

Maine's Working Waterfront Coalition

A statewide group of industry associations, nonprofits, state agencies and individuals dedicated to supporting and enhancing Maine's working waterfront through policy, planning, investment and education

Threatened: a livelihood for many, a heritage for all.

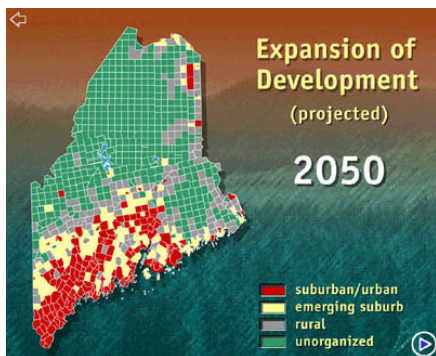
Working waterfront *is* the Maine coast. Over the past 300 years, marine-related industry has been the central force shaping the way our coastal communities look and feel today. Ironically, it helped create an environment so attractive to interests outside of the industry that Maine's working waterfront is increasingly in danger of disappearing. In order to sustain this part of our shared heritage, and to protect this vital piece of our current and future economy, we must take action immediately and ensure that there will always be room on Maine's coast for people who make their living from the sea.

Facts

- Of the 5,300 miles that make up Maine's coast today, only 25 are devoted to commercial fishing activity.
- These 25 miles – *a mere 0.36% of our shorefront* – currently provide Maine's 10,300 fishermen access to the water in order to park their trucks, dock/board their boats, buy ice and fuel, and unload their catch
- In total, these 25 miles support over 26,000 fishing-related jobs and provide the access necessary to sustain an industry worth over \$740 million.
- In addition, water-dependent marine trades such as boat builders, boat yards and marinas employ nearly 3,000 people statewide, generating an additional \$85,000,000 in wages.
- In 2001, Maine's working piers and wharves made it possible for 269 million pounds of seafood to generate \$740 million dollars in economic income.

Will Maine be next?

As much of the rest of the country struggles against the forces of sprawl and gentrification, Maine has become all the more attractive as a place still relatively unspoiled. But for how long?



A recent study by the State Planning Office predicted that if current trends continue, the majority of Maine's coast – from Kittery to Mount Desert Island – will be classifiable as "suburban/urban" by the year 2050. How will this affect our water-dependent industries? For answers we may only have to look as far south as Cape Cod or Nantucket, where residential growth has all but eliminated the presence of marine industry – particularly the coastal access provided by the private residences of fishermen – from the waterfront. Not only has this hurt the industry, but it has changed the

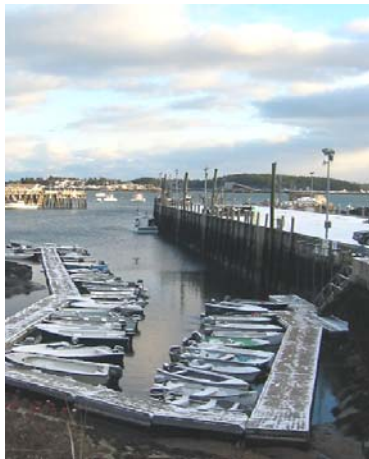
character of these places forever.

This is happening in Maine now. In a 2002 study of 25 coastal communities from the length of the coast, 84% indicated that lack of shore access is either already a problem

or is expected to soon be a problem. All along the coast, land values are skyrocketing due to second-home ownership and gentrification. Faced with increases in property assessment of as much as 300%, many fishermen are simply unable to pay the resulting taxes, and are being forced inland. Some must drive miles back to the coast where, if they are lucky enough to find an access point with sufficient parking, they often have to wait in line to load and unload their gear and catch.

Policy, Planning, Investment and Education – Current-use taxation is part of the solution.

We do not have to sit passively and watch as the Maine coast we know – which is so valuable not only to water-dependent industries and tourism, but also to our heritage and state pride – disappears lot by lot because of sprawl, use conflicts and a regressive tax structure. In fact, many have been hard at work for some time in search of a solution.



The Working Waterfront Coalition believes that allowing properties related to commercial fishing to be taxed on their current use, rather than their ‘highest and best’ use, can be a vital part of this solution. Such current-use taxation is already an option for farming and forestry – two of the three industries represented on our state flag.

In fact, a statewide referendum in 1999 that would have allowed Current Use Taxation for working waterfront failed by less than 1%. This past November 2005, the Constitutional Amendment to allow waterfront properties to be taxed at their “current use” passed the ballot passed 72% to 28%, a very strong measure of WWC’s and the campaign’s work during the last three years. Also with the

Coalitions support a state bond was passed that will provide \$2 million to be used to invest in significantly important working waterfront properties along the Maine coast. This will likely stimulate long-term investment into the preservation of Maine’s working waterfront.

The Maine Working Waterfront Coalition includes representatives of the following organizations:

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| Associated Fisheries of Maine | GrowSmart Maine |
| Bagaduce River Oyster Co. | Gulf of Maine Research Institute |
| Bayley’s Lobster Pound | Interested Citizens |
| Chewonki Foundation | Island Institute |
| Coast of Maine Organic Products, Inc. | Islands Coalition |
| Coastal Enterprises, Inc. | Lobster Institute |
| Commercial Fisheries News | Maine Aquaculture Association |
| Commercial Fishermen | Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center |
| Daigle Commercial Group | Maine Citizen Leadership Fund |
| Downeast Lobstermen’s Association | Maine Department of Marine Resources |
| Farm Credit of Maine | Maine Department of Transportation |
| Gardiner Savings Bank | Maine Farmland Trust |
| Genesis Community Loan Fund | |

Maine Fishermen's Cooperative
Association
Maine Fishermen's Wives Association
Maine Harbor Masters Association
Maine Island Trail Association
Maine Lobstermen's Association
Maine Marine Trade Association
Maine Sea Coast Mission
Maine Sea Grant Program
Maine State Planning Office
Maine Windjammer Association

Members of the Maine State Legislature
Municipal Officials
Muscongus Bay Realty
Northend Lobster Cooperative
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Raynes Marine
Spinny Creek Shellfish
Stonington Fisheries Alliance
Sunrise County Economic Council
York Harbor Board
York Land Trust