

Maine Coastline

News from the Maine Coastal Program

Fall 2008



Quality of Place

People have long considered Maine a special place (“the way life should be,” as the slogan boasts), and in recent decades this notion has been accompanied by increasing concern about losing what distinguishes Maine from much of the rest of America. Lately the term “quality of place” has emerged as a key concept linking Maine’s unique qualities—its abundant natural landscapes and beauty, its “small town” character, its relative freedom from problems besetting mainstream urban America—with its economic future. By asserting that the key to creating sustainable prosperity in Maine lies in preserving, restoring, or enhancing all the things that make Maine special, the “quality of place” concept challenges the conventional understanding that economic and environmental concerns are in opposition to each other, “jobs versus the environment.” Instead, it’s “jobs because of the environment.”

The current focus on “quality of place”—indeed the term itself—can be traced to the Brookings Institute Report, *Charting Maine’s Future*, issued in 2006 (<http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2006/10cities.aspx>). That report emphasized the economic value of Maine’s scenic, recreational, and cultural assets, and warned that “widespread suburbanization and sprawl are driving up costs and may well be damaging the state’s top calling card—its scenic beauty, the feel of its towns, its quality of place.”

Governor Baldacci initially responded to the Brookings report by forming a Governor’s Council on Maine’s Quality of Place (<http://maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>) to examine Maine’s economic and environmental challenges and recommend actions. The first Quality of Place Council completed its work in May 2008, when the Governor formed a permanent Council to refine and implement a quality of place investment strategy. The first council’s report, “People, Place, and Prosperity,” asserts that Maine’s quality of place is its primary economic asset, because “in the new economy, the greatest competition

worldwide is for people. People looking for a place to retire, or to visit awhile. People with energy and skills, who can start and sustain businesses in the new innovative sectors that Maine has targeted for future growth.”

State Planning Office Director Martha Freeman explains further: “We know that quality of place attracts visitors, skilled workers, and entrepreneurs. We believe too that the economic opportunity it provides will help keep Maine’s young people in Maine.”

“Preserving our place-based assets is only the first step to creating new job opportunities,” says Professor Dick Barringer of USM’s Muskie School of Public Service and another member of the permanent Council. “We must build upon these strengths by enhancing them, by combining them in new and productive ways, and by marketing them effectively.”

This edition of *Maine Coastline* features two examples of how the Maine Coastal Program works to enhance and protect quality of place. As showcased on page 4, MCP provided much of the support needed to develop a manual to help local town planning boards and other municipal decision-makers do

a better, more consistent job of considering scenic values in their decisions (see “Standards for Protecting Local Resources” on page 4). Another, related effort involves assisting the Sagadahoc Region Rural Resource Initiative (SRRRI), a partnership among regional stakeholders in 12 communities working together to preserve the rural character and resources of the region (see “Sagadahoc Regional Rural Resource Initiative” on page 5 for more details).

Enhancing and protecting Maine’s quality of place is an ongoing process, of course, with new challenges and new opportunities constantly arising—the Coastal Program will continue to work toward this key goal.

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Director's Column

September 2008

Maine's economy has always been linked to the natural environment. "Nature" in Maine has been both a resource base for extractive industries (lumber and paper from trees, granite stones and blocks from quarries, seafood from the ocean) as well as home to a vibrant tourism industry, that markets Maine's scenery and natural amenities.

Our traditional view of Maine's natural assets is changing in a big way, as the Brookings report from 2006 revealed, and the report issued last year by the Governor's Council on Quality of Place affirms. Maine's prosperity is inextricably linked to its environment—it's no longer "jobs versus the environment" but "jobs because of the environment."

Now when people refer to "quality of place," it's about more than just Maine's remarkable scenery, or rich flora and fauna. It also means our abundant recreational opportunities, the fact that most people in Maine can easily go hiking, fishing, camping, swimming, or any number of outdoor activities not far from home. And it means the unique flavor and cultural amenities of our towns and cities, the built environment as well as the natural. In short, it means everything that makes Maine desirable as a place to live, everything that draws people to come here, keeps those who grow up here from leaving and lures people who have left to come back.

