

Stephen Train: – get to know a few more people from the cranberries all the time. We gave them an ambulance. The Town of Long Island asked for their ambulance. We got a new one. So, we gave them ours.

Corina Gribble: Is it not cool?

ST: Yes. It came from Electric Bolton, Connecticut when we got it.

CG: So, my name is Corina Gribble. I am with College of the Atlantic. I am here with Ela Keegan, also from College of the Atlantic. We are here at the National Working Waterfront Symposium in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Today is May 16th, 2018. It is 8:33 a.m. Could you start off by saying your name and spelling it?

ST: My name is Stephen, with a P-H, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, Train, T-R-A-I-N.

CG: What is your occupation? Where do you live?

ST: I'm a commercial fisherman, primarily a lobsterman. I live in the Town of Long Island, Maine.

CG: What is the working waterfront community like on Long Island?

ST: The working waterfront on Long Island is basically three different things. We have the ferry landing where the water taxis and the ferries come in. We have just down from that is a little barge landing where the freight will come in. We have a municipal pier that was the old state ferry wharf that fishermen can use. We require or request – I guess we require because we give them a key to the gate. You can walk down it. But to drive down with traps, you need to pay a fee, a minimal fee. But it helps to maintain the wharf without making the rest of the town maintain it. It doesn't cover it all, but it gives them a little bit into it. So, they're kind of vested. That allows us to maintain the wharf and put planking on. The third part of the commercial working waterfront in the Town of Long Island is our individual wharfs. There are, well, I don't know, maybe ten or twelve individual lobster wharfs, not commercial, their title. But a lot of us have our own wharf afloat where we take out our traps and can tie a boat up, grounded out, things like that.

CG: Why is the working waterfront important to the Long Island community?

ST: As we're seeing from other parts of the country, we're lucky that we've got our own personal access sites to the water. We've got to get traps in and out. We've got to unload things. Oh, we also have a boat yard on the island. I forgot about that. So, I guess that's working waterfront. But without that access, we don't – we're the largest employer. The biggest part of the economy on the island is the fishing industry. Without that access to the water, we don't have a job. We've seen places in the country where fishermen have actually been zoned out of keeping traps and gear and things in their own backyard and had to go to the commercial end of the island or the commercial wharfs to do their work. We don't want that to happen. We provided that for people that are out on the water. But we're fortunate with the state environmental regulations

that we can build a wharf up to 12 feet wide, the tidal wharf. We have a pretty good town right now that supports the fishing industry. So, we're lucky to be able to maintain and continue that access.

CG: Do you feel there is anything unique to Long Island?

ST: I don't think it's so much unique to Long Island as it is to a lot of the main islands, that we've got those communities that understand the industry. It's not a job. It's kind of a way of life. It's what you grow up as. Not everybody wants to go fishing, but the whole community gets behind the people that do. It sustains a lot of the island. There are times where every kid in the school is either the son or daughter of a lobsterman, or a son of a daughter or somebody that works at the lobster company, or a lobsterman themselves, a lobsterwoman. I don't think we use lobsterwoman. It's lobstermen, not like postmaster, same thing, one or the other. But anyway, so, the community is, it's a big part of who we are. I think that's true on any of the main islands that still have a robust lobster fleet.

CG: What is your story with the working waterfront? How did you start out and get to where you are today?

ST: I think we've got a generational difference. But you had Legos, I'm sure, when you were a kid, right? I'm probably fourth or fifth generation. I haven't chased it back for more than four. It's a generational thing in my family. When I was probably five, six years old, when we started playing with Legos, we didn't build houses, we built boats. We made lobster boats out of them. We could use the little curly things to make radars and spinny things. We could use one block for a trap. That's what we did. That's what we wanted to do. We weren't old enough to get out on the boat. I had my first license at seven. I'd go out with my father, all [inaudible] traps. But when we played, we played lobsterman. If we didn't play lobsterman, we played ferryman. We worked on throwing the lines around the post. So, from a very young age, it's part of the culture. When I actually got involved in working waterfront things is when the City of Portland – which is very important to us, being an island community off of that city. Every lobster that's bought on Long Island goes back to Portland and gets taken out through a wharf. The City of Portland started rezoning parts of the waterfront and wanted to rezone and wanted to do other things. So, we've got Portland Harbor. There's no place to take out lobsters, and Cape Elizabeth. There's only one in south – there's nothing in Falmouth, Cumberland. You can go up the river in Yarmouth and this one place, I think. I'm not even sure they take it out. They might truck them in. So, without the Portland waterfront still maintaining zoning for a working waterfront, the fishing industry, I'm going to have an issue. We're going to have to have somebody come down, pick our lobsters, and take them someplace else in the state. I mean, this is a real island. We're not putting a bridge. It's not what we want. We want to be able to pull into a dock, get our fuel, get our bait, take out our lobsters. I draw too much water to steam to Westbrook. The river is a little too short. We don't have a lot of options.

