

Summer
2007

NAMA

Newsletter

NORTHWEST ATLANTIC MARINE ALLIANCE



Fishermen Craig Pendleton and Glen Libby stand on either side of Reps. Pingree and Adams after the Maine Legislature unanimously passed a resolution asking the state's Council representatives to support area management. (Photo: Travis Kennedy)

Late last year, citing the failures of current management to achieve the rebuilding of groundfish stocks required by law, and greater economic stability in the fleet, the New England Fishery Management Council asked the industry to propose new management approaches.

A number of industry groups responded by submitting qualitatively new strategies—not to be implemented—but further analyzed by government scientists.

NAMA joined forces with the Area Management Coalition (AMC)—Island Institute, Midcoast Fishermen's Alliance, Nature Conservancy, PERC, Downeast Initiative, CLF, Earth Justice—and proposed an area management plan.

The strategy is a refined version of the Inshore Gulf of Maine Conservation and

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From the Coordinating Director:

Summer is here and it's time for us to recap NAMA's many accomplishments during the past few months.

First, it is my pleasure to introduce Jennifer Plummer, who was hired and started with us in March. Jennifer's role as administrative coordinator has long been needed and she has already proven to be a valuable asset in many ways.

Second, NAMA has been given a clean bill of financial health. In a world where fraud and creative financing have made headlines far too often, I take great pride in having clean, open and transparent books. Many thanks to our Tammy Normandeau of Lambrides & Associates who helps track and allocate funding for various programs.

Additionally, NAMA continues to be an invaluable information source for elected officials, managers, scientists, and the fishing community at-large. As previously reported, Congress recently cut critical funding for collaborative research in New England. This was unexpected and we view it as a major step backwards for science and fisheries management. In response, NAMA took the lead making the case for the important work of collaborative research, both in the data it collects and the lasting relationships it builds, by travelling to make the case on Capital Hill by writing and coordinating an industry-wide letter of support that was sent to the Office of Budget Management. It appears that our hard work is paying off. While the outlook for 2007 funds remains bleak, 2008 funding appears to have solid support.

Also, NAMA was contacted by staffers of Sen. Olympia Snowe and Congressman Tom Allen, both of Maine, and received a request to speak on the subject of an industry-funded buy-back program. This program has been under development by an ad hoc committee for over a year. NAMA trustee Geoff Smith of the Nature Conservancy had a seat on the committee. After much negotiation, the program stalled when all the representatives of Massachusetts voted against the final product. Recently, other members of the committee began to resurrect the program and decided to pitch it to the New England delegation as a potential solution to over capacity issues in the groundfishery. I solicited the help of Glen Libby, President of Mid-Coast Fishermen's Association and Proctor Wells, President of IFISH and a NAMA Trustee to accompany me to DC and present our thoughts on the subject. It was a good opportunity to present our side, especially as we related the issue's long-term impacts to coastal fishing communities.

Closer to home, our involvement in the Area Management Coalition remains the single most time consuming project on our plate. One recent action and accomplishment includes: a joint resolution by the Maine Legislature (which you will read more about inside this newsletter) that supports Maine's fishing community and in particular encourages Maine's representatives to the New England Fishery Management Council to support and vote for the AMC proposal. Many thanks go to Robin Alden, former Commissioner of Maine's Department of Marine Resources for shepherding this issue through the legislature.

In closing, since I am writing this update before the next Council meeting and therefore cannot predict the outcome of our plan, let me say this: A lot of work, sweat and tears have gone into the proposal. It is a good plan that will likely achieve our desired goals: rebuild fish stocks, address accountability, and promote stewardship. However, there is a movement within the federal government and managers, which you as public consumers should pay particular attention to, that is: the privatization of a public resource. More and more, ideas like Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPP's) are being promoted. In short, the historical design of these programs use catch history as a determination of an individual's allotment of fish. In my words, these programs reward the very people who caught the most during times of scarcity and depletion. The table has been set, days at sea can be purchased and leased with the lessee acquiring and keeping the catch history. Those with access to capital have flourished under this program, which ironically was sold to the fishermen as the "salvation for little boats." Indeed, there are few small boat fishermen who believe this to be the case.

