

MANATEE SNORKEL ENCOUNTER



Friday, February 21, 2025

Creation Adventures by Science Partners



Let heaven and earth praise Him, the waters and everything that moves in them. Psalm 69:34

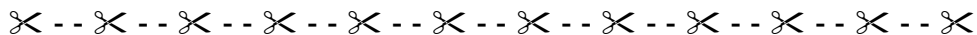
Join Bill & Merilee Clifton - creationists, authors, Florida Master Naturalists, and science educators - as we **focus on “Florida’s Gentle Giant” - the West Indian Manatee**. Our destination is Crystal River on *Florida’s Nature Coast*. In the morning, outfitted with **wetsuits, snorkels, masks, and fins**, we will **take a pontoon boat ride in search of manatees**. When we find them, we’ll join them in the crystal clear, spring-fed waters – the only place in Florida where it is legal to swim with manatees! During our **manatee encounter**, we’ll observe these sociable, threatened mammals “up close and personal.” We’ll study them in their natural habitat, learn what threatens their survival, and find out how we can help. Then, we’ll have our picnic lunch and tour **Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park (HSWSP)**. This 166-acre park, located at the headwater of the Homosassa River, is a **showcase for native Florida wildlife**. We’ll see many examples, some endangered or threatened as we take the **“Wildlife Walk”** through natural wildlife habitats, keeping an eye out for alligators, snakes, deer, Florida black bear, bobcats, otter, Florida panthers, manatees (underwater viewing), and a variety of birds including endangered whooping cranes.

We will meet at American Pro Diving Center, 821 SE US Hwy. 19, Crystal River 34429, between 7:45 and 8:00 AM. IF YOU ARE LATE, YOU WILL LITERALLY MISS THE BOAT! Our day as a group will end at HSWSP around 3:00 PM. **Be sure to bring a picnic lunch.** It’s always a good idea to bring sunscreen, insect repellent, water, rain poncho, and camera. If you have any questions, please email Merilee Clifton at sciencepartners@cfl.r.com or call / text 407-808-4458. **Cost includes pontoon boat ride, wetsuit / snorkel / mask / fins rental, gratuities for pontoon boat crew, and entrance to HSWSP.**

Minimum number is 20; maximum is 41 (capacity for two boats). A supervising adult must accompany and swim with all children. **Minimum age is five years. Deadline for minimum number is January 24, 2025. Later registrations may be accepted, space permitting and with dive shop’s approval.**

You may register two ways:

- (1) Make your **check or money order** payable to **Science Partners** and mail it along with your registration form below to **343 Allison Ave., Longwood, FL 32750**. (Checks will be held until minimum number is reached.)
- (2) Make your **Zelle** payment to **Science Partners** at **407-808-4458**. **Also email or text the information requested on the form below** to Science Partners at sciencepartners@cfl.r.com or 407-808-4458.



Registration Form: MANATEE SNORKEL ENCOUNTER – Friday, February 21, 2025

Family’s Last Name:		Cell Number:		
Homeschool Group:		Email:		
Adult Names:	Children’s Names and Ages:	Children’s Names and Ages:	Children’s Names and Ages:	Children’s Names and Ages:
1.	1.	1.	4.	4.
2.	2.	2.	5.	5.
3.	3.	3.	6.	6.
Cost: (Ages 2 and under are free)				
# Ages 5-12 years = ____ @ \$75 = \$ _____		# Ages 13 years + = ____ @ \$80 = \$ _____		
Total: \$	Circle Payment Type: Check Money Order Zelle			

See page 2 for important information.

MANATEE SNORKEL ENCOUNTER

Please read entirely and contact us if you have any questions!

WHO: *Manatee Snorkel Encounter* participants.

WHERE: Meet at **American Pro Diving Center, 821 SE US 19, Crystal River** **between 7:45 and 8:00 AM**. It is critical that you be on time! ***If you are late, you will literally miss the boat!*** Manatees are early risers! Please check driving directions and driving time – and be sure to allow extra time from your home. Don't forget change or E-pass if you use toll roads.

WHAT TO WEAR: Please **WEAR YOUR BATHING SUIT** under your clothes to the dive shop. This will save us a lot of time as we "gear up" (put on wetsuits and get snorkels, masks, and fins).

WHAT TO BRING: ***Please read checklist below carefully. Everything has a specific purpose.***

Each Family / Car:	Each Person – <i>Bring the following items in a bag:</i>
Directions.	<u>On Boat:</u> <u>Sweat suit</u> (or something with long sleeves, long pants) to wear over wet bathing suit after snorkeling and then taking wetsuit off on the boat. Ride back may be chilly! <u>Shoes</u> that can get wet on boat. <u>Towel.</u>
Full Tank of Gas.	
E-pass/Change.	<u>After Snorkeling:</u> <u>Dry clothes and shoes</u> to change into at dive shop. These can be what you wear over your bathing suit to the dive shop in the morning. <u>Undergarments, toiletries...</u>
Sunscreen.	
Insect Repellent.	<u>Small plastic bag(s)</u> for wet bathing suit, clothes, and towel.
Water.	<u>Lunch / Water</u> in disposable bag (or something you can carry). You may bring a cooler in your car, but coolers are not allowed in Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park.
Snacks.	
	<u>Optional:</u> Hat, rain poncho, and camera, etc. You might also consider a disposable underwater camera. Dive shop offers video for sale after trip.

SCHEDULE:

Be at the dive shop in Crystal River between 7:45 and 8:00 AM. (We have hotel information if you'd like to go over the day before.) Dive shop personnel will meet us and direct us as we gear up. We are required to view a short video, ***Manatee Manners***, on appropriate behavior in the water with the manatees. Then we'll drive to Pete's Pier and leave our cars (parking \$5 – subject to change). Driving directions will be provided. The pontoon boat(s) will pick us up there, and we'll head out in search of manatees. We'll snorkel with the manatees and then return to the pier around 11:00 AM. We'll drive back to the dive shop to change clothes. Then, we'll eat our picnic lunches and Mr. Clifton will give us a lesson on manatees. After lunch, we'll enter Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park where we'll take their "Wildlife Walk," enter a floating underwater manatee observatory, and observe many native Florida animals, birds, and plants in their natural settings. Our day as a group will end at HSWSP around 3:00 PM. You are welcome to stay in the park until it closes at 5:30 PM.

WHY: *"Ask the beasts and let them teach you; and the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; and let the fish of the sea declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind."* Job 12:7-10

FYI: There are nice gift shops at the dive shop and at the wildlife state park.

Blessings,
Bill & Merilee Clifton
SCIENCE PARTNERS