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.
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
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

Boat Dock/Pier
(ADA Compliant)

Pavilion
“Classroom”

Rainwater Recovery System
(Fresh water for plants)
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
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.

Welcome to Fantasy classroom

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

Port Authority, Aquarium Honored for Environment-Friendly Fantasy Island

TAMPA — A joint environmental effort between the Tampa Port Authority and The Florida Aquarium, which is a small man-made island in Tampa Bay, has been recognized.

The Florida Aquarium is recognized for its environmental efforts, including Protec-Texico Pro-Aqua Award and an Award for Innovation in Galapagos Islands.

Welcome to Fantasy Island

The island is cleared and native vegetation is being reintroduced.

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

The project is being funded by local companies, including Gardiner Trust Fund, which was the outcome of a settlement after a 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
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!