

FROM THE CROWE'S NEST

The Time to Act Is Now

A developer buys a local fisherman's wharf and turns it into condos and sheik boutiques. Access for fishermen to get to work is lost. In another instance a traditional access to the mud flats gets sold and a no trespassing sign appears, the worm diggers and clambers can't get to work either. A town ordinance gets passed and the mussel fishermen can't get their trucks to the beach to pick up their catch.

These types of situations have been happening more and more up and down the coast of Maine. With a sagging stock market (and a lot of surplus wealth) people have been buying up waterfront property with a gold rush mentality. As state Senator Dennis Damon said in his speech to the recent conference on working waterfront access: "Once it's gone it's gone forever."

It should be a crime when generational families of these coastal towns are forced to sell their homes and wharfs because they can no longer afford to pay the inflated taxes due to real estate speculation.

You ask, "What can be done? How do we stop it?" Well there is groundswell of interest amongst people seeking answers to those

questions. Some of these people are: Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Sunrise County Economic Council, Maine State Planning Office and your local state representative and state senators, that you can get in touch with if your are concerned over a piece of waterfront property that may go the route of private development.

One thing that should be done is to shift the tax burden on those responsible for the loss of our heritage. Nantucket, Mass. does this by imposing a 2 percent tax on real estate sales. That money goes into a trust, which is then used to purchase land for public use. First time homebuyers and land that is being sold within a family are the only two exceptions to the tax. Last year they collected 5.3 million dollars for acquiring public use land.

The gold rush promoters and beneficiaries must somehow be held accountable for the social and cultural havoc they wreak. There are devastating costs from literally bulldozing communities.

There are means to make changes, but they will have no effect if we don't act on them now. Now's the time. ↓



HERRING F

"The pro for limited and now w said Mary director of t Association ity issue. early every was implem

The pote is driving t ment 1 to Fishery M (NEFMC) agement Pl be comple States Mar sion's (ASM

Herring the NEFM complem from zero t by the AS divided in zones, Area 1A and 1B offshore G Areas 2 an Cape Cod a EEZ to the

The AS state meas tions that the spawni sures, effor ing prohibi waters.

When th ten, said N Lori Steele, called for li

The Time to Act is Now!

by Laurie Schreiber

WALPOLE — Dennis Damon, a state senator, grew up in North-east Harbor, his parents' sixth and last child. Three of his brothers are fishermen. Fishing goes back three generations on Deer Isle. As a kid, Damon believed he might also make his living from sea. Even though his father encouraged him to explore other options, he assured young Dennis he could always fish if that's what he ended up wanting.

"But what he didn't know was that there would come a day when a fisherman's son couldn't go fishing," Damon told folks at the first of a series of meetings

tries, is rapidly being bought up as private property, fencing off people who look to the sea for their livelihood.

As awareness of the problem has grown, so has a burgeoning movement in an increasing number of coastal communities to purchase or improve small pieces of the coastline to ensure the public can get to the water.

A number of people related the success their communities have had in accomplishing this goal. Joe Donnelly of the York Land Trust said York Harbor recently celebrated the purchase of an \$800,000 dock, thanks to the

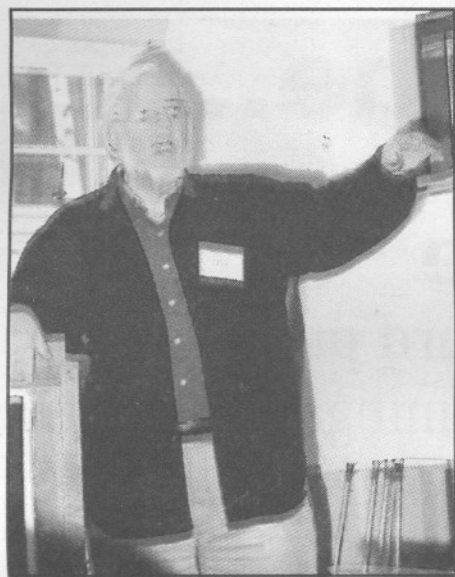
sary by severe overcrowding at the town pier. But it came only after the community suffered a blow a couple of years earlier, when a large dock came up for sale for \$1 million. Several town officials thought the dock was suitable for the area's needs, but the dock was bought privately, a house was built, then sold for more than \$2 million.

"And now," Donnelly said, "instead of having a wharf with boats tied up, the wharf has a picket fence around it and there are potted trees on the wharf. That is not our idea of a working waterfront."