The Maine Coastal Program works to preserve and enhance quality of place. In fact, it's a core part of our mission: "to enhance coastal resources and sustain the maritime economy." While often thought of as a "balancing" of two objectives existing in tension with each other, how much more productive it is to think of these as complementary—you cannot do one without the other.

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Director, Maine Coastal Program

Maine Coastline

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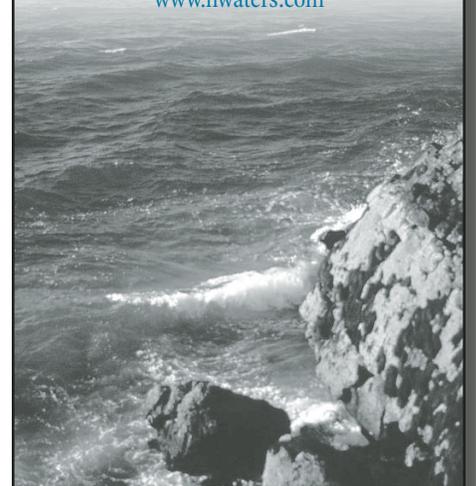
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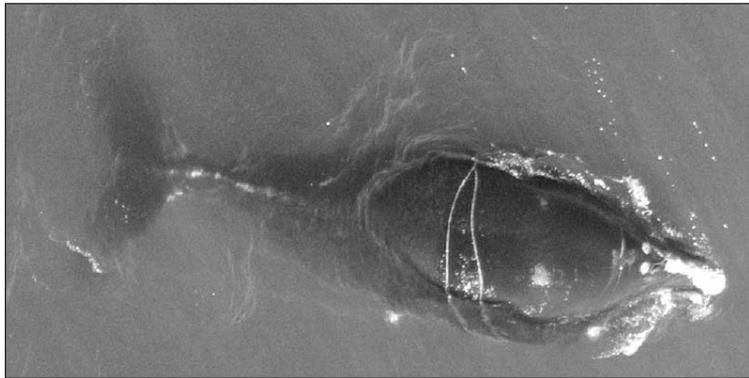
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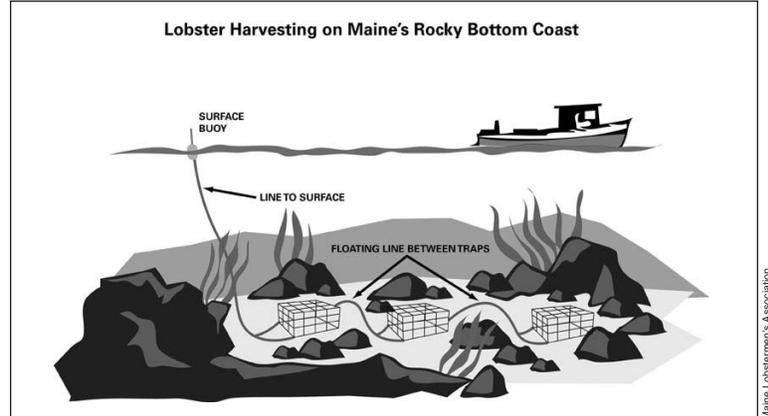
Floating Rope Ban Update

On June 6, 2008, the National Marine Fisheries Service announced it was considering a 6-month delay in implementing new regulations requiring all trap/pot fishermen along the east coast to use only sinking groundline, partly in response to a request by the Maine Lobstermen's Association (and the efforts of Maine Senators Snowe and Collins). The proposed regulations, part of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, are intended to prevent endangered right whales from entangling themselves in fishing gear. They have created deep anxiety throughout Maine's lobster fleet. Fishermen, already pressed with skyrocketing fuel costs, fear the sinking rope requirement would burden them further with thousands of dollars in expenses in new gear and increased maintenance.

High anxiety was much evident at the Maine Fisherman's Forum in Rockport last March, where the Maine Lobstermen's Association held their annual meeting. Many were concerned that the sinking rope would quickly chafe and wear on the rocky bottom of much of Maine's coast, requiring fishermen to replace it more often while also leaving more "ghost traps" (traps left on the bottom when the line secured to the trap breaks). The rule would not apply to inshore areas, where right whales are seldom seen—although many Maine lobstermen have never seen a right whale offshore, either, and feel the threat posed by lobster gear in this area is minimal. Lobstermen also feel that sinking groundline would make hauling more dangerous because the rope would more frequently hang up on the rocky bottom.



