The Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit:
Connecting Decision-makers, Landowners, and Users with Information and Tools for Preserving and Enhancing our Nation's Working Waterfronts.

www.WaterAcessUS.com

The National Working Waterfront Network

Mission:

Increase the capacity of communities to make decisions, balance diverse uses, ensure access and plan for the future.

Objectives:

•Research, educate about, and celebrate WWFs;
•Provide access to information; and
•Strengthen a network of diverse partners.

Before I talk about the Toolkit, I wanted to start with a bit of background. First, what are these "working waterfronts" we are talking about? Working waterfronts are waterfront lands, waterfront infrastructure, and waterways that are used for a water-dependent activity, such as ports, small recreational boat harbors, fishing docks, and hundreds of other places across the country where people use and access the water.

The National Working Waterfront Network emerged from the discussions and activities of individuals and organizations working on waterfront access issues and participating in the the first two national Working Waterfronts and Waterways symposiums in 2007 in Norfolk, Virginia and in 2010 in Portland, Maine. A consensus was building that there was a need to engaged the issue on a national level. Working waterfront legislation was being introduced in Congress and participants wanted a mechanism for sharing information on tools and strategies for working waterfronts preservation. Although still operating informally, the NWWN is moving towards a more formal structure guided by the efforts of core group of organizations, including many Sea Grant programs. The NWWN's mission is to increase the capacity of communities to make decisions, balance diverse uses, ensure access, and plan for the future.

To achieve this goal, the NWWN conducts research and raises awareness about working waterfront issues through a variety of activities. Most recently, the NWWN held its third symposium in Tacoma, Washington. In 2010, a subcommittee of the NWWN successfully compete for funding from the Economic Development Administration to develop a Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit.

