

Coastal & Marine Extension News – Fall 2010

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Highlights of Recent Activities

Chuck Adams – Regional cooperation is continuing on the Trade Adjustment Assistance program for shrimp vessels owners, captains and crewmembers in the Gulf and S Atlantic region. Information on eligibility has been distributed to all 445 potential eligible individuals in Florida. The deadline for applying is 23 September 2010. However, the “rules of the game” keep on changing and a later deadline may be provided. Florida Sea Grant will be involved in developing the educational modules that will be available on-line for those who sign up for the program.

Betty Staugler and Joy Hazell – On August 14th, 126 citizen scientists participated in the 2nd annual Great Bay and Sound Scallop Search in Charlotte County. Two weeks later, on August 28th, another 90+ volunteers took to the waters to participate in the 1st annual Great Bay and Sound Scallop Search in Lee County. The searches were coordinated by Betty and Joy with assistance from **John Stevely and Bryan Fluech**.

The searches are a way of assessing bay scallop distribution and trends in abundance over time in local waters. This year, 163 scallops were documented during the search in Charlotte County, an increase over the 94 observed in 2009, and 335 scallops were documented during the Lee County search.



Volunteers attended a required training to receive monitoring gear and sampling instructions. A post-event survey of Charlotte volunteers indicated they increased their ability to identify a bay scallop by 19%, increased their ability to find bay scallops in the field by 20%, increased their ability to identify the common seagrasses by 30% and on a scale of 1-10 (10 being highest), they ranked the training of field collection methods a 9.1 and the overall event scored a 9.6.

Tom Ankersen – To promote coastal policy in Northeast Florida, **Tom Ankersen and Richard Hamann** offered a hands-on one week field course in marine and coastal law for law and graduate students in March of 2010. The Course used the facilities of UF’s Whitney Lab and the Marineland Coastal Policy Center. Under the supervision of Ankersen and Hamann, collaborating professionals and students developed case studies of relevance to Northeast Florida and authored research papers. Three research papers have been selected for publication in peer review journals and law reviews.

The UF Law Conservation Clinic:

- received an Award of Merit in the student project category from the Florida chapter of the American Planning Association for its work with the Town of Marineland. The Clinic drafted an entirely new unified land development code based on principles of sustainability that was recently adopted by the Town Commission. A key feature of the code was the incorporation of voluntary certification programs such as the “Clean Marina Program,” LEEDS Green Building, and Florida Yards & Neighborhoods into local legislation. The new code also includes a “dark skies” ordinance to prevent light pollution within the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve.

- successfully worked to achieve the relisting of the Florida Everglades as a World Heritage Site in Danger under the United Nations Convention on World Heritage. The Everglades had recently been removed from the global list based on federal and state restoration efforts. The Clinic argued that restoration was not proceeding at a pace or with results that justified the delisting, and that climate change factors, including sea-level rise, warranted relisting. At its recent meeting in Brasilia, the World Heritage Committee returned the site to the list of sites in danger, at the request of the U.S. Government.

Doug Gregory completed the Monroe County Green Initiative Task Force, Sustainable Vision Statement, and it was accepted by the County Commission. This Sustainable Vision Statement will be the foundation for the county's Climate Action Plan and will provide needed energy related information for updating the county's comprehensive plan. Sea Grant and FCS Staff have been providing support for the task force since November, 2009 by organizing monthly meetings, providing research in specific topics and drafting the Sustainable Vision Statement. Doug also completed, in July, a year term as chair of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee. A major part of the SSC effort during the year was spent in developing the Acceptable Catch Limit Control Rule, which is still under development.

Bryan Fluech, John Stevely, Betty Staugler and Joy Hazell coordinated a Florida Sea Grant/FWC pilot project called The Great Goliath Grouper Count in early June. An ambitious group of scientists, citizen volunteers, charter boat captains, and county government staff took part in the count, a regional survey along approximately 200 miles of Florida's Southwest coast. The event provided a regional snapshot of goliath grouper size distribution and abundance on selected artificial reef locations between Collier and Pasco counties within a 10-day period.



In a nutshell, we feel this project proved to be a great success. It was a pilot to determine if a sufficient number of trained volunteers could collect valid data in such a comprehensive manner. A total of 52 volunteers surveyed 59 sites in water depths ranging from 13 to 125 ft. Their data was consistent with information obtained by professional marine biologists. Eighty-six percent of the sites had goliaths on them and divers counted 312 goliath grouper in total with an average of 5.3 fish per site. Most of the fish were in the 3-5 ft size range, which represents a 5-11 year old goliath grouper. There was about at equal number of fish less than 3 ft and more than 5 ft.

