



**Minutes of the  
Technical Advisory Committee  
Habitat Conservation Subcommittee  
February 19, 2004  
Punta Gorda, Florida**

**In Attendance**

Mike Jones	Sarasota County
John Cassani	Lee County
Judy Ott	Department of Environmental Protection
Chris Becker	Department of Environmental Protection
Annette Nielsen	Department of Environmental Protection
Katie Fuhr	Department of Environmental Protection
Ron McGregor	Department of Environmental Protection
Philip Stevens	FWC-FMRI
Chuck Idelberger	FWC-FMRI
Susan Scott	City of Cape Coral
Kraig Hankins	City of Cape Coral
Betty Staugler	Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center
Jim Culter	Mote Marine Laboratory
Ernie Estevez	Mote Marine Laboratory
Kirby Wolfe	Mote Marine Laboratory
Tom Fraser	W. Dexter, Bender and Associates

**Others Present**

Catherine Corbett	Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Lisa Beever	Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Michael Werner	Herald Tribune
Bert Cass	Herald Tribune
Jeff Schmidt	Conservancy of Southwest Florida

**Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order and Introductions**

Judy Ott called the meeting to order at 9:10 am. Everyone at the table introduced themselves.

**Agenda Item #2 – Agenda Additions/Deletions**

No additions or deletions were suggested.

**Agenda Item #3—Minutes**

**ANNETTE NIELSEN MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 8, 2004 MEETING MINUTES. SUE SCOTT SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Agenda Item #4— Nonnative Fish within Charlotte Harbor watershed**



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Chris Becker initiated this discussion and gave an overview of his findings in the Myakka River. Philip Stevens of the Fisheries Independent Monitoring Program at FMRI presented findings of nonnative species in the Caloosahatchee River, Matlacha Pass and Charlotte Harbor. Kirbey Wolfe from Mote Marine Laboratory, Pineland Field Station presented findings of nonnatives in the tidal creeks along the East Wall of Charlotte Harbor. Also, David Ceilley of The Conservancy of Southwest Florida was unable to attend the subcommittee meeting but sent in a draft list of exotics that includes his observations going back 15 years. Tom Fraser sent in a list of exotics he found as well to staff after the meeting. Staff promised to compile a list for the minutes. The list of exotics found within the Charlotte Harbor watershed to date is as follows:

1) David Ceilley:

Callichthyidae

Armored catfish      *Hoplosternum littorale*,      Brown Hoplo  
(Flint Pen Strand 1997, now widespread in Lee and Collier wetlands)  
                                 *Pterygoplichys multiradiatus*,      Sailfin Pleco  
(Peace River-Corkscrew Swamp)

Clariidae

Labyrinth Catfish      *Clarias batrachus*,      Walking Catfish  
(Sanibel 1996, widespread)

Poeciliidae

Live Bearers      *Belonesox belizanus maxillosus*, Pike Killifish  
(Picaynue/Fakahatchee Strands, 2002)

Cichlidae

Cichlids      *Astronotus ocellatus*, Oscar (Picaynue/Fakahatchee Strands)  
                                 *Cichlasoma bimaculatum*, Black Acara  
(FGCU site in 1994 and now all SW Florida)  
                                 (*Cichlasoma urophthalmus*,      Mayan Cichlid  
(Estero Bay 1998)  
                                 *Hemichromis bimaculatus*      Jewelfish (North Ft Myers 2003)  
                                 *Oreochromis aureus*      Blue Tilapia  
                                 *Oreochromis mossambicus*      Mossambique Tilapia  
(Billy Creek 1989, Sanibel 1997)  
                                 *Tilapia mariae*      Spotted Tilapia

2) Tom Fraser has found the following in Horse Creek:

*Clarias batrachus*  
*Hemichromis letourneauxi*



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*Hoplosternum*    *littorale*  
*Misgurnus*        *anguillicaudatus*  
*Oreochromis*    *aurea*  
*Pterygoplichthys* *disjunctivus*

3) Chris Becker in the Myakka River:

<i>Hoplosternum littorale</i> ,	Brown Hoplo
<i>Clarias batrachus</i> ,	Walking Catfish
<i>Pterygoplichthys disjunctivus</i>	Sailfin catfish
	Blue Tilapia and
	Asian grass carp

4) Philip Steves: jewelfish in upper Caloosahatchee River, spotted tilapia in upper Caloosahatchee River and Mayan cichlids in upper Caloosahatchee River and Matlacha Pass

5) Kirby Wolfe: Mayan cichlids in Yucca Pens and Silcox creeks on East Wall of Charlotte Harbor.