CG: What has been the relationship between Portland and Long Island and Long Island and the other islands of Casco Bay, and the interactions, the challenges, the successes?

ST: What other islands? There aren't any other islands.

CG: [laughter]

ST: No, we get along well with our other islands. When you tell a joke on Chebeague, Long Island's probably the punchline. When you tell a joke on Cliff, Chebeague's probably the punchline. When you tell a joke on Long, Cliff's probably the punchline. Happens everywhere on the state. It's all in good humor. We get along well with our other island as we work well. Our fire departments and rescues work together. We will sometimes ride together in a boat to go to a meeting, stop by, pick so-and-so up, pick up the truck. They're neighbors in a different sense than you're used to. There's still a lot of individualism and a lot of loyalty on your island, just like it would be to your high school. It doesn't mean you don't respect the other people. You get along with the other people. The relationship to Portland is a little different. We have a mutual aid agreement with the fire department, but Portland's its own municipality. We are now our own municipality. That was intentional. We seceded from Portland. The motivation came up twenty-seven to twenty-eight years ago when Portland did a re-eval. We were part of Portland. The reassessment significantly increased the taxes in the Town of Long Island. We received minimal services. We didn't have a regular fire department. We didn't have a lot of the other things. That got people started. But it didn't get the support that we expected, until Portland actually helped and threatened to close our school to save money. That's when the entire town rallied and basically said, "We can't let this happen." But as an individual town, we still seem to get along with the City of Portland very well. It took a while. I think there was some animosity in the beginning. But we take tuition to students in our school now, from some of the other islands. Because it's a shorter commute when you're a six- or seven-year-old to Long Island than it is to put that kid on the ferry to the mainland. It's a smaller classroom. It's more of the environment the families are used to. So, it's been accepted, in the last few years, by the City of Portland. We send our children off at middle school age to the mainland. We pay tuition in the Fulton school system for them. It seems to be working fine.

CG: The community of Long Island, do you feel that island communities have a different relationship with each other, with the water, than maybe landlocked and mainland areas?

ST: If we had a problem, an economic issue with the fishery, whichever fishery happens to be the one, if we couldn't find another one – I mean, we've been fishermen. We've been lobstermen. We've been scallopers. We've been urchiners. We do what we need to do to maintain our livelihood and maintain the health of our community. If that happened, if something happened and we couldn't prosecute a fishery of some sort, the City of Portland would still be the City of Portland. The Town of Long Island would be a summer place for people to live. So, we would adjust. The island would survive. It wouldn't be the island we know now. You'd have trouble keeping kids in the school and maintain a volunteer fire department because you wouldn't have a lot of year-round people there. But a lot of mainland communities – and it doesn't mean their fishermen are not great fishermen, and their people aren't great people – their community will survive without a fishing industry. The islands are dependent, not solely dependent, but mainly dependent on the commercial fishing industry.

CG: What has been a success with Long Island in the working waterfront?

ST: One of the big successes was convincing the town – and it wasn't a hard sell – to assume responsibility and ownership of the old state, wooden state wharf that was the ferry landing. We provided land to build the new ferry landing in a different location. The state built it. We took possession of the old one to maintain access for fishermen that don't live on the water. Even though we've kept our school open and maintained our year-round population, the reality is the cost of waterfront property on Casco Bay. Whether you're on the mainland or on an island, it's not cheap. So, the fishing industry is not as prevalent on the water as it was. We'd love to pass it down, generationally. I think a lot of people will. But if a fisherman happens to be on the water and passes on ourselves, sometimes there's too many family members to pick one to put it in. The value of the home is high enough that you can't stay. They have to buy the other ones out. So, maintaining that access point that your boat can get in, two boats, three boats at a time and load and unload traps was a big success.

CG: What has been a big challenge currently with your community?

