



TAMPA PORT AUTHORITY

Best Practices

The Fantasy Island Story

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Environmental Role

- Port has a long-standing commitment to the environmental integrity of the Tampa Bay region
- Port engages in many environmental projects and initiatives
- Port works with environmental agencies, like EPC, Audubon Society, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, etc.

Background . . .

- Late 70s-early 80s– 4 acre island constructed of dredge material during Tampa Harbor Deepening Project
- Over time, non-native, invasive/exotic plant life made the island inhospitable to visitors
- 2000– a coalition began to discuss restoring the island as on-the-water educational and environmental project for Tampa Bay
- Critical partnerships formed

Background, cont.

- Port engaged in planning and funding efforts
- Development drawings and plans, and permitting procedures for construction
- Removal and treatment of non-native, invasive/exotic vegetation
- More than 7,000 plants transported and planted
- May 2006– TPA and its partners opened Fantasy Island to the public

Overgrown Island Before Development



BIG Three Factors

- Partnerships, Partnerships, Partnerships!
 - Committed stakeholders
- Funding Sources
 - Grants, in-kind services
- Research and Planning
 - Development of facilities, ongoing maintenance, school curriculum

Key Port Partners

- The Florida Aquarium



- Tampa Electric Company



- U.S. Coast Guard



Delivery of Plants & Equipment



Volunteers – Lots of them!



School Curriculum

- Hillsborough County school teachers
- Florida Aquarium Staff Members
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute Representative/FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission



Equipped for Education

Restoration/Shoreline Protection Projects
(Reefballs, oyster shell bars, salt marsh plantings)

**Informational Kiosks
and Educational Signs**

**Pavilion
“Classroom”**

Boat Dock/Pier
(ADA Compliant)

Rainwater Recovery System
(Fresh water for plants)



Ecotours



Maintenance Challenges

- Maintenance of facilities
 - Every 2-3 months, volunteers help maintain trails
 - Maintenance dredging around boat berthing area
- Care of habitat/plant life
 - Control of invasive plants
 - Litter clean up
- Vandalism/security issues
 - Theft and destruction of signs
 - Dock and pier damage



Read All About It!

Fantasy Island gets a facelift

■ The island in Hillsborough Bay will be cleaned up, planted with native vegetation and opened for public tours through the Florida Aquarium.

By BABITA PERSAUD
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — The island in Hillsborough Bay known as Fantasy Island is getting a new name, new look and new purpose.

This week, hundreds of volunteers are replanting the island with palms, sea grapes and other species. The hope: to turn this dredged up in the 1980s — educational park for public tours — into a finished at the bay. The island has paths, a playground and a pavilion.

Times
4-23-01



Welcome to Fantasy classroom

■ The plan will create a facility on Fantasy Island to teach about Florida's plants.

By STEVE HUETTEL
Times Staff Writer

7-18-01

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TAMPA — A 4-acre island made out of sand and rock dredged from the bottom of the bay will be turned into an outdoor classroom for teaching about wild Florida plants.

The Florida Aquarium and Tampa Port Authority plan to replace exotic species with native Florida plants and build a dock, nature trails and a teaching pavilion on Fantasy Island in Hillsborough Bay.

The port board agreed Tuesday to jump-start the project with a \$50,000 loan. Tampa Electric Co. will contribute up to \$150,000 for the construction, port and aquarium officials said.

By late fall, the island should be ready for visits from school groups and other visitors, said Ilze Berzins, the aquarium's director of animal health, conservation and research.

Educational programs will focus on the importance of natural habitats, the hazards of non-native species to Florida and how wildlife can live side by side with industry, she said.

"A lot of people don't know what's in

Please see CLASSROOM

Port Authority, Aquarium Honored For Environment-Friendly Fantasy Island

TAMPA — A joint environmental effort between the Tampa Port Authority and The Florida Aquarium

of a \$150,000 grant. An education pavilion also is in the works.

"What the classroom will do is study both the habitat of the bay and the port's role," said port spokeswoman Lori Rafter.

The Florida Aquarium sponsors daily "eco tours" of the island, where Brazilian pepper trees were cleared and native vegetation planted.

Rafter mentioned there are plans for a "much more interactive children's program" at the port.


7-17-02

Janis D. Froelich

Coast and a cutting to mulch, and to cover the island is left intact. Including sea oats, red cedars will be stacked, senior horticulturist at the Florida Aquarium. The island is the only island not managed by the state. It was suggested by local schools. The project is being funded by local companies, including Gardiner Trust Fund, which was the outcome of a settlement after a 1988 chemical spill in Hillsborough Bay. The spill resulted in a fish kill, millions of dollars in fines and a lot of bad publicity for Gardiner Inc., a fertilizer manufacturer with phosphate mining operations near the bay.

Awards

- 2002 Gulf of Mexico Program, EPC
 - 1st Place in Partnership Category
- 2004 Florida Native Plant Society
- 2004 Tampa Bay Regional Planning Environmental Award

A poster titled "GULF GUARDIAN AWARD WINNERS 2002" with a yellow border. On the left is a vertical image of sand dollars on a beach, with the text "1st Place" overlaid. The right side lists winners by category: Business (BP America, Inc.), Youth/Education (The Project CATE Foundation, Inc.), Government (City of Baytown), Civic/Nonprofit Organization (Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage, Inc.), Individual (Dr. Sharon Walker), and Partnership (The Florida Aquarium). A URL and contact information are at the bottom.

**GULF GUARDIAN AWARD WINNERS
2002**

1st Place

Business
BP America, Inc.
Gulf of Mexico Business Units
Suite of Environmental Stewardship Programs
Houston, Texas

Youth/Education
The Project CATE Foundation, Inc.
Rabbit's Big Splash
Mobile, Alabama

Government
City of Baytown
Baytown Environmental Enhancement Program
Baytown, Texas

Civic/Nonprofit Organization
Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage, Inc.
The Fish Preserve
Cortez, Florida

Individual
Dr. Sharon Walker
J.L. Scott Marine Education Center & Aquarium
Biloxi, Mississippi

Partnership
The Florida Aquarium
Fantasy Island:
A Cooperative Conservation & Education Project
Tampa, Florida

<http://www.epa.gov/gmnp>

The Gulf of Mexico Program
Mail Code: EPA/GMPO
Stennis Space Center MS 39529-6000
Phone: 228-688-1159
Fax: 228-688-2709

More to Come!

- General visitor programs
- More Teacher workshops
- Completion of grant-funded programs for Hillsborough County Marine Science classes
- Addition of other grade levels and counties

Thank You!



TAMPA PORT AUTHORITY
