

2004

Moosabec: the Downeast fishing community of Beals and Jonesport

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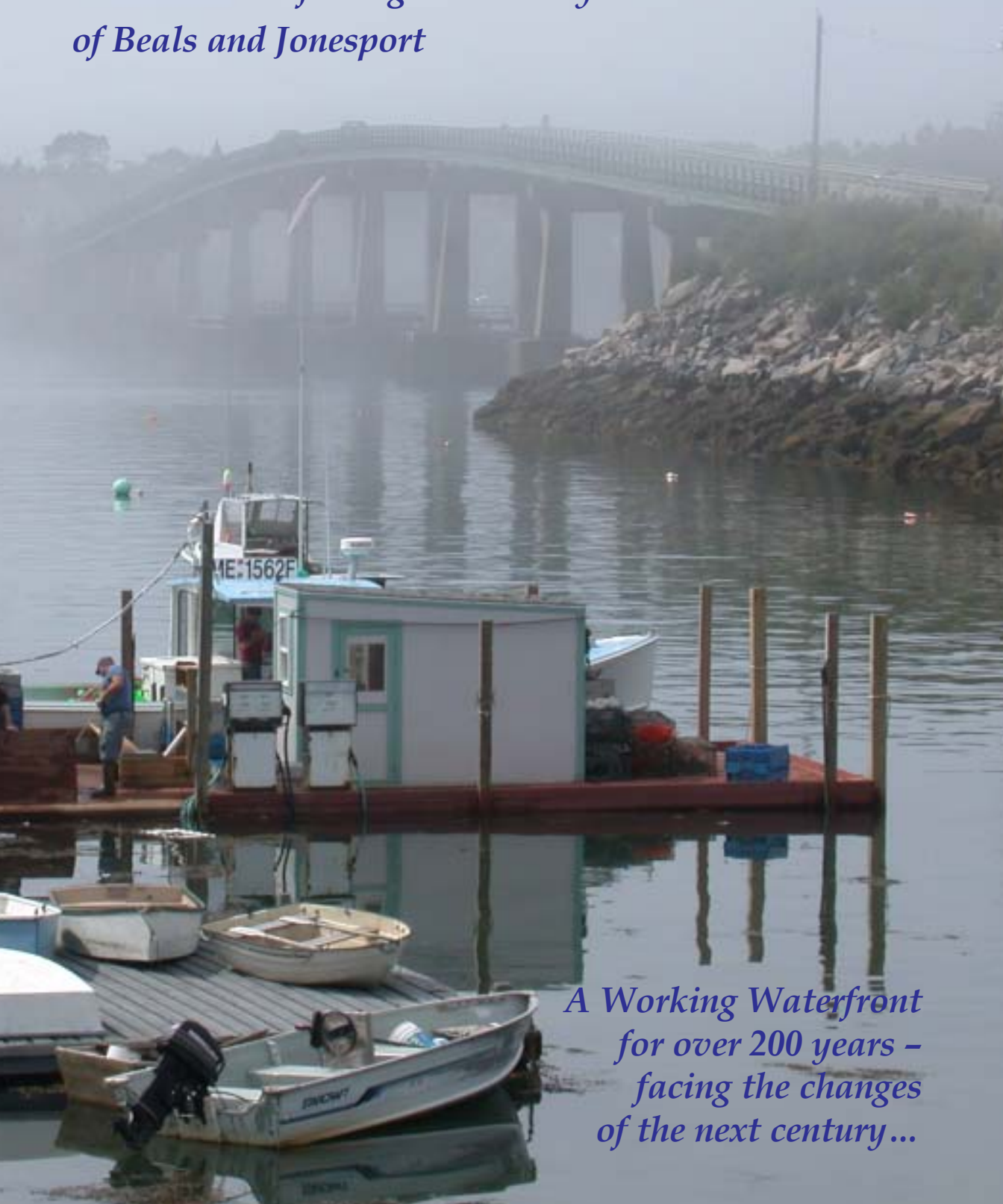
East, Judy and Daigle, Cheryl, "Moosabec: the Downeast fishing community of Beals and Jonesport" (2004). *Maine Sea Grant Publications*. 25.

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Moosabec:

*the Downeast fishing community
of Beals and Jonesport*



*A Working Waterfront
for over 200 years –
facing the changes
of the next century...*

This is not a promotional brochure.

Skyrocketing real estate prices tell us what we already know: this idyllic part of the coast has been found and change is upon us.

While we have limited ability to influence some changes – federal fishing regulations, escalating property taxes, state tax laws or the pressure of a retiring population drawn to our scenic corner of the world – recent community surveys reveal that the authentic Moosabec fishing community is something valued by long time residents and newcomers alike. Many agree that “preserving the area’s beauty and traditional way of life is top priority.”

As change envelops us, we wish to preserve the things we cherish about our community and need for our livelihoods: access to our shores and a viable working waterfront. This brochure seeks to develop constructive relationships to work out our differences in a direct and respectful way.



What is an authentic fishing village?

The tourism and real estate brochures tell one story: the sight of sparkling water and the imagined taste of fresh lobster on the plate.



Judy East



What does it really mean to live year round in a working fishing community?

A true appreciation calls not just on sight and taste but on all five senses...



Sounds

Like songbirds, diesel engines all have their own unique sounds. Can you tell the difference between the high whine of a Detroit or the low rumble of a Caterpillar? Both are used on fishing boats. The International engine of the local school bus will rumble through the neighborhood at about 7 a.m. But your local fishermen will be headed for breakfast in a cold pickup and a cloud of blue smoke, with a *hoa hoa chicka chicka chong rumble clatter* at 4 a.m. And that might start the neighbor's dog barking...and then your dog to respond...

After the rest of us get up, there are the gulls that pull apart your compost pile, steal chicken off the outdoor grill, and generally shriek their disapproval while depositing their "business" on your deck furniture.

What do you like and what would you preserve about this place?



Natalie Springuel

I would preserve ... *"The heritage and rustic beauty of a functional seaport and active (even at 4 a.m.) fishing village."*

Sights

A working waterfront has people in it. The tools of their trade are evident everywhere you look. It is not a place of manicured lawns and carefully landscaped gardens. While many take pride in their homes, there is still a lot of stuff around: traps, drags, boats, engines, blocks, winches, and assorted fishing equipment. Also, in front of costly shorefront property, the clam and worm diggers will be working the flats when the tide is out. Beyond this buzz of activity will be the island-studded coast and a fleet of boats working the water.



Nancy Beal

I like that *"It's an authentic fishing village for people whose living comes from the sea."*

Smells

In addition to the salty summer breezes and the aroma of spruce and fir, there are other odors at the more pungent end of the spectrum. While it may wrinkle your nose, to fishermen the smell of bait is the smell of money. Fish waste, clam shells and salmon pens contribute to the bouquet. And the fumes of diesel exhaust provide a constant reminder that this community is at work getting a product to market and food onto the table.

Touch

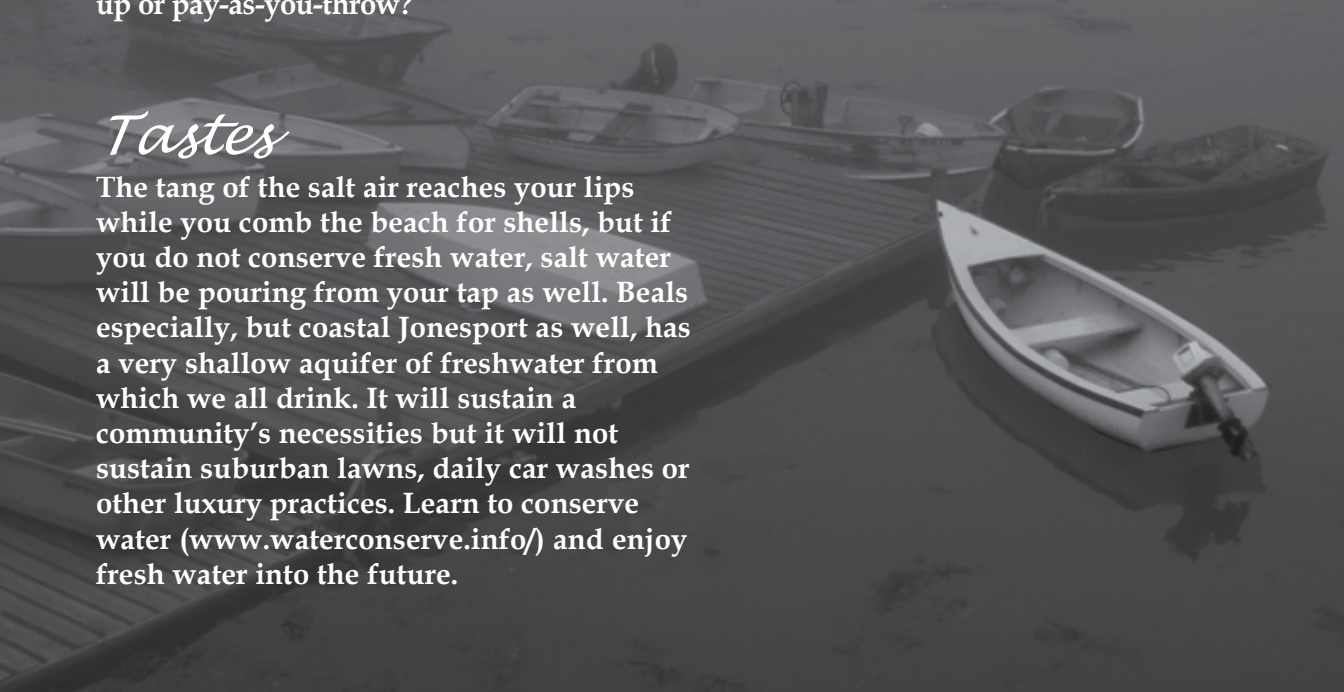
At times the night sky is so thick with stars you think you can reach out and touch them. At other times, the air is so thick with fog you can cut it with a knife. This "Downeast air conditioning" arrives pretty regularly in the afternoon or early evening. Sometimes it lasts all day - or all week. Like the typical car commercial, the travel photos are all shot from newly paved roads. After a few wheel alignments, cracked windshields from driving over gravel roads, and ever-higher tax bills to pay for road repairs, you will be well acquainted with the tough decisions of a rural balance sheet: pavement or gravel? full-time or part-time police protection? garbage pick-up or pay-as-you-throw?

Tastes

The tang of the salt air reaches your lips while you comb the beach for shells, but if you do not conserve fresh water, salt water will be pouring from your tap as well. Beals especially, but coastal Jonesport as well, has a very shallow aquifer of freshwater from which we all drink. It will sustain a community's necessities but it will not sustain suburban lawns, daily car washes or other luxury practices. Learn to conserve water (www.waterconserve.info/) and enjoy fresh water into the future.



I like that ... "the economy revolves around fishing."



And that sixth sense -

Intuition... Character... Relationships.

The roads of a small community get us from Point A to Point B, but the rules of the road are different. Parking signs are often ignored. Cars and trucks are often stopped (yes, in the middle of the road) for a quick chat, to discuss the catch, to plan the next morning's departure, and then to move along home. Very large boats may be in transit down the middle of the road. Don't blow your horn. Just slow down, weave around the community obstacle course and give your neighbors a wave.

How do you see this community in the future?



Nancy Beal

I hope that ...“it stays the working village - and not become ‘another’ coastal village for the ‘rich’.”



Nancy Beal

I want to preserve ...“the freedom to get to the shoreline and be able to walk it.”

Private property rights are important, but getting along with the community in which you live is just as critical. The private landowner can always exert final authority and POST, but think about the neighborly alternatives first.



Sarah Glauco

In towns where families have lived for generations, people looked out for one another. If a boat broke from its mooring, the first reaction was to help secure it and find its owner. Too often now, however, community care has been replaced by liability insurance. Those who might have helped in the past are reluctant to get involved because they might get “blamed” and, increasingly, are posting their wharves.

This kind of tear in the fabric of a community often comes with change. It is associated with lack of trust on both sides.

Building trust takes time and energy, the energy of reaching out and communicating. Newcomers are welcomed to the community, but cautiously. Those who live and work here want to protect what is special about it and what sustains them. Those who have joined the community most successfully are those who learn about it, appreciate it, and participate in it. In the face of change, liability, and litigation we still need informal relationships to perpetuate sharing of community resources and to build bridges and understanding among ourselves.



How do you see this community in the future?

I see ... “A thriving marine-based economy consisting of fishing, fishing-support businesses, aquaculture, and a small tourist population.”

All quotes in this brochure are taken from the community surveys in the Comprehensive Plans of Beals (2002) and Jonesport (2003).

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Design and layout by:
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Photos by Cheryl Daigle except where otherwise indicated.



Washington County
Council of Governments



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Published and distributed in furtherance of Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Land Grant and Sea Grant University of the state of Maine and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Cooperative Extension and other agencies of the U.S.D.A. provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

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