

# Manatee Awareness Patch Program

Protecting our environment and preserving it for future generations is a duty we all share. In Florida, we are able to reach out in our environment to help preserve the endangered West Indian Manatee. These peaceful animals will not survive without the concern and awareness of people who share their habitat. The purpose of this program is to inform and encourage public awareness of the dangers facing the West Indian Manatee, particularly in Florida.



This program is designed for Brownie, Junior, and teen Girl Scouts and can serve as part of a total program on environmental issues and the endangerment of other animals. We have a responsibility to protect our world. Reaching out to manatees is only the beginning.

- ❖ There is a tote that is available to check out from the council headquarters in Sarasota or the service center in Fort Myers. The tote has many things that will be helpful to you as you complete the patch. It includes a leader's guide, movies, books about manatees, and much more.
- ❖ There are lists available of places in the area to view manatees. If you contact these places ahead of time, they will most likely work with your troop to give educational tours.
- ❖ Girls must complete eight requirements to earn the patch; this patch can only be earned once. To purchase the patch, complete the evaluation form and patch form to receive the patches.

## Suggested Activities:

### DISCOVER:

- ❖ Discover facts about manatees' life, habitat, and history. Draw a poster or display showing what you have discovered and share this information with others.
- ❖ Keep a scrapbook of newspaper clippings and magazine articles about manatees and related issues. How are they being helped? Who is hurting them? Or search the Internet and gather articles.
- ❖ Find out, discuss, and make a poster or fact sheet about why manatees and other animals are on the endangered species list. Why do animals become extinct? Will the manatee become extinct?
- ❖ Learn about manatees by reading books, pamphlets, magazines, or by watching films.
- ❖ Participate in an activity where you learn about water quality and sea grass beds, which are really important to manatees

### **GIRL SCOUTS OF GULFCOAST FLORIDA, INC.**

4780 Cattlemen Rd.  
Sarasota, FL 34233  
941-921-5358 • 800-232-4475



**Girl Scouts**

### **SERVICE CENTER IN FORT MYERS**

12651 Girl Scout Lane  
Fort Myers, FL 33913  
239-561-1800 • 800-586-3186

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## CONNECT:

- ❖ Attend a special program about manatees. This could include participating in Manatee Days or having a park ranger or manatee professional talk to you about manatees and their careers.
- ❖ Go on a boat ride or kayaking or snorkeling to see manatees. Did you know that right in front of the Manatee House at Camp Honi Hanta there is a manatee breeding ground? Remember, while you are near the manatees do not attempt to touch them.

## TAKE ACTION:

- ❖ Complete a project about boating in manatee areas. Where in Florida do manatees and boaters use the same waters? Talk to a group of people to help them understand the importance of manatees. This could be a younger troop, school, or church group.
- ❖ Find out about manatee refuge sites. Explain the differences between natural refuge sites and business owned sites such as power plants. Will they have different long range effects on the manatees?
- ❖ Participate in a clean up service project for manatees' habitat; for example a beach, river, or bay environment clean up or organize one at a refuge site. See the program book for dates and contact numbers for clean up days throughout each county.
- ❖ List as many career opportunities as you can find that are related to caring for or about manatees and other endangered wildlife. Choose one career field and give a report to your troop as if you were working in that field. Describe what you would be doing and why.
- ❖ What laws exist to protect the manatees? How are they being enforced? Are new laws being considered? What groups are for and against these laws and why?

## Neat Facts About Manatees!



- ❖ Manatees spend most of the day eating and resting. They also travel, hang out with other manatees, and investigate objects.
- ❖ Manatees are related to elephants.
- ❖ Manatees have a paddle-shaped tail and two front flippers. The flippers have three to four nails on them.
- ❖ Manatees are herbivores. They eat only plants.
- ❖ Manatees live in rivers, bays, canals, estuaries, and coastal areas. They live in freshwater and saltwater.
- ❖ Manatees are agile swimmers. They can do somersaults, roll, and swim upside down in the water.
- ❖ Newborn manatees are about four feet long – the length of two newborn human babies.
- ❖ Adult manatees are about ten feet long – the length of two human grownups.