The Coalition Forms

The coalition formed early this year in response to loss of access to the water and shore for folks who depend on it for their economic livelihood and also a heritage going back hundreds of years. A statewide group of industry associations, nonprofits, state agencies and individuals, the group is dedicated to supporting and enhancing Maine's working waterfront through policy, planning, investment and education. The goal of "Working Waterfront Access: A Forum on Challenges and Solutions" was to highlight information and experiences, across industries and communities, and the tools available to shape the future of Maine's working waterfront, in the face of rapid changes in shoreline ownership, development and coastal access. Emphasis was placed on the value of a diverse waterfront. On the table were the challenges of retaining and improving access and facilities and of identifying and balancing the diverse components of a working waterfront.

Damon was one of a number of



Ted Hoskins of the Maine Sea Coast Missionary Society was the moderator of the forum on working waterfront access.



Mr. Malcom 'Laddie' Whidden, of Harpswell was a Fishing Community Representative at the forum.

held Dec. 17 by the Maine Working Waterfront Coalition and hosted by Damariscotta's Gulf of Maine Foundation.

Damon's story illustrates changes that have seared cultural legacies, enduring for centuries only to disappear in just a few short years. Maine's coastline, home to thriving maritime indus-

coordination of the Portland-based Coastal Enterprises Inc. with numerous local organizations to raise the money and facilitate the property's purchase.

"The piece of land was really quite small," he said, "but the significance of the land was enormous," Donnelly said.

The purchase was made neces-



Gover
ber, J
water
Marin
cause
he sa
to pro
water
ture t
a tim
speal
tion
ness
ment
that
from
acce
earn
"V
leng
ing o
gath
D
cultu
ues, l
way
tran
Grea
plan
level
retai
said.
P
key
wate
D
Ruth
in 19
abou
1946
the
shor
peop
"

HARVESTOR
RAINGEAR by GRUNDENS

Spend a bit of time
away from home?



Fishermen's Voice

Governor John Baldacci at a December, 17, 2003 forum on working waterfront access at the Darling Marine Center. After pointing out causes for change on the waterfront, he said, "It's critical that we're able to protect and enhance the working waterfront as a crucial infrastructure to Maine's marine industries in a time of dramatic change."

speakers who called for protection of water-dependent businesses from escalating development pressures, and for ensuring that people who make a living from the sea have reasonable access to carry out their work and earn their livelihoods.

"We're here to face the challenge of protecting and preserving our heritage," Damon told the gathering.

Damon and others spoke of a cultural divide and changing values, both in terms of money and a way of life, that is central to the transformation of the waterfront. Greater awareness and better planning is needed at the local level to ensure the waterfront retains a diversity of uses, many said.

Public access, said Damon, is key to maintaining a working waterfront.

Damon cited Maine author Ruth Moore, born on Gotts Island in 1903 and a novelist who wrote about island and coastal life. Her 1946 novel, *Spoon Handle*, tells the story of a man who buys

Damon cited Maine author Ruth Moore, born on Gotts Island in 1903 and a novelist who wrote about island and coastal life. Her 1946 novel, *Spoon Handle*, tells the story of a man who buys shore lots, then resells them to people from away.

“The message is, if we don’t realize what we have, and protect it, we’ll lose it,” Damon said. “If we do not protect our culture and our heritage, surely we will lose it. And if we do lose it, all of Maine will be the poorer as a result.”

Governor John Baldacci cited the main issues as changing land use, rising property values and, as a result, taxes; the evolving fishing industry; growing demands for access from the recreational and tourist industries. Baldacci noted that balancing the needs of all users is difficult but crucial.

“It’s critical that we’re able to protect and enhance the working waterfront as a crucial infrastructure to Maine’s marine industries in a time of dramatic change,” Baldacci said. “We all have an interest in protecting

the natural beauty of the waterfront and to maintain access for those who depend on it for their livelihoods.”

Shaping Maine's Heritage

In 2001, Maine's working piers and wharves made it possible for 269 million pounds of seafood to generate \$740 million dollars. Water-dependent marine trades such as boat builders, boat yards and marinas employ nearly 3,000 people, generating \$85 million in wages.

Fishermen must have access to the water in order to unload their catch, buy ice and fuel, repair gear and access their boats. Boat yards, boat builders and marinas also need access.

“Although the price of property can't be controlled the loss of public access can be addressed.”

