



York Land Trust

A strong partnership between local fishermen and the York Land Trust, along with support from the York Harbor Board, the Island Foundation, and Coastal Enterprises, Inc, enabled the community to preserve a dock critical to the future of the town's working fishermen.

Conserving Working Lands along the Coast

“The York project drew that community together and demonstrated what unlikely allies can achieve when they join forces. Now, similar partnerships between conservation and the fishing community are springing up elsewhere – and none too soon, given the perilous future of working waterfronts.”

– Hugh Cowperthwaite,
Maine Working Waterfront
Coalition

Communities that want to preserve shorefront access for commercial fishermen and other traditional maritime uses can explore the acquisition of easements that restrict future waterfront uses.

Working waterfronts cover only 25 miles along Maine's 5,300-mile coastline yet they supply the

lifeblood of many communities, enriching the regional economy and sustaining a valued way of life. Commercial fishing and marine trades contribute more than \$740 million annually to Maine's economy and employ about 39,000 people.

Growing development pressures and rising property taxes make it hard for fishermen and water-dependent businesses to retain the shorefront sites they have traditionally used. In York, a few individuals devised an innovative solution to this dilemma in 2003 when the York Land Trust collaborated with local fishermen to purchase a conservation easement on the Sewall's Bridge dock, enabling two fishermen to acquire the land and offer docking rights to the town's fishing fleet. This pioneering project was seen as a model and helped lay some of the groundwork for the Legislature to dedicate some "Land for Maine's Future" funds to keeping working waterfronts accessible.



Rich Knox



“The purchase of the Sewall’s Bridge Dock is a shining example of what needs to be done along the whole coast of Maine.”

– Patten White, CEO,
Maine Lobsterman’s Association

“Working waterfront operations are a part of the fabric of our community. They are part of how we identify ourselves and what we love about this place.”

– Doreen MacGillis, York Land Trust

Development pressures are growing along Maine’s shoreline: state planners predict that most of the coast will qualify as “suburban” by 2050.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- ✓ **Contact the Maine Coastal Program’s Working Waterfront Initiative** (<http://www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/wwi/contact.php>, Jim.Connors@maine.gov or 207-287-8938) to learn more about how communities can take action.
- ✓ **Define the specific waterfront challenges your community is facing** and get input from diverse harbor users. Consider what combination of approaches (e.g., new ordinances, capital improvements, improved harbor management, and/or easement acquisitions) might work best. Develop a work plan and funding strategy.
- ✓ **Identify and inventory your community’s existing working waterfront locations.** Contact the Island Institute (www.islandinstitute.org) for information about their recent coastwide mapping inventory.
- ✓ **Integrate working waterfront issues into your community’s local comprehensive planning process.** Join your community’s harbor committee (or form one if your municipality lacks one).
- ✓ **Contact your local legislative representative** to let them know how important the working waterfront is to your community.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Maine Coastal Program’s Working Waterfronts Initiative (www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/wwi/index.php)
- *The Working Waterfront* newspaper (<http://www.workingwaterfront.com/>)
- Maine’s Working Waterfront Coalition (<http://www.islandinstitute.org/programs.asp?section=workingwaterfront>)
- *The Right Tack: Charting Your Harbor’s Future*. Maine Coastal Program, Augusta, ME, 1995. Available free upon request (207-236-1486).
- Maine Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program (www.wwapp.org)
- Coastal Enterprises Inc. Working Waterfront Loan Fund (www.ceimaine.org/content/view/35/76/)

More information about this project and the Maine Coast Protection Initiative can be found at www.protectcoastmaine.org.

