



Press Release

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For immediate release

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Working Waterfront Properties Protected in Bremen and Owls Head

Two new working waterfront projects were approved by the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Board at their meeting in Augusta on November 18. In a joint statement, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF) announced that two separate awards totaling \$526,250 were made to the Bremen Lobster Realty Co-op in Bremen, and the Ship to Shore Lobster Co. in Owls Head, 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, "The WWAPP continues to attract high quality projects that make a significant contribution to preserving Maine's commercial fishing infrastructure. Not only will these funds secure these properties in perpetuity, but they will also allow the owners to continue to enhance the utility of their properties. These are important investments in Maine's fishing future", he said.

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 two fishing facilities serve 54 commercial boats and their crews. Over 100 fishing families rely on these access points for their livelihood.

The Bremen Property began operating as a lobster pound and buying station nearly 80 years ago. The Bremen Co-op was formed in 1995 when the principal lobstermen in the area formed a co-op to purchase the land and waterfront structures that occupy approximately 13 acres with 685 feet of prime ocean frontage. The Co-op members intend to use the award to repair and maintain their lobster pounds and remove the decaying hull of the Cora Cressy, a large wooden schooner that was beached in 1938 and now blocks effective access to the Co-op's piers. In addition the Co-op is considering the installation of chilled seawater tanks in its shore side buildings as a way

to store and hold lobsters ready for market. A spokesman for the Co-op stated, “The Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program provides a great opportunity for the Bremen Lobster Co-op to install substantial improvements to its facilities that will lead to increased income and productivity in the future. We are most grateful to the State of Maine for its generous assistance at a time when commercial fishing is under numerous pressures.”

Although smaller in acreage, the Owls Head property contains a large wharf that has over 14,200 square feet in surface area and provides the only public access for boating in the town (via a right of way across the pier) to the Owls Head Harbor. Current owners, Rodney and Anna Mason, intend to increase the number of boats which now land seafood products there and expand their lobster purchasing to include other wholesale sea foods throughout the fishing season. As time and money permit, the Masons would like to open a retail seafood stand on the wharf. For now, they are delighted with the working waterfront award, “Anna and I are very pleased with the Grant approval. Having just bought the property last month, we can honestly say the last four weeks have been the most discouraging weeks of our lives, and the approval we received today is incredible. Aside from the industry conditions, we have received continuous support from the community and our employees. The fishermen have been absolutely wonderful both with physical and emotional support. As a group, and with the support of this grant, there is huge potential. Eat lobster!”

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 \$2.9M in state bond funds to secure commercial fishing access over 11 properties with a combined fair market value of \$10M that handle \$26 million in annual landings, and support 500 fishing families.

With significant 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.