

**Attachment P: Recommendations to the Governor
and Cabinet, 1989**

Attachment K

MANATEE PROTECTION PLAN GUIDELINES

Area-specific manatee protection plans need to be developed by all counties in which manatees regularly occur to ensure the long-range protection of the species and its habitat. The objectives of manatee protection plans are: to reduce the number of boat-related manatee mortalities; to achieve an optimal sustainable manatee population (the goal of the Marine Mammal Protection Act); to protect manatee habitat; to promote boating safety; and to increase public awareness of the need to protect manatees and their environment. These plans will address manatee-human interactions, land use (including boat facility siting), and the protection of suitable habitat (including water quality, thermal refugia, freshwater sources, and grass beds). The information needed to prepare manatee protection plans will include manatee studies, habitat assessments, and, if available, boating studies to evaluate boater use patterns and activities.

Boat facility siting elements are necessary components of area-specific manatee protection plans. Boat facility siting must address marinas with wet slips and dry storage, and boat ramps. The objectives of boat facility siting plans are: to determine appropriate dock densities for particular areas; and to develop criteria for designating special use areas (i.e., for water skiing, jet skiing and commercial fishing).

Necessary components of a manatee protection plan are:

An Information Base

- a. location and capacity of all marina facilities (including dry storage) in the county (proposed and existing);
- b. location of all boat ramps in the county (proposed and existing);
- c. boating activity patterns, including travel routes and major destination areas;
- d. manatee sighting information for the county;
- e. manatee mortality information for the county;
- f. any aquatic preserves, Outstanding Florida Waters or other refuge/reserve information;
- g. port facility information;

- h. location of significant habitat resources, such as grass beds, warm water discharges and fresh water sources;
- i. location of manatee protection and boating safety speed zones in the county (proposed and existing);
- j. location of manatee information displays; and
- k. other relevant data as determined by the Department of Natural Resources.

Recommendations--with an Accompanying Implementation Schedule--to Increase Manatee Protection in the County

- a. boating expansion criteria;
- b. identification of recommended areas for water-related activities requiring high boat speeds, such as water skiing, boat races and certain types of commercial fishing;
- c. a plan for marking navigation channels in currently unmarked waterways used by manatees;
- d. new or expanded speed zones, refuges or sanctuaries for the regulation of boat speeds in critical manatee areas;
- e. installation of manatee educational displays at all boating facilities;
- f. development and dissemination of a pamphlet to county boaters describing manatee protection and boating safety speed zones in the area, and recommendations for boaters on how to avoid hitting manatees;
- g. inclusion of manatee and marine habitat educational material in the county school board's elementary, middle school and high school curricula;
- h. development of appropriate aquatic plant control methods in manatee areas;
- i. identification of land acquisition projects to increase refuges, reserves, and preserves for manatee protection; and
- j. other actions as specified by the Department of Natural Resources.