

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2007 ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Led a national coalition and spear-headed a successful international grass roots campaign to oppose the unwarranted state downlisting of manatees from endangered to threatened status, and generated national media opposition to the manatee's reclassification. As a result, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) deferred the manatee's status change indefinitely and manatees will continue to remain eligible to receive the strongest possible protections.
- Advocated successfully for a new FWC review of Florida's entire imperiled species classification system that will benefit manatees and all of the state's at-risk species.



- Led a national campaign to oppose the manatee's federal downlisting by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service resulting in the indefinite postponement of the unjustifiable change in the manatee's federal status.
 - Reached a successful settlement agreement along with conservation partners and the Florida Department of Community Affairs in opposing the building of a commercial marina in an aquatic preserve and critical manatee habitat. The settlement entirely eliminated the proposed 500-slip marina.
 - Helped to defeat a bill that would have limited the protection of fresh water springs, some of which are winter warm-water refuges for manatees.
 - Distributed free outdoor public awareness signs to shoreline property owners to alert boaters to the presence of manatees. Also distributed signs about the problems associated with hand feeding manatees.
 - Defeated a bill, along with conservation partners, that would have allowed one Naples, Florida developer to build a project, which would not have been permitted under manatee protection laws.
 - Prevented the elimination of state funding for the manatee rescue and rehabilitation program.
 - Helped to defeat a bill that would have prevented the restoration of the Ocklawaha River, which could provide manatees with additional habitat.
 - Produced 1,000 new posters featuring a public service message for boaters and distributed them free of charge to storefront businesses, dive shops, marinas, libraries, and schools.
- Distributed new national radio public service announcements featuring the voice of actor/producer Alec Baldwin.
 - Helped bring two South Florida men to justice for manatee harassment under federal law after they intentionally hooked a manatee with a rod and reel.
 - Reviewed and made recommendations on a variety of conservation issues including: the Broward County Boat Facility Siting Plan; minimum flow levels for the Lower Hillsborough River, Sulphur Springs, Tampa Bypass Canal, and Blue Spring; the Everglades National Park Management Plan Alternatives; and the Palm Beach County Manatee Protection Plan.
 - Worked to strengthen the state's Manatee Management Plan and supported its adoption at the Commission's December meeting.
 - Supported the efforts of local activists and helped to increase enforcement efforts by exposing diver harassment of manatees in a federal refuge in Crystal River, Florida.
 - Sponsored kayak eco-tours in Crystal River as a way to passively observe manatees while providing an alternative to the "swim with" programs.
 - Continued to advocate for mandatory boater education for all ages of boaters resulting in a proposed bill in 2008.
 - Provided funds to a research project in Belize to better understand manatee behavior, health, and reproductive biology, and supported efforts to implement speed zones and habitat protection measures.
 - Provided funds to a country-wide research project on the distribution and abundance of the West African manatee in Gabon.
 - Negotiated for improved manatee protections throughout the year with government agency staff and user groups on many local, state, and federal task forces and committees.
 - Produced 1,000 free public awareness banners for boaters. The banners warn other boaters that manatees are present.
 - Initiated grass roots citizen action on numerous local, state, and federal manatee protection issues.
 - Reviewed and commented on proposed coastal development permits in manatee habitat from state and federal agencies.



Save the Manatee® Club

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