



Florida Ocean Alliance Workshop Florida Oceans Day, March 22, 2011 Biographies of Speaker and Panelists

Plenary Speaker

James (Jim) C. Cato is professor emeritus, Food and Resource Economics Department, University of Florida. He has served as Senior Associate Dean and Director, School of Natural Resources and Environment, and Director, Florida Sea Grant College Program, University of Florida. He has B.S. and M.S. degrees from Texas Tech University and completed a Ph.D. in Food and Resource Economics at the University of Florida in 1973. In 2005, he was appointed to the Florida Ocean and Coastal Council and is now in his second term.

Panel

Moderator: James F. Murley serves as Assistant Dean for External Affairs, College of Design and Social Inquiry, and as Senior Advisor for Energy and Climate, Center for Environmental Studies at Florida Atlantic University. Governor Charlie Crist appointed Jim the first Chair of the Florida Energy and Climate Commission. In Southeast Florida, he serves on Climate Change Task Forces for Miami Dade and Broward Counties, Chair of the Sustainability Committee of the Urban Land Institute's Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council and is a member of the Water Resources Advisory Commission of the South Florida Water Management District. Jim is Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Florida Ocean Alliance. Nationally, Jim is a Fellow at the National Academy of Public Administration and a member of the Climate Leadership Project at the University of Oregon. Jim is a former Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs and was the first Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Florida. Jim graduated from Denison University in Granville, Ohio, with a BA in History and from the George Washington University Law School. He is a member of the Achievement Hall of Fame at the Chagrin Falls, Ohio, High School and a graduate of Class IX, Leadership Florida.

Panelists

Tourism: D. T. Minich, St. Petersburg/Clearwater Convention and Visitors Bureau is Executive Director of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC), which is the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) of Pinellas County, the most popular tourist destination on Florida's Gulf Coast. Minich oversees all operations of the organization, which has an annual operating budget of \$25 million and a full-time staff of 32, including international offices in the United Kingdom, Central Europe and South America. A member of the board of both the U.S. Travel Association and the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, Minich is also an active member of the state tourism marketing organization, Visit Florida, serves on the Board of Trustees of St. Petersburg's Dali Museum, and is past president of the Florida Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (FACVB). A vocal supporter of responsible and sustainable tourism, Minich has testified numerous times in both Tallahassee and Washington DC on issues related to beach preservation, most recently in opposition to expanded offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Prior to his appointment as VSPC's Executive Director, he served for 6 years as the Executive Director of the Fort Myers/Sanibel CVB. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Kentucky and a Certified Destination Management Executive designation from Destination Marketing Association International.

Economic Losses from Oil Spill: Senator Don Gaetz was chosen in 2010 to represent Northwest Florida for another term in the Senate. In 2006, he became the first non-legislator in more than 50 years to be elected to the Senate without opposition. Senator Gaetz is Chairman of the Reapportionment Committee as well as the Transportation, Tourism and Economic Development Appropriations Committee. In addition, he serves on several other Senate Committees including Health Regulation, Commerce and Tourism, Budget, Health and Human Services Appropriations, Rules, Rules Committee on Ethics and Elections and the Joint Legislative Budget Commission. Before being elected to the Senate, Don Gaetz was the Superintendent of the Okaloosa County School District. During his term of office from 2000 to 2006, Okaloosa Schools became the highest performing public school system in Florida and won numerous national awards for academic excellence. Senator Gaetz earned undergraduate degrees in religion and political science and a masters in public administration. He is the retired Co-founder and Vice Chairman of VITAS Healthcare Corporation and former President of the National Hospice Organization. He is a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Niceville. Senator Gaetz and his wife, Victoria, have two children. His son, Matt Gaetz is State Representative for District 4 in Northwest Florida.



