



Utilizing Oral History to Connect Students with Issues in their Coastal Community: A Voices from the Fisheries Project in Cortez, Florida

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Symposium

Outline

❖ Explanation of Project

- Goals
- Project Site
- Partners
- Methods
- Interview Questions

❖ Progress

- Training
- Integration into Curriculum
- Outreach
- Interviews Completed
- Other Outcomes
- Community Events

❖ Project Completion



Vessels in Cortez, FL

Explanation of Project

- ❖ SERO pilot project
- ❖ Partners staff anthropologists, local organizations in the community of Cortez, and a local public school
- ❖ Implement Voices from the Fisheries (VFF) Local Fisheries Knowledge Project to conduct oral histories with fishermen in the village of Cortez
 - VFF = NOAA Fisheries established method of partnering with local schools to conduct oral histories with fishermen
 - Students conduct the oral histories (interviews) with fishermen in their communities



Project Goals

❖ Education Goals for Students:

- Provide learning opportunities
 - ◆ connect to issues in their coastal community
 - ◆ equip with skills for work and continued education
- Increase in knowledge and lasting interest in the fishing industry, fishing history, and in the preservation of that through oral history
- Explore connections between fisheries, the marine environment, their community, and their own lives

❖ Data:

- Gather and preserve local fisheries knowledge and experiences

❖ Relationships:

- Strengthen connections between students, schools, community, and NOAA Fisheries



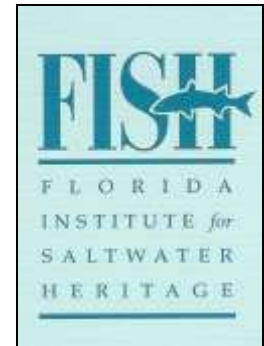
Project Site

- ❖ Cortez, Florida
 - 30 minutes south of St. Petersburg (Gulf Coast of Florida)
- ❖ Long history of fishing involvement
 - Spanish-Colonial era
 - Late 19th Century fishermen from North Carolina moved to Cortez - descendants still fish there
- ❖ Maintaining fishing way of life important to community



Project Partners

- ❖ NOAA Fisheries – Southeast Regional Office
- ❖ Manatee School for the Arts
(middle and high school in Palmetto, Florida)
 - Teacher = dept. head of social studies
 - 10th-12th grade students
- ❖ Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez
- ❖ Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage
- ❖ A.P. Bell Fish Co.



Methods

❖ Voices from the Fisheries

- Model developed by NOAA Fisheries
- Developed to address:
 - ◆ Need to improve relationships with fishing communities affected by regulatory actions
 - ◆ Introduce youth to career possibilities in NOAA
 - ◆ Many fishermen's belief that fisheries scientists and managers disdain their knowledge
 - ◆ NOAA's expanding education role
- Pilot project in Maine 2003
- Published handbook



Methods

❖ VFF Handbook includes guidance on:

- Identifying potential community partners
- Integrating into school curriculum
- Ethics in interviewing
- Recording technologies
- Interviewing
- Transcribing
- Archiving Interviews
- Project Evaluation



Community partner meeting in Cortez

Progress

- ❖ Overarching theme = changing face of Cortez's marine environment
- ❖ Interview questions developed by students
- ❖ Interviewees = community members involved in maritime activities
 - Commercial fishermen
 - Recreational fishermen
 - Crew members
 - Fishermen's wives
 - Fish house workers
 - Boat yard workers
 - Ecotourism industry workers



Fish house in Cortez

Progress

❖ Training

- Two day training & planning session - August 2012
- Facilitated by Susan Abbott-Jamieson
- Participants:
 - ◆ SERO anthropologists
 - ◆ Community partners (museum staff, A. P. Bell Fish Co, community member)
 - ◆ Teachers
- Topics:
 - ◆ Project planning
 - ◆ Overarching project theme
 - ◆ Interview topics & interviewee categories
 - ◆ Interviewing & transcribing techniques
 - ◆ Outreach



Progress

❖ Curriculum integration:

- Integrated into Florida history classes
 - ◆ Interviews conducted by history students
- Additional subjects:
 - ◆ Biology
 - ◆ Theater
 - ◆ Photography
 - ◆ Art
 - ◆ Business Math



Students conducting interview with fisherman

Progress

❖ Class Presentations

- Presentations to participating history classes by SERO staff anthropologists

❖ Outreach

- Article in the Islander (Anna Maria Newspaper)
- Festivals
 - ◆ Schoolhouse Centennial Celebration - November 2012
 - ◆ Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival - February 2013



Project booth at Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival

Progress

❖ Interviews Completed = 6

- Goal = 10-15 by end of school year
- Interviews recorded by video camera and audio recorder
- Plans to continue project & interviews next school year with new classes

❖ Goal - Connecting students with fisheries and their coastal community

- Learned about local fishing history in class
- First few interviews were with fishing family peers – students who fish in Cortez
- Other interviewed fishermen excited to share their history and “what really happened” with the younger generation
- Project incorporated into many subjects at school

Progress

❖ Additional Outcomes:

- Touch tank of local fish species at Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival
- Photos taken & being edited
- Theater class has developed monologues
- Art class creating fish prints
- Business math class examining fish house/fishing expenses and earnings



Progress

❖ Plans for Cortez Community Picnic:

- Annual event in community – April 20th
- Students present to community:
 - ◆ Monologues will be performed based on interviews and on book written about fishing family in community
 - ◆ Photographs presented at fish house gallery
 - ◆ Touch tank
 - ◆ Music by students



Project Completion

- ❖ Year 1 project completion = end of school year
- ❖ Completed interviews:
 - Will be uploaded to Voices from the Fisheries website <http://voices.nmfs.noaa.gov/>
 - ◆ Available to public and researchers
 - Archived at Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez
 - ◆ May incorporate into an exhibit - would be available to museum visitors



Students with interviewee

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- ❖ Susan Abbott-Jamieson
- ❖ Cortez Community Members

