

SUSTAINING A COASTAL LEGACY



NORTHEAST FLORIDA SHRIMPING INDUSTRY MARKET STUDY

PREPARED BY: THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL



The Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) was proud to lead an effort to better understand and support one of our region's most iconic industries—shrimping. Funded through a Community Planning and Technical Assistance Grant from Florida Commerce, the Shrimping Industry Market Study focused on the four coastal counties of Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, and Flagler. The goal of the study was to provide strategic, community-informed recommendations that will help small shrimping businesses grow, promote sustainable practices, and build a stronger, more resilient regional food economy.

From the very beginning, this study was guided by those who live in the historic shrimping communities and work in the shrimping industry every day. Over the course of the project, NEFRC hosted seven community meetings designed to gather local insight, present research, and refine recommendations.

The process began with a kickoff meeting in Mayport, which helped shape the research focus based on what local shrimpers saw as their most pressing issues. This was followed by four listening sessions, held in Fernandina Beach, Mayport, St. Augustine, and virtually, to conduct SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analyses and gather feedback on trends, market dynamics, and industry challenges.

Later in the process, a results meeting allowed stakeholders to review and respond to draft recommendations. The final gathering, a Community Asset Inventory Meeting in Mayport, brought together shrimpers, state and local representatives, and industry experts to share resources and discuss practical next steps.

KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Through this community-driven and research-informed process, NEFRC developed a set of recommendations focused on helping Northeast Florida's shrimping industry thrive in a changing economic and environmental landscape. These include:

- **Forming a regional shrimping cooperative** to give small operators more collective strength in purchasing, marketing, and distribution.
- **Developing a stronger brand identity** for shrimp caught in Northeast Florida, including the potential to trademark a regional logo that promotes quality, sustainability, and local pride.
- **Partnering with workforce development programs** to ensure that the industry has a future pipeline of skilled workers and entrepreneurs.
- **Exploring non-traditional partnerships**, such as rethinking relationships with government agencies and community organizations to improve collaboration and access to resources.
- **Enhancing public outreach efforts** to better connect consumers with the local shrimping story—why it matters, how it's done, and why it's worth supporting.

LOOKING AHEAD

With the study complete, NEFRC is now working to distribute the final report to all participating stakeholders and interested community members. The next phase will involve working closely with the shrimping community to turn these recommendations into action. This includes identifying project ideas, building new partnerships, and applying for future grants that can bring resources and momentum to the industry.

By combining the voices of local shrimpers with data-driven insight, this project sets the stage for a more connected, resilient, and prosperous future for shrimping in Northeast Florida.

For more information or to get involved, please visit www.nefrc.org or contact us at info@nefrc.org.