

Stakeholder input on the potential for a seafood trail on the South Carolina coast

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SC Seafood Trail Workshop
Charleston, SC

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Introduction

- South Carolina (SC) coast offers unique local seafood experiences
- Theme-based trail as a catalyst for rural economic development
- Identify shared goals and purpose for seafood promotion among coastal communities
- Explore interest in and capacity for cooperation and partnership around a seafood trail

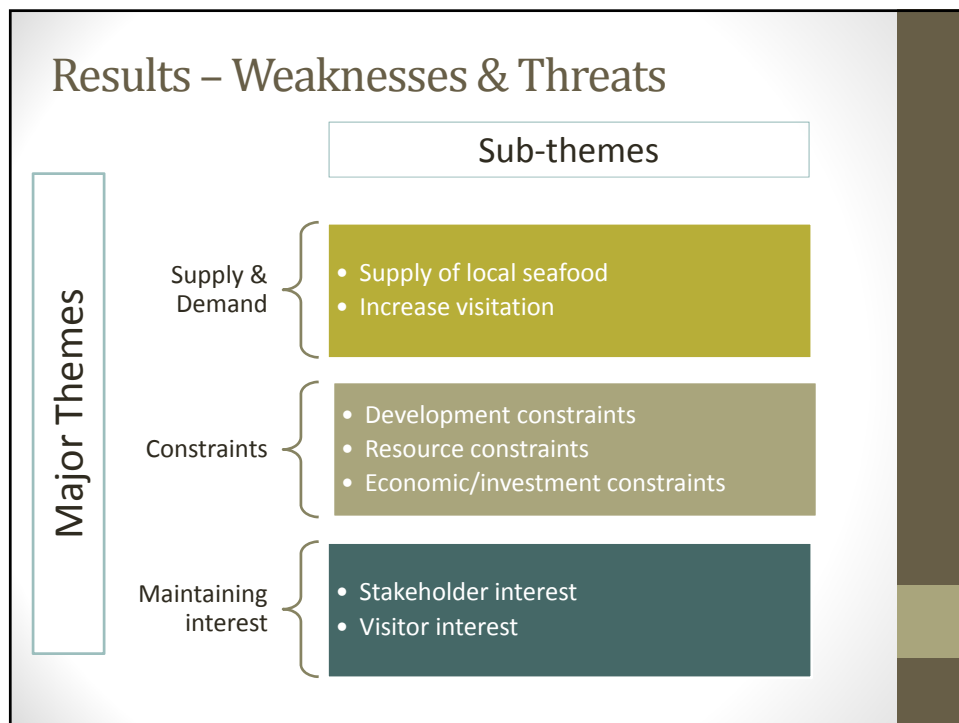


Study Area Description

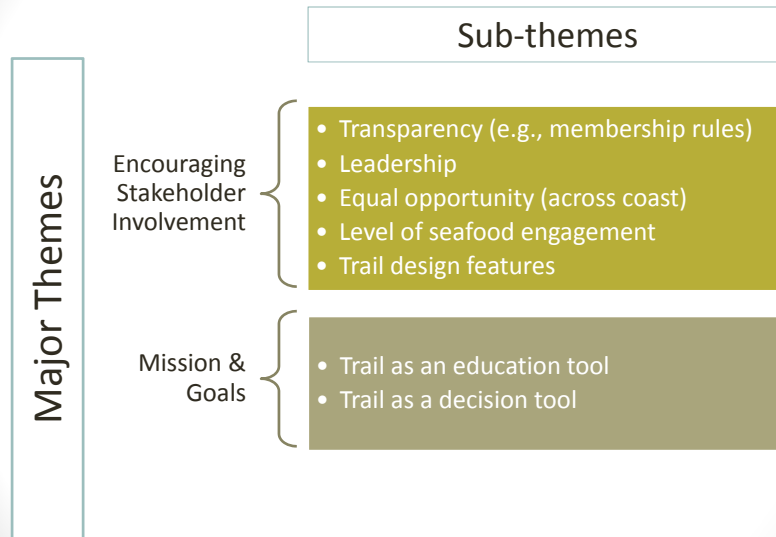


Methods

- Inventory – seafood harvesters, wholesalers, restaurants, and retailers; tourism organizations, museums and tour operators on SC coast (N=131)
- Identify stakeholder group representatives – Advisory panel
- 45 Invites = 31 interviews
 - Myrtle Beach/McClellanville (N=8)
 - Mt. Pleasant, Charleston, Edisto (N=14)
 - Hilton Head/Beaufort (N=9)
- Follow up survey (N = 15)



Results – Strategies



Results – Regional differences

- **Level of supporting infrastructure**

Areas with no infrastructure will have trouble attracting overnight visitors.

- **Types of product in each region**

More than shrimp

- **Quality of inter and intra-regional produce**

How do you determine that someone is selling local seafood? How to prevent people from lying about local seafood.

- **Competing view on primary trail narratives**

Seafood trail as a seafood marketing tool” vs. “seafood trail as an opportunity to preserve and highlight the heritage and traditions of the South Carolina seafood industry

Follow-up Survey

- Membership criteria?
 - Geographical location
 - Type of business
 - Quality control
 - Truly local product
 - Heritage focused
 - How should harvesters be included?
- Leadership?
 - Combination of interested parties – e.g., state agencies, chambers, and non-profit organizations involved in seafood and promotion of tourism and agriculture
- Funding
 - Membership fees
 - Jointly funded
 - Tax dollars
 - State

Conclusion

- General support for South Carolina seafood trail across regions, however, with significant regional differences
- Although some products are similar, some different (competing) seafood products are important to different regions.
- Need to capitalize on the different perspectives to diversify the tourism product along the coast.

Questions for Discussion

- What criteria should there be for membership in the South Carolina Seafood Trail?
- What organization(s) or individuals should provide leadership for the development and maintenance of a South Carolina Seafood Trail?
- How should the South Carolina Seafood Trail be funded?