Ports/Shipping: Doug Wheeler serves as President of the Florida Ports Council (FPC), a nonprofit corporation that serves as the professional association for Florida's fourteen deepwater seaports and their management. The FPC provides leadership, advocacy and information on seaport-related issues before the Legislative and Executive Branches of State and Federal Government. Wheeler has more than fifteen years of governmental affairs and association leadership at both the state and federal levels, where he held previous positions with Associated Builders and Contractors, and more recently, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, where he served as Vice President of Grassroots Advocacy and Political Action Development. Under Wheeler's leadership and management of Florida's largest federation of businesses, associations, and local chamber of commerce – encompassing more than 139,000 grassroots members, the Chamber worked aggressively and effectively to represent the interests of business in Florida. Wheeler was also previously with Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) for nearly six years, serving as the Southeast Political Manager covering seven southeastern states. He worked closely with ABC chapters and members on all areas of political affairs at the federal level, including candidate outreach, PAC fundraising, lobbying and grassroots efforts. Before joining ABC, he was the Governmental Affairs firm of Watson, Daley and Gosnell, located in Tallahassee. He has also worked for the Florida House of Representatives during five Legislative Sessions and the Republican Party of Florida during the 1994 elections. Wheeler graduated from Florida State University with a degree in Political Science, with an emphasis in Public Communications.

Cruiselines: Bob Sharak, executive vice president of marketing and distribution for the nonprofit Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), is charged with furthering the association's strategic promotional goals and objectives and serving the needs of its over 16,000 travel agency members and the world's 25 major cruise lines, which collectively represent 97 percent of the cruise capacity marketed in North America. Sharak, who joined CLIA in March 1993, directs all consumer and trade marketing efforts and promotional initiatives, including the association's annual **cruise3sixty** travel agent conference and trade show, Web site development (www.cruising.org), advertising and E-marketing, collateral production, CLIA's annual *National Cruise Vacation Month* and *World's Largest Cruise Night* campaigns. In addition, he manages industry alliances and partnerships, and spearheads CLIA's travel agency membership programs, including its portfolio of gold-standard training programs. Prior to entering the nonprofit arena, Sharak held senior marketing positions for several travel companies, including the Hertz Corporation, the Trump Organization, PeopleExpress and Continental Airlines. Sharak graduated from Kent State University in 1980, with a Bachelor's degree in marketing.

Recreational Fishing: Mark Robson has been the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries Management for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) since August 2003. The Division employs 30 staff and is responsible for the management and regulatory programs relating to marine fish, invertebrates and other marine life. The Division reviews science and public input and makes recommendations to the seven-member Commission. Additionally, the division supports agency efforts to protect coastal ecosystems, manages Florida's artificial reef program, provides outreach and education to commercial and recreational fishing interests, and serves as the Commission liaison to federal, state, local, and private marine resource agencies and organizations. Mr. Robson has served as the FWC representative to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council since 2003. Mr. Robson is a native of West Palm Beach, Florida. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Maine, and a master of science in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida. Mr. Robson's entire professional career has been with the FWC. He started working for the former Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission in 1977. Prior to his current position Mr. Robson has held positions as a wildlife technician, wildlife management biologist, regional nongame wildlife biologist, and regional director.

Economics of Restoration Activity: Laura Geselbracht is Senior Marine Scientist with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Florida Ocean Alliance. She has over twenty years of professional experience in the areas of environmental/conservation science, planning and policy. In her work with TNC, Ms. Geselbracht has headed up development of a marine site prioritization framework for Florida, the marine component of Florida's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy and a marine gap assessment for Florida. Prior to this, Ms. Geselbracht headed up TNC's Everglades Large-scale Conservation Area and played a key role building support for ballot initiatives that have contributed more than \$225 million to conservation land acquisition in South Florida. Most recently, Ms. Geselbracht conducted a sea level rise analysis of coastal Hernando County, using the Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model. Ms. Geselbracht holds a master's degree in Marine Affairs from the University of Washington and a bachelor's degree in Aquatic Biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara.