



ISSUE 6

BLUE HORIZON

Program Report from Friends of Blue Hill Bay

Fall 2009

Inside this Issue

This page

- Letter from the President
- Maine Aquaculture Violates Clean Water Act

Page 2

- Expense Report
- Scallop Closure
- Our Mission and Board of Directors

Page 3

- Aquaculture Update
- Harbor Dredging
- Summer Lecture Series

Page 4

- MERI Monitoring
- Benefits of Buying Local

Page 5

- Ocean Energy Testing
- Letter from the Executive Director

Letter from the President

This year marks Friends of Blue Hill Bay's tenth anniversary, a remarkable milestone for a grassroots non-profit organization. As Blue Hill Bay's only advocate we have worked diligently to see salmon farms removed from the bay,

farms removed from the bay, fund scientific research and map the bay's many uses. We have had our concerned voices heard by the state's governors, legislators and departments of Environmental Protection and Marine Resources.

None of this could have happened without the tremendous support of all



our members over the past ten years. Thank you. And it also could not have happened without the tireless support of our volunteer Board of Directors. We have operated all this time with just one paid, very part-time (and over-worked) administrative assistant who handles all of our communications,

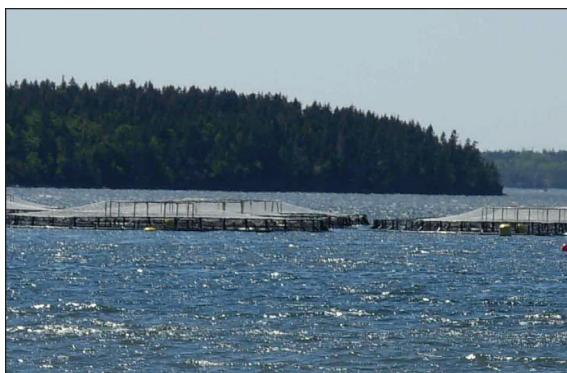
mailings and accounting.

The Board recently decided it is time to hire an executive director who can tackle all the issues in front of us. Barbara Arter was selected from more than 12 well qualified candidates. She brings to our organization a strong background in environmental policy making and tremendous energy to take FOBHB into its second decade. Please join the Board in welcoming her.

We continue to have several issues that impact a healthy future for Blue Hill Bay including pollution, aquaculture, dragging and dredging. This newsletter addresses

cont. on page 2

Maine Finfish Aquaculture Violates Clean Water Act



According to a recent New York Times article, 160 of the 384 regulated facilities that hold discharge permits in Maine had permit violations between 2004 and 2007. The top 30 violators in the state were finfish aquaculture facilities and fish hatcheries. (View article on line at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/us/13water.html?emc=eta1>)

The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires polluters to disclose the toxins they discharge into waterways and gives state and federal regulators the power to fine or jail offenders of discharge permits. Unfortunately, an extensive review of state records found that "in the last five years alone, chemical factories, manufacturing plants, and other workplaces have violated water pollution laws more than half a million times" across the nation.

The top ten violators in Maine include the following aquaculture facilities: Maine Coast Nordic Cutler Harbor (15 violations), Heritage Salmon Cutler North (21 at 2 locations), Atlantic Salmon of Maine (27 violations at 3 locations), Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife (21 violations at 2 locations), Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery (10), and Birch Point Fisheries (9).

Although there are no finfish aquaculture facilities currently operating in Blue Hill Bay, the data clearly illustrate that this form of aquaculture continues to be the primary violator of the CWA in the state

cont. on page 4

Letter from the President cont.

many of our concerns and is intended to bring you up to date.

The good news is that the Department of Marine Resources has initiated a ban on fishing and dragging for scallops in Blue Hill Harbor, Morgan Bay, and the upper part of the Bay in an attempt to rebuild the scallop resource.

There is also an effort underway by the Penobscot East Resource Center to encourage a more sustainable regional fishery by selling locally with a more environmentally friendly footprint. However we are also being challenged by the continued pollution from salmon farms further Down East, potential dredging of Blue Hill Harbor and the issues of red tide during the summer months.

