



## **Announcing Contract Employment Opportunity with Defenders of Wildlife to Advance Manatee Conservation in Florida**

Defenders of Wildlife is seeking a part-time contractor to further our manatee conservation work over the next 12 months to meet current needs and achieve our two primary objectives: 1) improve policies and regulations to protect natural springs and, 2) fully engage federal and state agencies in finalizing, releasing and implementing a warm-water action plan.

This role is a limited, project-based opportunity in which the contractor will operate as a 1099 consultant.

**Qualifications:** The contractor should have experience with environmental policy in the state of Florida and knowledge of the species. The contractor should have experience in community organizing, particularly at the grassroots level, coalition building, and advancing advocacy campaigns. A minimum of 2-3 years of policy and campaign experience is preferred.

**Skills Required:** ability to cooperate effectively with state and federal agencies, outstanding communication (written and spoken) and ability to work independently and as part of a team.

**Location:** The Contractor must be in Florida and ideally situated in a location that allows for travel throughout the state. Contractor will be expected to have reliable transportation and the ability to travel for meetings and work-related duties as necessary.

**Time Commitment:** We anticipate the contractor will spend up to 20 hours a week for up to 12 months of work.

**Compensation:** Terms and conditions of the contract including pay rate and schedule are to be determined and negotiated on a case by case basis.

**To Apply:** Please email a current resume and cover letter to Ben Prater, Southeast Program Director [bprater@defenders.org](mailto:bprater@defenders.org) by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

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**Background:** One of the key species that Defenders of Wildlife works to conserve is the Florida manatee. Our goal guided by our current Strategic Plan is to protect, restore and expand access to natural warm water refugia to support the recovery of the species. To accomplish this, we are focused on two principle objectives:

1. **Improve policies and regulations to protect natural springs.** We will advocate for increased springs protection in the state legislature, advocate for acquisition of springs before the Acquisition and Restoration Council, support conservation community efforts; engage with coalitions to protect manatee warm-water habitat and advocate that Florida Fish

and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) inventory and improve manatee access to springs.

**2. Agencies are fully engaged in crafting a warm-water plan.** Defenders will help catalyze efforts and watchdog FWC, FWS and utility companies in their development of plans to prevent significant future manatee mortality caused by potential changes in power plant operation or unanticipated plant shutdowns, including measures for transitioning animals from artificial to natural sites.

**Current Need:** To accomplish our first objective, Defenders would like to provide a constructive role to help strengthen ongoing efforts led by Florida Defenders of the Environment (FDE) to build an effective coalition and advance a campaign to restore the Ocklawaha River and its associated springs system along the St. Johns River. Ocklawaha and the springs complex behind Kirkpatrick Dam (also known as Rodman Dam) has been identified as one of the warm-water networks that has great potential to benefit manatees and other aquatic species that use this important waterway for reproduction, migration and over-wintering. Experts estimate that full or even partial restoration could potentially support 1,000 manatees if they had access to the springs behind Rodman Dam.

To make progress on our second objective we will work to ensure that agencies and utilities continue to make progress and develop a comprehensive Warm Water Action Plan to conserve and restore habitat and prioritizing actions to help manatees transfer from artificial to natural sources of warm water. FWC has updated the Florida Manatee Recovery Team's 10-year old Warm Water Taskforce report and that draft was reviewed and restructured by FWS. Progress on the report was delayed by the government shutdown. FWC and FWS are making some final revisions, which we expect will be completed in the next few months. Once agencies finalize the report they will provide it to Florida Power and Light (FP&L). FP&L will organize and host a workshop on manatee warm water issues to discuss the report and identify next steps. As soon as we know more about the workshop and report we will be able to engage and target our efforts more effectively.

*It is the policy of Defenders of Wildlife to provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law, in all personnel actions.*