

From: [LaVere, Ashley](#)
To: [Carla Burrmann](#)
Cc: [Merrill, Maria](#); [ManateeRuleComments](#); [Pasawicz, Michelle](#)
Subject: RE: Manatee Protection Local Zones
Date: Friday, May 29, 2026 3:47:36 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

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Hi Carla,

Thank you for reaching out to provide that update. FWC's Division of Law Enforcement regulates the placement of safety, regulatory, and/or informational markers in state waters. Any signage placed in, on or over state waters would need to conform with the established uniform waterway marker regulations and a Florida Uniform Waterway Marker (FUWM) permit would need to be obtained from FWC's Boating and Waterways Section.

Educational signs typically cannot be placed over or facing the water per FWC's standards. In-water signage can create potential navigational concerns, maintenance issues, and visual clutter. Further, signs facing the water can be less effective from a boater education standpoint depending on placement and visibility or could pose a distraction. FWC staff generally support boater education and outreach efforts related to manatee awareness and protection at locations such as boat ramps, marinas, and other upland public access points where boaters can easily view the information prior to entering the waterbody.

Thank you,

Ashley LaVere
Manatee Rules Coordinator
Imperiled Species Management Section
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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From: Carla Burrmann <cburrmann@co.hernando.fl.us>
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 4:03 PM
To: Pasawicz, Michelle <Michelle.Pasawicz@MyFWC.com>
Cc: Merrill, Maria <Maria.Merrill@MyFWC.com>; [ManateeRuleComments](#) <manateerulecomments@MyFWC.com>
Subject: RE: Manatee Protection Local Zones

[EXTERNAL SENDER] Use Caution opening links or attachments

Hello Michelle,

During our April 28th BOCC meeting, the commissioners voted to cancel the proposed MPZ in Mud River and asked if placement of manatee education/information signs could be placed in

the river instead. Is this something that would be supported by FWC? We have the FL Friendly Boating and Caution Boater signs for manatees at our boat ramps however I was unsure if there were any signs that could be placed within a waterbody?

Any guidance is much appreciated.

TY, Carla.



Carla S. Burrmann, M.S.

Manager

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From: Pasawicz, Michelle <Michelle.Pasawicz@MyFWC.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 4:14 PM

To: John Allocco <JAllocco@co.hernando.fl.us>

Cc: Carla Burrmann <cburrmann@co.hernando.fl.us>; Merrill, Maria <Maria.Merrill@MyFWC.com>; ManateeRuleComments <manateerulecomments@MyFWC.com>

Subject: Manatee Protection Local Zones

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Good afternoon Commissioner Allocco,

I wanted to provide you with some additional information regarding the establishment of a local manatee protection zone. Local municipalities have authority to implement a local zone, for the protection of manatees, within their jurisdiction under Ch. 379.2431(2)(p), Florida Statute. This statute directs review of the best available scientific information to support or deny such a proposal. The data that was reviewed by staff for the recent Hernando County proposal included manatee aerial survey data, manatee mortality and manatee rescue data. Other supporting information such as known manatee habitat was included in this review.

- Mud River Spring is identified in the [Manatee Warm-water Habitat Action Plan](#) as a secondary warm-water refuge of unknown magnitude. Warm-water habitat is considered essential for manatee survival in the winter season.
- Two (2) aerial survey efforts have documented manatee use at this site. The [annual synoptic winter counts](#) (1991-2019; 29 total surveys) and a recent NW region distribution survey (2020-

2021; 8 total surveys). The second data set is attached to this email.

- [Manatee carcasses](#) have been recovered throughout the state since 1974. A total of 25 carcasses have been documented in the Mud River system (not including Weeki Wachee), with 13 of those being attributed to watercraft-related injuries.
- There has been one manatee rescued in the northern extent of Mud River in 2013 with a rescue code attributed to watercraft. The rescue report is attached.

State and local manatee protection zones may be configured in portions of waterbodies or during seasonal periods, provided the data supports that. To balance manatee protections with the rights of waterway users, The Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act (Ch. 68C-22, FAC) allows for exempt activities via permitting. Commercial and Professional Fishing activities (68C-22.003(6), FAC) and Residential access through speed controlled areas (68C-22.003(8), FAC) are two examples of exemptions that our state rule allows. Should a local ordinance be written in such a way to authorize these permitted activities, the local municipality may choose to allow these as well.

Lastly, please note that there is already an established local boating safety zone on portions of Mud River. These areas are regulated as Idle Speed which is more restrictive than Slow Speed. The locations of the markers are attached in Excel documents.

Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions.

Thank you,
Michelle

Michelle R. Pasawicz
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