The new rope rule is intended to prevent entanglements by the endangered right whale. The photo above depicts whale #3346, also known as "Kingfisher." He was a male, just over a year old, and was first reported as entangled off St. Augustine, Florida on March 17, 2004. Several disentanglement attempts were made and some gear was retrieved. The gear was later identified as inshore lobster gear, and the owner was contacted. The gear had been set approximately 2 nautical miles from South Harpswell, Maine. The most recent sighting of this whale was on May 25, 2008, and some gear was still wrapped around the right pectoral flipper.



This illustration shows the traditional configuration of lobstering gear—a string (or "trawl") of traps connected together by groundlines with one endlines to a buoy on the surface. The new rule would require all groundlines to have a specific gravity higher than seawater, which would cause them to lay on the bottom rather than floating. Proponents of the new rule argue this would prevent whales from becoming entangled in groundlines; lobstermen counter that the groundlines would quickly wear out on the craggy bottom and would snag more easily when hauled, creating a safety hazard.

The Maine Department of Marine Resources proposed an alternative to the sinking rope rule with an alternative plan to reduce the number of endlines (lines which rise vertically in the water to a buoy on the surface, and which may pose the greatest risk to whales) while allowing floating groundlines to be used. According to DMR's Terry Stockwell, who co-authored the proposal, the plan was presented as a compromise that would help protect whales while also protecting the livelihoods of Maine lobstermen. This plan would apply within state waters (3 miles from shore) that occur within the National Marine Fisheries Service's floating-rope ban area, the so-called "sliver areas."

At a July 16 meeting in Portland convened by NMFS, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction team reviewed DMR's proposal to allow floating groundlines to be used in the state sliver waters (between the exemption and federal line) of Lobster Zones A-D. To offset any additional risk to large whales the DMR proposed a ban on single traps, a maximum groundline length and an endlines cap specific to this area. Much of the discussion was focused on the data used to analyze the conservation benefits of the proposal, and the environmental and scientific community members of the subgroup advocated for the development of another more holistic proposal that addresses all of Maine's waters and significantly advances the endlines risk reduction goals. DMR is consulting with NMFS to determine next steps.

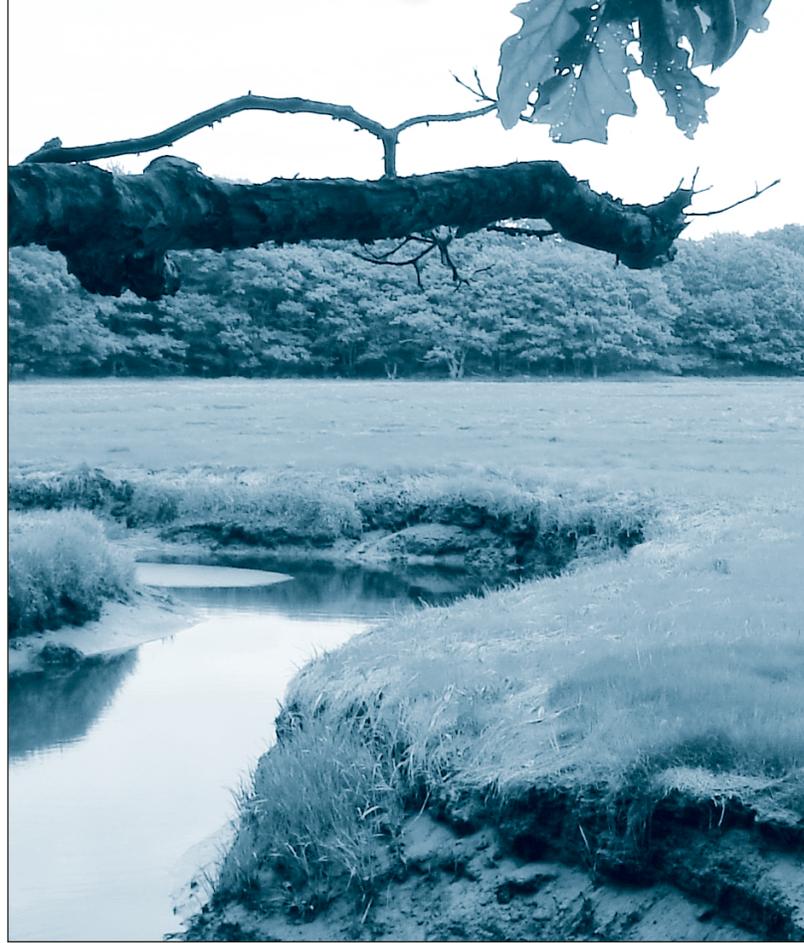
Let's Get Regional: Sagadahoc Region Rural Resource Initiative

