Maine’s Working Waterfront Coalition

Coalition Building - Strategies for Engaging the Public in Working Waterfronts

National Working Waterfronts & Waterways Symposium
March 25-28, 2013

Hugh Cowperthwaite
• Private, nonprofit Community Development Corporation (CDC) Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)

• Based in Maine (36 years)

• Provide financing and support for job-creating small businesses, natural resources industries (fisheries), community facilities, and affordable housing.

• $14.5 million in 224 loans to fisheries/aquaculture/working waterfront related businesses

Mission: To help create economically and environmentally healthy communities in which all people, especially those with low incomes, can reach their full potential.
Extensive coastline

Gulf of Maine

Extensive coastline
Maine’s Marine Community Assets

- 3,500 mile shoreline
- 149 towns in the coastal zone
- 10,300 marine harvesters
- 26,000 fishing related jobs
- $740M in annual income
- ~25 miles of working waterfront
Preliminary 2012 Commercial Maine Landings By Live Pounds
Total: 314,989,031 as of 2/19/13

American lobster 40%
Atlantic herring
other species 11%
urchins 1%
scallops 1%
shrimp 2%
mahogany quahog 2%
groundfish 2%
soft clams 3%
blue mussels 4%
seaweed 5%

* Data from the Maine Department of Marine Resources.
Working waterfronts define the soul and character of the Maine coast for residents and visitors alike.
Waterfront access is a problem!!!

- 1980’s – 2000’s, in-migration, second homes, retirement from northeast urban areas.
- Demand for waterfront land, crated a rise in prices and property taxes.
- Transfer of working waterfront from fishing families to wealthy “2nd home owners”
- We knew we had an access problem…need to protect!
- No hard data existed as evidence of a problem
- A legislative Task Force was formed in 2000 to investigate.
- One recommendation from Task Force, study the issue!!!
- Maine Coastal Program commissioned a study with CEI in 2002
- CEI selected 25 towns to assess Commercial Fishing access
64% of communities have an access problem right now

75% of access is in private ownership

25% of access is publicly owned
2002 to 2004 Study Findings

• From 2000 to 2004 there has been an overall increase (58%) in land valuation across the 25 municipalities.
• Up 15% in Eastport, up 104% in Kennebunkport
• Pull to sell a property at high market value
• Push to sell because of higher taxes
• Fewer fishermen (a decline in license holders)
Expressed Needs

Each locality has unique needs:

- **84%** Property Tax Relief
- **76%** Waterfront Planning Assistance
- **72%** Assistance Purchasing Access Rights

Data from CEI and SPO: *Tracking Commercial Fishing Access* - A survey of Harbormasters, twenty five Maine coastal communities 2004
Problem:
Loss of Working Waterfront

Opportunity: To develop a broad constituency, inspire new partnerships, and preserve our working waterfront.

Photo Reprinted courtesy of Foster’s Daily Democrat, Dover, NH. Photo by Steve Drozelle.
Maine Working Waterfront Coalition

A statewide group of over 140 industry associations, nonprofits, state agencies and individuals dedicated to supporting and enhancing Maine’s working waterfront through policy, planning, investment and education.
Coalition Governance Structure

- Executive Committee
- Steering Committee
- Working Groups
- Membership
Coalition Governance Structure

Executive Committee Composition:
2 state agencies
1 community development organization
1 coastal & island community non-profit
1 marine trade organization
1 commercial fish organization
1 aquaculture organization
1 public member
Coalition Governance Structure

Steering Committee
Set priorities and Committee work
Decision making and policy positions
Discuss issues, updates, projects, committee work
Communicate the Coalition activities with their membership
Contribute money and/or in kind to the effort
Expectation to participate in meetings
Coalition Governance Structure

Working Groups
Work on specific projects as needed
Meet outside the full Coalition to accomplish specific goals.
Made up of Steering Committee and Executive Committee
Ad hoc groups formed as needed.
Past Working Groups have focused on:
- Policy (taxes & public investment)
- Planning
- Investment (loans, grants)
- Education (posters, stickers, pamphlet)
- Workshops & seminars
- Research (updating data) building the case!
Coalition Governance Structure

Membership
Support the WWC mission
Assist in our efforts
Name and contact info included in membership list
Included on distribution list for WWC emails about events, activities, meetings, outcome, etc.
Working Waterfront Coalition Responses

**Working Waterfront Bond:** Respond to the gap between “market value” of a property and available financing for fishermen.

**Current Use Taxation:** Equity in tax policy for Fishing similar to what was already available to our Farming and Forestry.

**Loan funds**

**Creative Partnerships**

**Outreach**

**Research**
Building Momentum for Policy

Press Coverage

• “Governor Baldacci to speak at working waterfront press conference”
• “Maine Working waterfront coalition launches campaign”
• “Saving the working waterfront”
Do you favor a $12,000,000 bond issue to purchase land and conservation easements statewide from willing sellers for conservation, water access, wildlife and fish habitat, outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, farmland preservation and working waterfront preservation to be matched by at least $7,000,000 in private and public contributions?
November 7, 2005
Question 5: Bond Funds

• The Bond question passed by Maine voters by an overwhelming 66-34% margin.
• $2,000,000 of this bond was to go to working waterfront preservation.
November 7, 2005
Question 7: Tax Law

“Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to permit the Legislature to authorize waterfront land used for commercial fishing activities to be assessed based on the land's current use in a manner similar to treatment now available for farms, open space and forestland?”
November 7, 2005

Question 7: Tax Law

• The Tax Law question passed by Maine voters by an overwhelming 72-28% margin.
Coalition Persistence!!!

- Developed a case study (to share & inform)
- Show up in August (monitor the legislature)
- Have fishermen present “when it counts”
- Stay focused on the Coalition’s goals
- Monthly meetings (RSVP, offer food) with clear agendas, central location (Augusta), minutes distributed
- Kept a rolling list of accomplishments
Maine’s Working Waterfront Access Pilot Protection Program (WWAPP)

Overall Impacts
23 Projects
$5,091,000.00 invested
42 Acres of land protected
7,737 feet of shore frontage
512 Commercial Fishing Boats
978 Fishermen and their families
Maine’s Working Waterfront Tax Law

• As of April 1, 2012
• 81 properties enrolled
• 105.63 acres of land protected
• Fair Market Value of properties 21.6 M

http://www.maine.gov/revenue/forms/property/pubs/workingwaterq&a.htm
Policy Work

Maine Working Waterfront Coalition
  Working Waterfront Access Protection Program
  Maine’s Working Waterfront Tax Law

National Working Waterfront Network
  National Symposium(s) on Water Access (X 3)
  Nationwide Working Waterfront Research (EDA)
  Federal Working Waterfront Initiative $$
THANK YOU

Hugh Cowperthwaite
Fisheries Project Director
Coastal Enterprises Inc.
2 Portland Fish Pier, Suite 206
Portland Maine 04101-4633
Phone 207-535-2920
hsc@ceimaine.org
www.ceimaine.org