

## Working waterfronts are difficult to define and measure, and thus protect.

### Key Findings:

- The scale of a working waterfront determines how it is measured, which determines how much protection it receives.
- There is no centralized mechanism or source for tracking data related to working waterfront infrastructure and businesses.
- The lack of mechanisms for measuring the societal and cultural, as opposed to economic, value of working waterfronts renders them susceptible to conversion.
- In the research world, working waterfronts are not viewed as a discipline or field of study, which limits the collective knowledge base needed for effective policy decisions.
- The elusive definition of small-scale water-dependent industries results in a lack of dedicated funding or protective measures. (i.e., it is hard to protect what you struggle to define).
- The lack of financing mechanisms dedicated specifically to working waterfronts renders their protection challenging.
- Working waterfront issues fall under the jurisdiction of many federal and state agencies and there is no coordinated working waterfront policy.

### Recommendations:

- Develop a consensus definition of working waterfronts to guide federal, state, and local decision-making, policy, and programs.
- Establish working waterfronts as a priority national goal and develop a mechanism to ensure coordination between federal agencies
- Encourage use of underutilized financing mechanisms and/or develop new mechanisms to invest in existing working waterfront infrastructure.
- Identify key socio-economic metrics for small-scale working waterfronts and develop systems to compile and track such data.
- Encourage the broadening of existing funding sources, both public and private, and other support programs to include working waterfronts
- Encourage the publication of academic articles on working waterfront topics by identifying research needs, approaching potential authors, and sponsoring article-generating panels at conferences and workshops.

**The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit and the reports listed below can be accessed via the National Working Waterfront Network's website at [www.WaterAccessUS.com](http://www.WaterAccessUS.com).**

- Full Project Report
- History, Status, and Trends of Working Waterfronts
- Economic Analysis of Working Waterfronts in the U.S.
- Financing Tools for Working Waterfronts
- Working Waterfront and the CZMA: Defining Water-dependent Use
- Engaging the Legal Community in Working Waterfronts
- State Funding for Ports: Selected State Summaries and Links to Resources
- The Tiff Over TIF: Extending Tax Increment Financing to Municipal Maritime Infrastructure
- Best Practices for Working Waterfront Preservation: Lessons Learned from the Field
- Case Studies

**For more information about the Toolkit or the NWWN, please contact:**

- Nick Battista, Island Institute and NWWN Treasurer/Secretary, [nbattista@islandinstitute.org](mailto:nbattista@islandinstitute.org).
- Stephanie Showalter Otts, National Sea Grant Law Center and NWWN co-chair, [sshowalt@olemiss.edu](mailto:sshowalt@olemiss.edu).
- Natalie Springuel, Maine Sea Grant and NWWN co-chair, [nspringuel@coa.edu](mailto:nspringuel@coa.edu).



The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit was developed by a subcommittee of the National Working Waterfront Network with the generous financial support of the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Project Team involved staff from seven partner institutions: Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Florida Sea Grant, Island Institute, Maine Sea Grant, the National Sea Grant Law Center at the University of Mississippi School of Law, the Urban Harbors Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and Virginia Sea Grant. The Island Institute, Maine Sea Grant, and the National Sea Grant Law Center provided project leadership and coordination.

The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit is a result of research sponsored in part by the U.S. Economic Development Administration under Investment No.: 99-07-13873, with additional support from the 1772 Foundation, the Munson Foundation, the University of Florida, the University of Mississippi School of Law, Urban Harbors Institute, and Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

# The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit

## Executive Summary

### National Importance of Working Waterfronts

Working waterfronts and the waterways that connect them define the culture and character of many of our nation's coastal communities, large and small. Working waterfronts provide a space for water-dependent businesses to exist and support important jobs in our nation's coastal zones, and as such represent an important component of the U.S. economy.

However, across the U.S., coastal communities, harbors, and ports of all sizes are subject to economic, technological, legislative, ecological, and demographic changes that challenge the continued viability and/or development of their working waterfronts. In order for working waterfronts, and thus the communities within which they reside, to remain economically and culturally vibrant, a national effort to address working

**In 2009, ocean and Great Lakes-related economic activity accounted for:**

- 3.41% of GDP, contributing a total of \$217.78 billion.
- 4.85% of total employment, with 130,855 businesses employing 2.4 million full-time and part-time employees who received \$84.25 billion in wages and benefits.

waterfront challenges is necessary at all levels, from federal to municipal. Increased national attention is needed to support regional and local initiatives. Coastal communities and waterfront stakeholders need increased capacity to plan and take action to weather changing demands on the waterfront and maintain water access for businesses and users.

### The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit

The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit is a web-based information portal that contains a wealth of information about the historical and current use of waterfront space, the economic value of working waterfronts, and legal, policy, and financing tools that can be used to preserve, enhance, and protect these valuable areas. The toolkit also features case studies of successful working waterfront initiatives from communities around the country. Sharing this information with stakeholders – including waterfront businesses and industry, waterfront landowners, users and residents, and planners and governments – is an essential first step toward increasing knowledge, awareness, and implementation of the range of tools and options that are available.



