

# CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM: MEETING 8 SUMMARY REPORT



Photo by Florida Sea Grant



# CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM:

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

**July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Thursday, 6-8:30 pm**  
Laishley Marina 120 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda, FL 33950



Photo by Florida Sea Grant

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

Join local researchers for the next meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum to learn more about local water quality issues, macroalgae and seagrass

### Guest Speakers:

**Judy Ott**, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program  
**Melynda Brown**, FDEP, Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves  
**Eric Milbrandt**, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation

**Contact:** Capt. Betty Staugler, UF / Florida Sea Grant, Charlotte County  
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### Forum Partners:

**UF** | UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**



**Sea Grant**  
Florida

**Charlotte Harbor Fisheries Forum 8 – July 30th, 2015.**  
**Laishley Marina. 120 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda, FL. 33950**

**Report**

On Thursday, July 30th, 2015, Florida Sea Grant Extension and the University of Florida (UF) convened the eighth 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 agent Captain Betty Staugler (Charlotte County) led and facilitated the meeting. Justin McBride, from West Coast Inland Navigation District, Dr. Carolina Doria, visiting scientist from Brazil, and researcher Dr. Jynessa Dutka-Gianelli, from UF, 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, a hand-out containing: an overview of the fisheries forum concept, description of the fisheries forum goals, and previous meeting summary was distributed to participants (Attachment 1). The objective of this meeting was to focus on water quality issues on the harbor, and learn from local experts about water quality issues, macroalgae and seagrass.

**Forum Activities**

**1- Scientists presentations:**

In this meeting, we had three guest speakers presenting information related to water quality in the harbor: Judy Ott from Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program on water quality, Melynda Brown from FDEP Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves on seagrass, and Eric Milbrandt from Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation on macroalgae (Attachment 2: bios). Following presentations, guest scientists formed a panel for an open-discussion with the forum participants. Panelists and participants engaged in a dynamic discussion focusing on water quality issues and research in the harbor.

**2- Discussion with a panel of experts:**

Following presentations, the guest scientists formed a panel for an open-discussion with the forum participants and Captain Staugler moderated the question and answer section. Panelists and participants engaged in a dynamic discussion focusing on water quality issues and research in the harbor. Stakeholders noted that it was a great opportunity for education about local issues and suggested that additional presentations as these be included in the forum future agenda.



## Panel Discussion: Water Quality Issues in Charlotte Harbor

Topic	Notes & Possible Solutions
Water quality / turbidity	<p>Possible causes:            Weekend wakes from boaters;            Wind fetch;            Environmental: red tides, freezes;            Complicated and hard issue to control;            Group didn't think that it was value in creating Golf Course Report Cards for water quality, not many golf courses in the area</p>
Macroalgae	<p>Complicated and hard issue to control;            Nutrient input tied up in algae;            Encourage use of BMPs;            Restore flows;  <u>Hog Island</u>: Important to find out what is going on in adjacent land areas increasing sources of extra N</p>
Seagrasses	<p>Essential to harbor;            Complicated and hard issue to control;            Increase of seagrasses during drought;            Seagrass beds could be protected by Poll-and-Troll;            Good example: shrimpers move the macroalgae off the seagrass when they use roller gear; research in this topic would be beneficial            Problems with interpretation of seagrass photos</p>
Habitat	<p>Link between habitat loss and sediments;            Function of dams and locks Pt. Charlotte</p>
Increase of nutrients	<p>Issue with exotic fishes;            What is the nutrient sources in Charlotte Harbor and Lemon Bay?            More complex system than Caloosahatchee;</p>
Control structures	<p>Are they constructed correctly and maintained properly?</p>

### 3- **Brainstorm activities for next meeting:**

The next activity was a group discussion to brainstorm what activities participants want for next meetings and how to move forward with the fisheries forum.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

The group suggested discussions and possible actions on the following topics:

- Education:
  - Seagrass education for all
    - Don Ball School – a good opportunity to educate the next generation
  - Boaters education – Aquatic Preserves
    - Boating and waterway: FWC
    - Coast Guard Auxiliary
    - Power Squadron
  - Perhaps submit a grant proposal to get funding to mail Boaters Guide to all registered boaters
- Land-use issues:
  - Hog Island

Captain Staugler will research some topics and acquire information to report back to group next meeting.

### 4- **Fisheries forum evaluations:**

The final activity of the meeting was a series of questions to assess the success of the meeting and make suggestions on how to improve the future meetings.

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

The group suggested that for the next meeting they would like to continue with discussions focusing on Education and Land-use issues.

Also, as additional potential topic for discussion: there is the possibility of dialogue with a county consultant who would like stakeholder input on a seagrass mitigation project.

**Next Forum: August / 27.**

Attachment 1

Looking Back: Overview of the Fisheries Forum Concept.

