



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maine Coast Fishermen's Association Receive Fisheries Innovation Fund Grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

BRUNSWICK, ME - The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association as one of seven recipients to receive a grant through the Fisheries Innovation Fund. This funding, \$99,882 in total, will continue to drive the organization's mission of working to identify and foster ways to restore the fisheries of the Gulf of Maine and sustain Maine's fishing communities for future generations.

The Fishermen's Association received funding to work on a project to develop the *Next Generation of Permit Banking and Fishery Trusts*. Permit banks are designed to anchor fishing access within communities and make fishing opportunities accessible for local fishermen. Access to a permit bank allows many to keep fishing, as adequate species' quota is need per trip, and provide an opportunity for new entrants into Maine's historic groundfish industry. There are currently three permit banks in Maine.

"It's been hard for us fishermen to plan for the future in the New England groundfish fishery, but we can see some light at the end of the tunnel. We know it's important to keep our community fishing, and provide access for future generations and we are excited to continue that work through this project" said Maine Coast Fishermen's Association's Board Chairman, Gerry Cushman F/V Bug Catcha.

"This grant will allow the Fishermen's Association develop new approaches to fishery trusts that expands upon current models and looks to the future for community access and needs." Explained Ben Martens, Executive Director of the MCFA. "We have worked over the past seven years with the Nature Conservancy to start a permit bank in Maine. This program will allow us to work with partners from around the country to think about what we can do better to support our local communities and the next generation of fishermen in Maine, New England and around the country.

The Fisheries Innovation Fund is an on-going partnership between NFWF, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Walton Family Foundation. All seven grants announced will fund conservation work aimed at reducing bycatch of deleted fisheries stocks and protect their habitats while still allowing fishermen to access their targeted species. The impact of the 2017 Fisheries Innovation Fund projects will generate a total conservation impact of more than \$1.6 million for 11 states in New England, the Atlantic, the Pacific Coast, and the Gulf of Mexico.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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The Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (MCFA) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2006 and led by commercial fishermen who, as stewards of the marine ecosystem, promote and advocate for the restoration of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem while balancing the needs of Maine's iconic fishermen and fishing communities. The Fishermen's Association works to provide a voice for fishing communities, strengthen the health of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem, and help maintain the viability of fishing businesses through advocacy, education, outreach, and collaborative research projects. For more information please visit www.maine coastfishermen.org