Based on the success of this year's count, we are tentatively making plans to do this again next year, expanding the number of sites that are surveyed. Also, the information will become more valuable when scientists are able to compare the data over a number of years. This information will not be complete enough to tell us exactly what the status of the goliath grouper population is, but it looks like it could help scientists develop better information about the species and be an opportunity to educate stakeholders about the ecology and management of goliath grouper. We are hopeful this approach may also provide a cost-effective strategy for scientists to evaluate trends in goliath grouper abundance.

On September 23rd, **Bryan Fluech, Joy Hazell and Betty Staugler** hosted a mock marine ecology event for 4-Hers in the Southwest Florida area. The event was designed to allow the kids to practice their skills before attending the upcoming statewide marine ecology event that will take place in November in Orlando, and, particularly for first timers, to undergo an event experience, before the real deal. We had 34 youth participate and 18 adults observe. Three identification stations were set up, one each for vegetation,



vertebrates and invertebrates, with 20-25 specimens at each station. A fourth station housed the scavenger hunt items where participants match specimens with clues. The agents collected specimens and worked with their partners, including the Florida Museum of Natural History, Rookery Bay NERR and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, to acquire specimens for the event. Designed to “mock” the statewide event, kids rotated through each station in 20 minute intervals. Due to time constraints, the written test portion of the statewide event was not conducted. At the conclusion of the event, the agents reviewed the answers for each station and provided tips to help the kids with identification. Based on the feedback we've received, both the kids and parents found the event very helpful.

Fred Vose – The Taylor County Reef Team is back in action! Historically in Taylor County, volunteer divers represented an active group in promoting, funding, building, and monitoring artificial reefs. Sea Grant specialist Bill Lindberg has invited us



to work again with his program to develop a divers’ trail in one public subsection of the Steinhatchee Fisheries Management Area. The trail will provide a path for visitors to follow between artificial reef patches which will provide training on the types of rocky reef habitat and reef inhabitants common to this area of the eastern Gulf of Mexico. The volunteer dive group (Taylor County Reef Team) and local dive shop owners in Perry (Scuba 7) have resumed planning activity this summer, and are reorganizing with our support and leadership. The new team will provide a diver base for the development of the trail and future enhancements to the public portion of the SFMA. The reef team advisory committee involves dive professionals, local recreational divers- business community

members, government employees including current and past Taylor County Commissioners, and a Taylor County Soil and Water Board Member.

Other plans in development include further enhancements to the Buckeye Artificial Reef, located 17 miles southwest of Keaton Beach. We plan to further develop this area when the permit review is completed by NOAA and the Corps of Engineers, scheduled for later this year or in early 2011. In other Taylor County news:

Camp Cherry Lake, Madison – Two environmental education activities were held at Camp Cherry Lake over the summer. The first, on June 15, was attended by 110 campers from Taylor and Wakulla Counties.

Activities included collection of fish and invertebrates using several gears, instruction on the types of habitats in lakes, variability of water quality, common lake vegetation, invasive plants, and identification of lake fauna and flora. The second, a 4-H Aquatics Day Camp, was attended by 34 campers from the Taylor County area. These campers also traveled to the FWC facility in Cedar Key for a fishing clinic. Students learned many activities including fish identification, casting and use of dehooking tools.



Scallop Biology and Monitoring --Two public presentations were held to educate the public on bay scallop biology and current monitoring efforts in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Steve Geiger (FWRI) gave one of the presentations, and I gave the other. In addition to the general scallop biology presentation, potential oil impacts to scallop populations were discussed, as well as dive safety and harvest regulations.



Taylor County Extension Open House, Perry -- Florida Sea Grant, 4-H, Agriculture and FYCS programs staffed displays and distributed information for an evening at Forest Capital Hall, home of UF/IFAS Extension in Taylor County. The September 20th event was well received and well attended, with grilled hot dogs, chips, popcorn, and drinks provided. At right, Lori Wiggins (4-H Extension Agent), discussed the marine education club that started in September with two attendees.



Holly Abeels – On Saturday, August 14, I teamed with Elizabeth Shephard, Family and Consumer Science Agent, Cinthia Sandoval and Jessica Allen with Wild Ocean Seafood Market to provide a local seafood class for 43 participants at the Brevard County Extension Office. It included a talk about fishery management, seafood nutrition, and locally available Florida seafood. Based on a survey completed after the program, all participants enjoyed the class and learned a great deal about different types of Florida seafood. The cooking demonstration was, of course, a huge hit. Participants were able to taste recipes shown in the demonstration and recipes were provided in their packets so participants could go home and try making the recipes themselves. They were given cobia, mullet, and shrimp to taste and recipes in their packets for cilantro crusted cobia, ceviche, and tuna meatballs provided by Wild Ocean Seafood Market. There was an average 56% increase in knowledge for the participants. At the beginning of the class 46% of the participants said they ate seafood 1 time a week or less (some never) versus the 54% who ate seafood 2 times a week or more. After the class, 88% of the participants said they plan on eating seafood 2 times a week or more. All those who answered the survey said they would recommend the class to someone else. We plan on holding another class on December 4 with some minor changes based on the responses in the surveys and possibly with a theme of holiday gifts and cooking ideas. We hope to continue to offer the class in the future.



