



P R E S S R E L E A S E

For immediate release--- April 2, 2010

For more information contact:

George Lapointe

Maine Department of Marine Resources

624-6553

george.lapointe@maine.gov

Jim Connors

State Planning Office

287-8938

jim.connors@maine.gov

Two Historic and Significant Fishing Properties Protected in Friendship Harbor

Protective covenants were purchased on two important commercial fishing properties in Friendship, Maine by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) under the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program (WWAPP). In cooperation with the Land for Maine's Future Program, the Department preserved in perpetuity the wharves and associated lands at the Friendship Lobster Realty Co-op and the Fishermen's Heritage Lobster Realty Co-op.

In this coastal town of about 1,300 residents, nearly a fifth of the population holds fish or shellfish licenses, confirming the historic interdependency of the surrounding homes with the sea. By selling a protective working waterfront covenant to the state, each Co-op will assure that the right to continue fishing from these wharves will remain for future residents many of whom comprise successive generations of fishing families.

Over 110 years ago the wharf that is now the Friendship Lobster Realty Co-op was extended into deeper water to allow the Rockland to Portland coastal steamboats to make an exclusive stop in the harbor. It became the single most important resource for the community, landing supplies and summer visitors for the newly built inns and hotels, and shipping out the local products to distant markets. Lobster smacks brought lobsters and clams to the wharf for sale. The wharf played a vital role for the community as a transport hub, a fish and shellfish buying station, and as a gathering spot for locally cooked restaurant meals throughout the 20th century.

In 1997, the members of the Friendship Lobster Realty Co-op bought the property and operated the wharf solely as seafood buying station. The 0.6 acre property has 110 feet of deepwater frontage, a wharf measuring over 14,000 square feet much of which is covered by buildings, and serves about 40 lobster boats that support 70 fishing families. Co-op members plan to invest their \$232,500 award by liquidating the property mortgage, purchasing a nearby lot for additional gear storage and parking, and doing deferred replacement and maintenance on the infrastructure. Co-op President Jim Wotton said, *"We appreciate the opportunity that this WWAPP award gives us. It allows us, at this time, to ensure that the property will always remain "working waterfront" and continue to be a valuable asset to the people in our community. The receipt of this award will allow us to pay off our dept and also do some needed repair and maintenance to our property & buildings. The assistance of Dick Clime at the WWAPP team who*

guided us through this process was invaluable. It was a long journey and we thank everyone who helped it become a success."

The wharf owned by the Fishermen's Heritage Lobster Realty Co-op is also more than 100 years old and was used by fishermen from Friendship Long Island to land lobsters on the mainland. Forefathers of the current Co-op members lived and fished on the island, building pounds to hold their lobsters for sale at better prices. The 0.61 acre property with about 100 feet of deepwater frontage has a 2,880 square foot wharf, multiple buildings and floats, and supports 40 boats and about 60 fishing families.

Members of the Fishermen's Heritage Co-op plan to spend the majority of the \$182,000 award on razing and replacing the 100+ year old bait building that has limited utility. At the same time, the wharf underlying this building needs extensive repairs. The new bait storage building will be fully refrigerated and permit complete forklift access on a single level, something the old building lacks. *"Replacing the cooler with a larger more efficient building will add cold storage space to the wharf. With the limited days herring can be landed this will allow co-op fishermen to have bait storage available for several days. Often bait may only be delivered once a week. The building now sets partially on the wharf with that area in need of replacement. This award will position the co-op to be sustainable for years to come."* says President Gilbert Simmons.

Both Co-ops expressed their appreciation to the Department of Marine Resources, the Land for Maine's Future Program and Coastal Enterprises, Inc. which jointly administer the WWAPP, for support of this project. Ideally situated to take advantage of the rich lobstering grounds of Knox County which lands more lobsters than the states of Massachusetts and New Hampshire combined, these properties are the two most important wharves in arguably one of the top five fishing harbors in the state. Recognizing the critical importance of strategically significant working waterfront properties to Maine's fishing sector, DMR Commissioner George Lapointe stated, *"It's exciting to see two more properties enrolled in the WWAPP. The fishing tradition runs deep in Friendship harbor and these two Co-op's stepping up to preserve their heritage is an accomplishment that should be recognized and applauded"*.

With money from two previous working waterfront bonds, a total of nineteen commercial fishing access properties from Lubec to York have been allocated funds for protection. Together these properties serve over 700 boats and 1,000 fishing families along the coastline. Maine voters will have an opportunity to approve an additional \$2 million for the WWAPP in November as part of a larger Land for Maine's Future bond package. Passage of this bond will continue the protection efforts for more of the estimated 100 strategically significant fishing access properties that are threatened by residential and recreational development. Earlier studies indicated that only about 20 miles of commercial working waterfront remain within the approximate 5,300 miles of Maine's rugged coastline. Loss of the commercial infrastructure threatens communities that depend on the sea for their livelihoods. For additional information on the WWAPP visit the website, www.wwapp.org.

The WWAPP and the Working Waterfront Tax Law have put Maine on the map as leaders in the nation for preserving and protecting working waterfronts. Maine will be hosting a national conference titled "Working Waterways and Waterfronts National Symposium on Water Access" in September 2010 in Portland. The WWAPP and other programs and tools in use around the nation will be highlighted at the conference. For more information please visit the website www.wateraccessus.com.