

CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM: MEETING 10 SUMMARY REPORT



CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM:

Providing a venue for public engagement in local fisheries issues and building links between stakeholder knowledge, science, and management

September 24th, 2015 Thursday, 6-8:30 pm

Lashley Marina 120 Lashley Ct., Punta Gorda, FL 33950



Photo: Thalita Ribeiro

**Charlotte and Lee anglers:
your knowledge can help local
fisheries thrive.**

**Join local researchers for the next meeting of the
Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum**

Contact: Capt. Betty Staugler, UF / Florida Sea Grant, Charlotte County
(941) 764-4346; staugler@ufl.edu

Forum Partners:

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA



Sea Grant
Florida

Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum 10 – September 24th, 2015.

Laishley Marina. 120 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda, FL. 33950

Report

On Thursday, September 24th, 2015, Florida Sea Grant Extension and the University of Florida (UF) convened the 10th meeting to facilitate the development of a Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum. The meeting in Punta Gorda, Florida, was open to the general public and participants were invited through emails, media, fliers distributed locally, and personal invitations.

The Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum is a collaborative effort to provide a venue for public engagement in local fisheries issues and to build links between stakeholder knowledge, science, and management. Nine stakeholders signed in for the meeting. Florida Sea Grant extension agent Joy Hazel (Lee County) led and facilitated the meeting. Florida Sea Grant extension agent Captain Betty Staugler (Charlotte County) and University of Florida researchers Dr. Kai Lorenzen and Dr. Jynessa Dutka-Gianelli were also present.

After the research team introductions, facilitator Joy Hazell explained the meeting agenda and group norms. Next, the stakeholders introduced themselves.

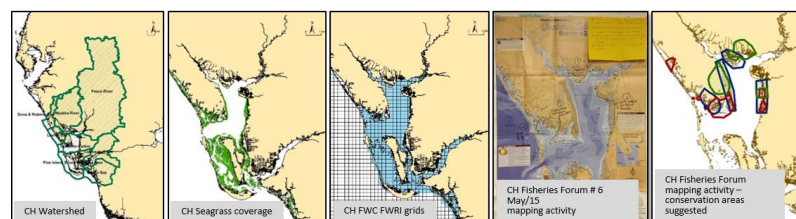
Following this, facilitator Joy Hazell gave an overview of the project, and a hand-out containing an overview of the fisheries forum concept, a description of the fisheries forum goals, and previous meeting summaries was distributed to participants (Attachment 1). The objective of this meeting was to develop questions for the stakeholder on-line survey that is being built to explore local issues for the forum to focus on.

Forum Activities

1- Mapping activity:

Jynessa Dutka-Gianelli worked with participants through a mapping exercise, showing different examples of how the group could start working with a base map from the Harbor and add scientific data, such as habitat data layers (e.g., seagrass, mangrove, and marsh). Another example presented was a map from the Harbor with habitat data and snook collection sites from the FWC FWRI Fisheries Independent Monitoring Program. She also explained how a base map from the Harbor could be incorporated into the survey that the group is working on.

Participants suggested the use of use aerial maps with higher resolution with marked seagrass scarring data. Participants also suggested the increase of visible markers on flats entrances, natural channels, East and West Walls, Gasparilla Sound, and shallow areas. In addition, the group recommended the possible creation of an app displaying those major points, add those to the Boaters guide, and increase of education programs on best boating practices, local fisheries and issues.



Examples of maps presented

2- **Stakeholder survey activity:**

Next, Dr. Kai Lorenzen explained how the researchers prepared a draft of survey questions using the Qualtrics software which will be used for the on-line survey distribution. Participants suggested that this survey should be distributed to local stakeholders from Charlotte, Lee, Desoto and Sarasota counties, using the boater's registration list and perhaps the license plate for Charlotte Harbor registry. Participants also suggested that it would be important to distribute the survey to different user groups in the Harbor to compile everyone's opinions.

Next, Joy Hazell explained the survey questions framework and participants offered suggestions on how to improve these questions and assure questions are relevant to all and work in everyone's needs. The research team will revise the questions including all suggestions presented and send the new version to forum participants for input.

Looking Forward and Next Steps: where do we go from here?

The researchers will create a final draft of the survey and send it to the forum participants for input. Prior to distributing the link for the on-line pilot survey, the researchers will send an email to forum participants to announce they will receive a notice with the on-line survey link. The pilot survey will be sent out as soon as possible for forum participants' revision, and the final survey will be distributed before the next forum meeting.

Next Forum: The group agreed to skip the meeting for the month of October, to give researchers enough time to prepare the survey, pilot it with the forum participants, and distribute it with local residents.

