

Interviewer: We are here today with Nate Meshelle, talking about the red tide and his experiences with it in Cortez and this is May 3rd I believe.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: So Neil, what we'll talk about first is just kind of your background in fishing and how you got started. So, if you could talk a little bit of how you got started in fishing.

Interviewee: I grew up on Bradenton Beach right here and I always just used to just water head fishing of the piers and stuff and then, as I grew into high school, some of my buddy's dads were commercial fishermen, stone crabbers mostly so, on the weekends we go stone crabbing which kind of fell in the cast netting mullet which we were always kind of into before high school but, we started it more serious and people started paying us because we were digging, we could thread nets and be aware of something.

Like I really started doing it myself most on it, started first sailing a little bit as well getting more involved which led to my senior year, I believe it was, I had a OJT and chose commercial fishing on the job training.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And I liked it, which actually you believe or not led to me withdrawing from school, my senior year and just digging, just going fishing full time, not even through the first quarter and then so, I was out and so, I had just been.

Interviewer: Who do you fish with?

Interviewee: I was fishing with a fellow there, down Morty Lee [*Phonetic*] [00:01:28] and underneath on John Venice [*Phonetic*] [00:01:30] on his boats down there --

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So and then I, I started with it and I said, if I'm not, if I make a decision to withdraw from school, I'm going to go ahead and just take away, which I did, go and get my GD that very February which was easy, didn't even -- I had all my credits. That's why I was like, why am I going to school, I'm going to be a fisherman, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee: So.

Interviewer: So, then when did you start fishing on your own [00:02:00] as a --?

Interviewee: So I mean, in high school during breaks and summer breaks I did acquire my first vessel there about myself in one year as well. So, I did a little bit of manual netting fishing, cast netting mullet at first and then later on after I fish with the fellow Morty at a high school there. I

fished under him with, actually I fished with him, under John Ben, it was my first sail boat and then in about three years John Ben, he's letting me run his other first sailing boat as a captain. And in the mean time I acquired other vessels, different styles of, inboard fishing boats like the well boat, the cooper boats that we use with that, we fish nets with, got more involved into the lady fishery and jack fishery, little bit of pompano again on --

Interviewer: Lady fish, Jack and Pompano those were all combined right?

Interviewee: Oh, no this is all same nets.

Interviewer: Oh same nets.

Interviewee: This is all same nets.

Interviewer: Oh really okay.

Interviewee: You know, this is all same nets, I don't do much hooking line fishing any more. I did -- like I said, I did a little of bit of hooking line the lady fish in high school because, we get out of school in the evenings and hit the bridge and we had a good time make a 100 bucks for the day I mean, we're not going to go scoop ice cream or bust tables for that much, you know that was profitable and then, just a year ago I purchased the, I stepped off the first, I ran the Pershing Boat for Jonny for about four years and then I kind of stepped down from that just, different things, different, different, I don't know we just, kind of just separated a little bit anyways and then took a couple years off and I purchased the Pershing boat from a family that was getting out of it.

But in the mean time, I was just stone crabbing about five years ago [00:04:00]. I was running crab boat for Terrine and got my parents involved they have actually then the next year they bought their own crab boat and so now we do stone crab together with my parents so, I was kind of need to get my parents involved in the fishing along with me which probably not would be now because red tide really did get us out here crabbing pretty bad so --

Interviewer: So, you were stone crabbing, you were bay fishing. Tell us about when you are bay fishing what do you -- what species are you going on?

Interviewee: We were catching red hand.

Interviewer: Just red hand, these Spanish sardines and...

Interviewee: We catch a small amount as a by-catch there which we were allowed for a by-catch but --

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Well we do get Cigar Minnows, and we get a few blue runners every once in a while in the bay.

Interviewer: I guess so, we kind of want to talk about red tide now. And when we say red tide, we're just saying, it doesn't have to be what we classically we think of red tide but whatever kind of water issues out there, but you've seen over time, is there one that you remember prior to last year and red tides that you remember prior to that?

Interviewee: Yes I do, I do remember because, when I was younger and I'm still now, I still serve, so I was in the water, I do remember this. Getting out of the water and putting milk in our eyes to help with the burning and one of my uncles that had actually had an ambulance because when he had fallen off his boat he inhaled fume the red tide fume ball in boat took the breath out I mean, pretty much did, he's on the beach in the ambulance at that time--

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: So, if I'm not mistaken, I was in middle schools, so much to say, four or five ish, something like that, does that sound about right.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Right. And that's when we get out for about a year, getting it off and on somewhere the same way.

Interviewer: I think it was long, I don't really know the exact...

Interviewee: It might have been three years [00:06:00] long, I can't exactly remember that well.

Interviewer: Well you weren't fishing at that time, but you weren't...

Interviewee: Not commercially, no, no. I was just...

Interviewer: But you do remember that?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. I mean, hooking on fish when I was a kid all the time, surfing and being on boats in water that's about, that's how I remember it. I remember of being fish being stacked out and, you know, it was weird, that was different, that I do remember. I remember when I first showed up there's a lot of green field on the beach on in that one. And then, this last one it wasn't grouper, it was grunts and eels and then most other things that came along with it but, it was different, it's just it --

Interviewer: You said, you saw a lot of different species the last time, then, you did crabbing?

