

Florida Aquarium Visits Cuba Amid Partnership Push



Tampa, October 11 (RHC) -- Members of the Florida Aquarium's fundraising arm will travel to Havana next week for meetings with the National Aquarium of Cuba, as part of mutual efforts to establish a research partnership.

"This is an educational mission," said Tom Hall, chairman of Florida Aquarium Foundation in Tampa, who will be on the Tuesday-to-Sunday trip. "We want to talk about what we do, hear what they do, and then compare notes. I'll know more when we get back."

There is no collaboration now by aquariums in the two countries. The National Aquarium of Cuba hopes to change that, said Jeffrey Boutwell, board member with the Latin America Working Group Education Fund in Washington, D.C. The nonprofit fund carries on the work of author Ernest Hemingway on a shared U.S.-Cuba approach to maritime resources.

Boutwell was part of a group that visited Cuba in September to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Hemingway's first trip from Key West to Havana aboard his cabin cruiser. Boutwell met then with representatives from the National Aquarium to learn what's being done to protect the marlin, tuna and other game fish with which Hemingway is identified.

The aquariums in Tampa and Havana both focus on research as well as public exhibits. A partnership, he

said, would help protect the two nations' shared marine resources.

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