

Item # 20

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

**PUBLIC HEARING
AGENDA**

**SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF
COMMISSIONER JACOBS**

March 24, 2009

2:00 pm

COUNTY RECORDS DIV.
DOCUMENT CONTROL

2009 MAR 24 PM 3:02



Kristin D. Jacobs

Commissioner – District 2

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 23, 2009

TO: Broward County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Commissioner Kristin D. Jacobs 

SUBJECT: Broward County's Boat Facility Siting Plan

As you know, the County's Boat Facility Siting Plan was adopted in June of 2007 following extensive coordination with state regulatory agencies and public process that included vetting with diverse stakeholders and interest groups. The Plan seeks to direct new boat facilities, namely boat slips, away from areas where manatees are known to congregate to areas thought to be less frequented by manatees. These areas of higher manatee observations are classified as Areas of Special Concern and are identified in the County's manatee protection plan as including the Dania Cutoff Canal, South Fork of the New River, the Middle/C10 canal, Dania Cutoff Canal West, and Port Everglades. The number of boat facility licenses to be issued in these waterways is substantially restricted as compared to more northern and southern waterways within the County.

However, lack of documented observations of manatees in areas outside of Areas of Special Concern does not necessarily imply an absence of manatees or less habitat utilization, but may instead result from insufficient monitoring and data. In fact, there are claims backed with video and photos that finger canals off the Pompano Canal and other waterways are serving as critical habitat for nursing and calving mothers. Such areas are not specifically identified in the current Boat Facility Siting Plan and are not currently receiving special protection or consideration. Staff has acknowledged the need to invest further efforts in identify critical water bodies that might serve as nursing or calving areas for example, or otherwise encourage frequent use by manatee. Such information might ultimately be used to designate additional Areas of Special Concern with higher levels of protective and possible reassessment of the County's Boat Facility Siting Plan. Right now there is simply inadequate information to make such determination and additional monitoring should be undertaken with the participation of our residents and other community partners who have personal familiarity with and historical information relating to manatee observations.

Staff could substantially further these efforts with:

1. More aggressive community outreach and education
2. Enhanced efforts to invite public participation in the Manatee Advisory Group
3. More information encouraging public reporting and documentation of manatee sitings
4. Improvements to the County's website as a communication tool
5. Establish avenue to facilitate public reporting of sitings
6. Direct response by staff to document siting claims
7. Press releases

Prior to actual adoption of the textual amendments to the Conservation Element at a later Commission Meeting, I would like to direct staff to develop policy language to be integrated in the Conservation Element, that commits to enhancing manatee monitoring efforts in collaboration with the public so as to provide a better understanding of the extent of use of all our County waterways by manatees and with the goal of improving our protective efforts. This information could be used in providing subsequent review and assessment of the County's Boat Facility Siting Plan as part of the next Evaluation Appraisal Report of our Comprehensive Plan in 2010 (confirm date).