One common theme in the discussion of how to preserve Maine's "quality of place," echoed in the Brookings report and by the Governor's Council, is the need for regional thinking and planning. Rather than working in isolation and focusing on their own limited area, towns need to have an eye on "the big picture" and collaborate with their neighboring communities toward shared goals.

The Maine Coastal Program is assisting in just such a project, the Sagadahoc Region Rural Resource Initiative (SRRRI). Initially launched in 2004, SRRRI consists of a group of people from 12 communities: Arrowsic, Bath, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Brunswick, Georgetown, Harpswell, Phippsburg, Richmond, Topsham, West Bath and Woolwich. Over the last four years membership has comprised a broad array of stakeholders: Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Comprehensive Plan Committee members; a town councilor, selectman, municipal staff people; land trust leaders and Nature Conservancy staff; the Bowdoin College Environmental Studies Program as well as state and federal agency representatives.

SRRRI is focused on the relationship between "service center communities"--larger towns where people shop for groceries, make use of the library, or go the doctor's office--and the "rural resource region" that complements these service centers--places where people pick apples, cross country ski, canoe, enjoy the beach, and where vegetables for farmers' markets are grown. According to Katrina Van Dusen, the regional planner who shepherds SRRRI, rural resource regions have received less attention than service centers in the dialogue about "smart growth" but preserving rural resources is critical to sustaining "quality of place." SRRRI focuses on providing town decision makers with data, recommendations, and guidelines, and other useful information to help them better maintain their community's rural qualities.

As Van Dusen explains, the Sagadahoc region's rural areas still have large unfragmented tracts of land where both wildlife and rural enterprises thrive. The SRRRI region includes highly diverse and valuable plant and animal communities, of at least statewide importance. However residential development is quickly moving outward from the Bath, Topsham, Brunswick service centers to where real estate is less expensive. Consequently, farms and open spaces are replaced by residences and roads, putting the ecological, scenic, and rural economy values of the area in jeopardy.



Protecting coastal marshes and riparian uplands is a recommended priority of the

The SRRRI Steering Committee has been working together since 2004 to learn about and implement techniques for preserving rural working landscapes, wildlife habitat and other natural areas. The Committee has sought input from the region's citizens regarding valued natural resources and special places that define their communities. SRRRI has provided training and outreach to citizen volunteers, municipal staff, and elected officials highlighting options for locally-adopted tools to protect natural resources and open spaces. A regional Conservation Blueprint is currently in the works that will include a Guidebook and Executive Summary, paper maps and digital data, for use by local planning boards, code enforcement officers, and other municipal decision makers. The Guidebook will include recommended tools for local adoption focusing on protecting: water resources and shoreland areas; large, unfragmented habitat blocks; connections between those blocks; and rare habitats.

Over the next year the SRRRI Steering Committee will be focusing on creating trail networks and farmland preservation and sharing additional relevant tools among the twelve towns.

"From the large tracts in Bowdoin to the islands off Harpswell, with rivers, peninsulas and Merymeeting Bay in between, our region is ecologically potent, well suited for farming and the harvest of marine resources, and beautiful as well!" says Van Dusen. "We are working to gain a better understanding of how the region's parts fit together, so we can ensure that the rural fabric remains intact for future generations."



the SRRRI Conservation Blueprint.



Swan Island, a State Wildlife Management Area in the Kennebec River, is one of the gems of the region. SRRRI is working to map and promote protection of farmland and large unfragmented habitat blocks on the adjacent mainland as well.