Toolkit Project Team

Island Institute (PI) – Nick Battista and Caitlin Cleaver

CEI – Hugh Cowperthwaite and Richard Clime

Florida Sea Grant – Bob Swett

Maine Sea Grant – Natalie Springuel and Kristen Grant

National Sea Grant Law Center – Stephanie Showalter Otts

Virginia Sea Grant – Lisa Lawrence

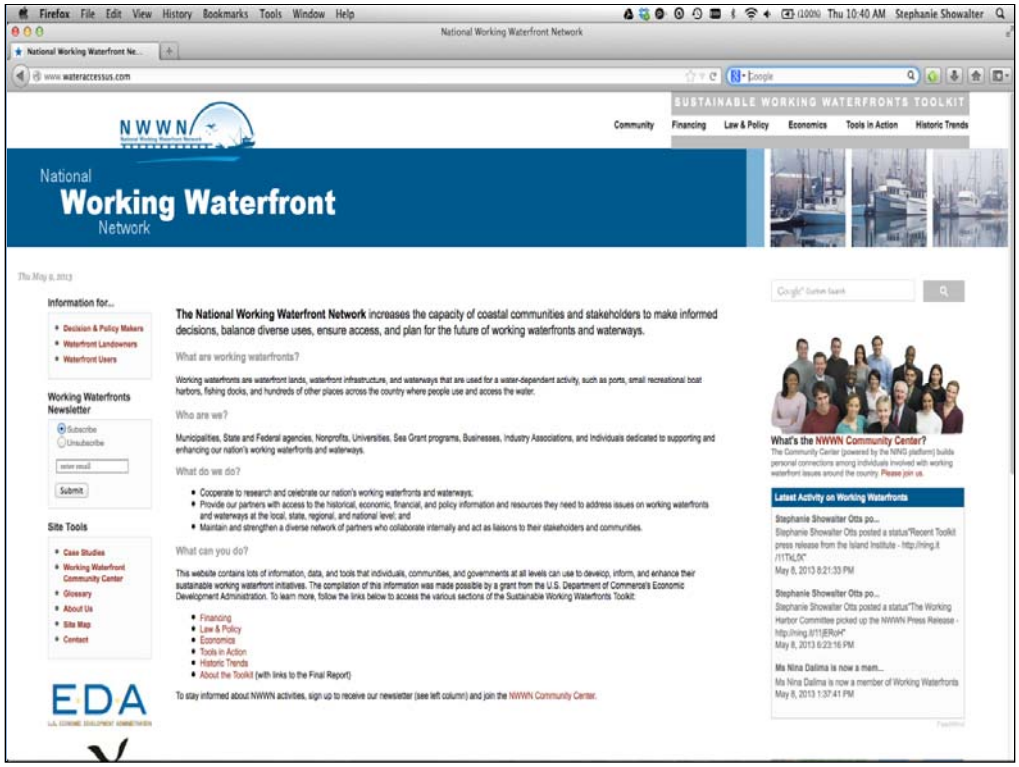
Urban Harbors Institute – Jack Wiggin

Recognize project partners.

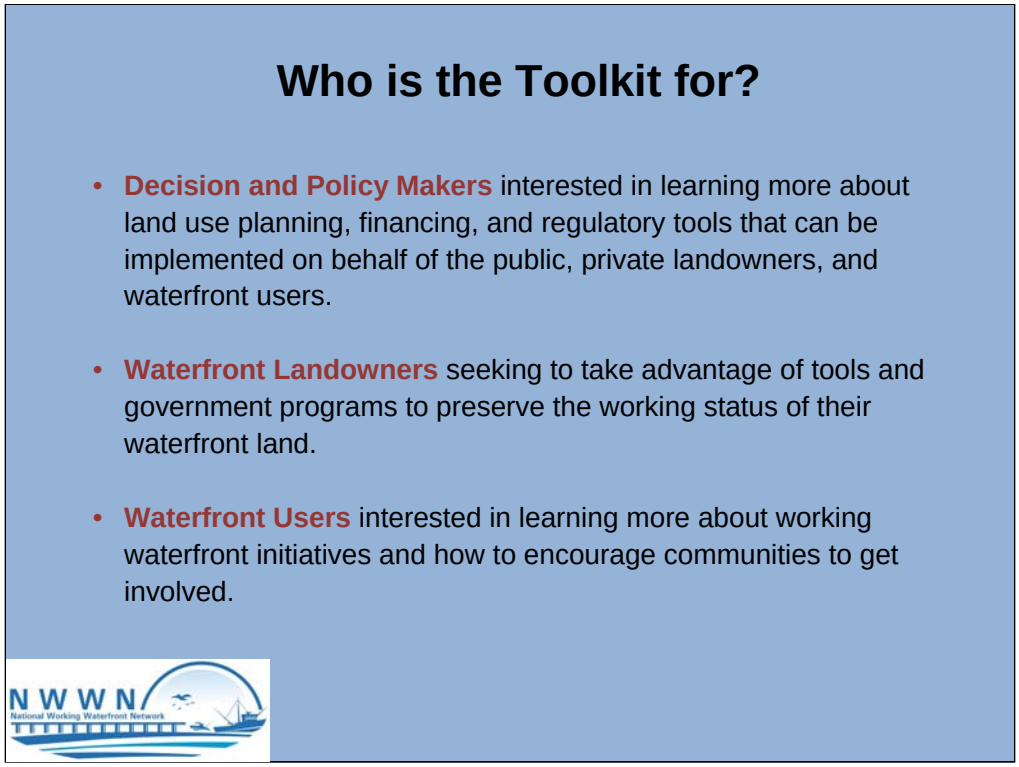
Working waterfronts are vitally important on a local, regional, and national scale. They are places where people live, work, and play. They contribute to the economy by facilitating shipping, fishing, and other commercial activities and thereby supporting the associated jobs. In many communities, they are a link to the past – a place to learn about, experience and remember our heritage, be it New Bedford whaling, San Francisco gold mining, or Leland, Michigan fishing. Working waterfronts play an important role in our nation's economy and in the culture of our nation's coastal communities.

In addition, because water has always been a means of transportation, working waterfronts are often interconnected within larger, complex systems such as the global supply chain. The conversion of a working waterfront to a non-water-dependent use, and the associated loss of access, can have ripple effects through these systems. For instance, after Hurricane Katrina, the number of public docking facilities decreased significantly resulting in a shift in seafood landings from Mississippi to Alabama. This shift increased the operating costs of Mississippi fishermen who now had to spend more on fuel and deprived Mississippi of the revenue from those landings.

