



Shrimp boats at dock on San Carlos Island, Florida. Source: Julie Dennis, Waterfronts Florida Program Coordinator.

Sustaining Working Waterfronts: A National Symposium • A National Network • A Toolkit

A National Symposium

Being in the company of people who share your passion is invigorating; particularly when they include knowledgeable and solution-oriented individuals. Being in the company of hundreds of such like-minded souls can be downright transformative! This describes the atmosphere when people gather during a *National Working Waterfronts & Waterways Symposium*.

Three national symposia have occurred to date: the first was in **Norfolk, Virginia** (2006), the second was in **Portland, Maine** (2010), and the most recent was in **Tacoma, Washington** (2013). Planning for the fourth symposium has begun; while it is expected to occur in late 2015, the exact date and location will be announced once they are decided.

Symposia attendees are dedicated champions of local working waterfronts and they come from throughout the U.S. (and elsewhere) to share ideas and solutions and to learn about new approaches. They come because waterfront communities, whether rural, urban, recreational, commercial or industrialized, have been subject to economic, technological, ecological, and demographic changes that challenge their continued existence or development.

A National Network

The only drawback to the recurring national symposium might be that it occurs too infrequently! Participants in a strategic planning session held at the conclusion of

the 2010 symposium in Portland, Maine decided to address this issue. The top action item that emerged from their deliberations was to create a national network that could sustain creative energy between symposia, cultivate synergy and collaboration at local, regional and national levels, and foster robust solutions to working waterfront issues. The result was the birth in September 2010 of the *National Working Waterfront Network*.

The mission of the National Working Waterfront Network (NWWN) is to increase the capacity of coastal communities and stakeholders to make informed decisions, balance diverse uses, ensure access, and plan for the future of working waterfronts and waterways.

A Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit

Achieving the National Working Waterfront Network's mission received a significant boost in October 2011 when a nation-wide team of its founding members was awarded funds by the U.S. Economic Development Administration to develop a toolkit to assist working waterfront communities. The online **Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit** made its debut in March 2013 at the national symposium in Tacoma and it now serves as the 'front door' to the National Working Waterfront Network.

The Toolkit is designed to inform both private and public decision-making and provide a starting place for communities dealing with working waterfront issues. Primary Toolkit users are those most likely to be impacted or with the ability for action, either through land ownership or governmental authority. They include decision- and policy-makers, waterfront landowners, and waterfront users.

The beating heart of the Toolkit is the *Community Center*, where individuals from around the U.S. (and world) who are involved in working waterfront issues can connect. The community center is open to all (free).



Here, members can ask questions, share ideas, learn about the experiences of their peers, seek out experts, hear about upcoming events, read network documents, and explore a variety of topics.

Information contained in the Toolkit is stored under five main sections, each of which constitutes a dropdown menu on the website's main page: *Financing, Law & Policy, Economics, Historic Trends, and Tools*

in Action. An overview of the contents of each Toolkit section follows below.

Financing: Very few programs, whether public or private, can be implemented without money, so funding needs to come from somewhere. Fortunately, financing tools exist that have proven track records in addressing working waterfront and waterway issues. There are also exist financing tools that have not been used for this purpose, but could be. The Financing section of the

Toolkit contains a searchable inventory of summarized information for over 500 existing tools, with links to learn more about specific programs and benefits. Twenty-seven of the tools in the inventory are from Florida; two examples include use of Community Redevelopment Area funds by the City of Sebastian to invest in working waterfront properties; and legal and policy assistance by the **Conservation Clinic** at the University of Florida Levin College of Law.

SUSTAINABLE WORKING WATERFRONTS TOOLKIT

Financing

Law & Policy

Economics

Tools in Action

Historic Trends

Law & Policy: Regardless of the strategy being implemented, a compatible legal and regulatory framework is necessary. Working waterfront policy to date has not been a primary focus in most states and, therefore, very few legal tools and policy approaches have been developed specifically for working waterfronts. Fortunately, tools have been created to address similar coastal management issues and they can be applied successfully in the working waterfront context at various governmental levels (local, state, federal). The Law & Policy section of the Toolkit includes information about these law and policy tools, provides access to case studies describing how communities have used them to address working waterfront problems, and contains links to additional resources.

Economics: To help promote the long-term prosperity of coastal communities and their working waterfronts, it is essential to document their current economic value and future prospects. The Economic section of the Toolkit does so by providing a comprehensive evaluation of all ocean-related economic activity for counties within eleven U.S. coastal regions, including the Great Lakes. An example is provided – using Duval County, Florida – of how the data and economic analyses can be applied to specific localities. Economic data also is presented on specific high profile industries such as marine cargo

shipping, commercial fishing, and passenger cruise ships.

Historic Trends: U.S. waterfronts were essential to the nation's birth, fundamental to its character and growth, and continue to be important to its prosperity. The Historic Trends section of the Toolkit provides a history of working waterfronts, profiles of well-known industries that make working waterfront communities such appealing places to work and visit, and describes how working waterfronts continue to evolve as changes occur in water-dependent industries and in response to environmental, demographic and economic pressures, and regulatory interventions.

Tools in Action: This section of the Toolkit contains searchable case studies from across the country that demonstrate the implementation of a wide variety of tools, such as financing, policy, regulation, planning, community engagement, and partnerships. The case studies are designed to help users learn how their peers have applied working waterfront tools in the real world. Each case study highlights best practices, "lessons learned," and issues and challenges. Assistance for using tools, such as how-to guides, is made available, as is contact information for key participants who were involved in each case study. Six case studies are based in Florida:

- Collaborative efforts to retain Port Salerno's diverse maritime heritage

- High and dry boats and residents in Ponce Inlet
- Protecting historic Mayport village from a proposed cruise ship terminal
- Port of the Miami River water dependent land use litigation
- The Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Florida Forever Grant Program
- The Waterfronts Florida Program

Please let us know of other case studies that we can add.

Perhaps the best thing about the Toolkit is that its contents and value will continue to grow as membership in the National Working Waterfront Network increases. We encourage you to become a member and get involved. Please join the National Working Waterfront conversation at [www.WaterAccessUS.com!](http://www.WaterAccessUS.com)

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