**Agenda Item #5 – Fiscal Year 2005 Workplan**

Catherine Corbett presented this. The subcommittees reviewed our progress in implementing the Priority Actions of the CCMP for the Triennial Implementation Review in 2002. Based upon these discussions, the subcommittees developed a list of projects for funding that were included in previous Workplans and/or the Research Needs Inventory. The HCS have identified the following projects for NEP funding through FY2004:

**2002--Prop Scar Study.** This project will provide a change analysis of boat propeller scarring of the submerged aquatic vegetation within the Charlotte Harbor NEP study area using data compiled in 1992-1993 by the Florida Marine Research Institute as a baseline to compare with recently collected data. This project will utilize aerial surveys and field reconnaissance methods to map all boat prop scars for the major water bodies within the greater Charlotte Harbor watershed and make accessible in a hard copy report and GIS database to area resource managers. Cost: \$25,000

**2003--Habitat Status and Change.** The CCMP quantifiable objective FW-2 requires maintenance and restoration of several habitats to the extent, location and quality of natural variability. These habitats include submerged



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aquatic vegetation, inter-tidal unvegetated bottoms, mangrove, saltwater marsh, freshwater wetlands and oyster bars and native upland habitats. This project will compile historical extent data for these habitats by subbasin and compare to current conditions. The findings will help drive the CHNEP's restoration decision-making and become the basis for the CHNEP's environmental indicators tracking. Follow-up projects to fill data gaps as determined through this project are expected. Cost: \$80,000.

**2004--Invertebrate species comparison.** The project will compile baseline data to evaluate the benthic macroinvertebrate usage of submerged aquatic vegetation, inter-tidal unvegetated, saltwater marsh, mangrove and oyster habitats within the greater Charlotte Harbor watershed, using previous analyses and original data collection. The final report will evaluate and compare presence/absence and abundance of invertebrates within each habitat type across basins within the greater Charlotte Harbor watershed. The final report will synthesize the information and be provided in an interactive CD format. Cost: \$80,000

**Unfunded projects identified:**

Data gaps identified through Habitat Status and Change project.

The information from the invertebrate species comparison project interpreted in three educational products: 2 posters and a slide/Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

Boat Ramp and Marina Signage Needs Assessment. Custom signs specifically designed for individual boat ramps and marinas depicting how to avoid damage to local area seagrass beds, as well as locations of oyster beds, etc. have been installed at various locations, typically by way of permit requirements. No inventory of such signs or location needs list exist. This program will conduct the needs assessment, design model signs, and identify funding/implementation sources/mechanisms. The model sign will include the layout, where local information will be inserted, and standard language. This project is currently unfunded. It is estimated that the project will cost \$20,000.

Subsequent to the HCS meeting, staff will send out a list of Research Needs Inventory projects for ranking by TAC members. The results will be used to help determine priority projects for NEP support in the next several years. The TAC will be provided with the results of this survey and the HCS recommendations for the FY05 at their April meeting during discussions of the FY05 Workplan.

**Agenda Item #6— Benthic Macroinvertebrate Comparison project**



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Catherine initiated this discussion. Based upon recommendations from the HCS and TAC, Mote Marine Laboratory should be awarded the benthic macroinvertebrate comparison project, contingent on contract negotiations and Policy Committee recommendations. The project will compile baseline data to evaluate the benthic macroinvertebrate usage of submerged aquatic vegetation, inter-tidal unvegetated, saltwater marsh, mangrove and oyster habitats within the greater Charlotte Harbor watershed, using previous analyses and original data collection. The final report will evaluate and compare presence/absence and abundance of invertebrates within each habitat type across basins within the greater Charlotte Harbor watershed. The final report will synthesize the information and provide it in an interactive CD format. One of the first steps of the project is to determine transect locations for each subbasin and habitat type. Jim Culter then presented a more thorough overview of their proposed methods for the project and solicited input from the subcommittee on transect locations around the coastal Charlotte Harbor area.

**Agenda Item #7—CCMP 5 Year Update—Fish and Wildlife Quantifiable Objectives**

Lisa Beaver presented this. NEPs are required to update their CCMPs every five years. Thus, the Charlotte Harbor NEP will need to update our CCMP by 2006. Staff estimates that it will require approximately 18 months to develop a major CCMP amendment and wish to initiate the process in the upcoming months. During the update process, staff will incorporate a survey to be administered over the internet and at public events. This survey will incorporate appropriate suggestions made through the "Call for Recommendations." In addition, staff investigated options of utilizing its own web site or any number of web survey services that are available. ClickSurvey is one such service which is being tested for the Lemon Bay Conference. The Habitat Conservation Subcommittee had suggested in January 2004 using the subcommittee structure for detailed review of and recommendations for the CCMP Update. The TAC recommended documenting previous accomplishments to launch the consideration of the CCMP Update. Enclosed in the agenda packet are the CCMP Quantifiable Objectives and Priority Actions for the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Loss issue and a description of the CCMP update process as well as program and our partners' accomplishments to date. She then gave a brief overview of some changes to the CCMP that she recommended.



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**Agenda Item #8—Agenda items for next HCS meeting**

The subcommittee requested for subsequent meetings a presentation on terrestrial nonnative species, restoration efforts for the North Spreader Waterway from FDEP, FMRI's work on juvenile fish habitat, the length of term of service for the subcommittee Co-Chairs and re-elections, the CCMP update, fiscal year 2005 Workplan, aquaculture regulations and the ecology of river flood plains.

**Agenda Item #9 – Member's Comments**

None at this time.

**Agenda Item #10 – Staff Comments**

None at this time.

**Agenda Item #11 – Next meeting's location and date**

The group suggested the next meeting be held April 8, 2004.

**Agenda Item #12 – Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.