

CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM: MEETING IV 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



Photo: J. Struve

March 26th, 2015

Thursday, 6-8:30 pm

Laishley Marina
120 Laishley Ct.
Punta Gorda, FL 33950

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

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

Speaker: Captain Betty Staugler
Florida Sea Grant Extension Agent Charlotte County

Meeting goals: to further narrow down and decide on key topics

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Forum Partners:

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA



Sea Grant
Florida

Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum 4 – March 26th, 2015.
Laishley Marina.
120 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda, FL. 33950

Report

On Thursday, March 26th, 2015, Florida Sea Grant Extension and the University of Florida (UF) convened the 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, local media, fliers distributed locally, and personal invitations.

Forty three stakeholders signed in at this fourth forum meeting, representing recreational and commercial anglers, local fishing club members, charter captains and guides, business owners, researchers, local media, tourism, part-time residents, and law enforcement. University of Florida graduate student Chelsey Crandall and researcher Dr. Jynessa Dutka-Gianelli led and facilitated the meeting. Florida Sea Grant extension agent Captain Betty Staugler (Charlotte County), and University of Florida professors Dr. Kai Lorenzen and Dr. Juliane Struve were also present.

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. The objectives of this meeting were to further narrow down and decide on key topics, and begin categorizing these topics. After the research team introductions, Captain Betty Staugler explained the meeting agenda and objectives, and ground rules for the meeting were agreed upon.

Next, stakeholders introduced themselves and briefly explained how they are connected with Charlotte Harbor fisheries. Dr. Kai Lorenzen presented a short overview of the project objectives and forum definition, followed by a short summary of the previous forum meeting discussions presented by Captain Van Hubbard. Then, Captain Betty Staugler gave a presentation about the different projects conducted in Charlotte Harbor area by the Florida Sea Grant agency. Stakeholders engaged in an active discussion about the interesting projects conducted in the area, and later, some participants expressed their wish to volunteer.

Forum Activity I:

Facilitator Chelsey Crandall led the next forum activity, which focused on participants working in small groups to select potential topics for future forum discussions to focus on, and answer the following questions for each topic:

- What does it mean?
- What can the forum do?
- What agencies/etc. are involved (who has the power)?
- Which stakeholders is this important to?

Participants were asked to write their answers in flash cards, and then, each small group presented their ideas to the whole group.

Activity Results:

Topic	What is it?	What could the forum do?	Who has the power?	Who is this important to?
Alteration of natural habitat	Reduction in amount, change in type, and the effects of inhabitability	Education on causes of degradation, could be liaison between agency and stakeholders	DEP, SWFWMD, EPA, FWC, assessment organizations, regulations	All-to be used as habitat (target species and prey), aesthetics, water quality
Selected closure zones	Close man made canals to netting (recreational, commercial)	Come to consensus that this is a good idea, petition the County Commission to act	FWC, local elected, county commission	Commercial fishers, homeowners, recreational fishers
Boater licensing	Requiring all boaters to take an education course before being allowed to operate a vessel in Florida could prevent some of the problems such as seagrass damage	Develop a recommendation of what boaters need to know to operate a vessel safely and without damaging the environment, bring the issue to FWC's attention	FWC, law enforcement, possibly state legislation	All of them
Pole and troll	This can effect water quality, habitat, boaters, promote	Determine recommendations: what area and size, how to enforce: volunteer enforcement (neighborhood watch)	FWC, county sheriff, citizens awareness	All/fish
Pole and troll			County commission, FWC	All stakeholders
Bait scarcity	Moving to other locations, overfished; water quality; Tied in to several other topics: habitat, commercial fishing, temperature, noise	Who has the data? Find out, what type of data is available, shrimping statistics, help fill in data gaps, inform and educate stakeholders (point paper, presentations/prizes at clubs, schools)	FWC , NOAA, CHNEP, City Commission	All on list developed at meeting III and Fish
Mullet fishing	Killing too many animals; killing way to much fishes, not just mullet	Lobby for change in regulatory framework and enforcement, lack of political will to protect the fishing stocks	Judges allow wanton misconduct. Stronger regulation and enforcement thereof. Law enforcement	Important to all stakeholders
Conservation	Following regulations, catch and release practices, proper handling/ dehooking, keeping education up to date	Educate	Law enforcement, outreach agencies	Anglers, resource users and future users (in state and out of state)

Additional topics listed on cards:

Habitat loss of grassbeds (remedy pole and troll), loss of food (bait) limit mullet fishing

Fishing pressure: limit tournaments, limit dragging harbor with nets

Longer term: address water quality

Shrimp

Mullet

Boat prop scars

Habitat

Commercial fishing

Mitigate destruction of habitat (sea grass, oyster bars, etc.)

Mitigate harvesting of bait fish/food supply for fish

Evaluate water quality parameters important to health of harbor

Acknowledge and investigate discrepancy between independent monitoring/science and dependent monitoring (anecdotal)

Get better input/involvement from all of the communities impacted by the health and well-being of Charlotte Harbor (provide summary updates, focus/narrow down, not expand).

Next Steps: where do we go from here?

Participants elected to have a speaker on pole and troll zones at the next meeting.

Next Forum: April/ 23rd.