



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: It's Been A Long Ride - Bob Atkins

I'm glad that I can remember it was 1994. I wish I could remember the date. But I have no trouble remembering the setting the night that George & Sandy Reynolds, Gregory & Patricia Bean, Breta Woodford, Kenny Boyd and myself, debated the question: "How can we organize all the opposition and stand up to and STOP the proposed ridiculous manatee protection zones?" Maybe you know some of these folks. Those are the founders of Citizens for Florida's Waterways. I'm proud to have been part of it.

For quite some time, I had been outspoken and opposed to the efforts of the Save the Manatee Club (SMC) and the old Florida Division of Natural Resources. Pat Rose was a principle of both at the time and from the outside they just seemed like one big organization.

This is my farewell address to you. The CFFW Board of Directors has chosen to put CFFW to bed. If I can leave all of you with anything let it be the truth about the 3 UNDERLYING LIES that the save the manatee cult is based on:

LIE #1 – *The manatee is in danger of extinction.* FALSE

Never was. But we were only counting the dead ones during the 70s and 80s. We have clearly known this to be false for at least the last 25 years

LIE #2 – *Boats are the biggest threat to manatee survival.* FALSE

Never were. Even the mortality data never supported this. We have clearly known this to be false for at least the last 25 years

LIE #3 – *Slow Speed zones are the only way to save the manatee from extinction.* FALSE

Since this was based on the FALSE premises above it is completely illogical. All those zones ever did was make a few misguide people feel like they were doing SOMETHING.

The whole concept of slow speed zones was not based on science. It just "Made Sense". So did the "universe rotates around the Earth." Just because growing public opinion supports a theory, does not make it fact. Funny (or sadly), we've been saying that for the last 30+ years and those zones have not only NEVER been shown to be necessary but also NEVER scientifically or statistically been shown to be effective. Only some very juvenile and laughable non-logical "peer reviewed" studies whose underlying assumption was the desired result have ever been produced. All the peers that review this junk science are believers. None of the non-advocates, like myself, were ever given "peer" status.

I guess I take exception to being considered of lesser qualification. I still believe this one chart I developed YEARS ago and continue to update frequently says it all. All three lies are debunked in one simple to see format. There is no threat of extinction (the ever-increasing LARGE green population bars). Watercraft mortality (those TINY blue blips) was NEVER the problem. All those speed zones have not been effective in reducing watercraft mortality (the blue blips haven't significantly changed in magnitude). The sources of the data are indisputably the best/ official data available. The visual message of the chart is undeniable.

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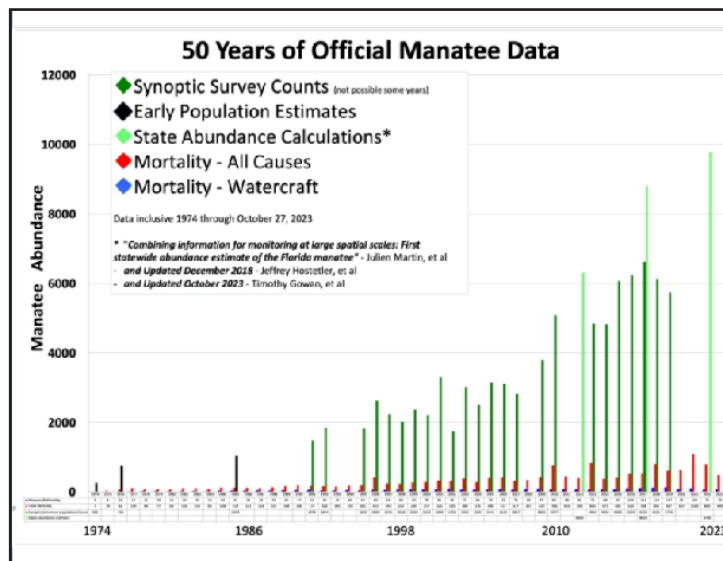
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Please Mark Your Calendars!



- » **November 29: Cocoa Beach Boat Parade Captain's Meeting** 7:00 pm at Cocoa Beach Country Club 19th Hole.
- » **December 5 Captain's Meeting** 6:00 pm at Time Out Sports Bar in Cocoa
- » **December 8: Cocoa Village Holiday Boat Parade** 6:00 pm
- » **December 9: Cocoa Beach Boat Parade**
- » **December 11: Board of Directors Meeting** 6:30 pm Lighthouse Christian Church on N. Banana River Dr.
- » **December 14: : Merritt Island Christmas Boat Parade Captains Party** 6:00 pm at Dolphins Waterfront Bar & Grill
- » **December 16: Merritt Island Christmas Boat Parade - Space Coast Christmas Theme** visit <https://www.facebook.com/MIboatparade> for the latest updates

President's Message: It's Been A Long Ride - Bob Atkins (Cont.)



