

Black Bass Management Plan

May-June 2010 Update

Development of the FWC's *Florida Black Bass Management Plan 2010 – 2030* is on schedule and progressing at a rapid pace. The vision for the *Plan* is to make Florida the undisputed Black Bass Fishing Capital of the World by seeking and using stakeholder input from fishermen and the angling industry. Agency staff will utilize this information to develop management strategies and actions guided by good fisheries science to ensure quality bass fishing for the next 20 years.

Results of the website survey of interested anglers and direct email survey of Florida fishing license buyers is providing information that is being used as the starting point for BBMP development. Topics such as angler satisfaction, concerns, solutions and desired fishing opportunities were covered by these non-scientific surveys. [Results are posted at MyFWC.com/BassPlan_Survey](http://MyFWC.com/BassPlan_Survey).

The second meeting of the FWC staff BBMP Team occurred on 27 May. Team members reviewed and revised the actions and strategy outlines and standardized the format in preparation for the actual writing of the initial draft. Staff sub-teams will revise the three components identified as critical to making bass fishing better; habitat, fish management and opportunities. The communications plan for the BBMP was accepted and will be included in the Plan as an addendum. Team members revised the timeline to ensure continued progress to meet expectations of our stakeholders.

Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management staff then met with a group of anglers and fishing industry related individuals in mid-June to form a Technical Assistance Group (TAG). The TAG members were selected from the Florida angling community with a broad perspective of freshwater fisheries and diverse backgrounds and skill sets. They were provided recent information from the email surveys relative to current fishing habits and development of the Black Bass Management Plan (BBMP). The TAG developed vision and mission statements, and identified potential action/strategies to be utilized in the *Plan*. TAG input will be combined with FWC staff members planning efforts to generate the draft BBMP in August 2010, at which time it will be posted at MyFWC.com/BassPlan_Survey and another round of public input solicited. The Group agreed on quarterly meetings and a September meeting is being planned.

A progress update on the BBMP was presented to the Commission by newly appointed Division Director, Tom Champeau. Commissioners were provided information relative to current status of *Plan* development, public surveys, and formation and input from TAG. Four members of angling community spoke in support of the BBMP: Chris Horton, Conservation Director for Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (the largest freshwater fishing organization in the United States with 37,000 members in Florida and 350,000 nationwide); Glenn Lau, world famous cinematographer and author of numerous films and books on largemouth bass; Dr. Mike Allen, Professor of Fisheries at the University of Florida; and Todd Kersey, President of the Florida Freshwater Fishing Coalition. Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the progress and their continued support for *Plan* development and implementation.