



# Citizens For Florida's Waterways

Established 1994

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*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 the marine environment.*

## President's Message - The Life Cycle Of CFFW

Organizations have a life cycle and life span just like those of us who comprise them. CFFW has been through a lot of changes over the years and a little look back kind of lends to thinking about the phases the organization has been through.

### **Forming and Storming Phase – the lead up to CFFW**

As I grow older, I realize that most of the local boating public has no memory of unregulated Brevard County waterways. Ski Tournaments (Slalom, Jump and Trick) in Kiwanis Basin, cruising and watersports play in Sykes Creek, actually running through the Barge Canal on plane, waterskiing around MOST of the spoil islands and the golf course and islands of Cocoa Beach and NEVER even thinking of going slow in the many access channels to our waterfront homes. Do you remember?

The Roots of CFFW go back to those years, prior to the mid to late 80s. Those roots are intertwined with some pretty interesting, if not nearly unbelievable events at the State level. I remember my amazement and disbelief at hearing that the Governor's Cabinet was considering imposing a 35mph speed limit on all the waters of Florida. I'm not joking. It was my and many others first acts of boating advocacy. I have the letters on my hard drive that I wrote in the fall of 1989 to Governor Lawton Chiles, every Cabinet Member and the Brevard County Commissioners protesting the idea. The motivation for the ridiculous speed limit was boating safety but there was an obvious veil of manatee protection in the action. The reach of that proposal was into waterways like inland lakes where not one manatee has or ever will inhabit. I'm not sure what prevented 35mph from becoming rule of law, but thankfully that idea FAILED.

But it wasn't long until we saw the relentless parade of State environmental officials come to town and hold a series of public "hearings" to gather local expertise on the next round of arbitrarily defined slow and idle zones for manatee protection. Most of these "hearings" were led by Pat Rose who back then was both a high-level state natural resources manager AND the Executive Director of the fledgling Save the Manatee Club (SMC) that over the years may have done as much manatee harm as good. The SMC had received about a \$750K donation from FPL and they were off and running. Was it because FPL was breaking the Clean Water Act by creating thermal pollution (re-termed manatee sanctuary) and chopping up manatees with large tug props pushing oil barges in the intercoastal waterways and St Johns River all the way down to Sanford?

The SMC came to the aid of FPL. They also forced the State and Federal wildlife agencies into action and court to create vast areas of the state waters as slow or idle speed and honestly there is little difference from a boater's perspective between the two. They had no real criteria or any understanding of whether these zones were even effective it didn't matter then it doesn't even matter today. They still don't know and can't prove anything actually worked nearly 40 years later. Only one or two zones have been removed over the decades and many many more have been added.

## CFFW Officers

### President

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*Sandy Reynolds*

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*David Zimmerman*

### Membership

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### Government Liason

*Steven Webster*

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## Please Mark Your Calendars!



- » **September 25: Board of Directors Meeting** 6:00 pm Lighthouse Christian Church on N. Banana River Dr. Open to the public.
- » **October 4: District 2 Dredging Committee Meeting** 6:00 pm at Kiwanis Island, Karen Rood Bld. Merritt Island. Open to the public.
- » **October 16: Board of Directors Meeting-Annual Meeting** 6:30 pm Lighthouse Christian Church on N. Banana River Dr. Open to the public
- » **November 16: Brevard Marine Advisory Council** 6:00 pm Viera Government Center, Bldg. C, 3rd Floor. Open to the public
- » **November 27: Board of Directors Meeting** 6:30 pm Lighthouse Christian Church on N. Banana River Dr. Open to the public
- » **December 16: Merritt Island Christmas Boat Parade - Space Coast Christmas Theme** <https://www.facebook.com/MIboatparade> for the latest updates

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## 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.

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 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.

