



Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau
Update #10 on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
Date: Friday, July 9, 2010

Message to Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands Visitors

Charlotte County is closely monitoring 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 that oil will ever reach our shores.

Landfall in Northwest Florida

- All Florida beaches are open.
- Oil Impact Notice have been posted to include: Escambia County, all Gulf side beaches; Walton County, all Gulf beaches, Okaloosa County, Brackin Wayside Park, Henderson Park Beach, and James Lee Park. These areas are more than 300 miles from Charlotte County.
- Tarballs, tar patties and oil sheen have been reported on Northwest Florida beaches with the heaviest impact reported in Escambia County.
- There have been no reports of Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill-related oil products reaching Florida beyond the Northwest Florida region.

Fishing in Florida

- As of July 4, 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 remain optimistic 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.

Using Social Media 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 efforts including explanation of the \$25 million dollars BP gave the State of Florida for tourism marketing. Some of those funds were given directly to Northwest Florida tourism agencies, some given to VISIT FLORIDA to market the State as a tourism destination, and Gov. Charlie Crist has the balance and will determine how to best use those funds.

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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