

UME update 1/5/2022

[Video Update](#)

There is still little manatee activity at the Temporary Field Response Station as water temperatures remain above average. Staff continue to monitor the area and provide lettuce in floating PVC pipe corrals each day in the off-chance manatees visit the area and take an interest in the lettuce offered. As mentioned in a previous update, the corrals are working well in preventing the lettuce from dispersing outside the feeding trial area and allow for easier clean up, reducing the chance of lettuce remaining in the system.

FWC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leadership toured the Temporary Field Response Station last week to meet with Florida Power & Light environmental staff and provide support to the response team. Leadership visiting the Response Station included Melissa Tucker, Director of the FWC's Division of Habitat and Species Conservation; Gil McRae, the Director of the FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute; Tom Reinert, Regional Director of the FWC's South Region; FWC Law Enforcement Lt. Colonel Alfredo Escanio; and Roxanna Hinzman, USFWS's Unified Command Agency Administrator.

A new FWC Emergency Rule, 68CER21-1 went into effect last week. The rule provides additional protection for manatees at the Temporary Field Response Station by establishing a no entry zone at the Florida Power & Light Cape Canaveral Clean Energy Center. Buoys have been deployed to mark off the area and FWC law enforcement and biological personnel and volunteers created special buoy anchors to ensure the markers stay in place without entangling manatees.

Last week, our manatee response staff received a report of a stranded, unresponsive manatee near Merritt Island. A rescue team responded, and the emaciated male manatee was transported to Jacksonville Zoo for care.

This week, a juvenile male manatee was rescued and transported to SeaWorld after it was found beached next to a road near Crystal River. The manatee likely gained access to the road during a high-water event caused by a passing storm during high tide. Once the water receded the manatee became stranded. In addition to being stranded, staff noted the manatee was underweight and had a healing wound on its side along with cold stress lesions on the animal's body. Out of an abundance of caution, the manatee was rescued and transported to SeaWorld for evaluation.

On January 3, an adult female manatee was released at Blue Springs State Park. It was originally rescued in Welaka Spring in February 2021 for emaciation and transported to SeaWorld for rehabilitation.