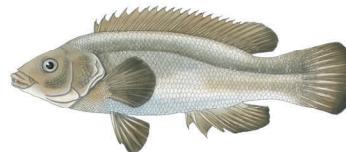
In other news the bay still has five shellfish aquaculture lease

sites and new shellfish aquaculture leases are being planned in neighboring waters of Deer Isle and MDI. Also, the state has recently decided to investigate the potential of ocean wind energy near Isle Au Haut. These are all issues that are being closely monitored by FOBHB.

No newsletter would be complete without an appeal for your support. In order for us to continue our work, ensuring we have a clean and healthy bay for the future, your help is needed. Please join us again as we work for our bay.

Enjoy this issue of the newsletter and cheers to another 10 years.

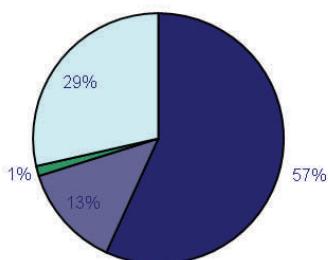
~ Don Eley, President



Expense Report

For 2008 the majority of FOBHB's expenses went to program services which included research efforts and support of the waste water pump-out boat. Legal fees, just under one-third of our expenses, were used to continue our efforts to ensure aquaculture compliance in the Bay. And our administrative expense remained low as the board continued as all volunteer.

FOBHB 2008 Expenses



DMR Closure Protects Bay Scallop Brood Stock

In an effort to restore scallop and urchin stocks in near-shore waters in Maine, the DMR Advisory Council recently approved statewide regulatory changes including several scallop fishing closures along the coast and specifically in Blue Hill Harbor and Morgan Bay.

The closure was established based on recommendations from both area fishermen and the Scallop Advisory Council and effects both dragging and hand harvest (diving). The decision was substantiated by scientific information gathered from DMR's 2008 Scallop Survey, which indicates that the harbor has an exceptionally high abundance of scallop seed that should be protected until statewide stocks increase.

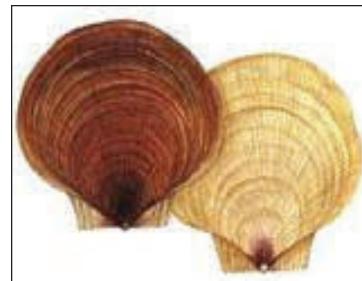
It is hoped that the seed produced in Blue Hill Harbor and Morgan Bay will travel with the bay's circulation currents and become distributed throughout the bay ultimately enhancing scallop stocks, which have been down substantially the last few years.

Our Mission and Directors

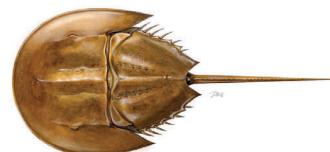
Friends of Blue Hill Bay is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving the natural ecology, traditional marine fisheries and the unique aesthetic quality of Blue Hill Bay. Friends of Blue Hill Bay is a federal and state tax-exempt 501(c) (3) corporation.

Directors

Don Eley, President	Jennifer Cecil
Dottie Hayes, Vice President	Ronald Lesko
George Knapp, Secretary	Sal McCloskey
John Knutson, Treasurer	
John Candage	
John Russell Duym	
William Matlock	
John Roberts	Robert Slaven, Jr.
Robert Vaughan	Teke Wiggin
Patrick Wilmerding	



According to the DMR website, the closure encompasses the area north of a line drawn from Stills Point, Blue Hill Neck to the most northern point of Long Island, and north of a line drawn from the most northern point of Long Island to the most southwestern point of Newbury Neck. For more information visit the DMR website at <http://www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/scallops/09-21-09regs.htm>



2009 Aquaculture Update

Pending DMR Aquaculture Lease Applications (as of September 2009)

- Friendship International/ Brad and Adam Scott, renewal of Job Island (PEN JI, Isleboro) and Sloop Island (PEN SI, Deer Isle) leases (Sea Urchins)
- Glidden Point Oyster Company, LLC., North of Dodge Lower Cove, Damarsicotta River, Edgecomb (Oyster)
- Pemaquid Mussel Farm, LLC, St. Helena Island, Stonington (Mussels)
- Joseph Porada, Goose Marsh Pond, Mount Desert (Clams)

Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Sites in Blue Hill Bay as of Fall 2009 (From: <http://www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/leaseinventory/shellfishleases.htm>)