# The Life Cycle Of CFFW

## *CFFW Founding and the Early Years Phase - Bucking the System*

Many of us showed up and beat our heads against the predetermined outcome of the sham public “hearings” for a few years. Each time we were amazed to read in the Florida Today that most attendees were in favor of the regulations. A flat LIE. In 1994 we faced a significant update and a huge proposal of Brevard County manatee zones, another public hearing, and an anticipated huge turnout in a BCC auditorium. A small group of 6 people met at a local residence to strategize an approach to “winning” at the public “hearing”.

We defined an organization on the spot and named it Citizens for Florida’s Waterways. Our strategy was to tie a bright orange armband on each attendee that was there to protest the proposed zones. The auditorium was packed and all but a handful of attendees sported an orange armband. Clearly, we were going to convince the Tallahassee invaders that we were right and they were wrong. WRONG! Nothing could have been farther from the truth.

But we had accomplished something. We signed a lot of people up as members of CFFW that night. We at least had organized the voices of protest into a focused group. Within a few weeks we had our first meetings of our own and drew up by laws and elected our first set of officers. We were a raucous group of angry and disappointed boaters who felt innocent victims of a false manatee extinction crisis.

We sought out like minded individuals and organizations around the state faced with the same overzealous regulatory push. We really did build momentum for resistance, but it was like pushing against a moving train. What we did accomplish early on was an ability to have a louder and less raucous voice and represent the recreational boater’s interests and impacts but truthfully, we had little impact. We were presenting arguments to a stone wall.

CFFW members interjected themselves as working members and active participants in the 2 and ½ year effort to develop the Brevard County Manatee Protection Plan during the mid 90s. Because of all the controversy and politics underlying the whole manatee protection, the plan was not signed by the late Commissioner Randy O’Brien (a CFFW Member) and formally submitted to the State by the Brevard County Commission until 2003. It still stands as it was and is long overdue for review and revision.

In the interim, a more arbitrary and capricious set of zones were proposed and around 2001, CFFW filed suit in State Administrative Court to challenge that proposal. We presented our valid arguments in court testimony for a couple of weeks and in the end, we did not prevail in any part of our challenge.

In those early years it was not hard to keep the membership engaged. There was a lot of animosity and anger to focus on trying to make a difference for recreational boaters. We kept our members informed and engaged through monthly meetings, bimonthly newsletters, an annual membership picnic, organizing the origins of the Merritt Island Christmas Boat Parade, setting up an annual waterway poker run by boat, and we set up and held a Marine Flea Market every year as an income producing event. Except for the CFFW Member Picnic, all of these events continue annually today more than 25 years later.

## Harbor Marina Gas Discounts! June through September



Harbor Town Marina will be offering a **.10** per gallon discount on gas starting **6/1** running thru **9/30** and the proceeds will be donated to CFFW!

They will sell 200 of these cards, so stop in soon to get yours while they are available!

A big **Thank You** to **Fred Whitten**, General Manager at **Harbor Town Marina**, and his entire team for such a generous donation to a worthy cause!

## The Life Cycle Of CFFW

### *Working Within the System Phase - Struggling to Achieve*

In 2005 CFFW went back to work and submitted an informal proposal to the State wildlife agency to update the Brevard County manatee protection rules/zones. The County Commission unanimously petitioned the State in support of CFFW's proposal in early 2006. That proposal languished in the offices in Tallahassee for over two years before the state arbitrarily denied the entire subject of zone review in Brevard. That is where the zone review process stands to this day despite a 2nd unanimous resolution from the County Commission in 2016 to evaluate the long term effectiveness of the zones as they remained unchanged.

2005 also saw CFFW organize a meeting of statewide boating interests. That got the attention of both the State and Federal wildlife services. The outgrowth of that planned meeting was the formation of the Manatee Forum which had the intent to bring all the interested parties together at the table with a promise that we would seek, evaluate, and FOLLOW the best science with respect to manatee protection. Further, we the members of the Forum vowed to work the political system in a single voice having reached some consensus with allowance for minority opinions before any recommendation went to lawmakers.