Interviewee: Yeah, exactly. That's exactly right.

Interviewer: It's interesting. So, if we talk about this past year which is the one that you probably remember the most about in that time, I mean, it's between 2003 and 2004 till now, do you remember any others between there?

Interviewee: Yes I do, we've had small, which is really, hydraulic fishery for the last several years, It would come up, it seemed like it just comes up from the south, if I'm not mistaken, it would just pops up either or I do remember we've had small red tides for the last several years right at the end of summer which is really from what we can observe it's really hydraulic fishery for the last several years.

Interviewer: If, I mean, do you have any, can you draw the areas where you would see these patches and that where they popped up usually...

Interviewee: What color would --

Interviewer: Just whichever one you would, not yellow...

Interviewee: Yeah we'll go over that...

Interviewer: Whichever you show up first?

Interviewee: So, I mean, I did not see it with my own eyes but I know that we did not have, so mullet, we have them run, they run as you get down the shoreline, later in the fall --

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: That's when they go off shore. In December or [00:08:00] actually let me back up and on Thanksgiving first part of December we'll have our run here locally.

Interviewer: Mm-mm.

Interviewee: Which I'm going to [*Indiscernible*] [00:08:06] but, we always get our push of fish these will come up there, in that year from PGI and all these fish. But they haven't been able to mate it, because they're being killed right here.

Interviewer: Oh really.

Interviewee: Or they can get to it.

Interviewer: Right in Charlotte Harbor.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: In that area right there at Mount Charlotte.

Interviewee: Yes, I have a friend that lives right there in Mangrove [*Phonetic*] [00:08:30] and he even helps me, you know, say hey, look it, they come in but they are going to run, and hopefully they don't run, and hopefully they go offshore and then come to us rather than taking the intracoastal. So, they do get here.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So, you want me to just go ahead?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, they, they get right here, but I do remember one, the first year that we had started seeing red tide late in the fall again, you know, this consistent pattern that we're been having, that first year, I remember we had it right on, let's see, so, it's up on boat, we're up here now. It was right here in the summer time, and I might be blending years together. But you want me to start just circling where I --

Interviewer: Yeah because this is going to, this is -- you want to tell me after one year. You [crosstalk] [00:09:24]

Interviewee: Okay and so, so.

Interviewer: These were happening right?

Interviewee: So, the fall, it was late in the fall we held some fish there and as we were holding them into our seeing and they were dying due to the fact of ride tide and we could smell it. I remember earlier we had red tide and crisis by there, fish were going in there and dying. I want to say, I really want to say, did we have some fish killed down here. Kind of hard for me to really pinpoint it earlier in the summer when I first observed, it shows that because I'm out here bay fishing.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: But once I, you know, calm November [00:10:00], these are the, these are the couple spots that I remember and I believe there was more out here, but I don't want to circle anything unless I'm a 100% confirmed but I mean, with this being here, usually there was, there's more down here but I did not see with my eyes, these were just from, from hearsay.

Interviewer: These will just pop up in over the years and then, affect your fishing but, there wasn't anything consistently like this last year that went --

Interviewee: Not that I can --

Interviewer: And so, what years this would cover what from 17 back to --?

Interviewee: I'd say 14.

Interviewer: 14 to 17 about that range of...

Interviewee: Yeah roughly.

Interviewer: You've this thing popping up every sum up --

Interviewee: You know what, actually, you know I'm thinking about it a little bit more. You know a couple years ago, there was an entire person just came from. There was a person just came from the south and came in on the *[Indiscernible]* [00:10:58] we remember seeing front fish, when I was doing some landscaping like in the summer time for... out on jelly fish right here. And I remember it coming in right there, which is pretty much the same spot but it could I mean, it came from down here, it came from the south.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: In this direction and then we run the arrow right here --

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Because, it definitely, and there was reports out at all down here so, I mean--

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And that's what is seems, it always seems to be coming from the south of that. And there could be, like I said, there could be a lot more, but I just, I don't want to give you anything since I know for sure.

Interviewer: And so, when you described these patches, how -- what did they look like?

Interviewee: The water?

Interviewer: Yeah. Was is just [00:12:00] what color and what it was like and how--

Interviewee: Now those did seem of, they looked like red tide, it was the red, it was the red orange change that red tide usually is and --

Interviewer: Did they go deep or could you tell?

Interviewee: No, because we didn't go swimming in there, you know, we kind of stayed away from it. But I will tell you that one unique thing that I did notice this year when red tide first came in, which was a boat, right when it hit. And I was, there was one area we went through and the water density like changed. It sounded like we were traveling through surf.

Interviewer: Oh, really.

Interviewee: Like the way the waves were crashing out there like, I'm riding my buddy and I'm just like, are he was popping or something and, we look back and we just were like listening close and it was just like, it wasn't water it was like scurfy, it was real thick sounding as it crack as in--

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Yes you can tell that just by the sound --

Interviewee: Yeah. It was weird I've never experienced that before.

Interviewer: And so, going back to these the species that you were saying mostly affected was mullet or did you see other species affected by these patches when you -- when they popped up or it's because you were going for mullet that's when you noticed that was mullet that were affected?

