



Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau
Update #12 on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
Date: Friday, July 30, 2010

Note: Because the source of emerging oil has been capped and Charlotte County has been advised that there is a less than 10% chance that any oil will reach this area, this will be the last update of its kind barring any unforeseen developments.

Message to Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands Visitors

As it has from the beginning, Charlotte County continues to monitor developments surrounding the Deepwater Horizon Oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau is providing the following message to our guests and encourages all Charlotte County businesses to do the same:

- Currently, there is no local impact from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and Charlotte County is more than 300 miles from the primary oil plume;
- Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands is open for business and the shoreline and beautiful beaches are clean, natural and ready for your enjoyment;
- According to the experts our area is in no imminent danger and there is a less than 10 percent chance oil will ever reach our shores.

Currently, Deepwater Horizon is not discharging any oil into the Gulf of Mexico. Preparations for the static kill will resume once equipment is reconnected. For the latest updates, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/

Free Listing on VISITFLORIDA.com

VISIT FLORIDA recently announced **any Florida tourism business** can receive a free listing on www.VISITFLORIDA.com through June 30, 2011. Approved businesses receive a direct hyperlink to your website homepage, business description and one photo.

For the month of June 2010, VISITFLORIDA.com experienced record traffic with 719,070 visits, which represents a 46 percent increase over the same time last year.

If interested in having your tourism business listed, visit www.VISITFLORIDA.org/free or call the VISIT FLORIDA industry hotline toll-free at (877) 435-2872.

Note: VISIT FLORIDA Partners already receive this service as a benefit of partnership.

Landfall in Northwest Florida

- All Florida beaches are open.
- Tar balls and light sheen continue to be reported in Northwest Florida, which is more than 300 miles from Charlotte County.
- Nearly 90 percent of Florida's more than 1,260 miles of coastline remains unimpacted.

Fishing in Florida

- As of July 22, 2010, while there are some areas of the Gulf of Mexico closed to fishing, the vast majority is open to fishing and all related saltwater fishing regulations remain in effect in the open areas. Information on the Federal Fisheries Closure can be found at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.
- The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has issued a partial fishing closure in Escambia County (located more than 300 miles from Charlotte County). Additional information can be found on FWC's site <http://myfwc.com/>

Charlotte County is Open for Business

- Florida has more than 1,260 miles of coastline and 825 miles of beach including Charlotte County's 28 miles of sand beaches.
- Charlotte County's accommodations, restaurants and attractions remain 100 percent open for business.
- We'll continue to monitor the situation and refer to www.CharlotteHarborTravel.com for the most accurate and up-to-date information on our area.
- While we have been assured by experts that Charlotte County beaches will not be directly impacted by the oil spill it is the responsibility of the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau to convey to the public any impacts of the spill related to Charlotte County Tourism.
- Charlotte County Emergency Management has emergency plans in place and a plan of action is dependent on the scenario.

Calling All Photographers: Charlotte County Needs Your Photos to Share Open for Business Message

- The Charlotte Harbor VCB is utilizing the social media channels of Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/CharlotteHarbor>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/chgiflorida>) to update followers on the status of local beaches and waterways.
- Members of Charlotte County's tourism industry are also encouraged to utilize their social media platforms to educate future visitors that beaches and waterways are currently oil free. This can be done by:
 - Updating your website with beach status and an open for business message;
 - Share timely images and videos of Charlotte County's beautiful coastal areas on your Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr accounts as well as newsletters you send to subscribers. Share these on the Charlotte Harbor VCB Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/CharlotteHarbor>);
 - If your business is located in a coastal area, install a webcam to broadcast current conditions (and inform the Charlotte Harbor VCB).
 - VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing corporation, has launched Florida Live, www.FloridaLive.com, a social media platform

where users are encouraged to share same-day Florida images through Facebook. The Charlotte Harbor VCB encourages you to share timely images of our beautiful beaches and water activities on this website.

State of Florida Marketing Efforts

VISIT FLORIDA is the state's trusted source for travel planning and serves as a resource for travelers to Florida. A travel advisory page has been established (http://www.visitflorida.com/florida_travel_advisory/) linking to individual Florida destinations and an interactive map with Twitter feed updates.

All members of the Florida tourism industry should read VISIT FLORIDA's Sunshine Matters blog at www.visitfloridablog.org for the latest on state marketing.

Tracking Loss of Business

It is extremely important to track the loss of business due to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Individual and business claimants may file a claim in one of three ways:

- Call the Deepwater Horizon response hotline number at 1-800-440-0858
- File a claim online at www.bp.com/claims
- Visit one of BP's Claims Centers

The Claims page on the BP website explains the process of how to file a claim (www.bp.com/claims)

Alert the Charlotte Harbor VCB if your business has received any cancellations or if you can justify a significant loss of business. BP has asked counties to track the economic loss to the area. The information will be important to Charlotte County's request for compensation funds from the BP Tourism Marketing Allocation to reimburse marketing funds which are being expended by the Charlotte Harbor VCB to counteract the negative media coverage and resulting loss of tourism business

Visit www.charlotteharbortravel.com/travel_update/ to download the Charlotte County Loss of Business Form and forward it to Elizabeth Parker at elizabeth.parker@charlottefl.com or by fax to her attention to (941) 743-2245.

Information Resources

The oil spill's impact is constantly evolving. The following links lead to official State of Florida sources of information in the following areas:

For the latest updates on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, visit the designated Florida Department of Environmental Protection website at www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/.

VISIT FLORIDA, the state tourism marketing organization, Sunshine Matters Corporate Blog for the latest on the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and its impact on Florida tourism www.visitfloridablog.org and the VISIT FLORIDA Travel Advisory page http://www.visitflorida.com/florida_travel_advisory/

Mote Marine Beach Report, tracking the Deepwater Horizon oil spill impact on Gulf beaches. www.mote.org/beaches/.

Fisheries and wildlife: Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). myfwc.com/OilSpill/index.htm.

Health and safety: Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) and Department of Health's (DOH) joint webpage. www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/health.htm.

Beach or fishing area closures: (as reported to DEP). www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/closures.htm.

Official trajectory and forecast information, [visit NOAA's site](#).

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