

**Attachment 3  
PPBEP COMMUNITY GRANT FINAL REPORT FORM**

<b>Agreement No.:</b>	FY2023-03		
<b>Grantee Name:</b>	National Wildlife Federation		
<b>Grantee Address:</b>	11000 Wildlife Center Dr.		
<b>Grantee's Representative:</b>	Paige Lansky	<b>Telephone No.:</b>	2486725778
<b>Project Title:</b>	Manatees and Meadows: Protecting Manatees and Their Habitat Through Outreach		
Please submit any high-resolution photos related to the project, if available (include photo credit for possible use by PPBEP for use in our e-newsletter, annual report, social media, or website) with your report as image files to <a href="mailto:mtross@ppbep.org">mtross@ppbep.org</a> .			

**1. RESULTS: Describe the progress made toward the goals and objectives as stated in the funded grant application.**

The goal of this program is to promote awareness, education, and protection for manatees and seagrass by conducting outreach with target-audiences in the field. Teams of trained interns and volunteers visited boat ramps, marinas, fishing piers, water-based businesses, and a school, distributing outreach materials and speaking to diverse audiences. We spoke to anglers, boaters, residents, and visitors and distributed outreach materials such as magnets, stickers, and rack cards. At boat ramps and fishing piers, we distributed Boater's Kits that included polarized sunglasses, koozies, Boater's Guides, and magnets/stickers all throughout the region. Boat ramps and fishing piers included locations like Navy Point Boat Ramp, Juanas Boat Ramp, and Shoreline Park (see outreach location map). Throughout the year, we also attended festivals and events, such as the Sea Turtle Baby Shower, the Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Tournament, and Autism OdySea, passing out outreach materials and educating the general public.

In February, NWF hired a Gulf Program Outreach Associate and lead for this grant, Paige Lansky. Paige has over 12 years of experience in natural resource management, monitoring, and community outreach as well as a vast knowledge of Florida ecosystems and wildlife. Paige initiated program work by meeting with partners such as Rick O'Connor, Escambia County's Sea Grant Extension Agent; Elizabeth Hieb with Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL); and our partners from PPBEP. In March, we hired on two local interns to facilitate outreach, trainings, and assist with creation of educational materials.

Our interns and volunteers are essential for ensuring success of our program and reaching a wide, diverse audience. We recruited volunteers using social media, partner volunteer groups, and physical flyers. We hosted in-person and virtual events to train volunteers to deliver audience-specific messages, and address commonly asked questions or concerns.

Prior to our in-person outreach, we updated and redesigned outreach materials with the new logo, created by PPBEP staff, and designed eye-catching table cloths, banners, and souvenirs to draw public attention. Volunteers received customized t-shirts with the new logo and sighting website. A large banner was created to draw attention to our tent and provide information for those that

may not stop to talk to the outreach team. We created new flyers, brochures, rack cards, and outreach trinket designs. We ordered materials throughout the season as needed.

In May, we visited Myrtle Grove 4th grade students to facilitate a lesson plan which focused on manatees, migration patterns of manatees, the importance of seagrass, and ways to protect manatees and seagrass habitats. We spent an hour with each 4th grade class giving an age appropriate presentation, playing an interactive manatee fact game, and providing students with manatee coloring sheets and Panhandle Manatee souvenirs.

At the initiation of this program, in 2021, we created our Panhandle Manatee Facebook (FB) and Instagram pages. This year, we continued to add photos, advertise volunteer opportunities, and provide information to the public about our program. Paid advertisements on FB reached a wider audience through our NWF's Gulf Program FB page. Our team developed two educational blogs for NWF's blog page which will be shared on social media sites with Panhandle Manatee, DISL, and PPBEP once they are live. One blog focused on the significance of seagrass to the Pensacola and Perdido Bay estuaries while the other focused on manatee life history and migration patterns.

During the last month, focus moved to distributing informational rack cards to local businesses that would reach tourists and community members throughout the year. This helped to provide long term material distribution past the in-person outreach events. We created a list of potential businesses and residents and systematically reached out to establish contacts and deliver rack cards and display holders.

## **2. IMPACT: Summarize the organization's key evaluation results related to the funded grant (number of people reached, samples taken, etc.):**

To expand our Panhandle Manatee team with trained, knowledgeable volunteers, we hosted 4 training events, one in person and 3 virtual events, as well as supplying volunteers with recordings of the training. We trained a total of 18 new volunteers and provided updated information and a refresher course for 6 previously trained volunteers. From our continued programmatic efforts, we currently have a total of 58 trained volunteers who have participated in outreach activities.