Interviewee: I will go with what you said, last year, I remember I noticed in mullet. Now about that early summer like I had said that one that came in there, not last summer but the summer before --

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Could have been three summers ago. It was a lot of pen fishing stuff that just came in, came in there that I remember.

Interviewer: Okay. So, there were pen fishing with these --

Interviewee: Mm-mm.

Interviewer: Out of that two mullet maybe around here but then, you would see--

Interviewee: Yeah, that stuff that's been consistently happening for the last three or four years, like it should be four years now with this, when I saw that time. That stuff is definitely been hurting the mullet from leaving all [00:14:00] this right here and coming up by right here and then they just die, and it's been going on.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And if, I don't know if you guys were going down here, they're talking about those guys like, those fishermen down there will be able to help you better but --

Interviewer: Well that's kind of where it all started--

Interviewee: Mm-mm.

Interviewer: It was more of a general ecosystem discussion but then, they got to pine out and then it was all about red tide, so that's we kind of changed it, they changed the focus and then, we kind of said, we need to figure this out and kind of, you know, the state has got some patchy data and so, we're trying to fill in the history of the stuff and kind of, get -- and then, what people have seen on the water so. So, if we go back to last year, and I know that you're fishing in different species and so, it's going to change to where you saw and but, can you kind of, draw the extent maybe with the blue marker of what you saw last year?

Interviewee: Of red tide?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Me with my own eyes, you know, I did red tide clean up by the way.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And that was pretty disgusting I think, I didn't go see a doctor but, I believe I got nothing poisoning from it.

Interviewer: We feel good for you.

Interviewee: I was bad, I got connects to the hot cold sweats.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: It's my own fault I should have been wearing a mask because it was so hot.

Interviewer: Did they give you masks or respirators, I think--?

Interviewee: I was -- that's what I did go get, I did go get a respirator but, I did not work, I did a little bit of work for the city. Like kind of, kind of the tide kind of run in and out of the sky here but it never really made it pass the skyway [00:16:00]. And then it goes further north in the map/ And this probably actually -- sorry, because I did go offshore fishing, just did come offshore and I think I was, that's roughly a 10 mile, I have seen it. But I mean, this whole entire area was good, from what I saw with my own eyes.

Interviewer: And then, you say it went up to the skyway?

Interviewee: Yeah it never really seemed to make it pass the skyway, I don't know if the tide didn't allow it or we -- I think we had prevailing east winds that helped prevent that. I don't, they might have been little tiny amounts that need to pass the skyway here and there every once in a while, but yeah I, I was going to as like, did some work for the city of inner of cleaning the beach there where the city of piers are and then, the rest of the stuff was privately contracted, the county had put my name on website and people contacted me and then, and I go and give them an estimate what it will cost to do.

Interviewer: All right.

Interviewee: Yeah. And I actually had pictures, if you're interested let me send them to you or whatever but, it was pretty nasty.

Interviewer: Sure if you want yeah we're can [*Crosstalk*] [00:17:08].

Interviewee: Yeah, if you want to email and say hey and then, I can send you the pictures of what we cleaned up and actually what we have did to help prevent anymore from getting struck on the beach we like pull needle out to keep the current --

Interviewer: So, this red tide appeared, can be described what that was like?

Interviewee: Then, what I first -- like said earlier, what I noticed was a lot of eels and grunts and as far as for here now, this is from what I have seen in that blue area, the impact on all other species besides every once in a while seem like what happened was, you get a little fish fry and some mullet to go into like a canal or something and then that, the wind will blow red tide behind it and they will get struck and die. [00:18:00]

Interviewer: All right.

Interviewee: So, there was a few mullet that die but I remember the whole red tide that I was talking about, when I was a little of being more dead mullet than this one. And so, I'm getting that as, I feel like lot of our fish out runs, as far as our gannet fish, because I didn't really, I did see snook, I did see red fish but from what I know, is out there--

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Not that many of them, in our area here, it's right here, I don't know about these guys, I don't know if like they did see pictures. Like pictures can also be this evening but, from what I've seen here, this is all just like pen fish and eels.

Interviewer: Really pen fish and--

Interviewee: And pen fish, eels and grunts. And then every once in a while, you would see snooker and red fish or a sheep head, but it wasn't like it seemed before it. And then, it was quite, it was... there would be a quite a bit of mullet mixed in, but I mean, there's a lot of mullet out there to begin with and like I said, it's just like, one scoop of mullet can make it look like a whole --

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Everything and, and I'm not trying to like, you know, sugar coat the red tide but, now, I mean, but I'm just being for real from what I know is out there and what was really impacted I really do believe our fish somehow moved around from it and that being said, the sport fishermen, I have friends of sports fishermen all kind of, you know, that's why I drew that line across the map of the Manatee River and stuff because the sports fishing was still good all up here from the boat head in and out dependent on the winds, on the other side the Manatee River going all the way to the skyway, those guys were doing great.

Interviewer: Oh really.

Interviewee: You know, when I came through and even us commercially, the jacks had held up there, do the jack well. And we were doing pretty good still catching jacks of that lake and we just kept them, you know, kind of concentrated up there. Those kind of differ [00:20:00].

Interviewer: So how did it affect your bay fishing?

