

## Reinstate Clam Bay as an “Idle Speed Manatee Protection Zone

Submitted by Linda Roth 4/22/16

1. The two best ways to protect manatees are: 1) prevent boats from injuring and killing manatees, and 2) restore and maintain manatee habitats -- depriving a species of its food source and shelter is the surest way to kill it off.
2. Collier County established Clam Bay as a nature preserve in 1995. Clam Bay is the only coastal nature preserve in Collier County.
3. The Clam Bay nature preserve consists not only of mangroves. Its seagrass beds were once among the richest in Collier County, per the 1995 Collier County Manatee Protection Plan. In 1996, the County designated Clam Bay an “Idle Speed/No Wake” zone to protect this valuable natural resource. This signage was removed after a change in state law in 2009.
4. Turbidity from dredging of Clam Pass may have had some negative effects on the seagrass beds in the connecting waterway to Outer Clam Bay, but they have recovered. As you can see on the 7 seagrass survey maps (attached), most of the seagrasses that remain in Clam Bay are in this narrow connecting waterway where motorized vessels have no option but travel at “Idle Speed”.
5. Outer Clam Bay has not been dredged, but the seagrasses have diminished significantly from historical levels. Compare the seagrass beds in 1994 to those in the most recent survey in 2015. With removal of signage in 2009, there has been an upsurge in high speed boating activity. The resulting is most likely cause of the demise of the seagrasses in Outer Clam Bay.
6. The Clam Bay nature preserve needs to have “Idle Speed” manatee protection signage to restore the once rich seagrass habitat for manatees. Clam Bay’s shallow warm water, between - 4 ft. to - 6.5 ft. post-dredge, is an ideal environment for seagrasses to flourish, and for manatees to visit, rest and forage.
7. The Committee should recommend Clam Bay as an “Idle Speed” manatee protection zone.

Thank you