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Subject: MSTU Special Projects Funding FY25 Application Form Submission Result #32013375
Date: Monday, October 20, 2025 3:31:17 PM

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Full Legal Organization Name (Required)	Tampa Bay Watch
Street Address (Required)	3000 Pinellas Bayway S
City (Required)	Tierra Verde
State (Required)	FL
Zip Code (Required)	33715
Organization Website (URL)	www.TampaBayWatch.org
Organization President / Executive Director (Required)	Dwayne Virgint
Title (Required)	Chief Executive Officer
Phone Number (Required)	505-250-5554
Email Address (Required)	dvirgint@tampabaywatch.org
Contact Person Name (if different than above)	Peter A. Clark
Contact Person Title	President and Founder
Contact Person Phone Number	727-641-3779

Contact Person Email Address	pclark@tampabaywatch.org
501(c)(3)? (Required)	Yes
Registered in Florida? (Required)	Yes
Year Established (Required)	1993
Total Organization Annual Budget (Required)	\$4,200,000
Taxpayer / Employer ID # (Required)	59-3191962
Brief Description of Organization and It's Mission (approx. 600 characters) (Required)	Tampa Bay Watch is dedicated to fostering a healthy Tampa Bay watershed through community driven restoration projects, education programs, and outreach initiatives.
Project Name (Required)	Tampa Bay Watch Waterfront Skiff Lift Replacement
Requested Program Budget (Required)	\$20,000
Community Need: Describe the problem or need to be addressed by this project. (Required)	Tampa Bay Watch performs habitat restoration and protection activities throughout the year, relying heavily on the efforts of community volunteers to help the bay recover from its historic environmental problems. Individuals of all ages from community groups, scout troops, schools and others participate in salt marsh plantings, storm drain markings, oyster bar creation, coastal cleanups, and wildlife protection each year, demonstrating environmental stewardship in its purest form. In addition to the volunteer habitat restoration projects, Tampa Bay Watch has a large-scale environmental education program, in which students in grades K-12 throughout Tampa Bay visit the Tampa Bay Watch Auer Marine Education Center in Tierra Verde and our Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier to participate in immersive learning experiences. Tampa Bay Watch's administrative headquarters and base of

operations are located in unincorporated Pinellas County at the entrance to Fort De Soto Park. Since 2003, our program has utilized waterfront boat lifts at this location to support our mission-driven, water-based initiatives. The two skiff lifts provide vital access to the Lower Tampa Bay region and are essential to our daily operations.

Due to their age and damage sustained during recent hurricanes, one lift is now inoperable and the second is at risk of failure. Immediate replacement of both lifts is critical to ensure the continuation of our water-based activities and the success of our environmental programs.

**Project Summary:
Describe how the project will be fully implemented and how it will address the need or gap in the community. Identify and describe other funding sources, if any, for this project/program.
(Required)**

Tampa Bay Watch has secured permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and Pinellas County to maintain waterfront depths and replace the classroom boat and lift, with completion expected by November 2025. To fully rehabilitate our waterfront operations, we are requesting MSTU funds to replace two aging skiff lifts while utilizing the existing pilings. A professional structural analysis has confirmed that the pilings remain sound; only the lifting hardware requires replacement.

This project addresses a critical operational gap. The current skiff lifts—essential for deploying shallow-water vessels used in environmental restoration and education—have deteriorated due to age and storm damage. One lift is inoperable, and the second is at risk of failure. Without replacement, Tampa Bay Watch’s ability to conduct water-based programs, including habitat restoration, marine debris removal, and youth education, will be severely compromised.

To ensure cost-effective implementation, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was distributed to six boat lift companies. Three bids were received: Edge Marine submitted the lowest bid at \$23,000, followed by Pelican Lift Services at \$25,509 and Gulf and Bay Dock Works at \$26,409. Edge Marine has a proven track record with Tampa Bay Watch, consistently delivering high-quality services on time and within budget.