As a member of the public you should be aware of what this actually means. In a time when tainted food and foods with unknown origins are being replaced with locally and sustainably harvested products, the current direction of management heads the fishery in the opposite direction. Smaller locally owned fishing business will likely be replaced by larger corporate entities who will land in two or three large ports instead of Saco, Port Clyde, Portsmouth, Chatham, and other localities that once characterized the fishery. Jobs will deteriorate, our communities will suffer, and you as a consumer will have to settle for Wal-Mart as the place to buy species like tilapia and pond raised shrimp from a country you can't pronounce.

You must join us in this fight. Already we have partnered with major environmental groups, scientists, and conservation minded fishermen throughout New England. Please join us today. Your health and the health of the Gulf of Maine depend on it.

Sincerely,



Craig A Pendleton
Coordinating Director



Continued from front page

Stewardship Plan, which was adopted by the New England Council as a “frame-workable” item in 2004.

Like its predecessor, the plan was designed to resolve the central challenge in natural resource management: balancing rules that promote ecological sustainability and socioeconomic fairness.

It takes as a starting point a practical insight: the long-term health of fish and the fishing way-of-life demands a close collaboration with the people who understand fish and fishing communities best—local fishermen.

First the science. Area management rests on a fundamental tenet of ecology: that is, biological systems, whether terrestrial or marine, are almost incomprehensibly diverse.

To be sure, emerging research seems inevitably to underscore the reality that marine systems are more biologically complex than we ever imagined. Though we may never hope to achieve a perfect formulation of the environment, our knowledge of it can be enhanced greatly by utilizing fishermen’s unparalleled experience on the water.

And obviously the more accurate our conception of the problem at hand the more effective the rules will design to resolve it.

Landlubbers call it ecosystem-based management. Fishermen call it common sense.

To that end, the AMC proposal incorporates a vision of the marine environment that is now almost universally accepted by scientists and managers: ergo, the region’s waters are comprised of several genetically diverse sub-stocks of cod, haddock, flounder, and other bottom-dwelling species, not the one or two stocks currently recognized by management.

This is important—indeed critical—for setting appropriate total allowable catches (TACs) because a harvest limit that may be suitable for the region at large (i.e. the Gulf of Maine or Georges Bank) is almost certainly too high for the smaller sub-stocks to support.

In fact, Canadian scientists believe a similar misapprehension of Grand Banks ecology led to the collapse of Newfoundland’s cod fishery, which still haven’t recovered some 15 years after fishing there was banned.

Indeed, New England fishermen have long noted differences in appearance and behavior of groundfish stocks from across the region, but only recently has science been able to prove it.

For instance, studies on the distribution of lobster larvae show the particles (like small groundfish eggs) are subject to basic oceanographic patterns, which are determined by the coast’s primary geological features: Georges Bank, Cape Cod, Cape Ann, and the continental shelf.

The terrestrial masses create macro current and wind patterns, and largely isolate fish populations and thus limit the amount of mixing and reproduction between the regions various stocks.

Additionally, a recent study by fishermen-scientist, Ted Ames, showed that the historic distribution of cod in eastern Maine has been severely disrupted by heavy fishing pressure.

He argues persuasively that while increased fishing restrictions may have led to a recovery in the western Gulf of Maine, populations farther east will likely remain depleted until an area

Maine Legislature Unanimously Supports Area Management

Resolution calls on Maine Council Reps to Forward AMC Proposal

“Resolved: that we your Memorialists, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to request the delegates from the State of Maine to the 2007 New England Fishery Management Council to support the ‘Area Management’ concept and actively advocate for an “Area Management” concept of groundfish management for the benefit of all who now and in days to come ‘go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters.”

So explains a poetic resolution written by Rep. Herb Adams and passed unanimously by the State Legislature on May 15 in support of the Area Management Coalition fishery management proposal.

Last year, the New England Council asked fishery stakeholders to propose alternatives to the current Days-at-Sea management approach

House Majority Leader Hannah Pingree and Sen. Dennis Damon played key roles in forwarding the resolution and have been strong champions of community-based management in the region’s groundfishery.

