# Frenchman Bay Partners Steering Committee Meeting

# April 7, 2016 4-5:30

# Gordon’s Wharf

## Introductions

**Medea Steinman**, Friends of Taunton Bay, University of Maine at Machias

**Hannah Webber**, Schoodic Institute

**Alan Gray**, Friends of Taunton Bay

**Antonio Blasi**, Hancock County Commissioners, Schoodic Maine Guide

**Larry Libby**, Lamoine Conservation Commission

**Chris Petersen**, College of the Atlantic

**Fiona DeKoning**, Acadia Aqua Farms

**Anna Farrell**, MDI Biological Laboratory

**Jane Disney**, MDI Biological Laboratory

## Ways to talk about Rockweed

* Duncan will work with Anna to get a forum established on the Frenchman Bay Partners website so we can start getting questions from the meeting answered.
  + If things on the forum get less than pleasant, we’ll take the forum down.
* Anna will post the questions from the meeting on the website ASAP
  + Who will answer them?
  + Not necessary to answer every question
  + Use the forum to get some questions answered from a variety of people.
  + Quickly answer the easily answerable ones to lay a foundation about what we know, etc.
  + For an initial sort, we’ll put the questions on a Google Doc, and let a select group of individuals who are willing to answer questions go through them and answer what they can. Answers will be posted as we acquire them.
* Kudos to Natalie for being an amazing facilitator!

## Rockweed proposal to the full membership at the Annual Meeting

* We discussed the language around how rockweed will be incorporated as a conservation target.
* Should we add rockweed to our list of conservation targets? Or should we incorporate it into an intertidal (mudflat) target?
* If it’s a fifth target, is it limited to rockweed? Or does it incorporate all seaweeds?
  + We can decide!
  + Rockweed already incorporates a lot of species because it’s such a diverse habitat and includes a lot of our targets (i.e. mudflats, diadromous fishes, benthic habitats).
    - These include species that are important ecologically and commercially.
* What are some rockweed projects we can begin immediately?
  + Using citizen science to measure rockweed around Frenchman Bay.
    - At Schoodic Institute, they measure rockweed every year (following a standard protocol). Schoodic has been doing this for two years.
    - Ascophyllum on the far side of Schoodic is at least 13 years old.
    - Protocols are simple and straightforward.
    - Hannah recommends starting the project with school groups at town landings.
  + When you cut rockweed to 16”, how many years do you cut off? The answer would tell you something about how many years you want to wait to cut that resource again. Growth rate in the upper bay might be different from out at Schoodic. The citizen science project could involve setting up different sectors, studying them, and coming up with different recommendations for the area.
    - Identify areas we would like in conservation
    - We already know there are big variations even locally.
    - Someone at Unity College did a study on rockweed regrowth. Hannah is willing to contact her.
* What are the legal implications of the Supreme Court decision (if rockweed is designated as a fishery or not)?
  + Rockweed harvesting in Maine might be a small industry now, but what about the future?
  + Generally, landowners prefer conservation related holdings to remain in the public trust because they’re regulated by an agency. However, with rockweed, they don’t appear want the resource in the public trust. Perhaps they don’t trust the state to regulate it.
  + Cost of regulatory work in Canada must be crazy high.
  + If it is decided that fishing does not include rockweed, and that resources in the intertidal are not included in the public trust, that might make some people really uneasy.
* What about storm damage? How does harvesting change the natural equilibrium?
  + Whenever you harvest, the average biomass will decrease. It's about finding the level that keeps the biomass from decreasing past a critical level.
    - When you do that amount of harvesting, it must change something about the organisms, but if x species has gone down by x %, does it really fundamentally change the community? Where is the point to worry about how the community is changing (not a science question per se)?
    - Correlation does not always imply causation.
  + Architecture of the rockweed forest. What are the long term changes? What is the significance of those changes? What does that mean for the community?
    - Harvest may change the architecture in a way that scour doesn't.
* All this is a good argument for conservation. If we don’t know what harvesting does to rockweed, we should practice the “first no harm” principle.
  + We might set up a scenario where there is a balance between rockweed that is harvested and not harvested, negotiating local deals.
  + We’ve heard smaller groups have been unsuccessful in negotiations with companies like Acadian Seaplants. Could a larger coalition succeed where smaller groups haven’t?
* Do we have a commercially harvestable amount of rockweed in the area?
  + In Gouldsboro Bay for sure.
  + Is what we have in Frenchman Bay commercially harvestable? If it isn’t, the threat motivation will be much less (can take the heat out of it).
  + Shipping lobsters and oysters typically involves rockweed. To what extent? How is it harvested? We don’t know.
    - We could attend a Zone B lobster meeting, learn how they harvest rockweed, and talk about the importance of leaving enough rockweed.
* What are the timeline trends for the rockweed harvesting, and how do they compare to other fisheries?
* Conservation Action Planning process means learning about the target first, identifying threats, setting goals around that, and then taking action.
  + Bridge between conservation and industry.
* We need someone to write the language to take to the meeting. Ask Emma Fox to help out.
  + Revision of the Frenchman Bay Plan will take a few meetings.
  + Possible language could be: “Rockweed is important both ecologically and economically and is worth consideration of being a conservation target. As we spend the next year figuring out the goals and targets we’ve already identified, there are some obvious beginning things we’re going to do such as [citizen science, etc], so we can get out in the field immediately, get people involved, etc.”
  + Who will lead this? At the annual meeting, we will invite anyone who is interested to come over and join the rockweed committee.
  + “We will identify a champion for it” …who knows who it will be?
    - Schoodic Institute? Heading a committee leads to funding opportunities!
    - Conservation targets pull together people who are engaged in the target, and the people form project based committees.
  + Come up with some language and share with the steering committee.
* As we move forward, are there any things we need to be aware of that would get us into places we don’t want to be?
  + Get clarity around edible industry. We have a lot of seaweed harvesters.
  + Talk to them about how much they use Frenchman Bay for resources.
  + There are different components to different seaweeds.
* At the Annual Meeting, we’ll gather the full membership’s opinions on questions such as:
  + Should the proposal be just about rockweed or should it include all intertidal algae?

## ESV Decision Support Tool

* Margaret Snell and Emma Fox are looking at all the decision support tools that are out there in terms of their ability to engage stakeholders. How well do they work when you engage a large variety of stakeholders in the process?
  + They’re going to make a recommendation based on their research.
* We’ll bring together a group of people to identify priorities and value around rockweed. When we engage with industry, we’ll be able to bring a collective prioritization of what we value.
  + Probably an event in late Fall 2016 or maybe early 2017
  + Hopefully it’ll be an online tool
* Through the process of Ecosystem Services Valuation, we gain more information, and people’s opinions change as they revisit earlier opinions.

## Annual Meeting

* Location: Gates Center at COA
* Dates: May 7th or 21st. 21st is also World Fish Migration Day.
* Time: 9-12 pm
* Format:
  + Potluck lunch after morning events.
  + Committees will report out on what they did over the past year.
    - Maybe one person can give a quick overview of all the targets.
    - Mini breakout sessions so people can ask questions and interact with current targets and projects.
  + We can explain the Conservation Action Planning process: We have a Conservation Action Plan; this is why, and this is what it does. Here’s how it’s been working (four current targets), and here is how it can work for rockweed.
  + We’ll devote the largest amount of time to continuing the rockweed conversation.
* Float an agenda past the Steering Committee

## Meeting Adjourned