

Coastal and Marine Working Group Working Waterfront & Infrastructure meeting #7

Thursday, February 29, 1:00 pm

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 3:00 pm

Links: WWF & Infrastructure subgroup: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Link to the strategy template:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1la49eh9taIr40VGpODmweNk4niC0Am8N/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103075557565763153475&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Attendees (* indicates CMWG member):

- Kristen Grant
- Margaret KellyBoyd
- Gabe McPhail*
- Nick Battista*
- Melissa Britsch
- Bill Needleman*
- David Plavin
- Charlie Eichacker

Important notes and to-dos:

- The template needs to be finished in the next few days
- **To-do:** We need to consider equity and distributional factors in the goals. We should try to ID which communities are most dependent on commercial fishing and aquaculture for their economic well-being.
- **To-do:** We should encourage coastal marine construction capacity as part of a resilience plan. Being able to respond quickly is important. Construction helps diversify the economy, provide jobs, and meet current needs.
- **To-do:** Connect public investment to guaranteed and continuous access for commercial fishing and aquaculture. They should also be tied to design standards for resilience.
 - o Is 10 or 20 years enough of a time requirement for public investment in private infrastructure? The state is thinking about what to do with the \$50 million. We don't have a specific recommendation. The current \$50 million will be out too soon for the climate plan, but the climate plan could guide future efforts.
 - o Note: some private WWFs will never take public funds. How do we help them be resilient anyways?
 - Land use controls and regulations fit here.
- **Question to GOPIF:** do we have one goal that we try to get into the plan? Should we condense our two goals into a single goal? Will it have a better chance of getting into the final plan?
 - o Is there a limit on actions? No, but we should prioritize to help GOPIF prioritize.
 - o **Prioritizing is essential to make sure our ideas get into the plan!**

Agenda:

Discuss goals and objectives for short term (2025) mid term (2030) and long term (2050 +) implementation.

Proposed 2030 goals:

- Some meaningful percentage of working waterfront infrastructure is secured for long term access – I'd want to be broader than just covenants and public ownership and really looking at a 10-20 year time horizon. Something like - secure long term working waterfront access for 30% of the State's working waterfronts by 2030.
- Some meaningful percentage of working waterfront infrastructure is meeting/attaining the state standards for Sea Level Rise planning and preparation.

Notes:

- Nick will be working on tidying up the template
- The template needs to be finished in the next few days
- The work should be in certain timeframes, some of which are pretty short.
- **To-do:** think about specific, short goal statements to summarize the longer list of ideas that we have put together
- **Question:** what are the mechanisms for implementing our goals? Like WWF access - would the WWAPP be the mechanism?
 - o It is one of the mechanisms, but not the only one. There is the other covenant and the Governor's \$50 million will likely require WWFs to stay WWFs for some length of time.

Talking about the two goals Nick suggested – first goal

- **Question:** should we have a geographic aspect of the goals?
 - o We should, and also a diversity of site types
- **Question:** how to be equitable about protecting WWFs? What parts of the state are most dependent on WWFs?
 - o Looking at the % of residents holding fishing licenses could be an option
- **Question:** could we add a piece about considering social vulnerability into the goals?
 - o We should. Where the xx% protected sites are located matters.
- **To-do:** We need to consider equity and distributional factors in the goals. We should try to ID which communities are most dependent on commercial fishing and aquaculture for their economic well-being.
- **Question:** Is 30% a good goal for WWF protection? Do we know how much is protected now?
 - o We know WWAPP properties and "prime" WWF locations from a 2007 study. We know there are ~1000 access sites total. Maybe 8-10% are protected now, but we're not really sure.
 - o This is another reason why we need to do inventories, to better establish the baseline.
 - o If we don't know the baseline, we should be clear that we are trying to establish the baseline and then do a % increase based on the established baseline.

- Don't put down an arbitrary number now
 - Try to get a proportion based on community need and how reliant on CF communities are. Essentially, we need to make sure access goes where it is relevant. We need to preserve enough WWF to support the industries in their respective areas. Communities like Stonington need a lot of access since they are so dependent on commercial fishing.
 - Commercial fishing and aquaculture aren't a huge part of the Portland economy, but fish go to restaurants and waterfront businesses rely on the waterfront, so it is an important part of the economy
 - Some communities play an outsize role in regional WWF needs – they are essentially “service centers for WWFs.”
 - We need to protect key WWFs
- If we don't use a percentage for the amount of WWFs protected, could we use job or other economic numbers as a proxy?
 - WWF protection could tie into larger land conservation goals
- Tips to keep in mind from GOPIF about the big picture:
 - It might be helpful for the full plan to have a number goal. At a high level, a number goal will fit well into the plan.
 - We should also keep the language about how we need a baseline first. Stress that we are doing the work
 - Example: the 30% local food goal team is acknowledging that they need a baseline first.
- **Question:** do we need to make the case stronger for why WWFs are threatened by climate change? Does GOPIF know that WWFs are important and how they are threatened?
 - The January storms helped make the case
 - The high-level strategies should expressly say “working waterfront”
 - If it is clear that WWFs are important, it will be more likely that the Climate Council will grab it.
 - It will be important for the CMWG to show that WWFs are important. We need to tell the CMWG what our priorities are, and the CMWG needs to tell the Climate Council.
 - Keeping numbers in the goal could help with getting into the final plan. Having a number to work for is super helpful.
- **Question:** would it be better for us to pick a somewhat arbitrary number for our goal? Or should we pick a smaller increase over time?
 - It would be best if we could base our pick on existing data. 30% lines up with other goals. Can we validate our baseline? Regardless, we should say our amount and be clear that we will do work to get a better baseline and adjust as needed.
 - We can say “% increase in total #” or “% increase in currently conserved” since we don't know the baseline very well. Or we could say something like “double the number of protected WWFs.”