ST: Two challenges, in my opinion, is the expense of the property. We are a desirable community. Most of us that are fishermen down there are multigenerational. We got there when it wasn't a desirable community. So, it's hard to realize that we're going to try to keep future generations on the island. It's going to be a struggle because the incomes from fishing aren't the same as the incomes from people that can buy it as a second home. That's a struggle. We try to figure out how we're going to do that. Some of the islands have done some sort of subsidy on working class housing. We have a project for it that hasn't gone anywhere. But it's a living. I love what I do. There are good years. There are bad years. But as this climate dynamic changes and the bulk of the lobster population shifts from the western part of the state to the eastern part of the state, the numbers aren't what they were. The price hasn't adjusted because the volume statewide is still higher than it used to be. When I started fishing, what's now Zone F for Cumberland County, landed nearly 50 percent of lobsters in the state. It's not quite there. It was at least 33 percent, some years, 50 percent. My island alone, with a handful of fishermen, when I started, was landing about 2.5 percent of the lobsters in the state. Our volume has not changed, although the volume in the state has gone up fourfold. So, the percentage is way down. So, that makes it hard to have the incomes to keep fishermen on the water and in the town. The other part is the City of Portland, even though we get along with them, the State of Maine has granted Casco Bay lines a monopoly to run from any port in Cumberland County to the town of Long Island. They run a really good ferry service. But when you get off that ferry on the mainland, you are on the Portland waterfront. You've got a parking garage with a five-year waiting list. Might be two now. It's still a waiting list. The parking spaces aren't transferable. You have to go on and wait for one to open up. If I sold my home, I can't sell my parking space on the mainland, with it. But there's not a lot of parking on the Portland waterfront. The City of Portland is not receptive to putting more. They want to get the parking just off the waterfront. They're talking about shuttling people to the ferry from a remote lot, which might be great if you're coming up Friday night to stay the weekend or the week. But if you're getting off the ferry at 7:15 a.m., Tuesday, to go teach in Scarborough – because we do have that ability. We are close enough that if you're willing to ride a ferry, forty-five minutes to an hour each way every morning and back, you can work on the mainland. But you can't if you've then got to take a half hour bus and do everything else. So, one of our biggest problems is Portland's working waterfront not accommodating the needs of the islanders. We're not part of the City of Portland.

Chebeague's part of the City of Portland. But they do have one, two, three, four of their own islands that have regular ferry service.

CG: Have you seen anybody seeing that the single fishery attitude might need to change? I know a couple of different aquaculture arms that are in Casco Bay. Is there anyone on Long Island that is looking into these alternative fisheries and alternate working waterfront opportunities?

ST: We currently have two aquaculturists working on kelp from the Town of Long Island. One is a lobsterman. One is the lobsterman's son who went into geology? I'm not sure. He's working mostly with power companies, but he's gone on a kelp farm. He's also a tuna fisherman. So, we've seen it. We'll probably have a few more soon. The problem that we have with aquaculture where we are is we are – our proximity to Portland has resulted in a major closure. So, we've got a line right down through the middle of the bay. Then it covers most of the town boundary on the backside of the island. We can harvest scallops out of there, but the aquaculturists don't want us. We can get a permit to grow kelp or grow scallops in there as an aquaculture. But the people buying don't really want to buy it from a place that's been designated as closed, even though the kelp and scallops will be fine because of what you're eating. But anyway, the other problem we have with aquaculture, because it's a great opportunity, is the limited amount of area we do have left is more controlled by the state than the town. We probably have four or five other current aquaculturist plans or applicants for the waters of the town of Long Island. They're coming off of the mainland to come down there because they've got to get outside of that boundary of the City of Portland and the mainland. They are taking up more of the spots. I think it's great that they're doing it, that they are getting into aquaculture. My problem with it is I think the state has too much control of the waters, the territorial waters of a community that's dependent on those waters to survive.

CG: What kind of relationship has the State of Maine with Long Island been like?

ST: I think our relationship with the state's fine. We have to work with the DEP on wharf permitting issues. We've worked with the Department of Transportation on ship grants and things. Our senator and representative, whichever way you agree or disagree with them politically, are there for events. They show up. They ask questions. I think most of the fishermen have a relationship with DMR that's civil, if not better. We have a high rate of participation in associations, management boards. So, I think our relationship with the state has been fine. I think the legislation we're working under is where we may have issues. I mean, we control the moorings in our town. We control the clam licenses in our town. But we don't control the aquaculture in our town.

CG: How has the National Working Waterfront Network supported you and your community and what kind of tools or information would you like to see come from them to help with working waterfront challenges?

ST: I don't think we've been harmed by anything the national working waterfronts have done. I'm not sure we've needed much help. We're pretty well-controlled on knowing we need the access. What I would like to see is a better understanding, not just of my island, but whether it's

Vinalhaven, Swan's Island, Isle au Haut, Islesboro, wherever, the understanding that we don't have bridges. So, we need access points. We need places to have vehicles when we get to the mainland. We don't have a regular car ferry service to an awful lot of these islands. So, if the feeling is you chose to live there, you deal with a lot that you've got, it's going to change. It's going to become a vacation community. So, I would hope that the National Working Waterfronts would understand that ferry service and accessibility for islanders is part of a working waterfront. It's important. We have a lot of people that would love to be on the water. I get it. I live on the water. But too often, the zoning is about what a municipality wants to happen and overlooks what's currently happening. There's displacement.

CG: Ela, did you have any questions?

Ela Keegan: No, I do not.

CG: Anything else you would like to add before we wrap up?

ST: No.

CG: All right. Thank you so much for your time. It is really...

EK: Thank you so much.

ST: You're welcome. I like doing it. Did we run long?

CG: No, it is perfect.

[end of transcript]