March 2, 2023

What Goes Around, Comes Around - Thank Goodness

As we were doing a bit of house cleaning at MCCF and reminiscing over the changes in the last 20 years, we stumbled upon a Maine Fishermen’s Forum Program from 1994. As someone who has only missed two forums since the start, I was curious to read this gem just to see if I could recall any of the players and topics. What became obvious is that many of the issues in 1994 and today look very much the same. Certainly the conditions, species and technology have changed, but issues around resource decline, regulation that seems removed from the harvester, and an underlying woeful hand wringing really haven’t improved. Yet, I couldn’t help but feel excited and hopeful. For three reasons: 1) the Forum rises from the ashes of the 2-year Covid induced hiatus with renewed commitment, 2) It is always so great to catch up with the people I know and admire in this industry, and 3) mainly because it is the Eastern Maine Skippers Programs’ 10th opportunity for information exchange, networking, and demonstration of the next generation’s hope and engagement in keeping fishing a vital part of Maine’s coastal communities.

2012 was the first year for EMSP at the Forum. It was a kind of sea trial to see if this idea, created by teachers, school administrators, students and a handful of fishermen could generate any kind of interest in engaging the next generation of fishers by exposing them directly to the industry. What happened in that small room at the end of the main hall was beyond what any of us expected. It was standing room only! After some very nervous presentations from students on projects and knowledge exchange from five high schools over a 200 mile stretch of coast in Eastern Maine, the emotional and encouraging comments from parents, educators and, most importantly, fishermen was inspirational. In the years since, EMSP has been awarded a bigger room during prime time at the Forum (many thanks to Jenni Steele) and has continued to draw large numbers of fishermen, vendors, NGO’s and regulatory staff to talk with the students and have conversations about their approaches to real time issues and opportunities. Though challenging to get schools to give up a day and travel from the eastern end of Washington County, North Haven, Vinalhaven, and most communities in between, this gathering always leaves students excited, attendees impressed, and teachers very committed to this unique learning experience. This year, despite the stress that the pandemic caused schools, is shaping up to be another extraordinary showcase of Eastern Maine’s next generation of problem solvers and opportunity generators. Come check us out at the Maine Fishermen's Forum, Samoset in Rockland, Friday, March 3rd at 1:00pm. Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 207.367.2708. Learn more about MCCF by visiting us online at www.coastalfisheries.org

Prices to Harvesters
Lobsters - to boat $7.10/lb. Select $ 8.10/lb
Bait (rockfish) .80/lb
Fuel (diesel): $4.85/gal
Disclaimer: figures collected on 2/27/2023

Oceanographic Buoy I-01
44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W - Frenchboro
Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 42.49°F
Source: www.neracoos.org