

A Message to Our Volunteers



Manatee County staff has been receiving daily requests from our wonderful group of core volunteers, residents, and visitors who are interested in opportunities to help with the oil spill. The most common requests have been for positions to assist with **shoreline cleanup** and **wildlife aid** should oil from the Deepwater Horizon incident reach Manatee County's shores.

Here is the most current information we have received regarding this event and the potential volunteer opportunities that may become available:

- There are currently limited opportunities for untrained volunteers to participate in the spill relief effort. Because oil is a hazardous material, spill cleanup must be conducted by volunteers who have undergone a specialized training. The required training course is a special four hour session. These safety sessions will be required for anyone who would like to help.
- Training sessions are currently being organized throughout the state. At least one session is going to be offered in the Panhandle; at the present moment none have been scheduled for the Tampa Bay region. If classes are posted, we will send out the information as soon as possible.
- Volunteer efforts for the region, including training, are being conducted through the state's volunteer program. The **best way to volunteer** is to visit www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org and sign up for the oil spill.
- If you would like to go clean up trash on the beach to help out, please wait for organized cleanups. The state is currently in nesting bird season and, as such, many areas on our beaches could be harmed. Please consider contacting our the Natural Resources Department or one of the local agencies such as Keep Manatee Beautiful, Tampa Bay Watch, Sarasota Bay Estuary Program, or Tampa Bay Estuary Program as many of these agencies have regular opportunities for you to help.
- At this time, Manatee County will route volunteer efforts through www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org as they are equipped to handle a high call volume. However, if we sponsor any cleanups or have a dire need for volunteers we will post these opportunities on the website and notify volunteers.

The concern for this situation shown by Manatee County residents and visitors has been incredible and we appreciate your commitment to keeping Manatee County's beaches, preserves, and waterways clean and beautiful.