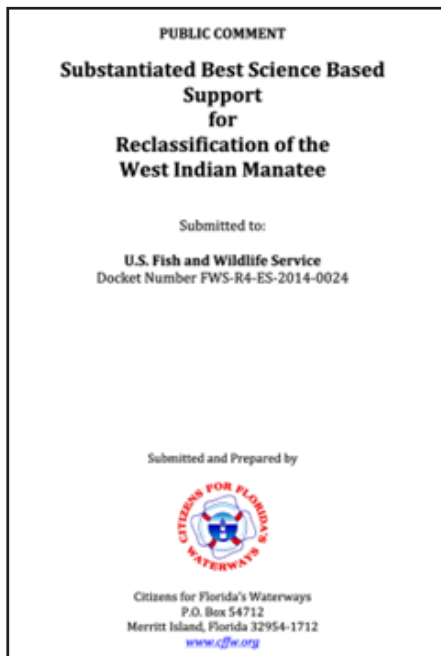
Please download the full-size chart at:
<https://cffw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/50yrChartR-110523.pdf>

Speaking of population numbers, please take a minute to look at our website <https://cffw.org/>. The latest OFFICIAL population estimate and a link to the USFWS publication is available on our front page. **9,790 Manatees in Florida.**

... (Continued on Page 3)

President's Message: It's Been A Long Ride - Bob Atkins (Cont.)

If you are interested in more of the science-based work that CFFW has provided to the wildlife agencies, please open the documentation that CFFW delivered in support of reclassification of manatees from *Endangered* to *Threatened*.



<https://cffw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/CFFWPublicCommentDocument.pdf>

USFWS has acknowledged this work had a significant positive impact to the decision to reclassify. Realistically, we all know the manatee should have been removed from classification in the Endangered Species Act. Unbelievably, the SMC is currently trying to get the manatee reclassified as endangered (immediately at risk of extinction without intervention).

There is one more scientific contribution we made that sadly was recognized by too few as being significant. We tried, unsuccessfully to get the manatee protection folks to focus on the real risk. Not manatee extinction but manatee over-population – at least localized over-population.

For every aerial survey dating back to 1991 (dark green bars in the chart), we obtained and did in-depth review of the raw manatee count numbers and locations recorded. We were alarmed at the burgeoning number (over 1500 in one actual count) of manatees counted at the Port St John

powerplant outflows. By 2010, we were acutely aware of the unexplained significant loss of seagrass in the Indian River Lagoon.

Since more manatees means more seagrass consumption, we thought there was at least logical reasoning to investigate if there was a correlation between those two trends. Is it possible that the conversion of seagrass into bodily excretions from manatees might be the impetus of the still not adequately explained algae blooms that were clouding the water and further stunting the seagrass growth?

When we started looking at the data it was clear that there was an immediate risk on the consumption side of the digestive process that deserved analytic attention. When might the growing manatee population in and around the power plants exceed the available food source (seagrass)?

In May of 2014 we presented our initial analysis of the CARRYING CAPACITY of the central IRL (Brevard). Admittedly it was not perfect, but the approach was clear. One could gather the best available data on seagrass acreage, density (mass per area) and growth rates to calculate total available seagrass mass. Also, one could readily calculate the mass of seagrass necessary to keep the large number of manatees healthy. And then compare seagrass availability to consumption to numerically bound the concept of carrying capacity.

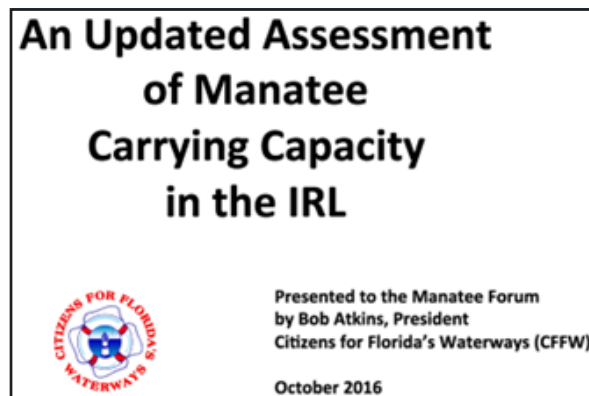
Our conclusion was that we were at risk of too many manatees and too little seagrass for them to eat. We identified the need to STOP attracting large numbers of manatees to winter in Brevard. TURN OFF the artificial source of hot water outflows at Port St John.

For some reason, it seemed to be beyond the mentality of the “scientists” in the peer group. There was significant pushback and critique of the analysis presented at that session of the Manatee Forum.

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President's Message: It's Been A Long Ride - Bob Atkins (Cont.)