The Panhandle Manatee team carried out education and outreach at 21 locations which included community events, boat ramps, fishing piers, and an elementary school. Through our efforts, we reached a total of 938 direct interactions with anglers, boaters, business owners, and community members. We distributed 303 full boater kits and 425 mini kits which included Panhandle Manatee outreach materials such as stickers, magnets, coloring sheets, koozies, etc. With our team of volunteers, we reached a total of 211 volunteer hours for training and outreach events, with a volunteer match worth \$6,709.80 (based on spring 2023 national average <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>). During the Spring semester, our interns visited Myrtle Grove Elementary where they lead roughly 60 students through interactive curriculum based on school standards.

In an effort to provide informational rack cards to water-based and waterfront businesses and residents, we reached out to 18 marine-based businesses and distributed 1,100 rack cards to 10

receptive businesses including Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park on Okaloosa Island, Kitty Hawk Kites on Fort Walton Beach, and Pensacola Beach Resort in Pensacola Beach.

While we are able to measure direct outreach interactions through this program, much of our impact is indirect outreach through material distribution, social networks, and community members that learned about manatees or the sighting network from our visible presence in the field. Indirect interactions were estimated at 4,800 individuals from March, 2023 to July 2023 based on rack card distribution, event turnout, individuals present at fishing piers and boat ramps, and social media viewers for a total number of impacted community members being around 5,800 individuals.

Although not a direct measure of impact, DISL reported 93 total sightings in the Pensacola and Perdido Bay watersheds during the grant period alone. The increase in sightings over the last 3 years likely demonstrates that the public is more aware of the sighting network than before programmatic outreach began.

**3. SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES: Describe the significant successes and challenges the organization experienced related to the funded grant.**

As we previously shared, our project lead, Jessica Bibza, passed away in late September 2023. We are grateful for the support of PPBEP to adjust as needed. Despite this major hardship for the NWF team and our partners at PPBEP, the grant was a success. We were able to work jointly to determine the best path forward to adjust our internship hours and hiring needs. The project did experience unanticipated turnover from our interns due to the success of receiving a fulltime job. However, we were able to adapt by rehiring and ensure adequate internship hours to complete the outreach goals of the program. PPBEP also accommodated these changes by approving a no-cost extension to extend the term of the grant award through the end of June 2023.

A success was the expansion of the program directly into local schools. With more advanced planning, the program could coordinate school visits prior to school ending to increase the amount of outreach in schools. We did speak to several local teachers about the need for outreach visits and reception was very strong, although most require several months advance notice to coordinate visits.

Another success was the targeted outreach of distributing rack cards to local businesses. Our interns noted that businesses were generally receptive to taking the rack cards but they did face a challenge with finding and reaching the correct contact to permit displaying materials, often requiring an in-person visit to a business for a response. Moving forward, in order for successful relationships to be created, and community trust to be developed, a longer investment than one season will be needed.

A final success is that, due to the number of outreach materials and rack cards that were distributed, it is likely the community will continue to use the manatee sighting website to report sightings well beyond this outreach season. There is opportunity to continue this type of outreach as we discovered that community members and visitors alike are unaware that manatees occur in the region, revealing a need for continued education and outreach.

Anecdotally, the program's reach was far beyond the Florida Panhandle. While visiting a non-profit in Tampa Bay, I saw a Panhandle Manatee magnet on their employee fridge. While visiting family in Biloxi, MS, I saw a Panhandle Manatee sticker on a water bottle, despite being hours away from our closest outreach site. Although the geographical reach of this program is difficult to measure, these Panhandle Manatee sightings demonstrate the passion the regional community feels towards manatees and desire to contribute to their protection and conservation.


**4. LESSONS LEARNED: Describe what the organization learned based upon the results, successes, and challenges reported. Address programmatic, evaluative, or organizational changes that will be made based upon these lessons learned.**

The Pensacola and Perdido Bay communities were generally very receptive of our outreach efforts and many people stated an interest in volunteering and contributing to the protection and conservation of seagrass and manatees. Some anglers/boaters were concerned about increased regulations but most people, regardless of the audience, were excited about having manatees in their waterways.

There is still opportunity to continue to provide outreach around manatee presence in the region. Many people we interacted with were still unaware of manatee presence in the area, including a group of FWC officers we spoke with. There could be an opportunity to conduct a training with local FWC officers about manatees in the area, seagrass safe boating practices, and common sighting locations.

We also identified the need to reach out to watercraft rental companies and distribute information or coordinate a training with individuals that rent boats or jet skis in the region. Unfortunately, under this grant period there was not time for this effort but we believe using this avenue to better target tourists should be prioritized in the future.

This report is submitted in accordance with the reporting requirements of Agreement No. FY2023-03 and accurately reflects the activities associated with the project.

  
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Signature of Grantee's Representative

7/13/2023  
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Date

Paige Lansky, Outreach Associate, Gulf Program,  
National Wildlife Federation  
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Print Name and Title