Interviewee: Absolutely terrible and I and we started right now, I mean that's what I'm, I'm not a scientist so I don't have any data to prove, but I have knowledge that what I can see is after this red tide that fall we had no fish, we didn't catch any fish all fall. And normally each boat will get, you know, a substantial amount of fish, so I got some good amount from end of August, September, October end, till the cold fronts keep us tied to the dock, you know, that's the big part of our season. And then the spring we have not caught one fish of the house here, which I call the house from here to the shipping canal.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Or you know Egmont area. Still have not caught one fish here and we should have already been catching fish here, any fish that we've caught so far and we haven't really been able to catch that much, has all been of John's Pass. Very few catches have been a little bit south towards the down seashore, that's as far south as anybody caught any fish, and there hasn't been any amount to speak of like it's been a real struggle for bay fishing.

Interviewer: That's moved you guys considerably further north?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah, every day is a long day we don't get in to late because we have to, you know, going to do 7 to 8 nights and we run and steep in two hours north to get fishing every day.

Interviewer: Why don't you go south or would it be further to travel south?

Interviewee: We do with the bottoms a lot referred to the south.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Once you hit there you had to be out nine miles.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Everywhere else is three counting charges at nine miles.

Interviewer: Yeah, all right, yeah.

Interviewee: And then so then [00:22:00] you lay down here.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So --

Interviewer: It's --

Interviewee: Yeah, and we have a spotted plane and he hasn't really see much to the south, we have a boat I think I don't know where Johnny's boat is.

Interviewer: I think they're down Fort Myers.

Interviewee: Yeah, they're down the Fort Myers and they are catching a few, I just talk to the Captain Morty, you know when we talk about --

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Okay, all right, so that's about I got involved in fishing right at a high school.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: That morning.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee: Okay, connecting the dots.

Interviewer: No, I don't [Crosstalk] [00:22:34].

Interviewee: Okay, cool, yeah, oh, like 10 miles, obviously I made it with him when I was on the boat with Morty. Yeah, they guess they've been working out there hasn't been easy, you know, hasn't been a whole lot of fish as we call the scrappy, you know, you get several different bunches together to make anything happen rather than it being one school.

Interviewer: On Monday, yeah.

Interviewee: But I --

Interviewer: So you're seen this, when you do see in there it's more split up into smaller.

Interviewee: Yeah, small, small bunches it's from what they are saying up there and then that's towards the end of well little bit of fish that we've been catching here it really hasn't been, and all too well now. Now earlier, earlier in the year Morty and then they were even further north, you know, of the map, north the clear water and but they weren't catching good piers of egg and they were catching, you know, mixed up what we call bumpers and stuff like that, you know, just mixed up bay fish, not just.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Good clean what we want, you know.

Interviewer: What about your stone crabbing? What happened there?

Interviewee: I've never seen out, I didn't like it, and I don't think any other, we never did anything, we put our, we refreshed our traps all the year.

Interviewer: Even when you see, if you were put them in the same area or?

Interviewee: We, you know, Green Valley.

Interviewer: Yeah. [00:24:00]

Interviewee: So there are stone crab grounds and we stone crab are here, we usually stone crab this area right here and the entire beach. You know after seven miles or so whatever I don't know if that one has seven miles but, seven miles with the beach is usually what we crab right there, we-we don't run a whole lot of year, we usually only run about a 1000, involved on fisheries like some we just keep few other to just to keep things going, never pick up, at the very end which were at the end of the season, but for the end of us, for us crabbing I think was January time I went and picked up some traps and I moved him off Egmont about seven miles and I called a quarter boundary of trap which is not really that good.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And that was, and so what was that, 40 pounds for the day I have, you know, come on the traps and wasn't that gray. And all the other ones they never called crab, and they as far as I know still haven't caught the crab, so from what I notice in the red tide did in down in South Bay, [*Phonetic*] [00:25:26] when I was running down there to clean because I did a lot of cleaning up and they showed garden areas right here which I'll send you the pictures too.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: The water was so thick like I described about the sturdy stuff and running across it, it didn't let sun line go through to the bottom so that the seagrass could photosynthesize I guess, and the grasses die all die out, and I think the same thing happened in the coral offshore and I believe that's why our bay isn't showing up of the house, [00:26:00] because all that core is, you know like every --

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And it's the bottom of food chains so whatever you know brings the bay to -- be on the coral --

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Whatever the bay is eating, something is eating on the coral, you know, what I'm saying through the circle and --

Interviewer: So and you -- it went pretty deep out there and then.

Interviewee: Oh, yeah that red tide, we had a plan, we have a spotted plan obviously and he was seeing it out 20 miles.

Interviewer: With 20 miles --

Interviewee: Yeah, as far as 20 miles.

Interviewer: Is there any -- did you see any other types of colored water I mean other than the red tide, the reddish, was there any other colors that you noticed out there any difference?

Interviewee: Yeah, it was dark -- yeah, it was a dark, it's like okay. So what I do remember is like that first way the leading edge was the red, behind it was the black.

Interviewer: Oh, really.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, my theory was that the leading edge was natural, the black was keeping it alive and it was like a monster and then behind it, it changed into a different monster, you know, that's what it looked like.

