



APRIL 11, 2012

Contacts:

Carolyn Holland, Ecotrust
503-467-0754 (desk)
503-313-0915 (mobile)
cholland@ecotrust.org

Nancy McLeod Carter, Island Institute
207.594.9209 x 133 (desk)
207.975.3204 (mobile)
ncarter@islandinstitute.org

NATIONAL COMMUNITY FISHERIES NETWORK LAUNCHES, PROMOTING
HEALTHY FISHING COMMUNITIES, WELL-MANAGED SEAFOOD STOCKS, AND
“COMMUNITY-CAUGHT”
SEAFOOD BRANDS

A new voice for community-based fishermen

Portland, Ore. and Rockland, Maine, April 11, 2012 — Today marks the beginning of a new era in community-based fishing in America, with 14 community fishing associations from Maine to Alaska banding together to start the national Community Fisheries Network (www.communityfisheriesnetwork.org).

The founding member organizations, ranging in size from **5** to **35** fishermen, commit to environmental stewardship in their local waters and to pursue the highest standards of community engagement, financial accountability and transparency, and economic development. They'll also grow a nascent campaign to promote their brand of sustainable, “community-caught” fish in local and regional marketplaces.

The launch demonstrates the strength of community-based fishing organizations, a classification within the fishing industry that is recognized in national fisheries law, but has been largely overlooked in policy development and management decisions by the regional fisheries councils that oversee the nation's fishing sector.

“Strong community groups are the key to well-managed fish stocks and healthy working waterfronts across the country,” says Linda Behnken, head of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, one of the network's charter groups. “Today, we're banding together to share experience and knowledge. We will be working toward positive change in national fisheries policy that recognizes and supports sustained participation by community-based fishermen in coastal fisheries.”

Glen Libby, president of Port Clyde Fresh Catch, another charter member agreed: “It's very exciting to be working with this many groups of like-minded fishermen from communities all over the country and to realize that we have so much in common. We are fortunate to have been presented with this opportunity to learn from each other and we look forward to a long-term collaboration.”

Fishing community leaders are responding to their own experience of watching the industry consolidate into fewer and fewer hands, both in the fishing and the processing arenas. This process, much of it encouraged by regional fisheries councils and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has had large [economic impacts](#) on smaller fishing communities.

In seeking to strengthen the role and recognition of communities in fisheries management, Community Fisheries Network members are drawing on powerful [research](#) from 130 fishing communities worldwide, which shows a clear benefit to fish stocks and fishing communities in areas where communities join in the management of marine resources.

“The fisheries that are successful in the long run demonstrate a deep sense of stewardship by the people working the water — that’s true in the developed world, as well as the developing world,” says Ed Backus, Vice President for Fisheries at [Ecotrust](#), a co-convenor of the Community Fisheries Network. “Having strong community fishing organizations is the best way to nurture and strengthen that connection between people and place.”

Heather Deese, Vice President for Programs at the [Island Institute](#), a co-convenor and member of the network added: “The Community Fisheries Network was spawned by fishermen and their friends and supporters in communities across the country facing similar issues. The Network members are deeply committed to doing whatever it takes to keep fish stocks healthy for the long- term so that there will be jobs for local fishermen and seafood for the nation, next year and in fifty years.”

The charter members of the Communities Fisheries Network are:

Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association	Port Orford Ocean Resources Team
Alaska Marine Conservation Council	San Diego Fishermen's Working Group
Cape Cod Development Partnership	Port of Morro Bay, CA
Maine Coast Fishermen's Association	San Francisco Community Fishing Association
Calendar Island Maine Lobster Company	Island Institute
Penobscot East Resource Center	Ecotrust
Port Clyde Fresh Catch	
Cape Cod Fisheries Trust/Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen’s Association	

Links to cited resources:

[Report on Holdings of Individual Fishing Quota \(IFQ\) by Residents of Selected Gulf of Alaska Fishing Communities 1995-2009](#), August 2010 NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office, Restricted Access Management Program.

Gutierrez, Nicolas L. et al. “Leadership, social capital and incentives promote successful fisheries’ *Nature* 470,386–389(17 February 2011) doi:10.1038/nature09689 <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v470/n7334/full/nature09689.html> (Abstract)

News summary here: <http://www.washington.edu/news/articles/co-management-holds-promise-of-sustainable-fisheries-worldwide>

About Ecotrust

Ecotrust's mission is to foster a natural model of development that creates more resilient communities, economies and ecosystems here and around the world. For more than 20 years, Ecotrust has converted \$80 million in grants into more than \$500 million in capital for local people, businesses, and organizations from Alaska to California. Ecotrust's many innovations include co-founding the world's first environmental bank, starting the world's first ecosystem investment fund, creating a range of programs in fisheries, forestry, food, farms and indigenous affairs, and developing new scientific and information tools to improve social, economic and environmental decision-making. Ecotrust works locally in ways that promise hope abroad, and it takes inspiration from the wisdom of Native and First Nation leadership in its work. Learn more at www.ecotrust.org

About Island Institute

For 29 years, the Island Institute, a membership-based nonprofit organization located in Rockland, Maine, has served as a voice for the balanced future of the islands and waters of the Gulf of Maine. We partner with Maine's year-round island and working-waterfront communities to ensure that they remain vibrant places to live, work and educate children. Learn more at www.islandinstitute.org