Community-Based Performance Standards

Ask people what's distinctive about Maine and you're likely to hear words like "beautiful," "scenic," or "charming." There's no question that scenery is a key element in the mix of attributes that make up "quality of place" here. And there's also no question that Maine's scenery is increasingly compromised as the result of suburbanization, loss of farmland, unplanned development, or the economic shifts that can impact traditional village centers, just to name a few causes. The pace of these changes has accelerated significantly since the 1990s.

One key part of the solution is for local municipal decision-makers, like code enforcement officers and planning board members, to take scenic resources into account in a consistent, systematic way when making planning decisions about their towns and cities. With support from the Maine Coastal Program, Lincoln County Planner Bob Faunce created a guidebook to help these decision makers do a better job of managing their community's scenic resources. Entitled "Protecting Local Scenic Resources: Community-Based Performance Standards," the 67-page guide offers simple, easy-to-read explanations of why such standards are helpful and provides recommendations with sample language that can be easily adapted and used by each town.

As Faunce points out in the Guide's introduction, private developments are not the only source of concern. "Municipal projects such as road maintenance, ditch widening, clearing of roadside trees, new storage yards and similar activities can significantly impact scenic views and resources," writes Faunce. "These concerns can be addressed if all activities are required to comply with performance standards, which are designed to protect local scenic resources." The Guide then proceeds to outline various standards that may be applicable to a local community's planning needs, and provides boilerplate language that may be used or adapted to comprehensive plans, subdivision and site plan review ordinances, or other municipal codes.

According to Elizabeth Hertz, project manager for the effort at the Maine Coastal Program, the Guide is an excellent tool that helps municipalities exert greater control on the scenic character of their communities. While a set of standards and procedures exists at the state level in the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA), says Hertz, projects often fall outside the bounds of NRPA review, leaving municipalities essentially on their own to figure out how to include scenic resource impacts in their decision-making process. Where should scenic assessment be fit into local planning processes, and how should scenic assessment be undertaken? These are the key questions addressed by the Guide.

A digital version of the guide can be downloaded at <http://maine.gov/spo/coastal/docs/protectinglocalscenicresources.pdf>; for a paper version contact Lorraine Lessard (Lorraine.Lessard@maine.gov; 207-287-1486)



The Town of Rockport will use its SHIP grant to build a hoist in Marine Park at the head of the harbor. The hoist will be installed on the left-hand shoreline, approximately where the lobster boat in the picture above is tied up.

Small Harbor Improvement Program in Action: Rockport Harbor Hoist Project

Rockport Harbor will benefit this year from a grant provided by the Small Harbor Improvement Program (SHIP), a program that supports licensed commercial fishermen and related industries along the coast that increasingly rely on public facilities for access to the water. With coastal real estate pressures forcing changes away from public ownership, SHIP is designed to help protect a dwindling public asset through a successful state/local partnership.

In 2008 the Maine Department of Transportation is awarding nearly one million dollars in grants to 21 coastal cities and towns. Examples of projects include pier reconstructions, float installations, boat ramp rehabilitations, new hoist installations and gangway replacements.

One of the grants was awarded to the Town of Rockport for building a new marine hoist at the head of the town's harbor. The new hoist will improve the working waterfront—Rockport Harbor is home to 18 fulltime commercial fishermen—and also

enhance public access to the harbor. Currently there is no public hoist available in the harbor.

According to Rockport Harbormaster Ken Kooyenga, the new hoist is an important step in the town's goal of maintaining "a viable working waterfront for generations to come."

The hoist will be constructed this fall at Marine Park, the town-owned area where the Goose River enters the harbor. An engineering firm has produced a site plan and design, and the hoist itself should be installed and ready for service by Thanksgiving.

An inter-agency committee composed of representatives from five state agencies selected the successful projects. Funding for next year is contingent on the state legislature—for the latest updates on the SHIP program please visit <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/freight/ship1.php> or contact Kevin Rousseau (Kevin.Rousseau@maine.gov; 624-3565).

