



Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau
Update #6 on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
Date: Tuesday, June 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 currently more than 300 miles away from the primary oil plume;
- Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands is open for business and the shoreline and beaches are pristine, clean and ready for your enjoyment;
- We do not know if our area will be affected, but it is in no imminent danger.

Landfall in Northwest Florida

- Reports of tarballs and/or areas of light oil sheen have been confirmed from Escambia County (Alabama-Florida state line) to Walton County in Northwest Florida. More than 2,600 personnel are actively cleaning the beaches;
- All Florida beaches are open.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a small portion of the oil slick has reached the Loop Current in the form of light sheens. Currents in the Gulf have formed a circular current which caused the loop current to pinch off at the Florida straits and is projected to move oil to the west. Learn more on the [NOAA website](#).

June 1 marked the beginning of Hurricane Season which is through November 30. NOAA has published a fact sheet titled "Hurricanes and the Oil Spill" at http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pdf/hurricanes_oil_factsheet.pdf

As of June 7, 2010, about 67 percent of the Gulf of Mexico is open to fishing. Information on the Federal Fisheries Closure can be found at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

Charlotte County is Open for Business

Florida has more than 2,200 miles of tidal shoreline and 825 miles of beach including Charlotte County's 28 miles of sand beaches. Like the rest of Florida destinations, all of Charlotte County's accommodations, restaurants and attractions remain 100% 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 the 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.

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.

Our website advertising banners promoting the current summer advertising campaign have been updated to reinforce Charlotte County's beautiful natural beaches.

Attract Summer Business

ECONOMICAL Summer Escapes is an ideal opportunity for accommodations to attract business during this situation. Accommodations can participate by offering vacation packages with local attractions and tourism businesses and/or offering lodging deals as stay two nights get the third free, valid through Oct. 31, 2010. Visit www.charlotteharbortravel.com/cms/index.php?id=362 to see examples and contact Lindsey Barfield at the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau at Lindsey.barfield@charlottefl.com or (941) 743-1900.

State of Florida Marketing Efforts

VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing corporation, has launched Florida Live, a social media platform where users are encouraged to share same-day Florida images through Facebook. If you would like to share photos of our beautiful beaches and water activities, visit www.FloridaLive.com.

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 and the rest given to VISIT FLORIDA to market the State as a tourism destination.

To learn more about the \$25 million BP provided the State of Florida for tourism marketing, participate in a free webinar being held on Thursday, June 10, with VISIT FLORIDA. Learn the details on VISIT FLORIDA's efforts to maintain visitor interest and trust in Florida. On this call you'll receive a complete briefing on what's happening with that money as well as the \$2.5 million emergency response fund VISIT FLORIDA used to launch advertising in key feeder markets several weeks ago.

Make plans now to attend this webinar:

Date: Thursday, June 10, 2010

Time: 10 a.m. Eastern/ 9 a.m. Central

Register: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/961749371>

There is no charge to attend this webinar; however, you do have to register to save your "seat." There are only so many lines available so make sure you register right away to prevent getting locked out. If you have any questions about the call or need anything, feel free to call VISIT FLORIDA directly via their toll-free Industry hotline at 877-435-2872.

Queries Regarding Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

The VCB office and call center have received queries regarding the status of Charlotte County relating to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and we understand members of the industry are receiving inquiries, too.

Tracking Loss of Business

If your business is receiving inquiries or has received cancellations from potential visitors because of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, please keep record of those cancellations for possible reimbursement from BP. 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

Also, please alert the Charlotte Harbor VCB if your business has received any cancellations as we would like to track the economic loss to the area. 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

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

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

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