When working waterfronts decline, our ocean and coastal economy loses on multiple levels: our national GDP declines, businesses and activities dependent upon these waterfronts cannot succeed, jobs are lost, access to the water is eliminated, the critical connection to shore-side markets and infrastructure vanishes, and the character of the home community or port suffers.



This is a screen shot of the homepage of the NWWN website. In addition to the Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit, the website contains the NWWN Community Center – a social networking site that is open to anyone interested in working waterfront issues.



When the project team began working on the Toolkit, we identified three groups who we believed were our primary audience – decision and policy makers, waterfronts landowners, and waterfront users. Why these three groups? Quite simply, we focused on the groups most likely to be impacted or with the ability, either through land ownership or governmental authority, to take action. We wanted the Toolkit to inform both private and public decision-making and provide a place to start for communities dealing with these issues.

Toolkit Contents

- A **historic overview** of trends and **drivers of change** in working waterfronts and water-dependent industries over time and today;
- An **economic analysis** of the U.S. ocean economy;
- A database of **financing tools** and descriptions of **law and policy tools** to increase the capacity of communities to preserve working waterfronts;
- Guidance for implementation including **case studies** and related resources.

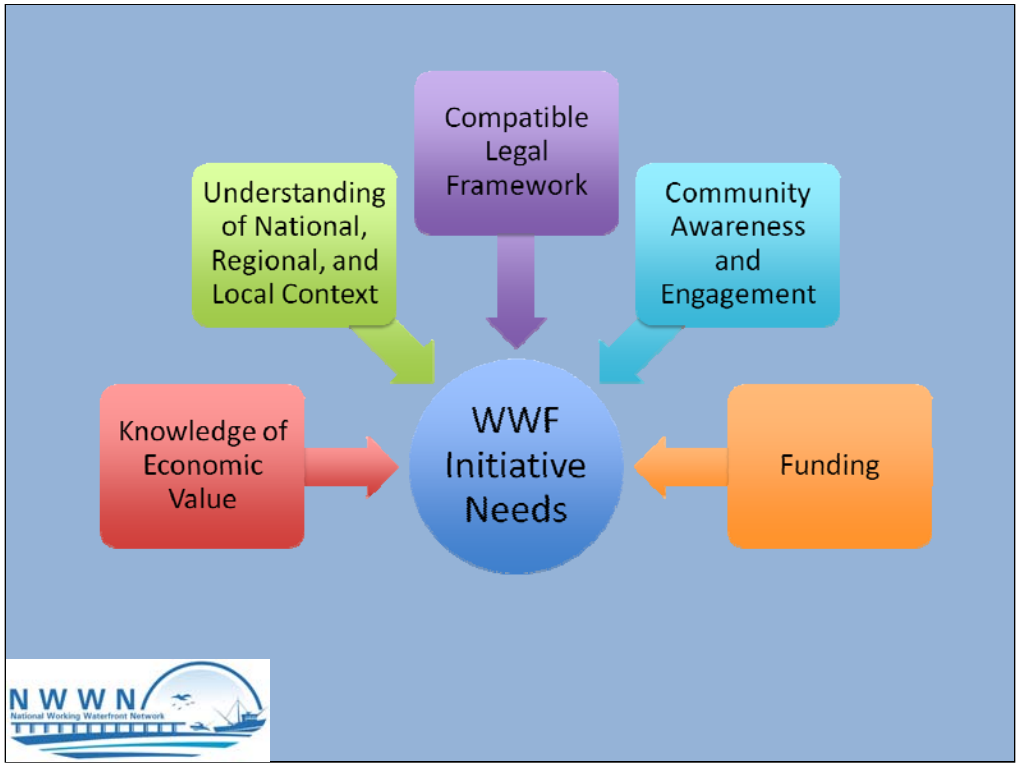
The Toolkit contains a wealth of information that can help individuals understand the economic importance of the waterfronts in their areas and the forces that are driving changes. A database of financing tools can help identify potential funding sources, and the law and policy pages provide ideas as to how laws, regulations, and policies can be used to support working waterfront initiatives. Finally, there are about twenty case studies that highlight how communities around the country have successfully implemented these tools to protect and enhance their working waterfronts.