The action was one of a number of ideas proposed by lawmakers to help the state’s struggling groundfish industry weather economic hardship until stocks rebuild in lieu of LD 170 (a law that would have allowed the vessels to land lobsters in the state.)

Last year, the New England Council asked fishery stakeholders to propose alternatives to the current Days-at-Sea management approach, which has resulted in substantial loss of business (outlined by LD 170’s supporters) without achieving desired stock rebuilding.

Indeed, Governor Baldacci (who wrote a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce last month asking him to declare the fishery a man-made disaster), George Lapointe, Maine’s Marine Resources Commissioner and the Portland Press Herald have all called for a new approach to groundfish management.

On June 23, the Council, which includes four representatives from Maine—Commissioner Lapointe, and fishermen James Odlin, Jim Salisbury, and Dana Rice—voted to delay review of the proposals until Amendment 17 begins, perhaps as early as November (see cover story).

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The Spring Running Celebrates Kennebec River Revival

Festival celebrates the connections between the Kennebec and Maine's history, culture, and economy

NAMA representatives joined Chairman of the Board, Dana Morse, in Augusta on May 20th to celebrate the river's annual passage of herring.

"I'm excited to have a commercial industry group at the event because it helps people draw the connections between the health of the river run and the health of groundfish stocks," said Morse, who serves as the festival organizer.

The site of the event, Edwards Mill Park, on the shores of the Kennebec River, is adjacent the dam that blocked the passage of migrating fish for more than 150 years.

The Spring Running honors a new season of fishing and farming, as well as the historical, cultural, ecological and economic connections to the fishes' migration.

Festival demonstrations included a bateau display, a touch tank, fly tying,

casting, fish smoking, net repair and construction, gyotaku (fish prints), and traditional barrel construction and preservation



of fish.

On July 1, 1999 the Edwards Dam was breached—restoring 17 miles of free flowing water and reopening prime spawning habitat for the first time since 1837.

Ten species of migratory fish that had been blocked by the dam are now able to make their way upstream: shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon, Atlantic salmon, striped bass, three species of river herring, and American shad.

Dana's father, Larry Morse, founder of the River Market and Augusta's downtown farmers market, originally conceived of the celebration.

Today, as an associate for Maine Sea Grant and UMaine Cooperative Extension, Dana carries on the idea by educating the public about the connection between a sustainable and healthy river

and sustainable and healthy economies. Morse said numerous people make the event happen. "The planning has been a team effort, a result of having many great minds around the table."

The organizations involved in the planning include: the City of Augusta, Kennebec Valley Trout Unlimited, Maine Rivers, the Maine Department of Marine Resources, Old Fort Western, the River Market, Time and Tide RC&D, the Maine Lakes Conservancy Institute, and the Capital Riverfront Improvement District.

NAMA presented an information booth and spoke with representative of other community-based organizations about the role river health plays in the health of local groundfish stocks in eastern Maine.

"At some point, people will realize that environmental stewardship is not just something to do to feel good about ourselves; they'll realize that environmental stewardship is something we have to do, it's inescapable," said Morse.

NAMA Activities Round-Up

Vessel Buyback Meeting

On May 21st, Maine fishermen Craig Pendleton, Proctor Wells, and Glen Libby flew to Washington, DC to attend two legislative briefings on a proposed fishing vessel buyback program. Sen. Olympia Snowe and Congressman Tom Allen's offices called NAMA to request attendance at the briefings. "We were able to add value to the discussion by enhancing and sometimes contradicting items being proposed," Craig said. A major item of concern within the program is that it will be in the form of a \$100 million dollar loan, which will be paid back by those remaining in the fishery. One agreed upon item was that a buy-back program did offer a dignified way out of the fishery from those who were ready to leave. The Maine fishermen also distributed a document highlighting the pros and cons of a federal buy-back and offered alternatives, such as state or community permit banking. NAMA will remain involved with any further developments of this program