Next forum meeting was scheduled for **December / 3rd.**

Attachment 1

Looking Back: Overview of the Fisheries Forum Concept.

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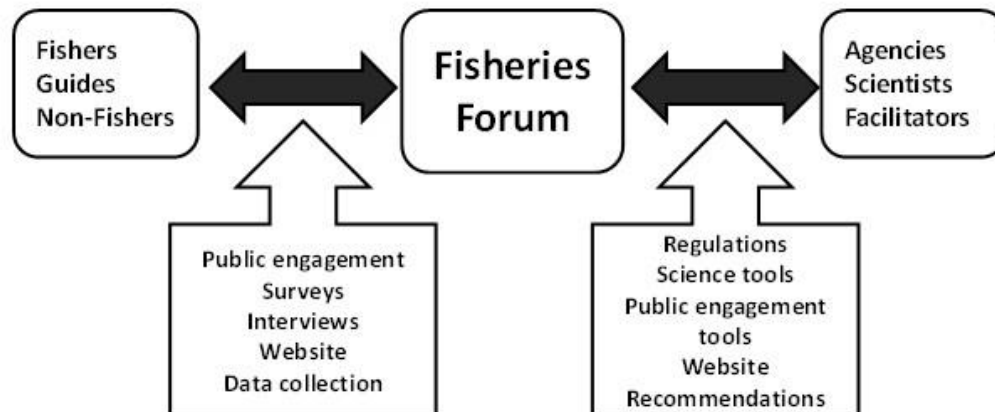
Background:

Why have a forum?

- People care about “their” local fisheries
- Different places have different fisheries issues (and some shared ones)
- Stakeholders have in-depth knowledge complementary to scientific knowledge and data
- Stakeholders feel that opportunities for input to management decision making are limited, and that “official science” may be at odds with their local knowledge

Fisheries Forum Aims:

- Provide a venue for long-term engagement of stakeholders
- Promote in-depth consideration of important local fisheries issues
- Improve links between stakeholder knowledge and science
- Represent place-based perspectives to management agencies



Attachment 1 (cont.)

Looking Back: Previous Meetings Summary.

Forum 1 Nov/19/14	Forum 2 Jan/22/15	Forum 3 Feb/26/15	Forum 4 Mar/26/15
<p>Introduction to Project</p> <p>Who should be involved? Stakeholder list</p> <p>Structure: Meet once a month; Thursday, from 6-8 pm at Laishley Marina, Punta Gorda</p>	<p>Revisited stakeholder list</p> <p>Structure: Keep open and inclusive, Work on getting more people involved</p> <p>Speaker: • Dave Blewett, FWC FWRI – CH Field Lab</p>	<p>What are some issues that the forum could focus on?</p> <p>Narrowing down top topics from list: Water quality; pole and troll zones; habitat; boating (education, outreach, licensing); tournaments; hatchery; commercial fishing; artificial reefs; law enforcement; research; water flow</p>	<p>Select potential topics for future forum discussions to focus on: What does it mean? What can the forum do? What agencies are involved (who has the power)? Which stakeholders is this important to? Natural habitat alteration; selected closure zones; boater licensing; pole and troll; bait scarcity; conservation; fishing pressure; water quality; mullet fishing; etc.</p> <p>Speaker: • Capt Betty Staugler, FL Sea Grant Charlotte County</p>
Forum 5 Apr/23/15	Forum 6 May/28/15	Forum 7 Jun/25/15	Forum 8 Jul/30/15
<p>Focus on one subject and drill down:</p> <p>Pole and troll zones Define goals Identify users and involve different groups How to get funding? How to enforce? Define place and designation of zones Education and outreach program How to get agencies and politicians support?</p> <p>Speaker: • Capt Justin McBride, West Coast Inland Navigation District</p>	<p>Explore pole and troll case studies and discuss broader goals of a pole and troll zone:</p> <p>Pole and troll case studies Why create a pole and troll zone? <u>Concerns about pole and troll zone:</u> pros and cons; need to define goals; create a plan with different users input; representation from different groups and areas <u>Next:</u> Refine users needs and views. How the forum can address those needs?</p>	<p>Focus on define the needs and fisheries perspectives of different user groups in the Harbor and identify how the forum can address those needs:</p> <p>What would your ideal harbor look like? What negatively affects your everyday fishing experience? What is the cause? What are the possible solutions? What are the potential downside to the solutions?</p>	<p>Focus on water quality issues: Learn more on water quality issues, macroalgae, and seagrass</p> <p>Speakers: • Judy Ott, CHNEP • Melynda Brown, FDEP, CH Aquatic Preserves • Eric Milbrandt, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Found.</p>