Shellfish Type	Name	Location	Lease Size (acres)	Lease Dates
Blue Mussel	Gray Mussel Farm, LLC.	East of Long Island	6	2006-2016
Blue Mussel	Maine Cultured Mus-sels, Inc.	East of Hard-wood Island	15	2005-2013
Blue Mussel	Maine Cultured Mus-sels, Inc. & Mussel Bound Farms (Erick Spencer)	East of Long Island	51	2007-2017
Oyster, blue mussel, scallop, surf clam	Tightrope Seafarms (Evan Young)	Blue Hill Salt Pond	19	2009-2019
Blue Mussel	Evan Young	East of Hard-wood Island	2.3	2005-2015

Summer Lecture Features the Schooner *Bowdoin's* Voyage to Greenland and the Arctic Circle

As a celebration of Friends of Blue Hill Bay's tenth anniversary a special summer lecture was presented by Captain Richard Miller. With more than 120 people attending Captain Miller presented an exhilarating slide show and discussion of the Schooner *Bowdoin's* 2008 voyage to Greenland and the Arctic Circle. With 12 Maine Maritime Academy students aboard, Captain Miller followed Admiral Donald MacMillan's many passages to the Arctic Circle on the famed schooner. From the long ocean passages, to being surrounded by ice, to the swim in the Arctic the audience felt part of the trip. With the success of this lecture, FOBHB plan to continue with a summer lecture series featuring the ocean and those who venture on it.



Town of Blue Hill Investigates Dredging Harbor

The selectmen of Blue Hill have recently issued a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers asking them to investigate the possibility of dredging Blue Hill Harbor for the purpose of creating all-tide public access which will benefit the town's 28 fishermen, numerous kayak and hunting guide services, and local and visiting recreational users.

The Corps will conduct a survey of the harbor and consider the engineering options for dredging that would create a six-foot channel at low tide. If the Corps approves the project, the town would then vote to provide matching funds and to maintain the dredged area every 3-4 years.

For many community members it is still unclear if dredging is the best way to solve the problem of low tide access. There are concerns that potential contaminants in the dredged material could become distributed throughout the bay thus harming wildlife and polluting the water. There is also concern that dredging may cause serious bank erosion and coastal subsidence.

Clean Water Act From Page 1

of Maine. When the CWA was first passed in 1972, the primary pollutants in the state were contaminants from the pulp and paper industry and untreated sewage from municipalities and private homes. Today the primary source of pollution in the state is excessive nutrient waste from finfish aquaculture being released directly into our bays.

Furthermore, the data also indicate that Maine levied no fines on any of the violators. In contrast, North Carolina had the highest number of enforcement actions punishing 85% of the facilities that were out of compliance. The MDEP issued a response stating, "the Department considers a variety of factors re-

garding the violation including the cause and frequency of the violation" and cited a lack of resources as well as a complicated federal data management system as hindrances to reporting and managing violations. The response did not however address the lack of enforcement actions or fines. Although the agency issues letters of violation, the response did not indicate that violators are brought into compliance in a timely and effective manner. It is clear from this report that more pressure should be placed on DEP and DMR to ensure stronger enforcement in the form of fines and/or other restrictions. ~



Meggan
Dwyer on the
Pinniped II
(Courtesy of
MERI)

Pinniped II, MERI's new "green" research vessel. Recognizing the need for an energy efficient research boat reflective of its commitment to environmental responsibility, MERI acquired and retrofitted *Pinniped II* for research in May. The Brooklin built 24' wooden lobster boat is equipped with a flexible solar panel, painted with water based paints, and fueled with a 20% biodiesel mixture. MERI's ultimate goal is to convert the engine to run on waste vegetable oil, making the *Pinniped II* the first 100% biodiesel vessel in the area and a model for the marine community.

MERI also began monitoring

phytoplankton diversity, an important indicator of water quality, at eight sites around the bay. And in June, as part of a larger study at University of Maine at Machias, MERI launched invasive species collector arrays at three offshore sites to examine species' substrate preference, diversity and spatial differences. Meanwhile, MERI will continue to monitor the Bay until October 30 to gain additional late season data after a rainy start to the season. For more information on MERI's coastal monitoring program, visit www.meriresearch.org.