So, we took the criticism and re-worked the analysis and added in some further analysis of the impact of incisor-less animals yanking the seagrass out of the bottom. The picture was bleaker than originally suggested. We presented it to the Manatee Forum in October 2016. The situation was dire and needed immediate attention. Here is that second presentation on the Manatee Carrying Capacity of the IRL.



<https://cffw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/IRLCarryCapacity-1016.pdf>

Surely, they would realize how significant the risk of starvation was. We all know that answer – don't we. Sad, that the very people that claim to be saving the manatee from extinction had more to do with the slow agonizing deaths by starvation of over 1000 animals by ignoring some simple calculations and analysis.

So, I will be attending what will probably be my last Manatee Forum in the interim between writing this and the time you read it. I am trying to come to grips with whether my farewell will be a rant of disgust with the whole effort or a simple goodbye.

But to you, my friends, please understand that no matter how long the journey has been and how hard the metaphoric brick wall we have been pounding against, we all wish CFFW could have done more with the original problem: "How can we organize all the opposition and stand up to and STOP the proposed ridiculous manatee protection zones?" ❖

Kelly Cover-Haugh

V.P., Newsletter Editor

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Board of Directors for Citizens for Florida's Waterways in one capacity or another for over 25 years. From the dinner meetings we had at various restaurants around town, to the Poker Run and the Marine Flea Market, weekends at Sebastian's Captain Hiram's or the various other events, I've been there for most of it and I wouldn't change a thing! It's hard to say goodbye to something you have worked so hard for, but all good things must come to an end, or so they say. I will still be fighting the good fight around Brevard County serving on the District 2 Dredging Committee and the Brevard Marine Advisory Council both of which I have done for several years.

May your ANCHOR be tight, your CORK be loose, your RUM be spiced, and your COMPASS be true! I hope to see you around town! ❖

Peggy Wehrman

Secretary

I've enjoyed this experience with CFFW.

I appreciate being allowed to hold office and have been privileged to work this challenge with very talented people. My life is forever enriched and my beliefs forever strengthened in the needs of the waterway future. We at CFFW have donated to many causes in our locale and have helped many community service needs. We've given our talents to other like forums and shared our science-based data to influence solutions. The end is here; hopefully new efforts will emerge to take over in offering protections for issues facing Florida's Waterways.

Thanks so much to our steadfast membership partners! ❖

Sandy Reynolds

What a great challenge and journey it's been since the early 90's to be part of and experience what it takes to voice your opinion and fight for what you think is the right thing to do. Citizens for Florida's Waterways didn't win the battle but we slowed down the process. It was amazing to see the public input at the first rally that was held at BCC with over a thousand people showing up as we passed out yellow armbands to show support and express our opinion.

The years have passed with many boating weekends at ski island and other sites with families having fun, enjoying the days visiting with many friends and neighbors. We also had times we planned the Ski Island clean-up and loaded our boats with trash to take home for next day pickup. All and all boating is not only for spending time out on the water to see how fast you can go, to many of us it's an education for our children as they see the many sights and what we have in this wonderful water environment.

We have had the opportunity to plan cookouts, weekend get-ways at Sebastian Inlet, have events such as dinner meetings with various community speakers, the Poker Run and then the famous yearly Flea Market at Harbor Town Marina. All of these events through the years were made possible only because of the support of our volunteers. There was a time we would have so many volunteers it was hard to keep all of them busy but by the end of the week-end event we all had something to do and felt like we were part of this organization. We could have never had such a successful organization without those members and their families that helped to make those good times possible.

I'm saddened that the times have changed as have happened with so many organizations. Folks will never know and experience how rewarding it is to belong and see what you think may be impossible to do and then bring it together as a success.

CFFW continues to have members who have been dedicated and supported the organization through the years and it has not gone unnoticed. We have appreciated each and every one of you. The CFFW Board of Directors have worked as a team and I cannot say enough for the time that they have spent with this organization.

Thanks to all of you! ❖

Gary Haugh

I was born and raised in St. Petersburg Fl, grew up there in the 50's, 60's and 70's. My family always had a boat of some kind so we boated and fished a lot. It was a rare sight to see manatees around Tampa Bay back then.

As Florida's population continued to grow, more power plants, manufacturing facilities, canals for waterfront homes along with other things were built. This became an ideal environment for manatees to live in, warm, protected waters. Unlike snowbirds they decided to stay instead of migrating south for the winters and their population grew. Areas became over populated with them and they began harming Florida's waters, devouring and destroying sea grasses.

Some people thought manatees were cute cuddly creatures and the "Save The Manatee" club was started. Their goal was to save every manatee no matter what. I moved to Brevard County for work in the 80's, and continued enjoying boating and fishing in Brevard's beautiful waters. I began hearing talks on restricting Florida's waters due to "watercraft related deaths" caused by private boats and I got involved with Citizens for Florida's Waterways shortly after it was formed. I attended numerous meetings in Brevard and around the state discussing restricting of our waters, but it seemed the Manatee Club had already convinced the policy makers to do what they "The Club" wanted. CFFW pushed back, some of us got on the Brevard MPP committee and fought for your waterways with little success. It seemed like their minds were already made up.

