



FWC Update

FWC officer receives lifesaving award

The quick response of an FWC law enforcement officer was instrumental in saving the life of a fellow officer.

Lt. Tim Kiss, regional training officer for the FWC's North Central Region, received the Award of Lifesaving for his "attentiveness and quick response on Sept. 28, 2006 to a medical emergency" affecting Lt. Ken Avinon, an FWC investigator.

Kiss was conducting night-driving training for officers at the Lake City office when Avinon complained of not feeling well.

"Ken said he didn't feel good and wanted to go home," Kiss said. "He wasn't looking well at all, and I told him we needed to go to the hospital to get him checked out."

Kiss continued talking with Avinon and realized his condition was deteriorating.

"We headed for the hospital. He was in distress. I took him to Shands where doctors confirmed he was having a heart attack," Kiss said.

After being given medication to stabilize his condition, Avinon was transported to Gainesville by ambulance. There he received additional treatment and was given an excellent prognosis for recovery.

Maj. Bruce Hamlin, regional commander, presented Kiss with the lifesaving award.

"The cardiac specialist in Gainesville reported that the favorable outcome was a result of the quick transport to the hospital," Hamlin said. "I would hate to think what would have happened if Lt. Avinon had just gone home that evening.

"It is extremely rewarding to see the training and skills we provide our officers come to such good use, especially when it results in the saving of someone's life," Hamlin said. "Lt. Kiss' quick recognition of the developing emergency situation resulted in saving a fine lieutenant's life."

Avinon has since returned to duty.

FWC seeks public input to help protect manatees

The FWC has released a draft of the state's first manatee management plan and is seeking public input. The plan outlines future protections to ensure the species' continued recovery, and it is the



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final step in changing the manatee's classification on the state's imperiled species list after lengthy study and review by experts.

"The fact that the manatee did not merit classification as endangered is a tribute to the commitment made to manatee conservation over the past 30 years. This effort has few parallels in conservation biology," FWC's Imperiled Species Management Section leader Kipp Frohlich said.

In order to change manatees' classification to threatened, the FWC must adopt a new management plan.

"This first draft incorporated extensive public input," Frohlich said. "Now we are looking to Floridians to let us know if it meets their expectations for manatee recovery and management."

FWC staff will evaluate Florida residents' comments and modify the plan as necessary to ensure continued progress toward recovery for the manatee. The revised draft will be on the agenda for final approval at the FWC's April or June meeting. If the management plan is approved, the manatee's classification will change from endangered to threatened.

The draft plan includes new measurable biological goals for assessing progress, developing solutions for the potential loss of

manatee warm-water refuges and developing improved methods for monitoring manatee populations. Many current management activities, such as boating regulations and speed zones, reviews of coastal permits, county manatee protection plan development and other habitat protections will continue. The draft plan also addresses evaluating the effectiveness of current management actions.

Earlier this year, FWC Commissioners agreed with the findings of the Florida manatee biological review panel, which found that the manatee meets Florida's requirements to be classified as a threatened species -- one with a very high risk of extinction. To qualify as an endangered species it would have to be in imminent danger of extinction. Under the state's listing process, the imperilment categories of endangered, threatened and species of special concern define the risk of extinction, not the level of protection each species receives. Protection measures are outlined in species-specific management plans.

The draft manatee management plan is available online at: MyFWC.com. Click on "Imperiled Species" then "Listing Actions & Petitions."