Buying Local Helps the Bay

For generations, local fishermen fished for groundfish a few months of the year in order to supplement their lobster fishing income. Species, such as a haddock, cod, hake, halibut, and winter flounder

Aboard the *Pinniped II*, MERI Shifts Focus of Monitoring

A red tide bloom of record extent and intensity on the Maine coast kept researchers at the Marine Environment Research Institute (MERI) busy this summer. Meggan Dwyer, MERI's new Monitoring Project Coordinator, says this year's unprecedented red tide—a "bloom" of the phytoplankton species *Alexandrium spp.* that produces a toxin causing paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP)—peaked in Blue Hill in early July when MERI found elevated numbers of *Alexandrium spp.* at several sites around the Bay. By July 15, red tide had cleared in the Upper Bay and the area was re-opened for shellfish harvesting.

Since May 15, Dwyer and two Monitoring Interns have taken water and phytoplankton samples at 11 offshore marine sites aboard the

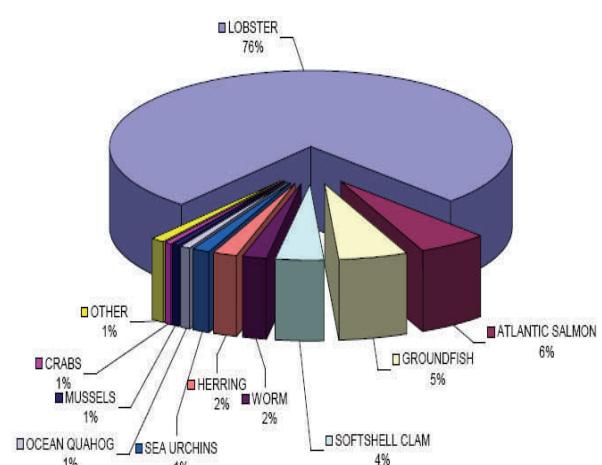
were sold in grocery stores, fish markets, or even door-to-door. However, stocks of these coastal shelf groundfish have been greatly depleted in Downeast Maine due to both overfishing and ecological imbalances and consequently, not a single boat in the eastern region of the Gulf of Maine fishes for these species today. Since current state and federal groundfish permits are

Cont on page 6

Preliminary 2005 Maine Landings By Value

Total: \$406,653,210

*Last updated 8/23/06



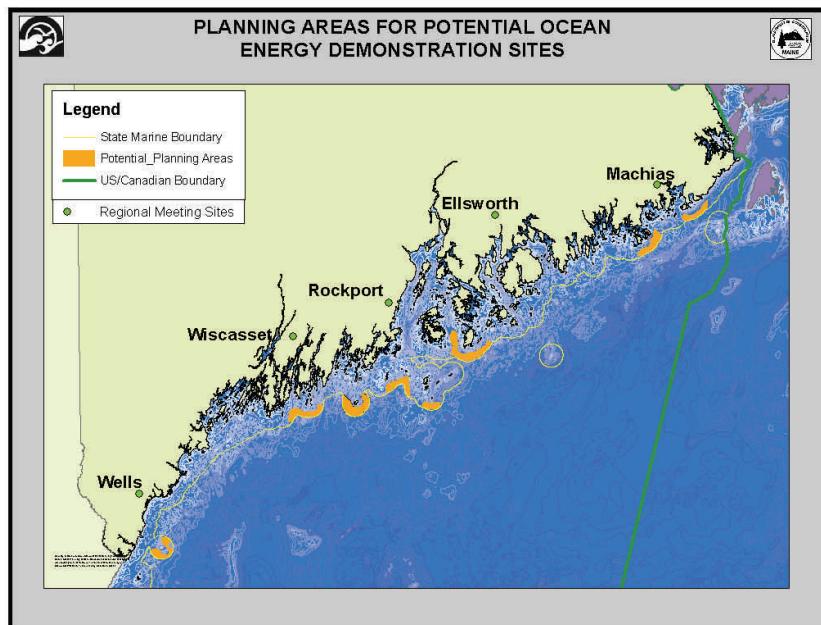
State Considers Ocean Energy Testing Areas in Maine Waters

In June 2009, the Maine legislature passed legislation (L.D. 1465) which tasks the Maine Department of Conservation (DOC), in consultation with the Maine State Planning Office, to select up to five locations within Maine state waters to be designated as "Ocean Energy Testing Areas."