CFFW has continued to fight for your waterways through law suits, creating scientific data and being involved with state committees and other organizations with some success. CFFW has been informing and educating the public on waterway issues through our website, emails, meetings, poker runs and our marine flea market which has been a big success.

Fighting for your waterways is an uphill battle. The Indian River Lagoon is a mess for a variety of reasons. The lack of sea grass being a main factor, but the feds and state refuse to do something as simple as turning off the warm water mandated by the federal government. This could allow manatees to go elsewhere and give grasses a chance to grow back, instead they're feeding them.

The people that started CFFW are few now and a lot of new residents don't know what our waterways were like before all the restrictions. CFFW has struggled to get "new blood" with the "old blood" getting worn out. People need to stand up and be heard before more of our rights are taken away. I'm going back to be a renegade boater. ❖

Dave Zimmerman

We moved to Florida 10 years ago to a house on a canal. We bought a boat because we enjoyed boating and did it much of our lives. I found out about CFFW through my sister and decided to join the club. We enjoyed several years of events hosted by the club. Then I went to a meeting to find out more about the club and was appointed by Bob as a board member. I have enjoyed working with the board members planning and carrying out the annual events. As I am sad to see the club go away, I am grateful to have met some lifelong friends being a board member. ❖

Robin Turner

I've been boating on the Banana River since the early sixties. Ever since I was in elementary school I've lived on a canal and had a boat. In 1964 I got my first boat, a ten ft. john boat with oars. My friends and I spent our days playing on and around the islands behind Cocoa Beach. When I was in Junior High School in 1967 our family bought a fifteen ft. Bonito with a 40 HP Johnson. I learned to ski behind this boat. The next year my dad and I built a nine ft. hydroplane and put a 20HP Johnson on it. This became my primary mode of transportation. Even though I was too young to drive I could go anywhere in Cocoa Beach in a matter of minutes. Of course, this was back when the waterways were free....

In 1977 I started my long career in the computer business at Kennedy Space Center. Throughout those years I still went boating in the old Bonito. In 1985 I replaced it with a sixteen ft. Hydrostream with a 140 HP Merc. Lots of fun at 70 MHP. I would get home from work in the afternoon, jump in the Hydrostream, and head to Gatsby's Dockside. Back then the trip only took ten minutes, now it takes an hour.

Dockside was a fun place with lots of beautiful waitresses and bartenders. One beauty, Kathy, really caught my eye. We started dating in 1987. We spent many happy hours in the Hydrostream. We loved the boating life. In 1988 the old 140 HP Merc died and was replaced with a 150 Merc Black Max.

In 1989, of course, Club Manatee brought all this crashing down. That was the year I started making up boating rights flyers, putting them in ziploc bags with a little rock so they wouldn't blow away, and putting them in every boat at Dockside. No one believed these onerous boating rules would actually happen. They did....

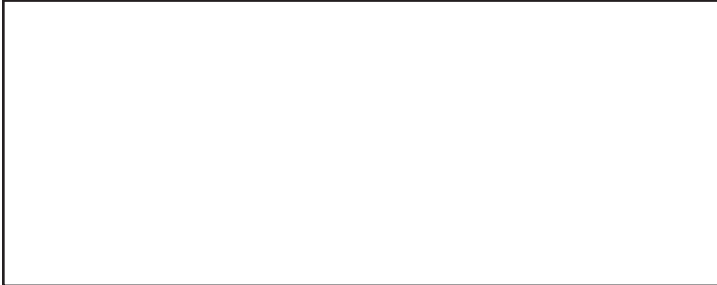
In 1990 Kathy and I got married and moved to a house on the St. John's River west of Cocoa where there are no speed limits. We put a trolling motor on the Hydro-stream and started fishing and winning his & hers bass tournaments. While we lived out there, we had two children, Johnathan, and Jacqueline. When the kids came along, we traded the Hydrostream for a twenty ft. Hurricane deck boat. We kept the Black Max.

In 1997 we moved back to Cocoa Beach. Our son was ready for school and there were none anywhere near us out on the St, Johns. Also, we missed Cocoa Beach and our primary babysitters, my parents, still lived there. We bought another waterfront house and settled in. We enjoyed the deck boat here but have outgrown it.

Since my return to Cocoa Beach I've been fighting for boater's rights, first alone, but with CFFW for the past several years. I will never give up on this crusade. I will still print my flyers, put them in ziploc bags, and leave them everywhere. I will be a boater forever. ❖



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