NOAA Research

On May 24th, Craig attended a conference sponsored by the NOAA office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. The meeting was held at the Brookings Institute and led by Dr. Richard Spinrad, Assistant Administrator for OAR. After opening introductions by the 15 attendees, Dr. Spinrad addressed the group and then posed three general topics as they related to research and his agency: 1) Climate Variability and Ecosystem Predictions; 2) Environmental Information on Oceans and Human Health; and 3) Future Directions. The meeting was then turned over to a round table discussion with each participant giving his or her comments on the three topics. Craig spoke on using fisheries and environmental indicators as predictions to future success or failure of fish populations. He pointed to efforts the Northeast Consortium and Gulf of Maine Research Institute as important projects not only to achieve good science but to break down the barriers between fishermen and scientists. "I suggested that OAR keep in mind that local knowledge is a useful and overlooked commodity and that fishermen and their vessels are platforms ready and waiting to partner with scientists," said Craig. He also recommended that fishing vessels could add to weather data collection and that real-time data was becoming more and more of a necessity in fisheries. Finally, he explained that the current vessel monitoring system management

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management style approach is adopted.

And so here's where science and socioeconomics converge.

Today, the right to harvest groundfish, and thus make a living, is distributed indirectly through permitted days-at-sea (DAS). DAS are based on a fisherman's historical landings: the more landings you have the more days you get.

But some fishermen (especially those with small inshore operations) don't have the size and capacity to rack up high landings. Furthermore, through no fault of their own, some fishing communities have no fish in their waters to be caught.

The social component of area management is predicated on the belief that fishermen shouldn't be forced out of the industry simply because they have small boats or because of a fate of geography.

Thus, management lines are drawn

according to the ecological boundaries described above and landings are allocated to the specific areas based trawl surveys and landings reports that show how many fish typically reside there.

Fishermen are granted their allocation based on their current days-at-sea allotments. (Those cut out in the past can buy or lease permits in line with current rules if they want to go fishing in the future).

The permit-holders must then commit to fishing in one of the areas (it is proposed that the Gulf of Maine be further divided into two areas: inshore and offshore, where scientists believe separate fish stocks exist).

To be sure, managers already recognize distinct stocks in the Southern New England and Georges Bank management areas. What's more, American and Canadian fishermen share the harvest using a similar system in international waters.

But there is another component to fisheries management

besides ecology and economics: politics.

Beginning in 2004, managers allowed the region's fishermen to lease unused days-at-sea. The program's proponents argued it would help rationalize the fleet by allowing the most efficient operations to lease access from those that were struggling.

It was also argued that the plan would not lead to increased landings because vessels were only allowed to lease within their own size and horsepower class.

But the proponents of the program were also very careful to make sure that the landings resulting from leased days stay with the investor not the original owner.

Consequently, a few relatively wealthy operations leased millions of dollars worth of days-at-sea and therefore some fishermen have a large financial stake in the status quo.