— Chris Spruce, Sunrise County Economic Council in Machias

Over the past 400 years, marine industries have been the central force shaping Maine's economy and heritage. Yet along the coast, skyrocketing land values are leading to a turnover in working waterfront to second-home ownership. Today, less than 1 percent, or about 25 miles, of Maine's 7,000-mile coast is devoted to working waterfront.

Communities are recognizing the problem and coming up with new strategies to ensure they retain some form of access.

Chris Spruce of the Sunrise County Economic Council in Machias — which has recently been involved in helping several towns, including Milbridge, Jonesboro and Gouldsboro, to finance and redevelop their dilapidated piers and identify points of public access — cited an ad in a Washington County newspaper which called for purchasers for a dozen properties. All but one of the buyers are from outside Maine, he said.

public access — cited an ad in a Washington County newspaper which called for purchasers for a dozen properties. All but one of the buyers are from outside Maine, he said.

While no one could say there's anything wrong with wanting a life in Maine, Spruce said, the side effect of land sell-offs is rising valuations and the privatization of the shore.

“What do we do to stem the tide of conversion of private property or commercial property?” Spruce asked. “How do we address this threat?”

Although the price of property can't be controlled, Spruce said, the loss of public access can be addressed.

The problem of access is far more acute in southern and mid-coast Maine than Down East, he noted.

Belfast harbormaster Katherine Messier, of the State Harbor Masters Association, called for greater community input to balance how harbors should be run.

Communities, she said, need to understand the issues and set priorities; input can be formalized with the help of harbor committees and through harbor management plans, she said.

"A lot of people have different ideas about how harbors should be used," she said, adding that fishing and recreational use are equally important.

"It's hard to know what you want out of your harbor in the future," Messier said, "and you don't want to say you don't want any development, but at the same time, you want to make it a place that you want."

Terry Sortwell, a real estate broker for 20 years in Camden with LandVest, Inc., said local zoning ordinances are critical for defining how shore lots should be used. Many ordinances, he noted, now allow residential use in maritime commercial zones. Changes in the ordinance can curtail residential conversion, he said. "As each town's comprehensive plan is written or re-written," Sortwell said, "there's every reason to believe these marine-related zones can be sustained or even expanded."

Also key, said Sortwell, is education the public about the working waterfront, its history and needs.

"It appears to me that the use of working waterfront is at a historic low, despite the health of the lobster fishery," Sortwell said. "But the future holds many potential opportunities." Realizing that future and maintaining and expanding working waterfront can be accomplished only through public awareness and cooperation.

People Move to Maine

People move to the Maine coast, Sortwell said, for its clean water, beautiful views, great boating, and peace and privacy. Some grew up in Maine, moved away and, now returning, have

an appreciation for the real coast. For others, he said, it's a learning experience.

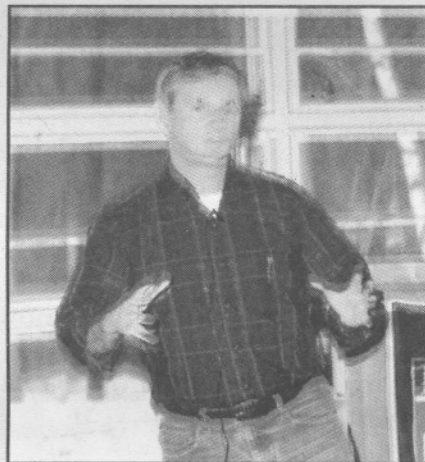
"The state of Maine lives at the edge of a megalopolis that extends from Washington and Baltimore, through Portsmouth,

New Hampshire, and is creeping up north," Sortwell said. The demographic bulge shows baby boomers with money retiring to North Carolina, Maine, British

See *TIME TO ACT* on page 12

Fishermen Form Co-op and Buy Waterfrontage

by Laurie Schreiber



Fishermen's Voice

Dana Faulkingham, president Northend Lobster Co-op, Westport Island, Westport, Maine. Faulkingham and 15 other fishermen got together and bought land and a wharf to preserve their access to the water. Between April and July, 2002 they put the coop plan together and the property sale two months later.

WESTPORT ISLAND — Grass-roots initiative and determination were all a group of fishermen on Westport Island needed to ensure they would have waterfront access in perpetuity.

"We've always done things the hard way," said Dana Faulkingham, president of the North End Fishermen's Cooperative. "We get our own bait. We've got five different dealers where we sell our product. The tourists love you, but the townspeople look down on you."