## **CHARLOTTE HARBOR FISHERIES FORUM:**

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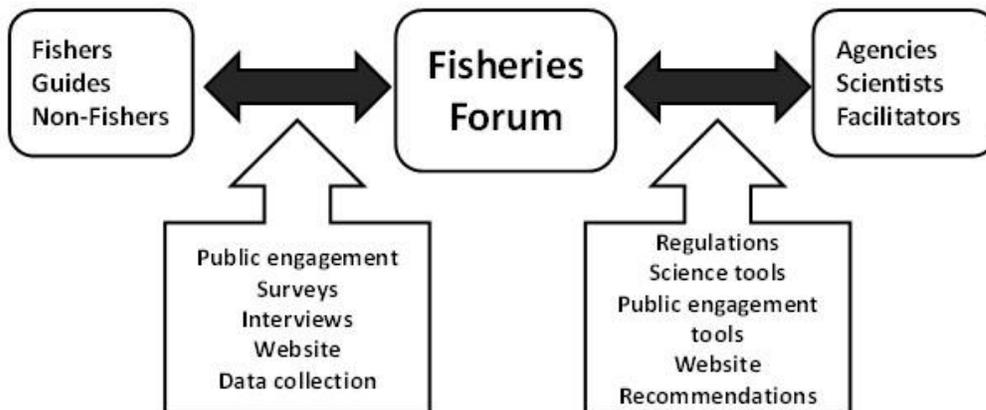
**Background:**

***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.

<p><b>Forum 1</b> <b>Nov/19/14</b></p>	<p><b>Forum 2</b> <b>Jan/22/15</b></p>	<p><b>Forum 3</b> <b>Feb/26/15</b></p>	<p><b>Forum 4</b> <b>Mar/26/15</b></p>
<p><b>Introduction to Project</b></p> <p><b>Who should be involved?</b> Stakeholder list</p> <p><b>Structure:</b> Meet once a month; Thursday, from 6-8 pm at Laishley Marina, Punta Gorda</p>	<p><b>Revisited stakeholder list</b></p> <p><b>Structure:</b> Keep open and inclusive, Work on getting more people involved</p>	<p><b>What are some issues that the forum could focus on?</b></p> <p><b>Narrowing down top topics from list:</b> Water quality; pole and troll zones; habitat; boating (education, outreach, licensing); tournaments; hatchery; commercial fishing; artificial reefs; law enforcement; research; water flow</p>	<p><b>Select potential topics for future forum discussions to focus on:</b> 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><b>Forum 5</b> <b>Apr/23/15</b></p>	<p><b>Forum 6</b> <b>May/28/15</b></p>	<p><b>Forum 7</b> <b>Jun/25/15</b></p>	<p><b>Forum 8</b> <b>Jul/30/15</b></p>
<p><b>Focus on one subject and drill down:</b></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><b>Explore pole and troll case studies and discuss broader goals of a pole and troll zone:</b></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><b>Focus on define the needs and fisheries perspectives of different user groups in the Harbor and identify how the forum can address those needs:</b></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><b>Focus on water quality issues</b></p>

## Attachment 2

### Guest Speakers Bios: Water Quality

**Judy Ott:** Ms. Ott has been the Program Scientist for the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) since June 2008. She assists local partners' resource management activities by providing staff support to the CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee, reviewing and managing scientific grants, and participating in research, monitoring and restoration activities relating to submerged, intertidal, wetland and upland habitats throughout the CHNEP. Prior to 2008, Ms. Ott worked as an Aquatic Preserve Manager for the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves, watershed manager in Wisconsin, water quality field and laboratory specialist on the Great Lakes and science teacher in Costa Rica and the FL Keys. She has co-authored over 20 publications and technical documents relating to watershed management and water quality, seagrass monitoring and oyster restoration. She has an MS in Water Resources Management from the University of Wisconsin and a BS in Biology, Earth Science and Secondary Education from Central Michigan University.

**Melynda Brown:** Ms. Brown received her Bachelors of Science from the State University of New York at Buffalo in Environmental Science and has worked at the DEP-Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves for the past 11 years focusing on water quality and seagrass monitoring. She has published the seagrass monitoring data in the Florida Scientist and has presented at numerous conferences.

**Dr. Eric Milbrandt:** Eric is the director of the Marine Laboratory, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation. Eric has worked on the disturbance ecology and restoration of mangrove, seagrass, and oyster reef ecosystems. He is also interested in macroalgal diversity and physiology as it relates to environmental conditions and biological interactions. His research interests have been motivated by applying science to improve resource management decisions and to inform the public. He has published articles in international journals such as *Limnology and Oceanography*, *Estuaries and Coasts*, and *Continental Shelf Research* and serves as an editor/reviewer for the *Journal of Wetland Management and Ecology* and *Marine Environmental Research*. He is an adjunct member of the graduate faculty at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU).