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Public and Private Partners Come Together to Discuss Community Supported Fisheries
National Summit held this week in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Some 70 fishermen, processors, small-scale businessmen and representatives from Federal, non-profit and academic groups gathered in Portsmouth, N.H., this week, from May 30 to June 1, to talk about Community Supported Fisheries, which are designed to direct more money to fishing boats and provide consumers with greater access to fresh, sustainable, local fish.

Participants came together for a National Summit, the first of its kind, representing more than 21 Community Supported Fisheries from nine states and two Canadian provinces (California, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Virginia, and British Columbia and Nova Scotia).

“Community Supported Fisheries - whether in Downeast Maine or down east North Carolina - seek to reconnect coastal communities to their food system, encourage sustainable fishing practices, and strengthen relationships between fishermen and communities,” said Niaz Dorry, coordinating director of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance.

Based on the community-supported agriculture model, a community supported fishery is a program that links fishermen to a local market where customers pre-pay for a “season” of fresh, local, low-impact seafood, and in turn receive a weekly or bi-weekly share of fish or shellfish. Over the past five years, these types of programs have grown dramatically in number and size across the U.S. and Canada.

“We wanted to further the dialogue for those involved in these efforts to meet, share and learn from each other,” said Erik Chapman, assistant extension faculty, New Hampshire Sea Grant and University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

The two and a half day Summit was a collaborative effort between NOAA Fisheries Service, the National Sea Grant Office, multiple State Sea Grant programs, the Island Institute, and the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. The goal was to foster development of a network of interested fishermen and business people to objectively evaluate the actual benefits and costs, and what it takes for such programs to succeed.

“Community-Supported Fisheries can help make our coastal communities more sustainable because: fishermen maximize their profits by selling directly to the consumer,

consumers get to enjoy locally caught, high-quality seafood and the community benefits because the money is being spent locally,” said Nick Battista, director of the marine program for the Island Institute.

“We are delighted to support creative ideas that provide higher quality fish products to consumers and improved profitability for local fishermen while promoting stewardship of the nation’s marine resources,” said Samuel Rauch, assistant administrator, NOAA Fisheries Service.

NAMA is a regional organization working with fishermen and other stakeholders to create ecosystem-based fisheries policies and markets that address social, economic, environmental and food system values. You can follow our work through our blog – Who Fishes Matters, Facebook, and YouTube.

The Island Institute partners with Maine’s year-round island and working-waterfront communities to ensure that they remain vibrant places to live, work, and educate children.

NOAA’s mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth’s environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#) , [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).