



# CITIZENS FOR FLORIDA'S WATERWAYS

Volume 24 - Issue 1

January/February 2017

*Citizens For Florida's Waterways promotes the need for responsible use of Florida's waterways. Our primary objective is to encourage coexistence among recreational and commercial boaters, the marine industry, property owners and the environment. Citizens For Florida's Waterways advocates education in the safe and considerate use of watercraft with respect for our marine environment and conservation.*

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## **President's Message** *by Bob Atkins*

### **It's Just Unbelievable!**

How long does it take to complete the simple stroke of a pen that moves the manatee from the list of endangered to the list of threatened species? Apparently, even though the species meets no criteria to even be listed at all, the USFWS lacks the ability to complete an action that it originally identified as appropriate in 2007. Ten years have passed since.

The latest kick in the USFWS butt to get some action came just days ago on January 9. On behalf of Save Crystal River (SCR), the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) issued a 60-day notice of intent to file suit against the USFWS if it does not reclassify the endangered West Indian manatee, which includes the Florida manatee, as threatened. The notice, sent to Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and other wildlife officials, claims USFWS has violated the Endangered Species Act because it failed to adopt or provide an alternative to its own proposed rule from January 2016 for reclassification within its 12-month deadline. Maybe you can still recall the proposed reclassification change published by USFWS on January 7, 2016.

According to the USFWS, since the announcement, the proposed reclassification has gone through a public review and comment process and is now being revised by various USFWS leadership officials. A senior official with USFWS acknowledged the service tried to follow a deadline of 12 months, but other unforeseen and unrelated issues throughout the year have delayed progress. USFWS claims it "is still on track" for making its final decision on manatee reclassification early this year.

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## Please Mark Your Calendars!

Please call Bonnie Zimmerman at 856-220-2476 for more information.



- » **February 6, 2017 CFFW Board of Directors Meeting** - 6:30 pm Karen Rood Bldg (near the boat ramp) at Kiwanis Island, Merritt Island. Open to the public.
- » **February 16, 2017 Brevard Marine Advisory Council Meeting** - 6 pm 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way Building A, 2nd Floor, Rm #219 Viera, FL 32940.
- » **March 1, 2017 District 2 Dredging Committee Meeting** - 6:00 pm Karen Rood Bldg (near the boat ramp) at Kiwanis Island, Merritt Island. Open to the public.
- » **March 6, 2017 CFFW Board of Directors Meeting** - 6:30 pm Karen Rood Bldg (near the boat ramp) at Kiwanis Island, Merritt Island. Open to the public.
- » **March 16, 2017 Brevard Marine Advisory Council Meeting** - 6 pm 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way Building A, 2nd Floor, Rm #219 Viera, FL 32940
- » **March 25 & 26, 2017 Citizens for Florida's Waterways 20th Annual Marine Flea Market** - Harbortown Marina, Sea Ray Drive (SR528) Merritt Island.
- » **April 3, 2017 CFFW Board of Directors Meeting** - 6:30 pm Karen Rood Bldg (near the boat ramp) at Kiwanis Island, Merritt Island. Open to the public.
- » **April 5, 2017 District 2 Dredging Committee Meeting** - 6:00 pm Karen Rood Bldg (near the boat ramp) at Kiwanis Island, Merritt Island. Open to the public.
- » **April 20, 2017 Brevard Marine Advisory Council Meeting** - 6:00 pm 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way Building C, 2nd Floor, Florida Rm., Viera, FL 32940.

## Newsletter Delivery Mode

### E-Newsletters Now Available

CFFW is offering all members the option to receive all future newsletters by email instead of a hard copy by mail. The Board of Directors have reviewed the expense logs for the past few years to determine where we could save money and this is the biggest expense we have.

If you wish to save your club money on printing and postage, please reply to [info@cffw.org](mailto:info@cffw.org) and we will add you to the email list for your newsletters! You will receive an email stating your E-Newsletter is ready for viewing. If at any time you wish to receive the hardcopy again, just send us a note at the same email and you will again receive the hardcopy.

You can view the same exact version online at [CFFW.org](http://CFFW.org) and click on "newsletters" tab and the issue you would like to view. ❖

*When Does Your  
Membership Expire?*  
(See Back Cover)

# President's Message

(Continued from Page 1)

A little history refresher follows:

The USFWS listed the manatee as endangered in 1967 under the original Endangered Species Act. PLF sued the service in 2005 to force a mandatory review of the marine mammal's status, according to the legal foundation and prior reports. In 2007, USFWS conducted a species status review of the manatee and concluded the manatee was no longer in danger of extinction and should be reclassified as threatened.

After USFWS failed to act on the 2007 review, SCR petitioned the service in 2012 to reclassify the manatee. USFWS replied it would release a finding of SCR's petition, which it failed to do by its deadline and asked for more time.

Finally, in July 2014, the USFWS announced a 90-day review of the status of the manatee and solicited public review and comment. The January 2016 proposed rule change to reclassify came a year and a half later. Which brings us up to date – but the question remains.