Interviewer: Really.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So it's kind of reddish in the leading edge and then black and --

Interviewee: As it came and filled in and passes and it came in behind it was dark, dark color, black color. And you know, when my other buddy, he said he is -- he says, you know, fisherman talks sometimes, he read a book one time which is hard to believe that too. Something about the Indians we're talking about the black tide, wave back wind so I guess, you know, natural not I don't know, I had to do something --

Interviewer: Someone asked that question the other day whether the native Americans had any remedies, had any records of [00:28:00] this kind of stuff and that would be kind of interesting.

Interviewee: Yeah, because they, because what he did say he remembered is like, what they did was, it's like we're harvesting a lot in the sea turtles because the shells were getting tools for them, you know, and so due to the black tide they know, they were able to get those. Wait, it's real little quick, I think it's important, after the red tide cleared up, you know, a lot of these in shore areas not a lot but some, it like cleaned up the water so clean for so long behind and it was amazing. Like in the summer time I've never seen the farm source so clear before like. So it was kind of a force fire will help clean up.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Interviewee: A lot of stuff that's been around that we didn't need any more I feel like, but the extent of the red tide, I don't know if that was natural, you know, what I'm saying.

Interviewer: You mean the --

Interviewee: The duration and how much of it.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Like that leading edge I think it was the natural cleaning that we probably needed, because red tide has been around since it's in the book you back to this. So I mean it's been, we have records for red tide for a long time around the world, so it's obviously it's a natural force fire for the water which I honestly believe that, but I say again the extent of it and how long it's been around for and the small, this small consistency stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I don't believe that to be completely part of nature doing its cleansing process. I think this stuff is definitely, the small stuff that keeps lingering around for last several years is definitely like I see definitely because on my facts but my opinion is that – has mans influence on it for sure.

Interviewer: Okay. So this will patch these things that we've seen in the past [00:30:00] are probably popping up because they're some kind of interference.

Interviewee: And that recollects man some more little. You know, we have little *[indiscernible]* [00:30:13] right here in coral shores, that's all, that's what I can remember right now, because I do a lot of fishing in the summer around this areas and obviously you can tell there is green grass on the shore on.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And it's stag net nasty and fisher dying here.

Interviewer: So you say this water is been real clean now, have you seen, it's a, have you seen any recovery in the sense that --

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: One from the bay fish you don't seem to see.

Interviewee: And you know we're just talking about that with Karen yesterday it's weird that, you know, our bay fish and stone crab offshore hasn't really recovered from this red tide yet but jacks were good these are *[indiscernible]* [00:31:05], glass minnows are just, I can't even say how many off shore, like I've never seen nothing like and there's old timers and I think they can't wait probably of their lightening, you know, because I usually never seen that any, you know.

Interviewer: The glass minnows are really shown up --

Interviewee: Yeah, they came -- and they are more of a red tide time species or fish which I've noticed as well, they always will hang on the edges of it and trying to be in it sometime, I don't know if they're feeding on that algae boom or not. Some guys have said and Morty thinks that they do feed on that. Then fishing a little bit of hook in line and then Palma Sola Bay, because I live on Palma Sola Bay actually and I've been doing good hooking line fish and that were no

problem, popping and running down the beach pretty good right now. So it's just kind of mess so we're keeping our fingers cross at this bate, is going to rebound and [00:32:00] here pretty soon.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And we going to get and run.

Interviewer: What about stone crab, what are you going to do about stone crab?

Interviewee: We're definitely not going to put out the traps right way, we're going to put about a third of amount and spread amount down this whole, that whole stretch of shoreline right there and see what happens.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And if nothing happens we're going to do like everybody else did and take all our review and run up to Hernando Beach with those guys.

Interviewer: But you didn't do that last year?

Interviewee: No, we have a small crab boat right now, I'm finishing up a new crab boat I'm building a new crab boat a bigger one.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: With more powers or more speed and all and it will getting new traps all the above up grading which I should be finishing up this summer.

Interviewer: Good. So did you, so you didn't do any stone crab I mean you got stone crab last year. How did you adapt I mean financially your business model.

Interviewee: I have to do with the SBA Loan.

Interviewer: SBA Loan, yeah, SBA Loan. Did lot of fisherman do that?

Interviewee: I know a few, some guys didn't get approved for, I don't know what reasons.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Which was weird because, I wasn't there sitting with them but I told them with the information I gave them and for some reason, some guys weren't, some guys were, so I don't know.

Interviewer: Were you guys approached by SBA were they here -- how did you know that SBA would have the loans for this?

Interviewee: I think it was word of mouth -- I'm sorry, word of mouth they posted up at the library of those beach.

Interviewer: Oh, they did.

Interviewee: They hung around for a month or so I think.

Interviewer: I didn't. yeah, I didn't realize they were up doing that I know they do it after hurricanes and stuff, but I didn't know they've done for this?

Interviewee: Yeah, and it wasn't bad, it was actually helpful for me, because I was having to run things on credit cards and they're interest way was way better than my credit cards.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So all I did was just [00:34:00] moved it to one and I mean, obviously I made minimal payments but I haven't been able to get ahead on that loan.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: You know, due to the fact I should have been able to get after this fall with bay fishery, but it hasn't come so, I'm sitting here, waiting and hoping that some -- I was back, this summer was going to be even, it's going to be tough because all fishing slows down in the summer due to the heat, so hopefully we have something doing before then and there, we're getting pretty close to May.

