

March 3, 2026

Dear Mayor, Members of the Clearwater City Council, and Interested Parties:

The Clearwater Marine Advisory Board would like to express its full support for a City ordinance that establishes a Manatee Protection Zone (MPZ) within the Stevenson Creek Aquatic Preserve.

The Board's support for the MPZ ordinance is based upon a review of two professional reports completed in 2025 on the Stevenson Creek Aquatic Preserve: One report by a PhD expert on Manatee behavior and their habitats and a second report by a retired Coast Guard Master Captain on navigational safety as well as testimony from experienced boaters on the Creek.

Our support is based upon twelve months of manatee data collected in Aquatic Preserve by local citizens with over 200 Manatees sightings. The study was supervised by the Save The Manatee Organization.

The Board appreciates that the establishment and implementation of this MPZ ordinance is being done in coordination with the regulatory requirements of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The Board fully supports the selection of approved MPZ signage located on the Fort Harrison Bridge, two standing pylons in the preserve, the Pinellas Trail bridge and the Douglas Avenue bridge. Once implemented, the Board also supports the enforcement of the MPZ.

Your support for the ordinance, its implementation and enforcement are appreciated.

Respectfully,

The Clearwater Marine Advisory Board

City of Clearwater, Florida