

Conference sets its sights on working waterfronts

Mix of innovation, tradition explored

Participants, panelists and speakers shared best practices and strategies to keep the nation's working waterfronts afloat and thriving at the third National Working Waterfronts and Waterways Symposium beginning on March 26, in Tacoma, Wash.

The goal of the three-day conference, sponsored by Washington and Oregon Sea Grant, was to find ways to preserve traditional waterfront uses while making way for innovation. The conference's last day was geared toward setting an agenda for the National Working Waterfront Network.

Challenges facing traditional-use advocates of the nation's ports include development, zoning, climatic shifts and new federal flood insurance maps that propose changing the status of many ports to V zones — the highest risk

flood areas. This new designation will significantly hike flood insurance rates and require many properties to raise their first floors by 10 to 20 feet.

However, some towns, including Apalachicola Bay, Fla., are fighting the adjustment. They say their waterfronts will essentially be declared unusable space if the maps are approved as proposed.

"Once you get to the waterfront, everything gets squeezed," said Joshua Berger, skipper of the Sound Experience schooner *Adventuress* in Washington's Puget Sound, recognizing the limited resources that must accommodate a wide range of uses.

Participants covered the spectrum of waterfront stakeholders and offered so-



Fisher-poet David Densmore performs at a banquet celebrating the nation's working waterfronts in March.

lutions, including coalition building by engaging the public with the history and heritage of our working waterfronts, promoting sustainable seafood, establishing long-term strategies for economic development and adaptation, and taking advantage of financial tools like government grants.

— Jessica Hathaway

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