

CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM: MEETING 7 SUMMARY REPORT



Photo: D. Fann

CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM:

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



Photo: D. Fann

June 25, 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!

Meeting objectives: *to focus on refining the needs and fisheries perspectives of different user groups in the Harbor, and to identify ways the forum can address those needs*

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Forum Partners:

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA



Sea Grant
Florida

Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum 7 – June 25, 2015.

Laishley Marina.

120 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda, FL. 33950

Report

On Thursday, June 25, 2015, Florida Sea Grant Extension and the University of Florida (UF) convened the seventh 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.

Twenty nine stakeholders signed in for the meeting, including recreational and commercial anglers, local fishing club members, charter captains and guides, business owners, researchers, tourism personnel, natural resources workers and managers, and law enforcement.

Florida Sea Grant extension agents Captain Betty Staugler (Charlotte County) and Joy Hazell (Lee County) led and facilitated the meeting. University of Florida professor Dr. Kai Lorenzen, graduate student Thalita Ribeiro, and researcher Dr. Jynessa Dutka-Gianelli 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. After the research team introductions, Captain Betty Staugler explained the meeting agenda. Next, the stakeholders introduced themselves and identified their connection with fisheries in Charlotte Harbor. Following this, Captain Betty presented a brief summary of the previous six forum meetings. The objectives of this meeting were to focus on refining the fisheries needs and perspectives of different user groups in the Harbor, and to identify ways the forum can address those needs. Questions regarding the direction that the forum is going were answered by the facilitators. Participants shared their ideas on important accomplishments that the forum had made so far, such as going in the right direction to select topics for the forum to focus on, bringing diverse user groups together for the meetings, and inviting local scientists and experts on local fisheries topics for educational sessions during the forums. In addition, the group discussed the possibility of forum member participation in the upcoming FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management public workshop (scheduled for July 7th) in Punta Gorda, since it would be a good opportunity for sharing their concerns and ideas on local fisheries with managers.

Forum Activities:

- 1- **User group listing:** participants reviewed the list of stakeholders' connections with fisheries, created during previous meetings and added extra categories:

How are you connected with fisheries in the Harbor? User groups:

-
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Recreational Fisher: Motor Boat | • Newspaper / Print Media |
| • Recreational Fisher: Air Boat | • Marine Scientist |
| • Recreational Fisher: Shore | • Marine Resource Manager |
| • Recreational Fisher: Fly | • Boaters |
| • Recreational Fisher: Kayak | • Business Owners / Vendors |
| • Commercial Blue Crab Fisher | • Home Owners |
| • Commercial Mullet Fisher | • Local Elected Officials |
| • Commercial Shrimper | • County Commissioners |
| • Guides | • Chamber of Commerce |
| • Charter Captains | • Tourism |
| • Recreational Fishing Clubs | • Out of town commercial fishers |
| • Conservation Group | • Tournament organizers |
| • Law Enforcement | • Realtors |
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2- **Small group breakout:** participants were grouped based on their association with fisheries for the brainstorm discussion activity to answer the following questions and report back to entire group.

How do you use fisheries? User groups represented: commercial fishers, scientists, recreational fishers, bow fishing, charter fishing, airboat tours.

In order for you to fish the Harbor in the way you would like:

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 solution?

<i>What would your ideal harbor look like?</i>	<i>What negatively affects your everyday fishing experience?</i>	<i>What is the cause?</i>	<i>What are the possible solutions?</i>	<i>What are the potential downside to the solutions?</i>
<p><u>HOW DO YOU USE FISHERIES: COMMERCIAL FISHERS</u> Have good water quality without too much algae</p> <p>Lots of good experience</p> <p>Lots of fish (e.g., mullet)</p>	<p>Floating algae</p> <p>Boat traffic (high speed, spook fish and everything else)</p> <p>Disturbed fish nursery</p> <p>Imaginary line (the purpose is not clear)</p>	<p>Nutrients, run-off, non-point source, yards, ponds, & ?</p> <p>“Shortest distance mentality,” lack of courtesy</p> <p>Less tidal flow, dirty bottom, & ?</p>	<p>Biological studies</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Protect nursery habitat</p>	
<p><u>HOW DO YOU USE FISHERIES: SCIENTISTS</u> Good water quality</p> <p>Health habitat mosaic (diversity)</p>	<p>Too much algae</p> <p>Coastal, inland development affects transitional habitats</p>	<p>Nutrient overload (Nitrogen), Septic Fertilizers Storm water run-off</p> <p>Population increase Oversaturation of east coast of Florida, residents move to west coast Desirability of coastal living</p>	<p>Education Investigation Regulation</p> <p>Long-term developmental planning Eco-friendly development</p>	<p>Homeowner expenses Additional costs (county) Fertilizer (industry)</p> <p>Higher development costs Longer planning process More detailed permitting</p>
<p><u>HOW DO YOU USE FISHERIES: RECREATIONAL FISHING</u> Clear water</p> <p>Healthy seagrass</p> <p>Lots of fish</p>	<p>“Dirty water”</p> <p>Grass on the water</p> <p>No fish</p> <p>Oysters not growing</p> <p>Discourtesy by boaters</p>	<p>?</p> <p>?</p> <p>Mullet harvest during roe season</p> <p>?</p> <p>Lack of education</p>	<p>?</p> <p>?</p> <p>No harvest during roe season</p> <p>More law enforcement Troll and pole? Education on environment</p>	