The scope of work includes installation of two 10,000-pound lifts, motors, gearboxes, control boxes with remotes, pulleys, winders, pipe, cable, and replacement bunks—essentially all components except the pilings. These upgrades will restore full functionality and ensure safe, reliable waterfront operations for the next 20 years.

Any costs exceeding the MSTU grant will be covered by the Spurlino Foundation or Tampa Bay Watch’s operating

account, demonstrating strong financial stewardship and commitment to project completion. This investment will directly benefit the community by enabling continued access to environmental education, volunteer engagement, and coastal restoration efforts that support Pinellas County’s strategic goals.

**Program Outcomes:
Describe the time-
line by which the
project will be
implemented
including short-term
and long-term
results. (Required)**

The replacement of the two skiff lifts at Tampa Bay Watch is scheduled for completion by the end of the calendar year. The project timeline is structured to ensure minimal disruption to ongoing waterfront programs and to restore full operational capacity as quickly as possible.

Short-Term Timeline and Results (0–3 months):

October–November: Edge Marine, the lowest qualified bidder, will be engaged to begin work immediately upon contract approval.

December: Installation of two new 10,000-pound skiff lifts using the existing pilings. This includes motors, gearboxes, control boxes with remotes, pulleys, winders, pipe, cable, and replacement bunks.

By Year-End: Full restoration of lift functionality, allowing uninterrupted access to Tampa Bay for shallow-water skiffs used in education, restoration, and monitoring programs.

Long-Term Results (1–20 years):

The new lifts will support Tampa Bay Watch’s mission-driven activities for the next two decades, ensuring safe, reliable, and efficient vessel deployment.

Enhanced operational capacity will allow for expanded programming, increased volunteer engagement, and improved responsiveness to environmental restoration needs.

The investment will reduce maintenance costs and downtime, improving long-term resource efficiency and supporting the County’s strategic goals of environmental stewardship, public service, and economic vitality.

This project ensures continuity of essential waterfront operations and reinforces Tampa Bay Watch’s role as a trusted environmental partner in Pinellas County.

**Describe how your
project aligns with
the County's**

Tampa Bay Watch’s waterfront programs in Tierra Verde directly support the strategic goals established by the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, ensuring the

**Strategic Plan:
(Required)**

efficient and impactful use of public resources.

Deliver First-Class Services to the Public and Our Customers: Our waterfront operations provide high-quality, mission-driven services to the community, including hands-on environmental education, habitat restoration, and volunteer engagement. By maintaining reliable access to the Lower Tampa Bay region via skiff lifts and classroom vessels, we ensure consistent delivery of programs that benefit students, residents, and visitors alike.

Promote Public Health and Safety: Our programs contribute to public safety by improving coastal resilience and water quality. Activities such as oyster reef construction, shoreline stabilization, and marine debris removal help reduce erosion, filter pollutants, and protect vulnerable habitats. These efforts not only safeguard natural resources but also reduce risks to nearby communities during storm events.

Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship: Environmental stewardship is the cornerstone of Tampa Bay Watch's mission. From seagrass monitoring to mangrove planting, our waterfront initiatives actively restore and preserve critical ecosystems. These projects are designed to enhance biodiversity, support fisheries, and promote long-term sustainability of Tampa Bay's natural assets.

Foster Continual Economic Growth & Vitality: By training volunteers, educating youth, and collaborating with local businesses and agencies, our programs stimulate economic activity tied to eco-tourism, recreation, and environmental services. Healthy waterways and restored habitats attract visitors and support industries such as fishing, boating, and hospitality, contributing to the region's economic vitality.

Maintain Social, Economic, and Cultural Equitability: Tampa Bay Watch is committed to inclusive access and community engagement. Our programs serve diverse populations through school partnerships, public workshops, and volunteer opportunities. We prioritize outreach to underserved communities and ensure that environmental education and stewardship are accessible to all, regardless of background.

In alignment with Pinellas County's strategic goals, Tampa Bay Watch's waterfront programs exemplify responsible resource use, community service, and environmental leadership.

**Authorized Signature
(Printed Name /**

Dwayne Virgint, CEO

Title) (Required)

**Authorization Date
(Required)**

10-20-2025

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