**How long does it take? ❖**



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## Florida has lost an Environmental Champion

Tragically, Bob Mercer, our friend and a driving force behind the scenes at Save Crystal River (SCR) was not able to outlive the pace of the USFWS manatee reclassification process. After a battle well fought, he succumbed to illness on January 4. Bob was CFFW's west coast ally and true friend. Moreover, Florida boaters and outdoor enthusiasts lost a true champion with his passing.

Bob, aka Bimini Bob, was a lifelong boater and sailed the Caribbean waters for many years before settling in a waterfront home in Crystal River in 2003 with Phyllis, his lifelong partner and wife. His passion for boating motivated him to become completely involved in the Crystal River waterway. Many Floridians are familiar with Crystal River for one reason or another from scalloping to swimming with the manatees. Bob found himself smack dab in the middle of local politics and the waterway.

The Crystal River manatee population, like here in Brevard, had exploded over the last few decades from a few dozen in the 80's to over 700 this past January. But in Crystal River, the manatee has also become the center of a unique tug-o-war. It has a significant local economic impact through eco-tourism, especially since Crystal River offers one of the only opportunities to swim with the manatee. "Swim with the Manatee" is big business and a huge economic engine in Crystal River. But, as with all other locales frequented by

the marine mammal, the influence of the manatee club on both FWC and USFWS has resulted in manatee protection regulations that have significantly impacted recreational boating. Now, the USFWS is also evaluating regulation to limit the impact to manatees caused by the "swim with" operations.

Many of us are acutely aware of the deterioration of the crystal clear waters of the Kings Bay area due to the nasty presence of an aquatic vegetation called lyngbya. It has all but choked out all other submerged aquatic vegetation and also left behind murky waters.

So here was Bob, and many of his neighbors, straddling the multi-faceted issues of recreational boating and the manatee with the added wrinkle of the economic value of the manatee to the community. Two things were clear.

- The manatee is not an endangered species.
- The native aquatic vegetation and once pristine waters of the area were in dire need of restoration.

One question needed to be investigated. Is there a correlation between the exploding manatee population and the deterioration of the waterways? Bob took it all on and he took action.

... (Continued on Page 5)

# Florida has lost an Environmental Champion

*(Continued from Page 4)*

It was clear to Bob that the manatee organizations had perpetuated the myth of endangerment to a point where regulations and protections for the manatee were affecting the manatee population to the brink of localized overpopulation. Whether or not the ecosystem was suffering already under the ever increasing grazing burden was not clear. But, as long as the manatee was afforded the kind of extra protections required under law for an endangered species, there was little funding or motivation for any action that could be taken one way or another. The endangered status had to be challenged.

Bob was a founding member and driving force behind SCR. We are all grateful to Bob and the SCR for bringing the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) into the discussion. It seems clear that the USFWS is incapable of performing its role without legal challenge so having PLF counter the never ending threat of legal actions from the manatee organizations at least helped balance the field.

In addition to legally pursuing the reclassification issue, the SCR organization took on the myriad of government and non-government organizations in the environmental bureaucracy to set in motion the processes and permits to eliminate the massive lyngbya problem. Interestingly, some of the greatest obstacles to the

effort were and are due to manatee protections. The lyngbya is being sucked out and passed through separation processes. Clean sand and water are returned to the waterway. Areas that were once choked in lyngbya have been cleared and new grasses have been replanted and are making a comeback. No one knows if this trend will continue and can sustain against the long term increases in human and aquatic herbivore populations.

Steven Webster and I were fortunate enough to take a cruise with Bob in November and observe first hand the positive impact that this motivated individual and the SCR has had in King's Bay and the residential canals. In many areas the blue hue of a clean sand bottom under clear spring water is visible again. So far, more than 70 spring vents have been reclaimed in the community canals and once again these waters are flowing clear and clean.

SCR has good momentum and strong leadership under Lisa Moore and a motivated Board of Directors. The local community and county government support the SCR. Hopefully their successes will continue and make the legacy of Bob's efforts in a complete and permanent restoration of the Crystal River and King's Bay Waters.

Eternal Fair Winds and Following Seas to you Bob. Your friends at CFFW will genuinely miss you.❖

# George Smith: Sailing Into The History Books

By Ann Dermody

For most people, 17 years spent sailing around the world after retiring from a stellar career would be quite the achievement. But for this octogenarian, there was also that little matter of a Nobel Prize.

“It had been in my head for as long as I can recall,” George E. Smith says about wanting a boat. The 86-year-old

physics at the University of Chicago in 1959 and taken a job in research at Bell Laboratories in New Jersey — the only institution at which he ever interviewed, and the only job he had his whole career — the yearning had turned into an undeniable need.

“I was 28, and it was a small sneak-box daysailer I used on weekends at



remembers that vague desire turning to yearning somewhere around the time he joined the U.S. Navy. It followed him through four years as an aerographer's mate (weatherman) and to the University of Pennsylvania in 1952, where he helped pay his tuition with the G.I. Bill after serving in the Korean War. By the time he'd completed his doctorate in

Long Beach Island and on Barnegat Bay,” Smith says of his first boat. He had it for a year and a half before it got destroyed in a hurricane. A week later, he bought a 19-foot wooden boat with a small cabin that he kept for six years, until it, too, was snatched away by a hurricane.

... (Continued on Page 7)

## George Smith: Sailing Into The History Books

*(Continued from Page 6)*

With several years on the water under his belt, Smith treated himself to a brand-new Morgan 22 and began dreaming about how someday he'd take off and go long-distance sailing. "I think I read every around-the-world sailing book that had ever been written," he says.

In 1975, Smith's wife died, leaving him a single parent to three children. Plans for a circumnavigation suddenly seemed remote, if not unattainable. But as luck would have it, a couple of years later he met Janet Murphy, a teacher who also loved sailing, and the pair went on to have many adventures, taking the boat from Northeast Harbor, Maine, to Beaufort, North Carolina.

In 1986 they started planning their trip in earnest with the purchase of a seagoing 31-foot Southern Cross named Apogee, semi-custom built for the task in Bristol, Rhode Island. After two shakedown trips to Bermuda, they set off and, apart from occasional short visits home, didn't come back until 2003. When asked why they stopped, he says simply, "We made it around the world."

Apogee is now safely moored to their New Jersey backyard dock on a lagoon leading to Barnegat Bay. "I've taken up

fishing in my old age," says Smith, who also has a 23-foot outboard powerboat. "I still go fishing, but please notice I did not say 'catch fish,'" he adds with a laugh.

And that little matter of being only one of 874 individuals in 115 years to win a Nobel Prize? In 1969, while at Bell Laboratories, Smith and his colleague Willard Boyle invented the charge-coupled device, a major piece of technology used in digital imaging. Forty years later, it won them the Nobel Prize in Physics. "It was a long time before it was acknowledged by the Nobel committee," he says of his invention, although the same year he and Boyle won the prize, they shared it with another scientist who separately invented complementary work with light transmission through fiber optics.

"They called up early one morning, and the person on the phone said his name was George Smith. I thought it was someone hazing me at 5 in the morning. I said, 'My name is George Smith.' The guy's name really was George Smith, too. But of course he was calling from Sweden. I was less annoyed when I heard the reason for the call," he says.❖



# **CFFW 20th Annual Marine Flea Market**

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*(See Map on Back)*



# It's time for the 20th Annual CFFW Marine Flea Market on March 25-26th and we need your help.

If you are interested in volunteering your time to help set-up, tear-down or work the event, please contact Kelly Haugh at 321-543-6970. We have lots of areas that you can volunteer your time and there is always fun to be had working with other CFFW members!

*CFFW welcomes your input to the annual fundraising event!*

If you have a business or you have marine related items for sale and would like to have a booth at the Flea Market, please contact Kelly or go to the CFFW website at [www.cffw.org/fleamarket](http://www.cffw.org/fleamarket) and you can download the information necessary.

We also have posters available. If you have a business and would like one for display, please call Sandy Reynolds at 321-543-7532 to arrange for pick up.

## Favorite Boating Apps

From celestial identification to tidal data, lots of handy information is available at the touch of your finger.

More boaters are relying on smartphone and tablet apps for everything from navigating to fishing and safety information. Here are a few that might interest you.

### FriendMapper

Handy for yacht-club cruises, poker runs, and fishing friends who make trips en masse, this nifty app lets you and up to 23 of your buddies track each other. Everyone appears on each other's maps. You can even one-touch dial any of the friends appearing on your phone's map. Available on the App Store or Google Play. \$1.99 | [friendmapper.co](http://friendmapper.co)

... (Continued on Page 10)



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# Favorite Boating Apps

*(Continued from Page 9)*

## GoSkyWatch

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## Speed

This app does one thing and one thing only: It tells you your speed. Make a sail adjustment or change your trim tab set, and it can impact your speed. With this app, you can instantly see what happens as you make those adjustments. This simple application turns your iPhone into a speedometer with large digits. Available on the App Store. \$3.99 | [highcaffeinecontent.com/speed/](http://highcaffeinecontent.com/speed/)

## IGFA Mobile

Anglers can check on the record status of any species of game fish caught in the world in real time. It includes a list of International Game Fish Association-

certified weigh stations so you can find the closest scales to check in your catch. Plus, there's a trip-planning list and complete IGFA rules. Available on the App Store or Google Play. \$8.99 | [igfa.org](http://igfa.org)

## Marine Day Tides

If you have an iPhone or iPad and don't want to pay for one of the more comprehensive applications that includes tidal data, this app is for you. It offers tidal data for more than 5,000 locations worldwide, sunrise/sunset/moon phase information, and tidal graphs. Available on the App Store. Free | [imray.com](http://imray.com)

## Boat Ramps

Want to know where to launch your boat? Nothing is as comprehensive as Boat Ramps, which gives the locations of more than 35,000 boat ramps nationwide. You can search by zip code, city, or current location. The app also gives driving directions to the ramp so you shouldn't get lost, even if you're in unfamiliar territory. Available on the App Store or Google Play. Free | [takemefishing.org](http://takemefishing.org) ❖

# CFFW Member Recognition

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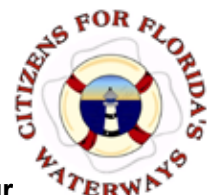
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