

1. MANATEE WARM WATER PROGRAM

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THE MARKETING PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO RESEARCH AND FIND SOLUTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROBLEM:

Project: Campaign to promote awareness of the manatee/warm water issue

SCOPE OF PROBLEM

One factor influencing the continued existence of the Florida manatee is the maintenance of warm-water habitat. As a tropical sub-species living at the northern limit of its range, the manatee's presence in the southeastern United States is predicated upon the presence of warm water that is adequate to meet the animal's wintering needs.

Historically, manatees relied upon natural springs, passive warm-water sites (deep basins for example), and warm ambient waters at southern extremes of Florida to shelter themselves from cold winter extremes. During the 20th century, these historical refuges were altered significantly. Access to natural springs was blocked, spring flows were reduced or disrupted, and feeding areas adjacent to springs were either lost or modified. Dredging and canal construction created new warm-water basins in areas not previously used for wintering. The advent of industrial plants discharging heated effluent into adjoining waterways created large, human-dependent, sources of warm water in areas not previously used as wintering sites.

Manatee response to these changes has been varied. Natural springs typified by adequate flows, accessibility, good sources of adjacent forage, and limited human disturbance continue to attract manatees in ever increasing numbers. Springs that have been dammed or otherwise blocked are minimally used or are no longer used by manatees. While poorly understood, manatees appear to continue to use passive warm-water sites, at least for temporary respite from cold weather, and have discovered and are using newly created ones. Most significantly, the majority of the Florida manatee population now seeks refuge during cold weather at industrial sites located throughout peninsular Florida. Many of these animals have been using the industrial sites since birth and know of no alternatives—they return to the same site every winter. One position is

that humans have a responsibility to protect manatees from cold-stress death caused by the loss of industrial warm water sites, because we “set” the animals up for an impending disaster by creating these warm water sites.

This reliance on industrial sites and on springs significantly affected by human activities has placed the very future of the Florida manatee directly in our hands. The continued operation of the industrial plants hinges on operational and economic constraints and the loss of warm water at some or all of these sites is an eventual certainty. Natural spring flows continue to decline. The loss or alteration of these warm-water sites will directly affect the animals that now depend on them. Given that the majority of the Florida manatee population is now dependent on industrial thermal outfalls and natural springs for warm-water, the future status of the Florida manatee is affected by what happens to these sites. The protection and enhancement of natural sites and how we address the loss of industrial sites will set the course for the manatee’s future.

Researchers and State managers are aware of this problem and are considering actions to alleviate the effects of the loss of warm-water sites to manatees. These actions are either short-term or long term. Short term actions, over the next 30-50 years, focus on triage, rescuing animals if a power plant has a sudden shutdown or permanently goes off-line. Rescuing animals is dangerous and time consuming and there are very few resources in the state. For example, only 5 boats designed to capture animals exist in the State. The State would also need warm areas to take them, and the means to transport them. An alternative is to do nothing and let a segment of the population die from exposure and the remaining animals learn to rely on different sources of warm water. An intermediate option is to rescue some of them. Long term actions, 50 years and onward but need to be acted upon now, include mitigating poor quality existing warm water sites to make them more attractive to manatees, technological options such as solar powered generated warm water released where power plants once stood, doing nothing, or creating passive warm water sites. None of these actions can be taken without an understanding and acceptance by stakeholders and the public. Therefore there is a need to learn what the public understands about the manatee/warm-water issue, what the public is willing to do to protect manatees and restructure the network of warm water sites for when the power plants are gone, how much the tax payers are willing to pay to protect manatees and transition to a new warm-water network. We also need to know how best to get the message across to the citizens of Florida to promote support for efforts to protect manatees from the loss of warm water.

This problem has several components.

1. Understanding what the public understands now about manatees and warm water and the inevitable shutdown of power plants cause the loss of these sites.
2. How does the public feel about the potential of 200 or more manatees dying from exposure to cold water and what are their expectations of the State and the utilities to prevent this mortality. How much are citizens willing to pay to rescue manatees and transfer them to warmer water.

3. What do the citizens think about the State of Florida mitigating the warm-water network. In other words either creating alternative warm water sites or improving those that exist now. To what extent are Floridians willing to have the State and Utilities address this problem effectively. How much are citizens willing to pay.
4. Give 1-3 above, how should be frame the messages to increase the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes.

DESIRED OUTCOMES (not complete)

1. WW task force. Acceptable manatee survival during power plant shut-down events.
2. Manatees begin using alternative warm water sites so that the general winter range is not significantly different. No significant loss of animals. Some of these sites were mitigated others not.
3. Researchers learn about how manatees navigate their landscape and make decisions about seeking warm water refuges.
4. An acceptance of mitigation by the public.
5. Enhancement of natural areas that may require modifying human activities at those sites and boaters and other users are accepting of this.
6. Willingness to provide, either through taxes or an add-on in electric bill, funding for triage, mitigation, technology development.
7. Outcomes become integrated into local government's manatee protection plans.

MEASURING SUCCESS (many to be determined by student team)

1. No significant loss of life during a cold weather event.
2. Manatees adapt to new warm water sites not frequented during the power plant days.
3. The 4 sub-populations are maintained.
4. Public opinion for support of our warm water efforts remains positive.
5. Ideally the State will not overly dependent on technology for warm water. Technology for triage.
6. Dollars dedicated to the warm water issue.

2. BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

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THE MARKETING PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO RESEARCH AND FIND SOLUTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROBLEM:

Project: Campaign to promote boating safety education requirements for all boat operators in Florida

SCOPE OF PROBLEM

Florida leads the Nation in the number of registered vessels, length of coastline, and number of boating visitors. It also leads the nation in deaths from vessel accidents. To help improve safety on the waterways, the Florida Legislature passed Florida Statute 327.395 which became active on October 1, 1996 (http://myfwc.com/boating/safety/education_law.htm). Under this law, anyone 21 years of age or younger is required to complete successfully a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators approved boating education course or have passed a course equivalency or temporary certificate examination. They also must have in their possession, a boating education ID card and a photo identification card before operating a vessel with a motor of 10 HP or greater. These identification cards are good for a life time. Many stakeholders preferred a statute requiring all boaters meet minimum education requirements and an unsuccessful attempt was made in 1989 at requiring a boat operator license, similar to today's motorcycle laws.

Unfortunately, Florida's fatal boating accident rate has continued to rise (<http://myfwc.com/commission/2006/Sept/Presentations/BoatingSafetyEducation81706.pdf>), and is now up to a fatality rate of 7.9% per 100,000 registered boats in 2005, a significant concern for law enforcement. The approach of ensuring minimal mandatory boater education is considered the best option for reducing the number of boating accidents. This can be achieved via an education requirement or a licensing requirement with an education component for all boaters. A boat license is a certificate that demonstrates proof that the holder has permission from a governmental or other constituted authority to operate a power boat, usually one of 10 HP or greater. Boater

education is the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills related to boating, including safe operation, environmentally responsible behavior, and courteous use. To acquire and maintain a license the holder must pass a test, sometimes both written and practical, and renew it as required. Licensees are considered to be given a privilege to operate a boat and can have this privilege revoked by the State. Education uses a boater education card that allows an officer to verify the holder has complied with the law and is obtained by either on-line or class room instruction and then an exam. Typically the exams are given on-line or at the end of class-room instruction, often with little oversight. However, non-proctored testing has proven to be problematic. For example, in New Hampshire, officials are considering ending on-line testing because of cheating--students used their reference materials during the test or had someone else take the exam for them. New safeguards are being implemented for on-line courses to ensure these issues do not occur. The bottom line is that Florida's mandatory education law has not resulted in a significant number of boaters having a minimal uniform threshold of knowledge for safe, conscientious, and considerate boating.

Licensing is an option to ensure uniform boater knowledge and training primarily because of the standardized instruction, proctored exams, and consequences, potentially loss of the license, if the boater violates the law. A licensing system also provides revenues from acquisition and renewals and facilitates identification of the boater and access to their boating record—the boater has a license number. It might also help increase access for some Florida citizens by overcoming some fears such as trailering, launching, docking, and safe use and increase the likelihood of some citizens investing in a boat. The US Coast Guard believes a license may assist in Homeland Security efforts by requiring boat operators to carry identification, one of the few missing links in safeguarding our nation's transportation safety. Education can be similar to a license if the boat operator must carry their education certificate, which will ID the boater, and also could be confiscated if the law allowed.

While surveys indicate most boaters find licensing acceptable, there are stakeholder groups that are opposed to the idea. For example, the marine industry, whose objective is to promote and protect growth of the marine industry including boat sales and service, believe that mandatory education and/or licensing will restrict boater access and negatively impact revenues. This concern by the marine industry has been well communicated to members of the Florida Legislature and others. Alternatively, most stakeholders accept education, although the extent of educational requirements (from voluntary instruction to requiring a certificate when boating) would likely be debated.

The goal of this initiative is to explore and recommend a realistic plan for licensing/education all boaters that:

1. standardizes the level of instruction and includes boating safety, environmental protection, and boater courtesy,
2. provides the opportunity for on-the-water training and trailering for those considering purchasing a boat or new to boating,
3. requires a proctored exam,
4. requires the operator to carry their license or certificate for ID purposes,
5. has consequences for violators, and
6. facilitates maintenance of a boating record database

This problem has several components.

1. Understanding case histories of similar initiatives. Note that Alabama is the only State in the US with boater licensing. Also consider automobile and motorcycle licensing. What were the two sides of these debates and which expectations became law.
2. Understand the critical customer segments, primarily the marine industries. What their concerns are and whether they are warranted.
3. Understand the barriers to boating. Would licensing be a barrier? Would licensing or education through written and practical instruction actually make boating more accessible by providing some citizens the necessary confidence to boat safely prior to investing money in a boat.
4. Develop a strategy to pass an education or licensing program into law that is similar to the goal stated above.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

8. Licensing/mandatory education system enacted by the Florida Legislature.
9. Decrease in the number of boating accidents and fatalities.
10. Decrease in the number of violations, i.e., increase in boater compliance with laws.
11. Reduced environmental damage.
12. Enhancement boater experience.
13. Opportunities for citizens interested in boating to gain practical experience prior to investing in a vessel.

MEASURING SUCCESS (many to be determined by student team)

7. Licensing/mandatory education law passed similar to goals stated above.
8. Decrease in number of boating accidents and fatalities.
9. Reduction in sea grass scarring, manatee, turtle, dolphin injuries and deaths,
10. Enhanced boating experience reported as public opinion (survey results).
11. Increased revenues to support boating, boating related activities, and the marine environment.

3. STUDENT GOVERNMENT

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THE MARKETING PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO RESEARCH AND FIND SOLUTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROBLEM:

The Student Government at USFSP is interested in a marketing plan that addresses two related issues:

1. Increase participation in activities offered by Student Government.
2. Increase participation in Student Government.

It will be necessary to assess the knowledge the student body at USF has of Student Government and the activities offered by the organization. Based on the outcome of both secondary and primary research, it is likely that the marketing plan will have to address knowledge objectives, belief objectives and behavioral objectives in order to meet the charge given by the organization.

More detail will be given at the meeting on January 23rd.