Update: Coastal Zone Management Act Renewal

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), the Federal legislation governing the management of the nation's coastal resources since 1972, hasn't been reauthorized for over ten years. Reauthorization is the process of renewing original legislation, and gives Congress an opportunity to make changes to the original roles and responsibilities it outlined. Although the CZMA has been operating without an authorization, it has received operating funds through the annual congressional appropriations process. In 2007 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Coastal States Organization (CSO) undertook an extensive effort to plan for the future of coastal and ocean management with the aim of reauthorizing and updating the CZMA. The resulting report, *Envisioning Our Coastal Future* (<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/czm/media/PhaseIII.pdf>) identified a set of core principles that have since guided the development of legislation to reauthorize and improve the CZMA. In addition to the guiding principles, four clear priorities for coastal management emerged from national stakeholder discussions (see sidebar at right).

A working group of coastal managers from around the country, under the direction of CSO, is drafting a CZMA framework to help guide reauthorization legislation. CSO's draft framework proposes increased technical, planning and financial assistance to local governments and would create a formal role for CZMA programs in the area of climate change adaptation.

As this newsletter went to press, the House of Representatives (Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans) continued to consider H.R. 5451, the *Coastal Zone Reauthorization Act of 2008*. Several amendments to the bill contemplate strengthening the CZMA to allow for the development of and funding climate change adaptation planning, to provide financial assistance to plan and assess offshore alternative energy development, and to create a Working Waterfronts Grant Program to protect working waterfronts against the demand for development and the changing economies of our coasts.

Long a champion of coastal management, Senator Olympia Snowe last year introduced S 1579 *The Coastal Zone Enhancement Reauthorization Act of 2007*. Senator Snowe's staff will work over the coming months to capture the results of the visioning process in a revised bill. In the meantime, staff at the Coastal States Organization have established a diverse "CZMA Coalition" of more than 30 organizations and agencies to support reauthorization efforts.

For more information about the CZMA, contact Kathleen Leyden at 207-287-3144 or Kathleen.Leyden@maine.gov.



Guiding Principles for the CZMA

- *ensure the long term sustainability of coastal resources and communities.*
- *be goal-driven and results-oriented.*
- *coordinate and align federal, state, and local governments to address issues of national importance.*
- *remain a voluntary partnership between federal government and the states in which each bears responsibilities for achieving program goals.*

Coastal Management Priorities

- *support for healthy coastal communities and coast-dependent economies*
- *protection and restoration of coastal ecosystems, habitats and unique resources*
- *preparation for the impacts of climate change*
- *coordination among local, state, regional and federal efforts*



Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher (Ret.), NOAA Administrator; Nick, Carly and John Cotter; Kathleen Leyden; Congressman Walter B. Jones, Jr.; NC Bob Bailey, Oregon Coastal Management Program.

Kathleen Leyden Receives Susan Snow-Cotter Award

Our very own Kathleen Leyden was honored on February 24 with the first Susan Snow-Cotter Award for Excellence in Coastal and Marine Resource Management. Bestowed annually by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Cotter Award is given to an individual who has initiated innovative practices and brought positive change to the management of ocean or coastal resources at either the state or national level.

NOAA officially renamed one of the Walter B. Jones and NOAA Excellence Awards in honor of Susan Snow-Cotter, who was Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Director when she died of cancer on December 13, 2006. Susan is being honored as “an exceptional leader in improving both policy and management of ocean and coastal resources on the national and state levels, and in the Gulf of Maine region.”

During the award ceremony, Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher presented the award to Kathleen, saying “you were nominated by people who understand and appreciate the importance of your work to protect and to preserve coastal resources. A distinguished panel of judges selected you for this honor from among an impressive field of nominees whose dedication and hard work epitomize coastal stewardship.”

The award was shared with Brian Baird, Assistant Secretary for Ocean and Coastal Policy at the California Resources Agency. For more information on the awards, see <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/programs/ocrm/jones-noaa-awards.html>.



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The Maine Coastal Program represents a partnership of local, regional and state agencies that work collaboratively to enhance management of the state's diverse coastal resources. Housed at the State Planning Office, Coastal Program staff work extensively with governmental agencies and community organizations such as local land trusts and regional economic development groups. Planning and outreach focus on such issues as watershed management, development issues, fisheries management, water quality monitoring, marine education, citizen stewardship, coastal hazards, marine infrastructure and habitat protection.

For more information on the Maine Coastal Program, please visit our website at www.maineoceanprogram.org.