

Rhode Island Commercial Fisheries Blueprint for Resilience Launch Event

May 7, 2018

Notes from the Next Generation Breakout Group

Moderator: Shayna Cohen

Participants: Shayna Cohen (Karen Karp & Partners), Laura Hastings (RI DLT / Real Jobs RI / Commercial Fishermen Registered Apprenticeship Program), Lisa Colburn (NEFSC Social Science Branch), Angela Silva (NEFSC contractor)

Goal: Recruit, train, and support the next generation of Rhode Island fishermen

The purpose of this breakout discussion is to come away with a clear understanding of:

- What do we need to do? (the key issues, barriers, next steps)
- How are we going to do it?
- Who needs to be involved?

Summary: The Next Generation breakout group was a small group with representation from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, the RI Department of Labor and Training, and Karen Karp & Partners food systems consultancy. The group felt that the issue of recruiting and supporting young fishermen already has some momentum, as seen in recent efforts to study and understand the “greying of the fleet” phenomenon across the country and in Rhode Island’s recent creation of a registered apprenticeship program for commercial fisheries. To continue this momentum, certain knowledge gaps need to be addressed. Specifically, it would help to know more about fishing boat crew in general (currently, no data is collected on crew), what aspects draw young people into fishing, and what kind of people are eager to enter this industry and likely to succeed in it. Understanding the “profile” of a successful young fishermen – particularly one without family roots in the industry – would help the fisheries support community learn how to better cultivate participation in the industry and set new fishermen up for success.

NOTES:

1. Current efforts:

- Research on the “graying of the fleet” and barriers to entry
- New research project – what’s bringing fishermen into the industry?
- The DLT and Commercial Fisheries Center of RI’s registered apprenticeship is a way to bring new people into the industry

2. Conditions that need to be in place to recruit the next generation:

- Fishermen with good business models and financial management skills
- Marketing the industry as one that has meaningful jobs that require diverse skills
- Exposure to the industry for people not born into it
- Education opportunities (New Bedford and Point Judith used to have high school fisheries programs, and URI had the two-year associates degree in fisheries technology; all of those dissolved)

3. What tools from the Blueprint for Resilience resonate?

- Lease-to-buy
- Programs getting people to the waterfront to see the industry, who wouldn’t ordinarily go there
- Small policy changes that are non-controversial like unemployment insurance, procurement policy

4. Next steps:

- There is momentum around this issue; we need to run with it
- Getting the word out to the public that this industry is an available work option
- Promote industry innovations, leverage social media to increase interest
- Leverage social science to show the young people who are succeeding now: what are they doing that’s different from what previous generations did?
- Social science has insufficient information about crew. Who are they? For workforce purposes and other policy purposes, it’s important to know
- More research on successful examples of young fishermen who are succeeding, and those who have transitioned (e.g., what is the profile of the successful young fisherman?)
- NEFSC: wants to do research that is more connected to the industry, not science in a vacuum; including research into this issue
- DLT wants to see a profile of who is entering or looking to enter the industry, to recruit for apprenticeship

- We need to get more people from industry into this working group
- RI has a fair number of first-generation fishermen; we need to talk to them to learn from their experiences
- We need to define career paths from crew to captain, and identify where the obstacles are: myths and realities