<i>What would your ideal harbor look like?</i>	<i>What negatively affects your everyday fishing experience?</i>	<i>What is the cause?</i>	<i>What are the possible solutions?</i>	<i>What are the potential downside to the solutions?</i>
<p><u>HOW DO YOU USE FISHERIES:</u> <u>AIRBOAT TOURS</u> Clear water Large areas of shallow water, easy access to shallows</p> <p><u>BOW FISHING, CHARTER FISHING</u> Calm fish</p> <p>Good seagrass, good habitat Clear water</p>	<p>Algae Being buzzed</p> <p>People burning shorelines</p> <p>Water quality</p>	<p>Lack of courtesy</p> <p>Lack of courtesy Boater education</p> <p>Rainwater run-off</p>	<p>Idle zones More enforcement</p> <p>Idle zones or pole and troll</p> <p>Tighter up run-off and lawn care regulations</p>	<p>Distance from shore line Forced to navigate in unsafe waters</p>
<p><u>HOW DO YOU USE FISHERIES:</u> <u>RECREATIONAL FISHING</u> Turn the clock back 20 years</p> <p>*See attached table next page</p>	<p>Too many demands on the Harbor Fishing pressure</p> <p>Commercial harvest of food supply</p> <p>Tournaments</p>	<p>Decline of habitat, bait, gamefish Fishing pressure (fishers being greed)</p> <p>Harvest of fish</p> <p>Many tournaments</p>	<p>Increase permit fees Protect & restore habitats Maintain water quality Stock Harbor with 250,000 redfish (≥ 7")</p> <p>Restrict commercial permits especially from out of area</p> <p>Limit number of tournaments & restricted species</p>	<p>Push back progress Going in circles to reach politically acceptable solution</p>

List of potential causes for fishing decline in Charlotte harbor, possible solution and downside, provided by Mr. Joe Udvari.

Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum					
POTENTIAL CAUSES OF FISHING DECLINE	Rank	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	DOWNSIDE	EVALUATE	PRIORITY
1. Over Fishing/Fishing Pressure		Increase license fees, add tag &/or limit licensure to local residents/charter captains	Public complaints & could hurt tourism/local economies	X	H
a) General Population Increase		None	More future fishing pressure		
b) Tournaments		Limit number and/or size of tournaments or restrict targeted species	Public complaints & could hurt local economies		
2. Destruction of Habitat	1	Idle and/or pole & troll zones	Affects livelihood of commercial fishers. May require variances	X	H
a) Sea Grasses		Targeted plantings			
b) Oyster Bars		Restorations and seedings			
3. Ineffective Fisheries Management		Improve to better protect resources		X	H
a) Scheduling of Open Seasons		Don't have open seasons close to spawning			
b) Length of Open Seasons		Consider closing seasons or limiting duration of seasons			
c) Size & Slot Limits		Revise to better protect breeders			
d) Unrestricted Commercial Permits		Restrict to locals only	Legality		
e) Lacking Stock Enhancement		Conduct study to assess merit and/or implement and monitor	Requires regulatory approvals, funding and permits		
f) Lacking Enforcement		Increase on the water patrols	Requires funding		
4. Over Harvesting of Food Supply		Selectively restrict permits and/or implement/revise catch limits	Complaints/Legality	X	H
a) Commercial Fishing		Revisit netting specifications	Pushback		
b) Commercial Shrimping		Stop in Harbor	Pushback		
c) Commercial Crabbing		Limit number/location of pots	Pushback		
d) Recreational Netting of Baitfish		Preach common sense approach	Pushback		
5. Poor Boater/Angler Education		Require mandatory course for anyone registering boat in FL and/or obtaining license	Legislative/Lengthy Process	X	H
a) Handling of Released Fish		FWC Literature			
b) Harbor Characteristics		Charlotte & Lee Co. Boaters Guides			
c) Aquatic Preserve Restrictions		Charlotte & Lee Co. Boaters Guides			
6. Degradation of Water Quality		Enforce local ordinances/codes limiting effluents & maintain monitoring network		X	M
a) Runoff & Freshwater Inflows					
b) Stormwater Discharges		Monitoring and enforcement			
c) Point Sources		Regulatory enforcement			
7. Increase in Predation		Likely infeasible			L
a) Shark/Catfish Population					
b) Invasive Species (e.g., pinfish)					
8. Natural Causes		None near term			L
a) Climate Changes					
b) Severe Storms/Weather					
c) Fish Migration					
9. Anoxic/Toxic Plumes					L
a) Natural					
b) Induced		Limit nutrient loadings and enforce local ordinances/codes			
10. Other					
a)					

Next Steps: where do we go from here?

It was suggested that for the next forum the group should invite a panel of local experts on water quality.

Next Forum: July / 30.