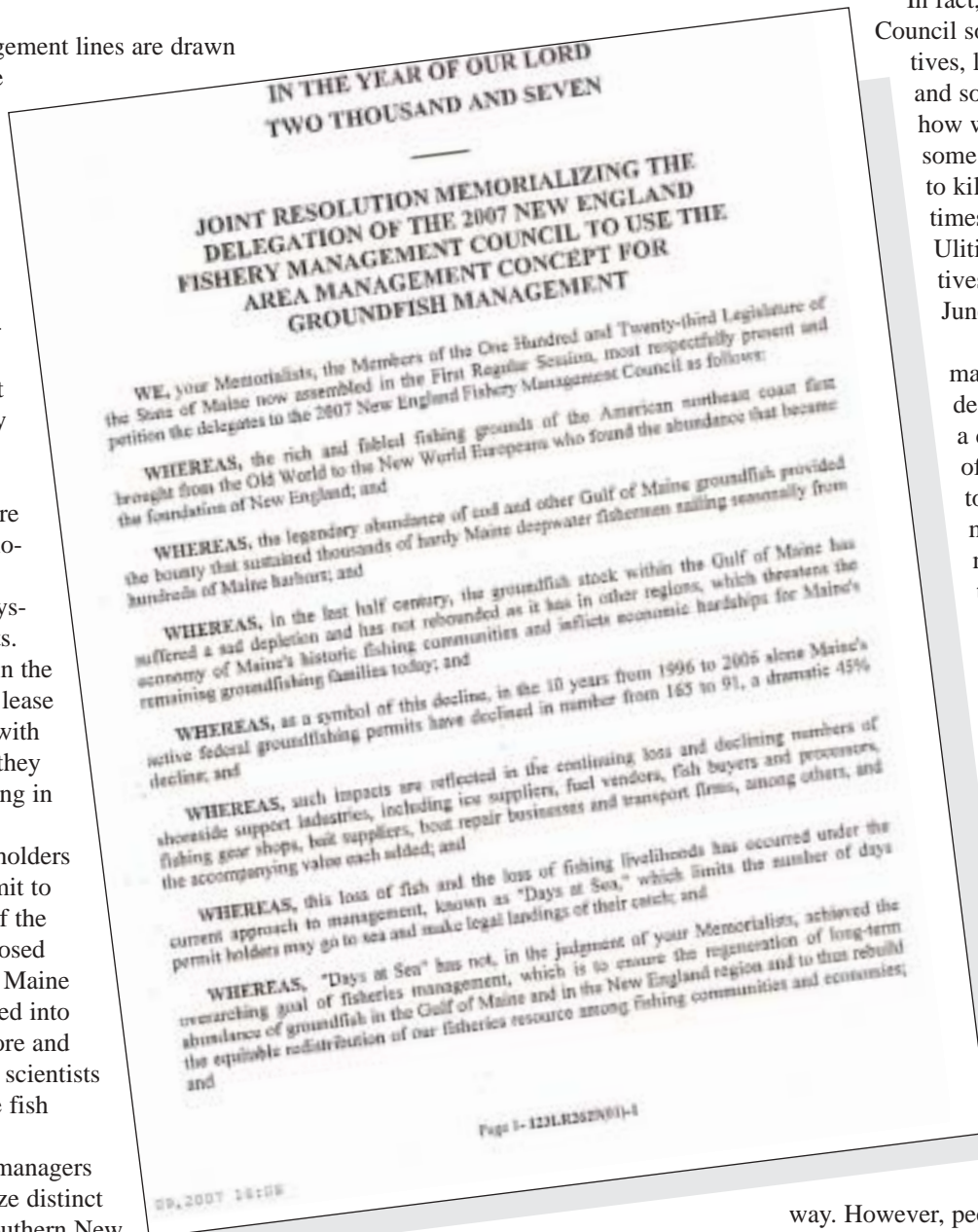
In fact, even though the Council solicited industry alternatives, like area management, and sought a new direction in how we governed the fleet, some Council members tried to kill the proposals several times before being analyzed. Ultimately three alternatives made it through to a June vote.

In typical fisheries management fashion, the decision was subjected to a complex back and forth of motions, amendments to motions, and amendments to amended motions, leaving even the most veteran policy experts scratching their heads about what the action really meant.

When the fog lifted, the area management proposal was left to be developed further in Amendment 17, a victory of sorts, but one with no definitive timetable.

"We can take solace in the fact that we have the Council taking steps toward managing the fishery in a new

way. However, people and fish stocks are struggling now. Today, we need to regroup and find a way to keep both stocks and small fishermen alive during this next phase," said Craig. (End)



ROUND UP

continued from page 4

was unable to do all that was needed of it, suggesting that a collaborative research project be used to develop an efficient and inexpensive means of data collection and communication.

New Hire!

NAMA has filled a desperately needed position of Administrative Coordinator with a Maine native, Jennifer Plummer of Gorham. Jenn's holistic education includes undergraduate studies in photography at the Rhode Island School of Design as well as a culinary arts degree from Southern Maine Technical College. She has worked with several Maine companies such as Marketing Dynamics Inc., Johns Manville, and Actuarial Designs & Solutions, Inc. Jenn's primary role at NAMA will be consultation on our expanding publications, day to day functions of the office, administrative support and coordination of meetings, fundraising, and finances. Additionally, she will be creating a stronger connection between farmers and fishermen. "By doing so we hope to focus more attention on seafood as a local food that supports local economies and communities. Currently the farmers are doing a great job getting people excited about spending local dollars on locally produced food. This connection may lead to expanded venues for our fishermen's catch," she said.



