



Press Release

March 11, 2009

For immediate release

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Working Waterfront Properties Protected in Three Coastal Communities

Three new working waterfront projects were approved by the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Board at their meeting in Augusta on March 10. In a joint statement, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF) announced that three separate awards totaling \$707,500 were made to the Vinalhaven Fishermen's Co-op in Vinalhaven, the Friendship Lobster and Realty Co-op in Friendship, and the Town of Scarborough for the Pine Point Municipal Pier to preserve commercial fisheries use of these properties. These funds from the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program (WWAPP) will purchase a "working waterfront covenant" on each property that will restrict any future development of the land that conflicts with fisheries uses. DMR Commissioner George Lapointe, who is also Chairman of the LMF Board, pointed out that when commercial fisheries properties are transferred to residential or other forms of commercial development they are lost forever as access points for Maine's commercial fishermen. According to Commissioner Lapointe, "DMR is very proud that this Pilot Program has been so successful in reaching exactly those types of properties which will make the greatest contributions to Maine's fishing future. Individually and collectively, the projects approved yesterday will have tremendous impact for years to come".

In its decision the LMF Board recognized that these properties are important to the state's economy and to the welfare of their host towns. Together these three fishing facilities serve 122 commercial lobster boats and their crews as well as 42 clam harvesters and their skiffs. About 240 fishing families rely on these access points for their livelihood.

The Friendship Lobster and Realty Co-op founded in 1996 occupies the site formerly known as Wallace's Shellfish which has seen commercial activity since the 1800's when fishermen and coastal steamers used it as the primary landing for people, products, and supplies in the town. The property consists of 0.6 acre with 110 feet of shore frontage on Friendship Harbor, a large wharf with over 22,000 square feet of working area, berthing space for multiple boats, ample parking, fuel and bait storage. With the award, the Co-op members plan to purchase an adjacent 0.4 acre parcel for gear storage, pay down their debt, and renovate their wharf to improve their competitive position and encourage new membership. Jim Wotton, Co-op President, recognized

the value of the Working Waterfront Access award to the members, “Friendship Lobster Co-op would like to thank everyone on the Land for Maine's Future Board for considering our application. We look forward to continuing our relationship with them as we progress through the rest of the WWAPP process. During these tough economic times we are excited to be able to improve and maintain our facility while ensuring a piece of working waterfront will remain in our community for generations to come!”

Playing a critical role in Carver’s Harbor to land nearly a third of the island’s catch, the Vinalhaven Fishermen’s Co-op contributes to a significant portion of the community’s income as more than 50% of the island’s inhabitants earn their living through the fisheries. The lands preserved through covenant protection include a combined 1.0 acres of shoreside facilities and back lot storage. It includes 320 feet of deep water frontage with all tide access and two pier structures that accommodate the offloading of up to 60 boats during the season. With the increasing difficulty of acquiring a regular and dependable supply of lobster bait, the Co-op has decided to invest its award monies to construct a large building for frozen and refrigerated storage of bait that promises to smooth out supply problems. Co-op President, Ted Lazaro commented, “The program is great for us. The purpose, to ensure that shorefront facilities remain available for commercial fishermen, is completely consistent with the mission of our Co-op. In addition, the funds from the sale of the covenant will allow us to build a bait cooler which we really need, but would not have done given the uncertainty of the economy and its effect on lobster prices”.

Dave Corbeau, Scarborough Marine Resources Officer, has been working to improve the municipal dock on Pine Point for 6 years. The 25 lobstermen that use the facility are limited to 3 hours a day to load and offload their equipment and catch. Over 40 clam harvesters and the recreational public also share the launch ramps and pier. As a result, users are backed up daily and the fishermen’s incomes are severely curtailed by the lack of an adequate pier facility. An enlarged pier with three times the current area, all tide access, and direct vehicular loading by mechanical hoists is planned for construction next fall utilizing \$400,000 of town money in addition to a grant from the Maine Department of Transportation’s Small Harbor Improvement Program and the money from the sale of the Working Waterfront covenant. With the assistance of Thomas Hall, Town Manager to apply for the WWAPP award, Officer Corbeau is happy that the effort is paying off, “I saw what the fishermen had to work with ...limiting their fishing effort and catch. I’m really pleased that this award will permit the town to complete construction of the new pier and give fishermen 24 hour access to the water”.

Funding for the WWAPP comes from bond issues approved by Maine voters in 2005 and 2007 providing \$5 million to preserve commercial fishing access to the coast of Maine. To date the program has provided \$3.6 M in state bond funds to secure commercial fishing access over 14 properties with a combined fair market value of \$12.9 M that handle \$38 million in annual landings, and support over 700 fishing families.

With funds still available, WWAPP coordinators Dick Clime and Hugh Cowperthwaite urge fishermen, commercial fisheries property owners, coastal municipalities and conservation groups to consider protecting important commercial fisheries (including clamming and aquaculture) access properties in their communities. Applications for the WWAPP are accepted on a rolling basis as long as funding is available. To learn more call (207) 772-5356 and ask for the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program or go online at www.wwapp.org.