

**Comments to the Collier County Local Rule Review Committee  
For Manatee Protection Zones**

April 22, 2016

Submitted by Mary Johnson

Board of Directors, Pelican Bay Foundation

Good morning. I am Mary Johnson and I currently serve on the Board of the Pelican Bay Foundation, representing the community of Pelican Bay in Collier County. At the time of Pelican Bay's development, an extensive nature preserve was created along the Clam Bay estuary that lies between Pelican Bay and the Gulf. Public beaches were created to the north and south at Vanderbilt and Clam Pass Park. The conservation area itself was deeded to Collier County to remain as a permanent nature preserve. The deed provided for low impact recreational use that would be in keeping with conservation. A marked canoe trail extends through the preserve, with a public canoe and kayak launch at the southern end. Thousands of people enjoy the beaches and nature preserve each year.

Clam Bay should be part of Florida's system of protection zones for manatees. It is one of the few designated conservation areas along the Gulf Coast between the Caloosahatchee River and the Ten Thousand Islands. Manatees have been well documented in the Clam Bay system over the years, with sightings by individuals as well as aerial surveys and tracking devices. The presence of seagrass beds and protected waters make Clam Bay a haven for migrating manatees as they travel along the coast.

Motor boats have never been prohibited in Clam Bay. This was in recognition of the long-standing use of boats by the Seagate community to go across Outer Clam Bay to reach the Gulf. However, in the past, signage was installed based on the presence of manatees and other wildlife, calling for Idle Speed/No Wake. With a 2009 change in state law, that signage has been removed. Now there is no way to protect Clam Bay from boating that is incompatible with conservation. There has been an upsurge in recreational use by wave runners and other boats towing skiers and water toys around Outer Clam Bay. This is destroying the value of Clam Bay as habitat for wildlife, including manatees.

Based on these considerations, we ask the Local Rule Review Committee to recommend that Clam Bay be designated as a Manatee Protection Zone with Idle Speed/No Wake signage. This will help ensure that Clam Bay can continue to serve as a wildlife and habitat conservation area into the future.

Thank you.

# CLAM BAY NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AREA (NRPA)

