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## lake woodruff national wildlife Manatees/Government

Posted by karenc - 2010/02/08 13:17

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I know many scuba divers support the effort to help save the manatee from extinction. Here is an Action Alert issued by the Save the Manatee Club. Please email the public officials and let them know how you feel. If we don't help now, the manatee may not be around for us or our children to enjoy. Karen C ACTION ALERT! More than 775 manatees have been killed by boats in Florida waters since 1974 when record-keeping began. The latest manatee to be killed by a boat had a name, a known history, and 1,250 adoptive parents. Shane was a regular winter visitor to Blue Spring State Park and one of the manatees in Save the Manatee Club's (SMC) manatee adoption program. He was born to Emma in 1981. Shane's carcass was recovered on Sunday, June 7th by Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission personnel at the High Banks boat ramp, about 10 miles south of the park. Shane had deep gashes on his back from a boat propeller and the necropsy revealed he had been cut so deep that the wounds penetrated his abdominal cavity. The area where Shane was found is a designated year-round slow speed zone with speeds of 25 mph in the channel. Ironically, Shane's death comes on the heels of recommendations from the Volusia County Council to raise boat speeds that protect manatees in several Volusia County waterways including the tributaries of the St. Johns River where Shane lived. Volusia County government is making these recommendations even though it appears the protection in Volusia is working. The county's boat speed zones were adopted in 1991 and the signs were erected on the waterways the following summer. Since that time manatee mortality from watercraft has decreased, suggesting that boat speed regulations are working. According to DEP statistics, in the five year period before the signs for the speed zones were posted, fourteen manatees were killed by boats. In the five year period since the signs have been posted, six manatees, including Shane, have been killed by boats. SMC staff feel this is a strong indication that the speed zones have helped reduce boat-related mortality in Volusia County. If any changes are to be made to the rule, they should be to strengthen it not weaken it. Although Volusia County Council has acted irresponsibly by voting to raise boat speed limits, it is the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that must either accept or reject their recommendations. It is up to DEP to make sure manatees are adequately protected in Volusia's waters, as well as statewide. The tributaries of the St. Johns River offer excellent habitat for manatees as much of this area remains relatively pristine. If DEP relies on scientific data, which they must do by law, they will maintain existing protection and keep politics out of their decision. Please, for the sake of all the manatees using Volusia's waters, take a moment to e-mail Virginia Wetherell, Secretary of the DEP. Let her know it is very important to you that the regulations for boat speeds in the St. Johns River tributaries and other waterways of Volusia MUST remain strong to adequately protect the manatees using these waters and that additional law enforcement is also needed to make sure boaters comply with the posted speed zones. Also, please contact Ms. Jamie Rappaport Clark, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Let her know you want boat speed zones in the waters of the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge in Volusia County to remain strong. Finally, please contact Florida's governor, Lawton Chiles, to let him know you want strong protection in Volusia County's waters. Thank you. Virginia Wetherell, Secretary Florida Department of Environmental Protection wetherel...@epic9.dep.state.fl.us Governor Lawton Chiles chi...@eog.state.fl.us Jamie Rappaport Clark, Director U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service jamie\_cl...@fws.gov

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