



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

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## **Midcoast Co-op Preserves Fishing Access for the Bremen Community**

From the multiple piers of the Bremen Lobster Co-op, the view of the Hockomock Channel between Muscongus Bay and the Medomak River is nearly obscured by the great rotting hull of the Cora Cressey, a former four-masted sailing schooner that was built in a shipyard close-by. In 1938 the ship was towed to this spot within 50 yards of the commercial fishing property to act as a breakwater to allow safer berthing of boats as they rested against the piers to unload their catch. Little evidence of these early twentieth century tall ships remains; the surviving frames are disappearing into the mud of numerous Maine coves.

But Bremen Co-op members are determined that their commercial fishing property does not disappear like the Cora Cressey and they have done something special to protect it in perpetuity. The Co-op recently received an award of \$300,000 from the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program (WWAPP) in exchange for a restrictive covenant that severely limits any future residential or recreational uses on their 13 acre parcel on Keene Neck in Bremen and forever protects the site for fishermen's use.

With 685 feet of prime shorefront, two large piers, two tidal lobster pounds, and a dozen buildings of all sizes for refrigeration, storage, office space, and workshops, the Co-op knows that despite its historical use for fishing access for more than 80 years, the property could be transformed into home lots and a berth for recreational boats like many of Maine's former working harbors.

According to Eugene Carter, the Co-op President, "With the economic conditions working against lobstermen lately, the fellows here thought that protecting the waterfront for fishermen, likely our children and grandchildren, made sense. We plan to use the money from the sale of the covenant to pay for overdue pier improvements and for installation of a chilled flowing seawater system that can store up to twenty thousand pounds of lobsters. Fishermen have to be smarter about selling the better lobsters for a higher price, and this award will allow us to do that."

Carter expressed appreciation to the Department of Marine Resources and to the Land for Maine's Future Program, which jointly administer the WWAPP, for support of this project. He

also acknowledged the assistance from neighbor Dan Goldenson and Dick Clime from Coastal Enterprises Inc., both of whom were instrumental in helping the Co-op apply for the funds and make its way through the program requirements.

As detailed in studies by Coastal Enterprises Inc. and the Island Institute, the disappearance of important commercial fishing access properties along the entire coast threatens fishermen's livelihoods and the cohesiveness of Maine's seafaring communities. Clime reports, "When the access of all 19 properties currently enrolled in the program is secured, the cumulative impact will be that 40 acres of prime commercial waterfront access along a mile of the Maine coast will be preserved."

George Lapointe, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and Chair of Land for Maine's Future Board pointed out that small coastal communities like Bremen are highly dependent on family income from working waterfronts, "In today's economic climate it is becoming increasingly challenging for commercial waterfront property owners to maintain a strong presence on the coast. With the price of lobster still very low and the unpredictable costs of fuel and bait, many businesses are finding that they need to diversify their income and remain flexible with the hope of better days ahead".

Although the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program has committed to protect a total of 19 commercial fishing properties from Lubec to York, the future of the program rests on passage of a new bond for the Land for Maine's Future Program which includes funds for working waterfront protection. There will be a Natural Resource bond referendum question totaling \$10 million (\$2 million dedicated to the WWAPP program) that will be decided by Maine voters at the ballot box in November 2010. Increasing interest in the program from working waterfront property owners supports estimates that there are approximately 100 commercial fishing properties in the state that remain unprotected and are critically important to much of coastal Maine's reliance on fishing for economic prosperity.

For additional information on the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program visit the website, [www.wwapp.org](http://www.wwapp.org)

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