- **Question:** do we have a sense of threatened WWF areas? What would make a WWF threatened or vulnerable? What criteria do we need to track and understand, like expansion capacity?
 - o This is another inventory need. There were conversations about this before the MCP Penobscot Bay Project started.
- **Question:** are we clear about what “protected” means? Are we being inclusive of multiple methods, or should we be specific about the tools we are using?
 - o We can consider zoning and increases in protective zoning. Zoning helps us cover more area quickly rather than by focusing on individual properties. Zoning is a practical tool that communities can use to keep people out of danger.
 - o We can also consider the number of properties protected through a covenant, easement, or ownership. This is a more secure method, but is slower.
- **Note:** there will be some land use conversations in April and May and we should make sure that WWFs are represented there.
- Here is a report that could be useful: [Access to the Waterfront: Issues and Solutions Across the Nation \(umaine.edu\)](#)
- **Question:** How to work in equity? From our % goal, have a sub percent based in towns that are on the economic margins or that don't have enough WWF to meet their needs.
- There is an overlap between public access to the water, access for food via recreational fishing, and access for commercial fishing. There is an equity piece to water access.
 - o WWF is a subset of the larger need for access to the water

Discussion about the other goal – having a number or percentage of WWFs adapted to climate change

- Is that a helpful goal?
 - o Having a number or percentage will be important.
 - o We want to focus on adaptation.
 - o Is there a metric we could pull from the January damage declarations to inform this? “Rebuilding with resilience” or something like that.
 - Don't want to exclude properties that weren't damaged in January but are vulnerable.
 - o Resilience is a big piece of the climate plan update!
- **Issue:** a lot of people are rebuilding exactly what they had before the storms because they are in a hurry. What is the right goal for properties that are built in a resilient way?
 - o We need to make it clear that we are trying to be in a better position than we were going into the January storms. People might do what they need to get going this year, but they might try to get resilient in the long term. Rebuilding will be both a short-term conversation and a long-term conversation.
- **To-do:** We should encourage coastal marine construction capacity as part of a resilience plan. Being able to respond quickly is important. Construction helps diversify the economy, provide jobs, and meet current needs.

New idea

- **Question:** Do we need to propose a significant investment in public working waterfront infrastructure, like the fish pier bond project?
 - o Action item for how to achieve the percentages above? Or a standalone strategy for public investment in public WWF infrastructure?
 - o Are we suggesting shifting the burden of maintaining WWFs from the private sphere to the public sphere?
 - How do we want to prioritize this idea? If it is a big priority, put it as a strategy, but try not to have too many strategies.
- Anecdote: in the 80s, Portland considered transitioning the WWF out and turning it into something else. They created the fish pier as the alternative. But there was too much demand and private WWFs remained. We shouldn't make it seem like a choice between private and public WWFs.
 - o But private WWFs might not provide enough secure access, so we should beef up our public WWFs.
- **Question:** how to make sure that WWFs meet SLR or other climate standards? It might be easier to do this with public infrastructure.
- **To-do:** Connect public investment to guaranteed and continuous access for commercial fishing and aquaculture. They should also be tied to design standards for resilience.
 - o Is 10 or 20 years enough of a time requirement for public investment in private infrastructure? The state is thinking about what to do with the \$50 million. We don't have a specific recommendation. The current \$50 million will be out too soon for the climate plan, but the climate plan could guide future efforts.
 - o Note: some private WWFs will never take public funds. How do we help them be resilient anyways?
 - Land use controls and regulations fit here.
- **Question:** do we know what is being considered for the Governor's \$50 million? We don't want our plans to conflict with what the State is planning. Nothing is certain yet.
- **Question to GOPIF:** do we have one goal that we try to get into the plan? Should we condense our two goals into a single goal? Will it have a better chance of getting into the final plan?
 - o Is there a limit on actions? No, but we should prioritize to help GOPIF prioritize.
 - o **Prioritizing is essential to make sure our ideas get into the plan!**

Wrap up:

- Send out a short summary
- Chat at the forum
- Try to wrap up the template early next week.
- Ask Jes when we need to get it to her and what she needs from us to get everything moving!