Faulkingham owns a waterfront shop where fishermen enjoy hanging out mornings. Down a few doors, a 3.75-acre boatyard was going up for sale, with all the deep-waterfrontage anyone could ever want. The price was \$380,000.

Faulkingham's good friend walked

in and said a group of them ought to buy it.

"I said, 'How do we do this?'" Faulkingham recalls. "He said, 'We form a company.' I said, 'How do we form a company?' He said, 'I don't know — you be president and I'll be vice-president.'"

The two friends tossed the idea around with others, and a group quickly grew, every day, every week.

It was April 2002 and they needed capital to pull it off.

Pretty soon, the guys figured out they needed to form a group of some sort because they needed to be a business entity in order to borrow money in order to buy the land.

They became a co-op in July. They hired a business attorney, elected directors, wrote up a business plan to show how they would make enough money for payments on the property.

"On July 19, 2002, we bought our first lobsters as a co-op," Faulkingham said. "It took us from April to July to get set up."

They made an offer on the property and five fishermen pulled out their own checkbooks to put down the deposit.

"The owner of the property wanted us to have it," he said.

The sale went through on Sept. 19.

"The future for us, I think, looks very bright," he said. "We wanted to be able to know, for the young guys and for everyone coming in, that they had a place to fish from and a place to park."

The property includes a boat shop, TraveLift, finger piers, floats and ramps. It provides a space for folks to park their boats, haul them out for maintenance and repairs. Ideas are afloat for further use of the facilities. The co-op now has 21 members.

"We think of ourselves as a success story," he said. "It's a terrific piece of property." ↓

TIME TO ACT from page 11

Columbia, and the like. The rising price of property, as a result is a reflection of that demographic — folks want to buy, sellers want to get the best price.

“It’s very important for us to perpetuate a way of life and for the public to understand why we need this.”

— *Jim Barstow, Monhegan Boat Line*

For folks like Damon, the state senator who grew up in Northeast Harbor, it is that changing demographic that is slowly eroding a way of life.

Northeast Harbor was once home to fishermen and fishing boats and, as a kid, Damon said, he thought it would never change. Today, the town is primarily a premier yachting destination, home to hundreds of millions of dollars worth of boats.

“They all paid to be there, but at what expense to the community?” Damon asked.

The town has emptied of the businesses necessary to day-to-day life, he said, storefronts taken up now by tourist shops.

“People say they and their businesses” — marinas, restaurants, hotels — “are the new working waterfront,” Damon said. “To me, that concept is unsettling. I can’t lump them into

a definition of working waterfront. Maybe I should call my definition struggling-to-survive waterfront.”

“It’s very important for us to perpetuate a way of life and for the public to understand why we need this,” said Jim Barstow of the Monhegan Boat Line, whose family has plied Maine’s marine trades since 1634.

“The question everybody in the state of Maine has got to ask themselves,” said Dana Rice, owner of D.B. Fisheries in Birch Harbor, “is how important is it economically to keep these industries going, whether it’s ground-fishing or lobstering or whatever? And if you’re not involved in the process for 20 years, you’re probably going to say it’s not that important.”

“The time to act is now,” Spruce said.

For more information about the coalition, contact:

Natalie Springuel
Maine Sea Grant
288-5015, ext. 298
nspringuel@ecology.coa.edu

Robert Snyder
Island Institute
594-9209, ext. 142
rsnyder@islandinstitute.org

Herb Sears
Gulf of Maine Foundation
(603) 773-0153
hssears@msn.com

Jim Connors
Maine Coastal Program
jim.connors@state.me.us ↴

Toolbox for Retaining Access

The Maine Working Waterfront Coalition has come up with a number of "tools" that will help hammer out waterfront policy and nail access. These include:

- Current use taxation, controversial but useful for specific situations such as water-dependent businesses;
- Expansion of the state's circuit breaker program;
- Deferred property taxation, which the state has now to address high-tax situations;
- Purchasing development rights;
- Obtaining access easements;
- Public investment in municipal access;
- Private investment in piers and wharves;
- Strong local ordinances and policies;
- Establishing tax increment finance districts.

Contacts for working waterfront access information:

Coastal Enterprises, Inc., 772-5356, mes@ceimaine.org

Robert Snyder, Island Institute, 594-9209 x 142, rsnyder@islandinstitute.org.