Criteria for site selection of the testing areas include wind speed greater than 17 miles per hour on an annual average; ocean depths greater than 200 feet of water; minimal conflicts with marine obstructions, dredge dumps, officially recognized shipping channels, unexploded ordnances; and proximity to existing undersea cables or areas that have historically been pre-permitted for an undersea cable by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

According to the DOC, through a combination of anthropogenic, environmental, and geophysical analyses, the state hopes to site these ocean energy testing and demonstration projects in areas with the fewest amount of conflicts. The DOC will officially designate these areas on Dec. 15, 2009.

Sites meeting the above criteria are shown on the map. Blue Hill Bay does not have any of the site criteria and is therefore not considered a potential testing site. The site nearest to Blue Hill Bay is off Isle Au Haut. It is unclear



how wind turbines will impact the marine environment and its users. Some possible conflicts include loss of scenic view; harmful impacts on birds, bats, fish, and marine mammals; and physical obstacles to navigation and commercial fisheries. The most obvious benefits to wind power include reducing dependency on foreign oil and creating alternative potentially less damaging sources of electricity.

Letter From the New Executive Director



In August of this year, the Friends of Blue Hill Bay Board of Directors hired me as their first Executive Director. This is an exciting challenge to be "the first" and I hope that I can live up to your expectations!

My plan is to work with board leadership and our administrative staff, George Fields, to promote the organization's mission and to strengthen the group's collaborations with state and federal agencies, researchers, conservation organizations, harvesters, municipal governments, and community members to encourage sustainable use of the bay.

I have spent my first 2 months getting to know many of the partners in the bay and I have attended meetings sponsored by MERRI, the Blue Hill Heritage Trust, and the Penobscot East Re-

source Center. One of my first goals for this upcoming year is to find funding to produce a bay-wide management report based on the inventory and mapping project conducted by FOBHB in 2007.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I have lived and worked in the quiet fishing community of Steuben (in Washington County) for the past 20 years where I have been the Project Director and Conservation Planner for BSA Environmental Consulting. I have a long history specializing in coastal watershed science and freshwater and nearshore-marine fisheries management including Taunton Bay and Narraguagus Bay.

I look forward to working with FOBHB and I hope you will continue your support for our efforts! We have included an envelope for your convenience. Please feel free to contact me anytime with ideas or questions about how we can better protect Blue Hill Bay. You can call me at (207) 546-2018 or email at bsarter@fobhb.org.

Barbara S. Carter



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www.fobhb.org

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Conserving the natural ecology, traditional marine fisheries and unique aesthetic quality of Blue Hill Bay since 1999

Buying Local From Page 4

based on past catches, many Downeast fishermen have lost their rights to fish the area if and when the stocks do return.

As a result of depleted stocks and the loss of fishing permits, most fishermen in our region today only fish for one species, lobster. If lobster stocks were to ever become depleted it could be the downfall of our local economy.

In an attempt to diversify the fishery and the local economy, the Penobscot East Resource Center (PERC) has established a Community Supported Fishery (CSF) in partnership with area Food Co-ops that offers local shares in a direct market of seafood, such as lobster, shrimp, and hopefully groundfish in the future.

The creation of this "direct market" allows local fishermen to

earn more by eliminating the middleman and harvesting at a loss. It also allows customers to pay less for fresh locally harvested and sustainably managed seafood.

Another benefit to the CSF is a smaller carbon footprint because less seafood will be trucked to a processor. Selling locally also allows the fishermen to catch less fish in the long run if they want to because they could earn more money per pound. More fish and shellfish in the water may bolster the next year's catch and add to the ecological diversity and abundance in the bay.

In addition to creating a local sustainable market for these fisheries, PERC has also been working to purchase fishing permits so that when fish stocks return, those permits will be available to Downeast fishermen. For more information contact PERC at 367-2708 or www.penobscoteast.org.

Don't Miss.....

Living on the Edge (of the Sea)

Dr. John Roberts:
Emeritus Professor, Board Member of FOBHB & Pres. Blue Hill Historical Society
7:00 pm Thursday Nov 19 at MERI

Visit the FOBHB Website

View maps of critical habitat, commercial fisheries, recreational destination areas, point source pollution, archeological sites, and more at: www.fobhb.org