Florida Sea Grant Boating and Waterways Work Action Group (**Abeels, Culver, Davidson, Fluech, Hammers, Hazell, Keyes, Krimsky, McBride, Murphy, Staugler, Stevely, Swett, Verlinde**) organized and implemented the inaugural Southwest Florida Regional Boating and Waterways Workshop September 9-10 in Punta Gorda (Charlotte County). Over 80 people



attended, representing local, state and federal government agencies, private businesses, marine industry associations, academia, citizen groups, and local advisory committees. The goals were to discuss innovative strategies to assist the participants in balancing economic vitality with ecologically sound management practices along Florida's waterways, as well as to increase professional networking opportunities.

Sponsors included Florida Sea Grant, University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Friends for Extension Foundation, Charlotte County, the City of Punta Gorda, the West Coast Inland Navigation District, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. **Betty**

Staugler was the workshop chair and the event's smooth flow is a testament to the effort and care that she invested during the past few months.

The first day included presentations on topics such as FWC's statewide boating economic study, non-economic tools to evaluate Florida's marine infrastructure, smalltooth sawfish management issues, permitting and regulatory considerations, derelict vessel management, infrastructure planning for sea level rise, Gulf oil spill response, waterfront community planning, and coastal and marine spatial planning.

Day two included a facilitated strategic planning session during which participants identified and prioritized waterway issues and discussed strategies to address them. **Joy Hazell**, a NRI fellow, was the facilitator and she did a first-rate job designing and implementing the session.



The participants were overwhelmingly positive about the quality and value of the workshop and requested that it be an annual event. The Boating and Waterways WAG will work with local partners to offer this event in Southwest Florida again next year, as well as in other regions of the state, as Florida Sea Grant continues to play an important role in bringing stakeholders together to collaboratively address and solve Florida's most pressing boating and waterways management issues.

Bill Mahan – was asked by EOC Director Pamela Brownell to write a press release on natural phenomena in our area that can be confused for oil spill related product. The Director said that people are seeing these naturally occurring oil spill look-a-likes, freaking out, and spreading rumors all over the county about BP oil being offshore, on the beaches and in the Bay. The EOC released the “Sheens, Tar Balls and Mousse Not Always from Oil,” press release on July 1, which quickly evolved into a Sea Grant web-based fact sheet, “All That Sheens May Not Be Oil... Or Tar Balls Either.”
http://www.flseagrant.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=69:oil-spill&id=238:oil-sheens

At the Franklin County 4-H Camp, 72 youth from Franklin, Walton and Covington County, AL participated in this year's 4-H Summer Camp July 5-9. Campers learned about the coastal and bay environment around 4-H Camp Timpooshee. Youth participated in classroom and field educational programs on fishing, seining, aquarium setup and fish and invertebrate identification. In addition, campers survived the annual “paint war!”



I worked with Dr. Steve Otwell and Victor Garrido to coordinate and conduct a special program on Aug. 4 for buyer assurance on safe seafood from the Gulf. This provided Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) training for area seafood dealers to comply with the new federal requirements to have a process checking Gulf of Mexico seafood for oil taint. The training taught 22 processors how to conduct sensory evaluations on seafood for oil taint.

I also met with a multi-federal agency project group that was evaluating the economic effect of the oil spill on the Gulf Coast community. The group is funded and supported by the U.S. Economic Development Administration to assist 20 Gulf Coast coastal communities in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida in response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Teams of economic development professionals performed needs assessment and provided recommendations for economic recovery. I assisted the team in gathering background information on the local communities for them to use in developing recommendations on recovery action steps and strategies for both the short and long-term.

I was invited to attend the BP Long-Term recovery Meeting in Port St. Joe on Sept. 1. During the meeting, attended by 45 people, BP outlined some of its short-term down-sizing plans as well as some of their long-term plans to have a presence

in the surrounding counties. In addition, I was able to meet with Coast Guard and NOAA officials to find out plans for offshore oil monitoring.