That vow was almost immediately broken by the SMC that took an objection to the State taking an action that SMC was not in favor of and they independently went straight to the Governor and not only nixed the State's proposed action to consider reclassification of the manatee but resulted in the abandonment of about half the members of the Forum in protest to the antics of the SMC outside the Forum norms. It took over two years to get the forum back and even though the Forum continues to meet twice a year, it was never quite the same after that. Without trust, cooperation is very tenuous.

## The Life Cycle Of CFFW

### *Influencing and Trying to Change the System Phase – A Mixed Bag of Success and Failure*

We continued to work toward better science. We funded, promoted and participated in underwater sound propagation and manatee hearing studies of Drs. Joseph Blue and Edmund Gerstein. We backed and promoted propeller scar analysis of James Woods.

None of these analyses were very well received by the agencies at first but because of their validity, they have prevailed somewhat – over strong objections by the SMC. Even today, the SMC continues to object to anything that challenges the myths that they have propagandized into accepted “facts”. These “facts” might be the farthest thing from the truth but SMC clings to them relentlessly:

Myth 1 - The manatee is endangered and in immediate threat of extinction.

Myth 2 – Boats are the biggest threat to manatee survival.

Myth 3 – Slow boat speed is the only way to save the manatee from extinction.

We had been arguing all three of these myths since the very beginning. I remember many folks asking this simple question and getting no answer in the 80s – How many is enough? Even

After several attempts to have the USFWS even consider reclassification from endangered, the observed and documented nearly explosive rate of population increase over 4 decades could no longer be explained away. Reclassification was finally seriously being considered. In 2014, The USFWS proposed asking the question. SMC went berserk and protested even the thought of doing the analysis and had thousands of form letters submitted in protest from around the world. No data or supporting evidence – just protest. CFFW provided significant data and analysis that the manatee did not meet the criteria required for endangered under any of the basic parameters. Despite emotional objections by the SMC and others, the USFWS took up the question and finally in April of 2017, published their findings and made the change in classification from Endangered to Threatened. Our data and analysis had supported removing the manatee from the ESA completely but to get it off endangered was at least a move in the direction of TRUTH.

In 2014 we also presented the Manatee Forum a detailed numerical analysis of local IRL area manatee carrying capacity and the threat to manatee due to conflicting seagrass loss and wintering manatee herd growth in the near vicinity of the FPL plant at Port St John. The analysis was updated and re-presented in 2016 and the message was clear. There was a significant risk of large manatee die-off unless we did something to change the direction of one or both of those trends.

The most likely solution – to turn off the heated water outflow and eliminate the attraction for 1500+ manatees to winter outside their natural winter habitat where there was insufficient and dwindling forage. Unfortunately, the prevailing voices (SMC and the agencies) took exception to the premise that the burgeoning manatee population itself had anything to do with seagrass loss and ignored the simple bigger threat picture. A few years later we all know what transpired and the explanation that the SMC and wildlife agencies hide behind for the 1000 manatee deaths from starvation is that human-caused pollution killed the grass – Never mind that they stood by and did nothing to stop the genocide we had warned them the risk of about 5 or so years earlier.

... (Continued on Page 6)

## **The Life Cycle Of CFFW**

### ***Influencing and Trying to Change the System Phase – A Mixed Bag of Success and Failure (Cont.)***

Ultimately the individuals most responsible for this AVOIDABLE tragedy are the very individuals charged with manatee protection. Their inability to recognize a real threat and do anything to mitigate the risk – unless you want to consider throwing tons of nutritionally worthless romaine lettuce at animals already suffering from malnutrition and ultimately dying of starvation. And what was the reaction of the SMC? Did they accept the fact that too many manatees could be a problem? – NO – They immediately started blaming the agencies for having reclassified the manatee and demanded it be returned to Endangered. Thankfully that has not happened.

