

Update on the Division of Law Enforcement's Work Plan
Manatee harassment from human interaction
Agenda Item 4, C.

As part of this year's work plan, the Division of Law Enforcement (DLE) is reviewing issues related to human / manatee interaction and the occurrence of harassment of manatees. The Crystal River / Kings Bay area is an area of particular interest due to the high concentrations of manatees that are easily accessible to humans operating vessels, swimming, snorkeling and diving.

DLE staff have been discussing the issue with staff from the Imperiled Species Management Section and Office of General Counsel. We have also coordinated with United States Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) biologists, Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge staff and FWS law enforcement personnel. Together we met with a small group of stakeholders to better understand their issues and provide information related to the Crystal River manatee population, current laws and regulations, as well as legal authorities and enforcement issues.

We will be holding a 'Listening Session' in Crystal River on June 4, 2009, at the Plantation Inn from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. to allow a broader group of stakeholders the opportunity to provide input on the issue directly to staff.

We will provide a briefing on the results of this 'Listening Session' at the June Commission meeting.