Steve Theberge – I was an Ocean Voice at Ocean Explorium in New Bedford, MA. It was a lead-in for the seventh Working Waterfront Festival for the number one fishing port in the country. My talk was titled “Burping Fish to Giant Oil Spills: How Can a Local Sea Grant Agent Help?” on Sept 23. About 50 adults and students attended including a marine biology class from a Tabor Academy. I designed and taught a two-day teacher in-service for Bay County teachers called “Putting the Bay into Your Classroom.” Teachers got recertified for their FWC collecting permits and got a tour of the Panama City NOAA Fisheries lab. They also spent time collecting marine specimens in St. Andrews Bay. NOAA Fisheries, 4 H, FWC and Bay County Public Schools were collaborators. The World Aquarium Marine Science Institute also visited Bay County with students and we spent a day looking at marine habitats in St. Joe and St. Andrews Bay. I worked with Bay County Public Schools and FSU on the SPLASH program. The SPLASH program’s goal is to motivate students who do poorly in science and math to improve their skills. I designed and taught the marine part of the program called Bay Day. We spent a day exploring St. Andrews Bay by field trip and lecture. Over 40 students attended the program. Teachers and students were very enthusiastic about the program. I also did a seafood risks and benefits program as part of Bay County’s Health Program. Some 25 county employees attended the program. In their evaluations they felt the program was enjoyable and they learned more about the health benefits of seafood, and planned to eat more local seafood.

Upcoming Events

Chuck Adams and Sherry Larkin have published an article describing some recent work on the mislabeling of grouper products in the *Journal of Marine Resource Economics* (Volume 25, pp. 77-92). Reprints are available upon request. The research project that produced this article will be completed in December 2010, with a proposed educational effort to help provide greater consumer assurance with respect to grouper products. The project PIs are Steve Otwell, Adams and Larkin. Additional information concerning this project will be presented at the Annual Food Distribution and Research Conference, to be held in San Destin during 18-20 October 2010, as well as at the Annual Meetings of the Gulf and Caribbean Research Institute to be held in San Juan, PR during 1-5 November 2010.

Tom Ankersen will co-facilitate a breakout session titled *An Effective Law and Policy Framework for Coastal Adaptation* at the annual meeting of the National Council for Science and the Environment in Washington D.C, Jan. 19-21, 2011. The breakout session was developed by Ankersen and colleagues at the Georgetown Climate Center and Stanford Center for Oceans Solutions, who run similar student service learning programs. The intent of the session is to provide recommendations to the Obama administration.

Tom Ankersen and former Conservation Clinic student **Kevin Sharbaugh**, J.D. will present the Clinic’s work on the development of a planning tool for the valuation of maritime infrastructure in Florida at the National Symposium on Working Waterways and Waterfronts in Portland, Maine from September 27 -30, 2010. The project was funded in part under a contract with the Florida Department of Community Affairs and through Florida Sea Grant’s Coastal Communities initiative.

Doug Gregory will be an invited participant in the NOAA SEDAR Spiny Lobster Stock Assessment Workshop on September 28-30 and will Chair the SEDAR Spiny Lobster Review Workshop on November 18-19. He will also attend the Florida Keys Marine Ecosystem Conference on October 19-21.

In October, **Bryan Fluech** will teach a 3-part course of seafood safety and sustainability at Hodges University Center for Lifelong Learning in Collier County. The course will address balancing seafood health benefits and risks, seafood supply and demand issues, Gulf of Mexico seafood safety in light of the recent oil spill, and an overview of local commercial fisheries. The agent has also made arrangements with an area seafood vendor to provide samples of locally caught seafood to

promote and raise awareness about the region's seafood supply. In addition, the agent is working with a local seafood processor to raise awareness of stone crabs, Collier's largest commercial fishery, by setting up a display about the popular crustacean at the first annual Naples Stone Crab Festival. The agent will have live stone crabs on display at the event, and he is also working with the processor to keep live stone crabs on display at the processor's local bayside restaurant for educational purposes.

Due to the success of the Southwest Florida Boating and Waterways Workshop and the suggestions from the participants, a regional boating and waterways workshop is being planned for the east coast. The workshop will be jointly chaired by [Holly Abeels](#), Brevard County Sea Grant agent, and [Lisa Krinsky](#), Miami-Dade County Sea Grant agent, with the help of the Boating and Waterways WAG. The current projected time for the workshop is March 2011.

[Bill Mahan](#) will complete revisions on "Psychological and Social Disruption of Florida and Alabama Communities Resulting from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill," submitted to *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

[Steve Theberge](#) – will be developing a marine biology after-school program at Boys and Girls Club, doing barotrauma work with local fishermen, more workshops on seafood risks and benefits, more fish and fisheries management programs, and a Florida Master Naturalist Workshop.

[Look for the next issue of this Newsletter in Winter 2010](#)