Interviewer: What about, when you said you did a lot of clean up, did other fisherman do clean up as kind of help supplement their income during that time or was that --?

Interviewee: I had a few fisherman work under me, I had actually contacted the county before the red tide had hit and tried to get them on board to hire the county to hire us on a daily, we sent everyone through and do, which I was kind of disappointed and then I see him saying he did exactly what I was wanting.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Interviewee: Us to do, how they had the shrimps skimmers out there, we could have all, we got boating, we could have all setup our boats with skimmers.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Interviewee: And been catching and coming in these passes before they came and landed all and we would have work day and night around the clock, two different night, during the day because we have that kind of experience from work in the oil spill, lot of us.

Interviewer: Oh, you did.

Interviewee: Yes, yeah, so, like my generation of fishing in older, we caught the oil spill right at high school, so we went more there, so we kind of have the – has hazardous cleanup experience on how they handle this stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And I had explain that to them, but what I --

Interviewer: But they were --

Interviewee: They were all -- they didn't want to spend money and they are hoping they would go away and probably really move down to.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And it didn't and they ended up actually hiring some *[indiscernible]* [00:35:54] for quarter million dollars.

Interviewer: Are you kidding?

Interviewee: Bunted up and like a -- don't [00:36:00] quote me on this they bunted up really fast and with all that money, they would have paid for us to hang up for a couple months and that about a money, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: 20, 30 fishermen work in boats day and night cleaning up, that would have -- I had worked just for two months at least.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Interviewee: You know, expenses everything, but -- yeah, they didn't that crew that they hired didn't last one week and I can promise you myself and the few fishermen that I had cleaning up the shoreline and some of our man did more than that one, company did come in with all their

boats and crews and it was a jerk, I'm sure you'd probably seen it on the news, they were using tongs like picking tongs and sometimes pitcher, which we use pitcher which was worked very well. Putting them in a plastic bags, why do you have plastic bags on boats on the water for one. Filling up these plastic bags with ten pounds of fish, because it's wet, so there's 20 pounds of weight altogether. The bag just starts ripping, so you're wasting, you just have a hundred plastic bags or twenty pound -- ten to twenty pounds of fish in them, and then they put maybe 200 pounds of fish on the boat in plastic bags, go to a dock, throw it into the Bobcat loader, a front loader and then it goes and dumps in the dumpster. There's so much time and resources wasted it was -- I was really disgusted with that and --

Interviewer: What were you guys doing with the skimmers and if you have --

Interviewee: We were in the water with pitchforks loading our boats and then taking them and dumping them into the bags at the boat ramps.

Interviewer: Okay, okay.

Interviewee: And actually what ended up happening on towards the end is people who did -- that was for the fresh fish, the stuff that hadn't been decomposing for over a week.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: The other stuff, they kind of and we just went in there and picked it up we were -- it was kind of just disintegrating. What was keeping it on the surface and smelling [00:38:00] was the salt do overnight and kiered on it and then the sun would bake it, so it just was like -- it was making jerky out of it on the surface and it was keeping smelling all the time, so all you really had to do is go over there and just turn it up and it disintegrating particles because we tried, we first tried picking it up and putting in the boats and it just --

Interviewer: If you're right through --

Interviewee: But that's all we had to do is go out there and turn it up and so we actually, we made skimming like plough net or drag net and we would just tow on it and then it was just the turbulence of the water just disintegrate it and it was gone and we cleaned it all up, and they were happy the smell was gone, we boomed it off, I said I'll send you the pictures and got it done.

Interviewer: That is interesting and where did you go during oil spill and, where did you go?

Interviewee: I was station in Pensacola, at the that military base there.

Interviewer: Okay, that's interesting.

Interviewee: Air Force Base.

Interviewer: And the generation of fishermen or *[indiscernible]* [00:39:01] express.

Interviewee: Yes. You know, and there is a lot of -- there is like I said there is a lot of seas I went and did that and so if this would never happen again I would hope that I will approach the county again and I'll say look come and do this right, we can kick -- we want to go to the Mangrove like we were and clean this stuff up all up inside, around these docks, which was the paint and all that stuff, we can catch this at the pass as it's coming. You guys can have your beach breaks on the beach thinking about the beach and we can keep this place it's clean.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well that's I mean that's kind of what I'd like to ask, is about what -- how management how -- what could management do to kind of help you and if there is a red tide in the future what -- is there anything that could be done that would help you in your business operation or --

Interviewee: As far as helping cleaning up is that was --

Interviewer: Well not cleaning up, some much just is there anything that could help you with stone crabbing or is there anything that can help you with bay fishery [00:40:00] the prior to any red tide that would --

Interviewee: Prior to slowdown development I would prefer that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Slow it down, you know, I do state pretty involved being the present with off chat I tried to do it in be involved with this type of stuff we had red tide meaning at the museums. I was attending some sort of bay fishery farm, but that kind of didn't really seem like it was going anywhere to sound like most people dock in.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And we actually did the clam release last month here Bradenton Beach.

