II**
Pinellas County Dept. of Environmental Mgt.
$37,700 $38,484 $76,184
Enhancement of Pinellas County Water Atlas, an interactive web site with local water data.

12 **Pinellas County Classroom Teacher Grants**
Pinellas County Education Foundation
$60,000 $90,000 $150,000
Continue enabling teachers to develop projects for protection and conservation education.

13 **Environmental Distance Learning - V**
PossibleNow, Inc.
$106,992 $106,992 $213,984
Continue supporting Teacher on Assignment to train educators and provide classroom support.

14 **Tampa Bay Longshore Bar Seagrass Restoration;** *Tampa Bay Estuary Program*
$283,500 $283,500 $567,000
Construct and compare longshore bar restoration techniques for seagrass reestablishment.

15 **Assessment of Seagrass Restoration - II**
University of South Florida
$86,818 $86,550 $173,368
Evaluate success of seagrass transplantation.

How PCEF Funding Made a Difference:

Tropicana Field Stormwater Enhancement Project

Major League Baseball's Tampa Bay Devil Rays teamed up with the Pinellas County Environmental Fund, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, and Florida Yards & Neighborhoods to turn the main entrance of Tropicana Field into a thriving Florida-friendly environment.

Booker Creek, a vital tributary to Tampa Bay, runs through the heart of the county and also serves as the entryway to Tropicana Field. Over the years, Booker Creek has seen heavy pollution which has resulted in the severe influx of trash into Tampa Bay.

The main goal of the project is to allow visitors to see how the Rays use Florida-friendly landscaping to create a beautiful and thriving habitat that can be duplicated in their own backyards. An equally important goal is to educate consumers about stormwater runoff and the impact their actions can have on the environment.

Through creative signage surrounding the project and entertaining messaging during Rays games, all attendees to Tropicana Field will be exposed to great environmental practices.

Promoting Florida-friendly practices through example.

Congressman C.W. Bill Young

NFWF and PCEF:

Successful Grant Management

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have enjoyed another year of successful partnerships to restore and enhance the natural resources of Tampa Bay.

Through the Pinellas County Environmental Fund, 15 new projects were supported around the Bay to educate our citizens and visitors, protect our precious resources, and restore habitats for fish and wildlife. I look forward to continuing to work with you to enhance the quality of life that is so important to us here in Tampa Bay.

- C.W. Bill Young
Member of Congress

How PCEF Funding Made a Difference:

McKay Creek and Chesnut Park Restoration Project

Great Blue Heron and chick
Photo courtesy of Nature's Lore Photography

Through a grant from the Pinellas County Environmental Fund, over 300 acres of Pinellas County public lands will be restored, benefiting the plants and animals that depend on these lands for their survival, as well as the people who enjoy the beauty and recreational opportunities the parks provide. Sixty acres of native ecosystem, including globally imperiled scrub, at McKay Creek Greenway and 255 acres of native ecosystem at Chesnut Park will be restored through the planting of native plant species. Pinellas County once contained approximately 1,000 acres of scrub, most of which was lost to development, making the restoration and protection of the county's remaining scrub habitat even more crucial. In addition, 24 state or federally listed species at these sites will benefit from the restored habitat. Visitors to the parks can learn more about the project and the importance of preserving native habitats and ecosystems as they walk the hiking paths throughout the parks or take advantage of interpretive tours that will be offered.

Over 300 acres of Pinellas County public lands will be restored.

A word from Ronnie Duncan,

Board of County Commissioners

The Pinellas County Environmental Fund is bringing together government, non-profits, academics, and citizens to work cooperatively to conserve the natural resources that make Pinellas such a special place to live. The Pinellas County Commissioners are proud to support these partnerships that are so important to our future.

- Ronnie Duncan
Chair, Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners

Financial Summary for PCEF:

Another Year of Funding Success

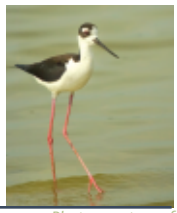


Photo courtesy of Bryon Chamberlin

Pinellas County Environmental Fund

Schedule of Funding Received and Awarded
October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006

Funding Received:	
Grant funding balance from previous years	$ 1,446,700
Pinellas County	350,000
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	936,890
Funding available	**$ 2,733,590**
Grants Awarded and Administration:	
Grants and Program Administration	$ 52,500
Pinellas County funds awarded	116,500
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration funds awarded	1,767,845
Total Grants Awarded and Administration	**$ 1,936,845**
Grant Funding Balance:	**$ 796,745**

At a Glance: Grants awarded & administration

Since its inception in 2000, the Pinellas County Environmental Fund has awarded **116 projects,** committing close to **$9 million** that has leveraged an **additional $13.5 million** -- for a total conser-vation investment of **$22.5 million** and a cumulative **2.5:1 return** on investment.

What Makes PCEF Work?

Local Action with National Assistance

Photo courtesy of Bryon Chamberlain

Through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's matching grant program, county and federal funds are leveraged many times over, doubling or tripling each partner's original investment. These funds are also catalysts for attracting support from the community and international corporations.

By providing new sources of funds, many local government and nonprofit organizations are able to implement projects that might otherwise never leave the planning stages. By bringing these organizations together with government agencies, partnerships are formed that extend well beyond the duration of the grant.

Visit nfwf.org/pcef to learn more, or to donate to Tampa Bay restoration efforts.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are working with local partners on cutting-edge solutions to Tampa Bay's environmental challenges. Together, we are helping PCEF to become an example of cooperation and communication, demonstrating the synergy that occurs when government and private sectors join forces.

PCEF Advisory Committee:

Peter Betzer, Ph. D., Dean, College of Marine Science, University of South Florida, St. Petersburg

Will Davis, Director, Pinellas County Environmental Management Department

Dick Eckenrod, Executive Director, Tampa Bay Estuary Program

John Iliff, Southeast Regional Supervisor, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Restoration Center, St. Petersburg

Sallie Parks, Community Leader, Palm Harbor

Jerry Smith, Ph.D., Retired Professor of Biology, St. Petersburg College, St. Petersburg

Peter Stangel, Ph.D., Director, Eastern Partnership Office, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Atlanta, Georgia

Jacob F. Stowers, Community Leader, Largo

Funding Partnerships for Tampa Bay

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation sustains, restores, and enhances the Nation's fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats. Through leadership conservation investments with public and private partners, the Foundation is dedicated to achieving maximum conservation impact by developing and applying best practices and innovative methods for measurable outcomes.

Through its mission and vision, the Foundation is committed to achieving measurable outcomes and will use the best science available to focus its efforts and regularly define, evaluate, and reevaluate where and how it makes its conservation investments. With this clear "stake in the ground," the Foundation intends to put itself at the forefront of a movement to drive accountability for sustainable conservation results.

A special thanks to Tampa Bay photographers who graciously provided images for this year's Annual Report:

Nature's Lore Photography
natureslorephotography.com

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Please visit www.nfwf.org/pcef for more information about the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pinellas County efforts.

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