



Florida Power & Light Company
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FPL announces more than \$700,000 to support Florida's imperiled manatees

- *Announcement made as federal and state agencies create a temporary field response station at the company's Cape Canaveral Clean Energy Center*
- *Environmental organizations across Florida will receive grants from Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) through its charitable arm, the NextEra Energy Foundation, in support of Florida manatees*
- *Manatee Lagoon – An FPL Eco-Discovery Center® plans to add a manatee rescue and release ramp, a seagrass nursery and an educational exhibit to support manatee recovery amidst the unusual mortality event*
- *FPL is funding a new manatee transport truck for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and has added a new manatee-focused Conservation and Education Liaison position to assist FWC staff*

JUNO BEACH, Fla. – Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) officials today announced the company has allocated more than \$700,000 over the next three years to support manatee rescue and rehabilitation, as well as habitat restoration. Donations made through FPL's charitable arm, the NextEra Energy Foundation, are a portion of this commitment as part of the company's comprehensive response to the 2021 Florida manatee Unusual Mortality Event (UME).

The company's announcement occurs as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) are creating a temporary field response station at FPL's Cape Canaveral Clean Energy Center. The energy center is located in the northern Indian River Lagoon and is a critical stop-off point where manatees congregate as they migrate south during the winter.

"Environmental stewardship is a critical aspect of FPL's continued efforts to deliver clean, reliable and affordable energy to its customers," said Kate MacGregor, FPL vice president of environmental services. "For over 30 years, we have worked closely with state and federal agencies to ensure manatees are protected and we stand ready to support FWC and USFWS in their ongoing conservation efforts for this important species."

Rescue and rehabilitation efforts

Agencies and organizations that support the rescue and rehabilitation of sick or injured manatees are critical. With more manatees at risk due to the UME, these organizations need more resources to aid in additional rescues and releases.

In partnership with the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida, FPL is funding a manatee rescue transport truck for FWC. During the 2020-2021 manatee season, there was a significantly higher number of manatee rescues

throughout the east coast of Florida than in previous seasons. This new truck will be added to the FWC fleet to expand rescue efforts and will be used to transport sick or injured manatees to rehabilitation facilities throughout Florida. Manatee Lagoon has also added a new staff position: a Conservation and Education Liaison, who will support educational outreach at Manatee Lagoon as well as assist FWC staff with manatee rescues and releases in the field.

“Manatee conservation in Florida is a highly collaborative effort involving numerous partners from private industry, government and non-profit organizations,” said Gil McRae, director for the FWC’s Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. “FPL has consistently been at the forefront of these collaborative efforts and these timely and substantive actions further affirm that commitment. We remain grateful and appreciative of FPL’s continuing support of manatee conservation.”

Earlier this year, FPL announced a matching grant to the Bishop Museum of Science and Nature in Bradenton to support its efforts to increase their capacity for manatee rehabilitation during this critical time. The Bishop has been rehabilitating manatees since 1998 and was a founding member of the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP) in 2001. The Bishop matched and surpassed that goal in late November.

Additionally, working with state and local organizations, Manatee Lagoon plans to build a new ramp to help rescue and release manatees. This ramp will provide an additional safe access point for staff from MRP organizations.

Supporting research to find solutions

Researchers determined the cause of the manatee UME is starvation, which is attributed to a lack of seagrass, a primary food source, in the Indian River Lagoon. Historically, extensive seagrass meadows were common throughout the Indian River Lagoon. However, several factors have led to the catastrophic loss of seagrass beds since 2011. Supporting research to restore and recover seagrass can positively benefit the health of Florida manatees.

FPL will provide a grant to the Florida Atlantic University Foundation for the FAU Harbor Branch Experimental Seagrass Nursery located in Fort Pierce. FWC is funding the expansion of the seagrass nursery while FPL is providing the funding to operate the nursery for two years. This project aims to use seagrass nursery technology as part of the seagrass restoration efforts in the Indian River Lagoon.

“We are very grateful to receive this gift from FPL and for the continuous support they have given FAU Harbor Branch for our ongoing research in marine science and technology addressing critical issues affecting our marine ecosystems,” said Jim Sullivan, Ph.D., executive director, FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. “The funding for this project will continue the momentum in our Marine Ecosystem Health program’s seagrass nursery, allowing our researchers to apply unique techniques to help repair the damages to the crucial aquatic plants that are essential to the health of the Indian River Lagoon, but also serve as a population-dependent dietary staple for the lagoon’s manatees.”

Monitoring seagrass ecosystem services, beyond that of growth and coverage, is key to understanding seagrass health and productivity and better inform policy decisions and restoration activities. A grant to the Florida Oceanographic Society (FOS) located in Stuart will support seagrass research and onsite seagrass nursery operations.

“Seagrass is important to our waterways and our community. It supports marine habitats and our way of life along the Treasure Coast,” says Mark Perry, executive director of Florida Oceanographic Society. “We are grateful that FPL has given us this grant to help continue our seagrass research in the Indian River Lagoon.”

Additionally, Manatee Lagoon will add an educational seagrass nursery exhibit to showcase its role in a thriving ecosystem. This will also provide an opportunity for Manatee Lagoon visitors to learn more about this essential part of Florida’s waterways.

How you can help

The public plays an important role in the safety of Florida manatees. Although there isn't one simple solution, there are powerful steps we can all take to help Florida manatees, including:

- Call FWC's Wildlife Alert toll-free number: 1-888-404-FWCC (1-888-404-3922) or #FWC or *FWC on a cellphone if you see a sick, injured, dead or tagged manatee.
- Many boaters will find manatees easier to spot if they wear polarized sunglasses and keep a lookout for signs of manatees such as the circular "footprints" they trace on the top of the water or their snouts sticking up out the water.
- Look, but don't touch manatees. Keep your distance when boating, even if you are steering a canoe, kayak or paddleboard. Be a good role model for others so that they learn how to watch and enjoy manatees without disturbing the animals.

Florida Power & Light Company

Florida Power & Light Company is the largest energy company in the U.S. as measured by retail electricity produced and sold. The company serves more than 5.6 million customer accounts supporting more than 11 million residents across Florida with clean, reliable and affordable electricity. FPL operates one of the cleanest power generation fleets in the U.S and in 2021 won the ReliabilityOne® National Reliability Excellence Award for the sixth time in the last seven years. The company was recognized in 2020 as one of the most trusted U.S. electric utilities by Escalent for the seventh consecutive year. FPL is a subsidiary of Juno Beach, Florida-based NextEra Energy, Inc. (NYSE: NEE), a clean energy company widely recognized for its efforts in sustainability, ethics and diversity, and has been ranked No. 1 in the electric and gas utilities industry in Fortune's 2020 list of "World's Most Admired Companies." NextEra Energy is also the parent company of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, which, together with its affiliated entities, is the world's largest generator of renewable energy from the wind and sun and a world leader in battery storage. For more information about NextEra Energy companies, visit these websites: www.NextEraEnergy.com, www.FPL.com, www.GulfPower.com, www.NextEraEnergyResources.com.

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