**The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit can be accessed via the National Working Waterfronts Network's website at [www.WaterAccessUS.com](http://www.WaterAccessUS.com).**



## Working Waterfront Tools

Although few tools have been specifically created with working waterfronts in mind, the sheer number of tools that have the potential to be used to address working waterfront needs is impressive. The challenge when implementing working waterfront initiatives is matching the right tools with the appropriate stakeholders.

Category	Tools
Policy and Regulation	Building Code, Coastal Zone Management Program, Design Standards, Exaction, Historic Preservation, Litigation, Moratorium, No Net Loss Policy, Police Power, Public Trust Doctrine, Real Estate Disclosure, Special Purpose Political Subdivision, User Fee, Visual Access
Financing	Appropriation, Bond Financing, Dedicated Revenue, Economic Development Entity, Foundation, Grant, Loan, Loan Guarantee Subsidy, Tax Increment Financing, Trade Association
Planning	Action Planning, Business Recruitment Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Disaster Recovery Planning, Growth Management, Harbor Management Plans, Historic Resources Survey, Land Use Planning, Marine Spatial Planning, Six Hats Exercise, Smart Growth, Special Area Management Plan, SWOT Analysis, Waterfront Master Plan
Zoning	Contract Zoning, Form-based Code, Impact Fees, Incentive Zoning, Overlay Zoning, Private Zoning, Shoreland Zoning, Water-Dependent Use, Water-Dependent Use Zoning, Zoning, Zoning Ordinance
Taxation	Ad Valorem Tax, Current Use Taxation, Excise Tax, Income Tax, Property Tax, Real Estate Transfer Tax, Sales Tax, Special Assessment, Special Taxing Districts, Tax Abatement/Deferral, Tax Incentives
Community/Stakeholder Engagement	Branding, Coalition, Conflict Resolution, Focus Group, Initiative, Partnerships, Stakeholder Analysis, Technical Assistance, Visioning Exercise
Mapping, Inventory, Study	Build Out Analysis, Coastal Access Site Inventory, Community Assets, Mapping/Inventory, Economic Analysis/Assessment, Force Field Analysis, Legal Tools Inventory, Legislative Task Force, Marketing Study, Natural Resource Inventory, Needs Assessment Repository, Visual Preference Survey, Working Waterfront Inventory
Land Conservation, Transfer, Acquisition	Acquisition, Compensation, Conservation Easement, Conveyance, Covenant, Deed Restriction, Easement, Eminent Domain, Land Bank, Land Trust, Lease, Liability Waiver, Purchase of Development Rights, Right-of-Way, Transferable Development Rights, Transferable Slip Rights, Working Waterfront Conservancy
Private Agreements	Consideration, Contracting for Access, Installment Contract, Lease-Option Contract, Private Use Agreements, Use Permitting



## Key Findings and Recommendations



### Working waterfronts are economically and culturally important.

#### Key Findings:

- Working waterfronts play an important role in our nation's economy.
- Working waterfronts play an important role in the culture of our nation's coastal communities.
- Working waterfronts are inherently tied to their geography and natural resources.
- Working waterfront lands and/or infrastructure facilitate important access to public resources.
- Once working waterfront land is converted to other uses, it is likely lost forever as a working waterfront.
- Creative solutions abound and need to be shared.

#### Recommendations:

- Maintain the nation's inventory of working waterfronts to meet current and emerging needs of waterfront uses.
- Recognize the importance of working waterfronts at the highest levels of government in policies, guidance documents, and in federal actions that impact working waterfronts.
- Identify and explore the cultural aspects of working waterfronts and their role in coastal communities.
- Identify tools that are used in other place-based industries that could serve as models for federal and state support for working waterfront preservation at the local level.
- Facilitate the sharing of information, ideas, and best practices about working waterfront preservation.

### Working waterfronts are changing, as are the threats they face.

#### Key Findings:

- Working waterfronts are often affected by external environmental, economic, and social forces; forces that communities cannot always control or anticipate.
- The external forces are changing and these changes vary across regions, making it hard for communities to identify solutions to the problems facing their working waterfronts.

#### Recommendations:

- Recognize the inability of local communities to address large-scale drivers of change and focus federal efforts on minimizing the impact of drivers of change on working waterfronts.
- Incentivize the conversion of non-working waterfront land, particularly historic working waterfront infrastructure, back to working waterfronts.
- Develop a body of literature that analyzes the best government policies to protect current uses and the effectiveness of current programs, such as current use taxation, and identify best practices for implementation.
- Identify strategies for revitalization or protection of working waterfronts no longer in use, but with potential future use.
- Continue researching drivers of change of the nation's working waterfronts, especially small-scale working waterfronts.
- Develop a better understanding of the impacts of environmental forces, such as storms and climate change, on the nation's working waterfront infrastructure.
- Facilitate a national conversation about the changing nature of working waterfront drivers of change and how best to address or prepare for them.

