

26th Annual International Submerged Lands Management Conference

Keep our Waterfronts Working: A Federal Legislative Update

Speaker: Dr. Molly W. Jacobs

Abstract: Working waterfronts are often the cultural and economic heart of coastal communities in states like Maine, but unfortunately many of these critical access points are under increasing threat of development and conversion to other uses. Maine and other coastal states have taken steps to protect and preserve working waterfronts, and these efforts could benefit greatly from federal support. We have been working with stakeholders and planning experts in Maine and nationally to develop legislation for a nationwide Working Waterfront matching grant program. I will provide a summary of our legislation, an update on the current status of the bill, and a discussion of the challenges and opportunities associated with developing a nationwide program.

Speaker Information: Molly Jacobs is a Dean John A. Knauss Marine Science Policy fellow working in the office of Congressman Tom Allen (Maine), where she serves as an environmental policy advisor and legislative assistant. Her primary areas of expertise in the policy arena include fisheries, coastal zone management, ocean observing systems, ocean governance, and the application of research-based science to policy. She received her B.A. in Biology from Swarthmore College in 1997 and her Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Washington in 2006.

Her scientific work has addressed the impacts of human-produced structures such as floating docks on subtidal encrusting communities; the importance of short-scale recruitment gradients for competition and succession in those communities; and the reproductive ecology of ascidians, a group of filter-feeding marine invertebrates that are common invasive species world-wide. She has worked in ecosystems ranging from coral reefs and kelp forests to oyster farms and heavily developed marinas. She is also an enthusiastic naturalist and has taught courses and workshops in invertebrate zoology, seaweeds, marine ecology, plankton biology, and other topics to college students, schoolchildren, and the general public.