Interviewer: Really?

Interviewee: Yeah, we Bradenton Beach purchased 300, 000 clams from Placida because due to the red tide, Placida -- due to the red tide, you cannot harvest the clams and they got oversized for market of whole value, you know, freaking.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, they ended up buying then we planted them all in the inside of *[indiscernible]* [00:40:58] right here along the inside of – on the bay side of Bradenton Beach.

Interviewer: Oh, really okay.

Interviewee: Yeah, we did that so, I'm getting out, I'm not being proactive and then I go and listen everybody just talk over there, so I mean, the people weren't trying to get involved doing thing, okay I'm like okay, I'll listen you guys enough and do whatever, but as far as finding us how can -- I mean, there is a -- what I just said right there, if there was some funding to and research behind planting more plants and planting more oysters and getting the fishermen to help do that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Living shore on is a big thing, I've always just thought, you know, all these people -- there is a few on Palma Sola Bay, you can tell, if you was to go by boat where they don't really have, they have a seawall, but it's this -- a flat runs up to a seawall and then you just got the plastic seawall, I mean I think those people should have rip wrapper off with mangoes planted within those rock and oyster beds [00:42:00] planting along the edge of that, because they just taken away have to have, so they need to replace that instead they just have this seawall with the few barnacles on it, I mean, that's not creating any filtration or nursery for anything that be right there. So, people need to be more mindful of living shorelines and if we're going to be developing, how are we going to -- what is that mitigate.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: You know what we have taken away and replace.

Interviewer: Do you have any theories on -- and we have talked a little bit about what's happening and why we're seeing red tides like this?

Interviewee: I believe that this was started actually, I mean, you know, it came from offshore from what I hear from everybody saying that this stuff comes from offshore and then it feeds on the high nitrogen content along the shorelines, if I'm not mistaken I mean that's what the scientists are put together and I can see that and I believe that but then again like I said our extra nitrogen ran off, I mean, again it's ridiculous to allow this, don't chew it and it just pay a fine, I

guess same people is doing the same thing, but now they're deepwater injected -- deepwater injecting, which we'll see how that impacts doing that rather than this treatment, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Right in my backyard in Palma Sola they break several times of a year.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And they say don't go swimming, because they have the *[indiscernible]* [00:43:44] where lot of people go and spend their weekends, they say don't go in the water, because of the bacteria, I just wish there was more funding that went towards dealing with our sewage, I think that would help a lot change [00:44:00] your fertilization methods, I mean really I think all our problems don't really stem from what's really going on the water, it starts at the living shore on that we need do address. And then goes in and then how we treat our sewage all around, all of it. I mean, even street run offs like why aren't our, our ditches that run out to these bays when it rains where's our filtration system in this. You know, that mean all the bays what I would like to see, being changed and addressed.

Interviewer: Well let me ask you just started renewed the local chapter the organized fishing for what kind of speared in doing that?

Interviewee: We think Cortez has started, we could start, try to get organized you know, because we face a lot of restrictions coming down the line from I don't want anybody kind of support fishery, call always at our neck about things. And so we felt that we needed to come together, a big thing I started that was the calling of the white row, we guys ever throw on the white rows during the season, every boat which we don't practice, we're totally against that, put on your boat and *[indiscernible]* [00:45:33] and take care of it, like it's those food.

Interviewer: White row is going to be lot cheaper than red row.

Interviewee: 10 cents versus a dollar. I can go on a whole another attention on that, but anyways that's kind of started as getting organic and we're worried that after it's going to come down and shutters down so that was a small reason. There was a group that we talk about going with all of the people who had bad dealings about it, [00:46:00] because they felt like they were done wrong. And there wasn't enough done by all, during the net ban which I was only four years old, so I didn't know anything about that. I mean, I do know from what I hear, that I was there. There is the group that we end up going with, Wakulla County fishing for freedom, they were had like the lawyer. There was a split minute at the gill net was by judge Fulford, [Phonetic] [00:46:25] that, I'm sure, you know all that, I've already explained that to you.

Went with that for a little while, things just wasn't working around. We were well like I had kind of gotten involved with all at the same time as I was with Fishing for Freedom through Larry Fulford, you know Larry Fulford?

Interviewer: I know Larry.

Interviewee: Okay. He got, he came I was running his dad, it's his dad's boat that Johnny has the little one, so you kinda like, he kind of saw it after me like oh, young guy running dad's boat, started talking became good friends, he got me involved in all, taking me over to the annual conventions, and what not, meeting Jerry and all of those guys and I really liked I, because it was a bigger group, it was way more, it was professional you know that Jerry Ben Lobes [Phonetic] [00:47:08] that this other group didn't have anything like, they were just throwing money at lawyers and not going anywhere spinning their wheels.

So I just completely went away from that, went with off. And I've been active with him, ever since then getting more and more members even some of the old farmers that had bad feelings about off. They started coming around a little bit, so it's been a chore to try to give against people to join. But the younger guys they all are right behind there with me.

Interviewer: That's good.

Interviewee: So, I got the support from my younger fisherman which was getting the older guys to get on board and they're slowly starting to come on board.

Interviewer: I mean, when I lived here, we used to have the off, had the fish fries in the fire house.