Our biggest failure was that we never achieved any success with our number one objective all those years ago. Through all the years we have not made any progress in reversing or decreasing any manatee zone in Brevard. I would argue that we slowed down the implementation and even influenced the zone definition for other counties across the state – but we made no progress here at home. The most significantly wrongheaded zone of them all is the slow speed zone from the mouth of the Port across the Banana River, through the Barge Canal and half way across the Indian River to the ICW – UNBELIEVABLE. To argue that has not created undue hinderance to navigation is insane and then throw in Sykes creek on top of that.

I think it is too bad that so many waterfront residents in Central Merritt Island and Cocoa Beach have no memory of when those zones did not exist and I believe it is that plus the acceptance of the seemingly inevitable that has caused so many to lose the will to try and restore open navigation in so many of these channels. It just seems like that is how it always has been – BUT IT ISN'T

## **The Life Cycle Of CFFW**

### ***Winding it Down Phase – Worn out by Time and Losing the Drive***

The warm water still flows from the Port St John Powerplant. The zones continue to exist and now pretty much go unchallenged. The membership has dwindled and lost energy and motivation. The two remaining major annual events (Marine Flea Market and Poker Run) get less and less help beyond the CFFW Board Members. We turned over the Christmas Boat Parade to very capable group of folks and the Membership Picnic is a just a memory. Consider that most of us have been here since the start almost 40 years ago, including the 30 years of CFFW, and we've aged right along with it. It is as if CFFW is nearing the end of its useful life cycle. There is still work that could be done, challenges that could be mounted by others but there does not seem to be enough of the three required ingredients: INTEREST, ENERGY and COMMITMENT.



# CFFW Member Recognition \_\_\_\_\_

## Diamond Level (\$100 per year)

Bob & Sherry Atkins  
Ben Blythe  
Jack & Karen Dignan  
John Farley  
Charles & Susan Frazier  
Jay Humphreys  
Gary & Kelly Haugh  
Keith & Tamasine Houston  
Doug Jaren  
Frank Jones  
Mike & Kris Moehle  
Paul & Tammarra Mycoskie  
Sandy Reynolds  
Wayne & Pat Stratford  
Richard Sproc  
Robin & Kathy Turner  
Willie & Peggy Wehrman

Robert Wille  
Gerd Zeiler  
Dave & Bonnie Zimmerman

## Gold Level (\$50 per year):

Marie Bridges  
Glen & Sherry DeJong  
Ed French  
Gus & Bobbie Gestel  
Tad Jackson  
John & Elizabeth Picardi  
Gary & Debra Sawicki  
Orson Tarver  
Bubba & Paula Beyer  
Iva & Linda Chamless  
Donald & Annette Doerr  
David Smith

Mandatory Equipment  
For Your Boat:

## A CFFW Family Membership!

If you own a boat or live by the water,  
you can't afford not to join  
Citizens For Florida's Waterways!

- \$25 Silver Family  \$100 Diamond Family  
 \$50 Gold Family  \$500 Platinum Family  
 Donation (\$\_\_\_\_\_)

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CFFW is a 501(c)4 organization. Donations and  
membership dues are not tax-deductible.

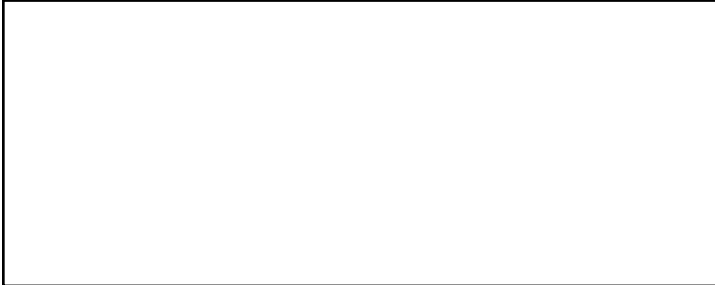


## Citizens For Florida's Waterways

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If you're not a member... please join.  
Your membership dues provide the financial support  
needed to save family boating from the  
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