Area Management Conference in Port Orford, Oregon

Area Management Coalition members Ted Ames, Robin Alden and Rob Snyder and Craig attended a two-day meeting on May 1st and 2nd to discuss and refine the area management concept. Members of the Port Orford community along with staff and Board members of Pacific Marine Conservation Council also shared stories about their experiences with community-based management. Port Orford fishermen have been developing a "local stewardship area" proposal to get involved with issues such as marine protected areas, effective marine resource management and coastal ecosystem health. Each invitee presented details of their work's successes and challenges. The second day promoted interaction between the East Coast and Port Orford group. "We took a field trip along the southern Oregon Coast and to a salmon hatchery. It was a great trip and as always we met and spent time with great people," said Craig.

Association of Family Farms (AFF) Chicago Board Meeting

On March 22nd and 23rd, Craig attended his second Board of Directors meeting of the Association of Family Farms in Chicago. The meeting was held simultaneously with a trade show sponsored by FamilyFarmed.org. Most of the AFF meeting focused on developing a draft business plan and membership package. Craig will serve on the group's Seafood Standards Committee to help set the foundation for quality and operating standards within the seafood community who chose to join AFF. "This fits in nicely with NAMA's vision into the future as we work to convince fishermen they will need to find innovative ways to make more money on less fish," Craig said. AFF's basic premise is to rearrange food distribution in a way that helps people see how their food is produced and supports local communities, by creating "value chains" where contractual agreements are made between producers, processors, packagers, and distributors. Producers retain ownership all the way to the consumer. "In today's world of spinach scares and hamburger recalls, wouldn't it be nice to see a local fisherman or farmer's face on the product with a guarantee on how the product was raised, harvested, processed and distributed? We think so and we'll keep you informed," said Craig.

CHOIR

NAMA remains active in a broad coalition of interests concerned about the health of the region's herring stocks. CHOIR's membership includes tuna fishermen, herring seiners, lobstermen, recreational fishermen as well as organizations such as East Coast Tuna, Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association, and Mid Coast Fishermen's Association. Steve Weiner, a tuna fisherman has been elected as President and Ray Cane of Cape Cod will serve as Vice President. Chris Weiner, who interned at NAMA last year, is serving as staff for the organization. The group is working to add additional precautionary measures to the herring management, such as greater observer coverage and reducing discards. Fishing for herring in groundfish closed areas with midwater trawls has been a bone of contention since 1995. NAMA plays a supportive role in bringing constituents to Capital Hill and has housed CHOIR staff as needed.

YOU CAN HELP!

ACT TODAY: In order to serve you better, NAMA has developed a "Subscriber Program." NAMA's subscribers come from many walks of life, including fishing, research, conservation, and education, and they share a common desire to manage our marine resources sustainably and fairly. We believe this can be accomplished by promoting collaborative approaches to fisheries research and management, where the fishery's diverse community is united by a shared sense of responsibility for building a resilient northwest Atlantic ecosystem. We cannot do this without your help. Please consider supporting our efforts to protect fish and fishing communities for future generations.

I subscribe to NAMA's Principles and my \$35 subscription fee is enclosed,

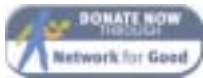
Your Signature

Date

Support NAMA's Programs! NAMA works on a multitude of programs that benefit fishermen and the resource. Your tax-deductible contribution and support will enable us to continue to promote and advance excellence in fisheries management, science, and harvesting through networking, information-sharing, visits to Capitol Hill, and maintaining a resource center in Saco, Maine.

Enclosed is \$_____ to assist NAMA in continuing its excellent work in advancing the welfare of fishermen and the resource in the northwest Atlantic.

Detach this form and mail it with your check to: The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance; 200 Main Street, STE A; Saco, ME 04072 Or, visit us online at www.namanet.org to subscribe or donate by clicking on the Network For Good icon.



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