Interviewee: We would like to eventually get to that point. I wish I could have been doing more this last year than I had been, but I [00:48:00] made that purchase of the higher roll from the fillings and that thing had been so badly neglected, I've had to replace –

Interviewer: Payment and then fishing much later.

Interviewee: No, I when I first got out of the boat it has two motors in it. When I got it, it came with two spares, hence we had a swap on motor got going, by summer before the red tide, I pretty much had to replace all the hydraulic rims, all the hydraulic lines, amongst other things, electrical, just to try and keep going, try and make a little bit of money and progress. Then got things going pretty well, red tide or decently red tide came, dropped everything into that, towards the end tried to get big fishing when the red tide went away there was no bay. And then actually

there was a very minute amount of bay I think I call like 10,000 for the fall that was it. That was one day and that was a very good.

And then the spring started in late February, and then I just last week had to replace the other motor. So we were down for two weeks. And then the transmission on the other motor I replaced last summer had to be replaced. So it's been, that's been taking up a lot of my time, so I haven't been able to do the things that I wanted to do to help off grow over the last year, that's when I'm getting there. But things are -- things will be, going to be coming around here seeing good, hopefully strength in numbers and the voice would be heard.

Interviewer: Those are all the questions I've got. Is there anything else about it, any of this that we didn't cover that you think that you want to mention or anything that you --

Interviewee: No, not I mean, I biggest thing I can say is like, I said earlier it was address living shore lines, and address or it'd run off. And I think we need to pay attention to that or anything. Trying to -- I don't know what are the things, and then you know fixing things, planning clams and oysters, [00:50:00] I think those are good things that's part of the living shoreline, but even before that which I do start to support that and I think it's good. But even before that it's really just our sewage like water will all run off and what are we doing with it? How are we treating it?

Interviewer: Into planting the clams and oysters, they're going to act as natural filters.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: In that bay.

Interviewee: Right. And so we have you know, there's supposed to be some divers, they're supposed to go and check and see how they're going and how they're --

Interviewer: They can survive the red tide.

Interviewee: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay.

Interviewee: Yeah because those clams survive the red tide through the whole down there, you know, so that's about it. I even told people when you're talking your shadow, you have to turn the water off, when you're just lathering up, because all that water goes to the plant especially during rainy season it's the overflow, so you're wasting clean water, but all your sewage runs down the same pipe. So that's making the level of the, you know, the retention ponds over out

there overflow, it's just small things that we can be doing at home by not running so much water that's going into our sewage system. And then beyond that the government needs to be more active on treating the water, treating and doing something better with it than just letting it run out.

Interviewer: Yeah, when I was in the navy I take two minute showers to turn it off.

Interviewee: My dad was a staff sergeant in the military and I never go to that all. He was still that way like he raised us like we were we can –

Interviewer: Well, we appreciate you taking the time to down talk with us.

Interviewee: I appreciate you all having me.

Interviewer: Good. And I'm telling everybody. So I imagine there will be a report that comes out of this and we'll make sure Karen is aware or kind of can get it to you guys once it's done. You know, I don't know what form it'll be in, but I'm sure they will, because what we're doing is we're taking all this [00:52:00] and kind of putting it all together up and down the curbs to kind of get a picture of what the fisherman had been saying over the years, and so that kind of get a historical look at red tide and then on the water you know, knowledge of what's happening out there so. Hopefully we'll have something in about six years. We're going to head – we aren't, but some people are going to head up further north around Crystal River and maybe go to Steinhatchee, you know and I don't know how much those guys saw up there.

Interviewee: Well, you know, I do know about Steinhatchee, is several years ago, five years ago maybe, a fellow that was a bandit fishing. They all try to get out of there because red tide was bad offshore, looking at fish it was bad, but it was just an offshore red tide.

Interviewer: Oh, really yeah.

Interviewee: It never came on shore I guess. And you know they were fishing out to here, running that bay down there.

Interviewer: They moved down here about most time.

Interviewee: Yeah, his boats stay there really, in Palma Sola and then he fished out of John Anderson fish, hooking line, been in the fishing group.

Interviewer: I didn't know that.

Interviewee: Yeah, he'll be a good person to talk to if you guys get out that way. Because he was a retired coast guard yeah he is –

Interviewer: I can't --

Interviewee: His name is Paul, I don't know his last name, his boat name is the Renegade.

Interviewer: I know his last name, I can't think what it is –

Interviewee: You know who it is then, I'm talking about.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewee: He's all like –

Interviewer: I think he is on the AP for the Golf counsel --

Interviewee: I'm sure, he is, yeah. He *[indiscernible]* [00:53:37].

Interviewer: But I'm glad you're starting the off chapter is kind of good to see it comeback. You know, I was kind of not involved with it, when I was at a lot of their meetings when I went there. And I was here during the net ban so, it was a little different, it was a little active then.

Interviewee: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: A lot of stuff going on. [00:54:00]

Interviewee: Oh, yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Great, I appreciate it.

Interviewee: All good.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Thank you very much.

Interviewer: Thank you, I appreciate it.

Female Speaker: Thank you.

Interviewee: I'm really glad to hear from you guys and I email you those pictures --.