We really envisioned the Toolkit was an educational tool. It's a place where people can come to learn about what's been done and make connections with people who have been successful, in order to make their vision a success. The case studies especially can be viewed as "road maps" to making things happen.

The continued sustainability of our working waterfronts is increasingly endangered by many factors including the following:

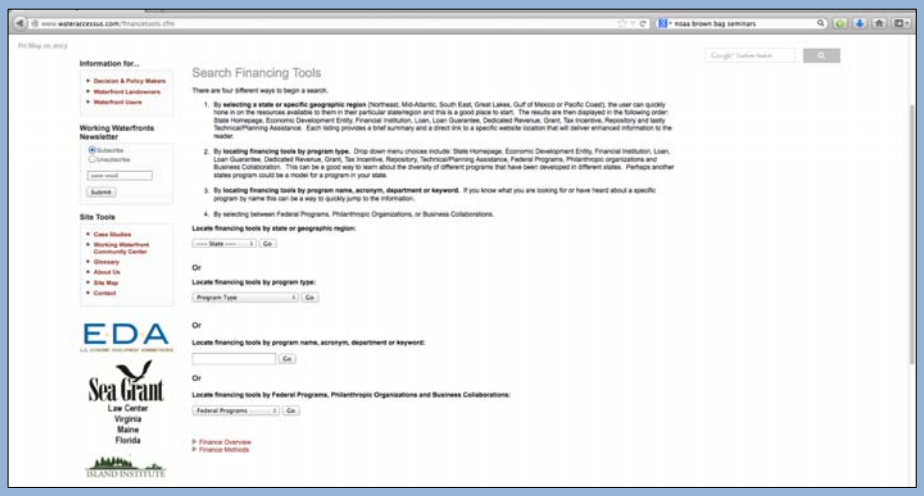
- Lack of community understanding of operational issues;
- Inadequate political support for necessary physical improvements, like dredging;
- Incessant pressure to convert waterfront property to non-water-dependent uses, residences, offices, stadiums, all of which generally have a far greater geographic range of locations than water-dependent uses; and
- Declining natural resources, such as certain fish stocks in some areas.

So, how can the Toolkit help?



Before launching a WWF initiative, and throughout its life, those involved need to know a lot about the working waterfronts in question to generate support for programs and to design effective policy and strategies. Knowledge of the economic value is essential to communicating the need to take action. To chose the right intervention, you need to know what national, regional, and local economic, social, environmental, and other forces are impacting a community's working waterfront. You need a legal and regulatory framework that is compatible with whatever strategy or policy you are trying to implement. The community, especially working waterfront landowners and users, must be aware of the issues and engaged in decision-making processes. Very few programs, whether public or private, can be implemented without money, so funding needs to be found somewhere.

Tap into Funding Resources



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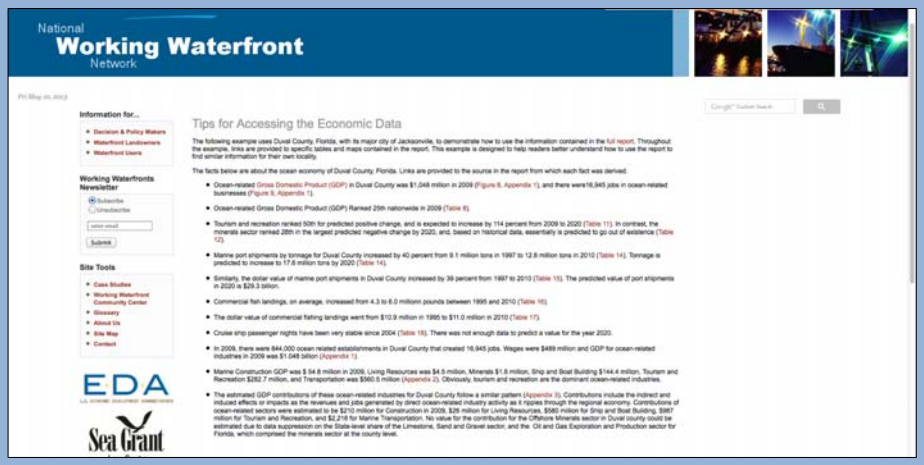
Here are just some examples of how the Toolkit can be used to address information needs. Visitors can learn how to tap into funding resources by searching the Financial Tools database.

Compile Facts About Your County's Ocean Economy



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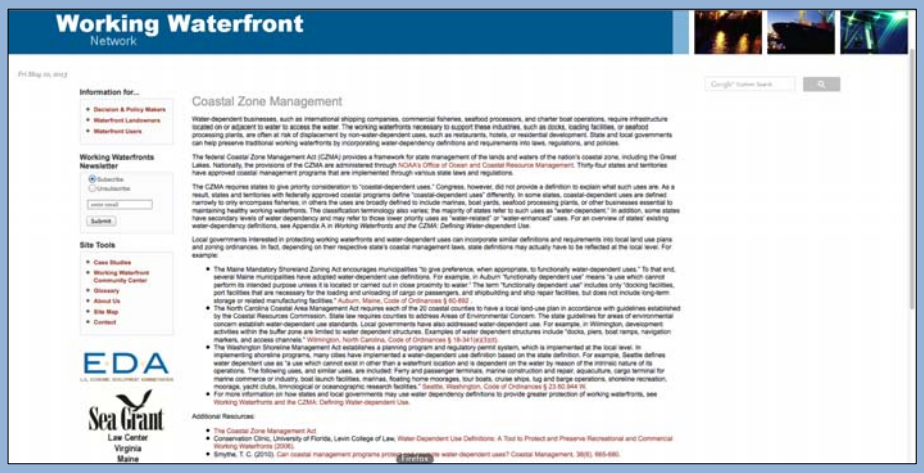
Strengthen an argument for action by incorporating state- or county-specific economic data.

Generate Ideas for Legal Reform



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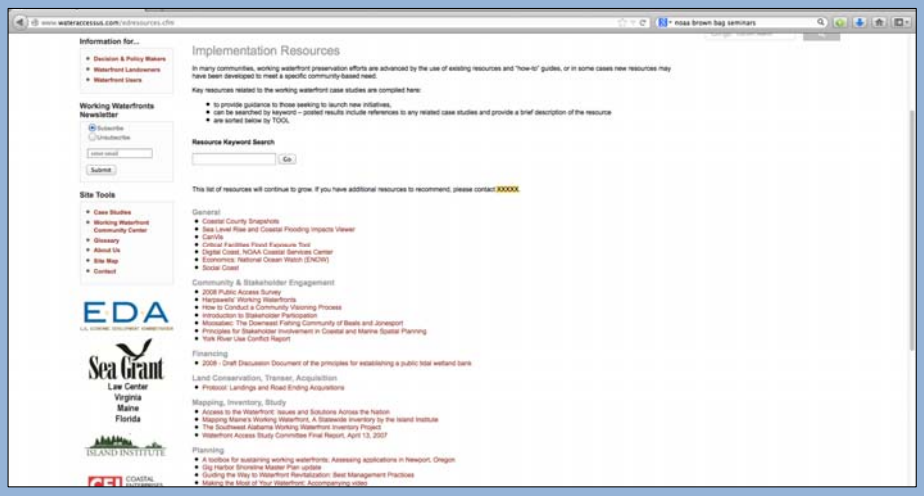
Provide ideas for legal reform, such as updating water dependency definitions.

Find “How To” Resources



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Find “how to” resources for engaging community members in working waterfront and similar initiatives.

Stay Tuned for More!

- Webinars
- Tips for Using Economic Data
- Additional Case Studies
- Further Research
- Symposiums

The NWWN subcommittees are currently planning a number of activities, including webinars and tips on how to effectively use the economic data. We hope to continue to add case studies to the website, and find finding to conduct future research. And, we hope to host our fourth symposium in a couple of years.

Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to learn more about the Toolkit. Please visit us on the web, join the NWWN and the Community Center, and get involved! I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.