

# Bonne Bay Fishery-Tourism Forum, June 13, 2010

## Meeting Report



## 1. Introduction

1.1 The meeting was held at the Town Hall in Norris Point, NL on 13 June 2010 and moderated by **Barbara Neis**, Principal Investigator for the Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance (CURRA), and MUN Sociology Professor.

1.2 It was attended by 28 participants, including the organizers and technician Gary Wilton.

1.3 Anita Best, CURRA community coordinator, welcomed the participants and thanked the Department of Innovation Trade and Rural Development and the Rural Secretariat for their financial and logistical support. She also thanked the members of the steering committee who had helped to organize the Forum. Anita mentioned the different projects the CURRA is involved with on the west coast of Newfoundland and drew people's attention to the CURRA website [http://www.curra.ca/about\\_us.htm](http://www.curra.ca/about_us.htm). She then went over the agenda for the Forum, noting the unfortunate but unavoidable absence of Phil Barnes of the Fogo Island Co-op and the fact that Andrea Maunder, from Bacalao Restaurant, would be conducting her presentation via Skype. Best also mentioned that Transport Canada had been invited to be part of the Question-Answer panel, but had not found a representative to send to the forum.

## 2. Background

2.1 **Joan Cranston**, the co-ordinator of *Bonne Bay: A Treasure and a Resource*, a series of public meetings and linked workshop supported by the CURRA that took place in Norris Point and Woody Point October 27-29, 2009, set the context for the Fisheries and Tourism workshop. She explained that the *Treasure and Resource* events brought together a broad range of stakeholders from all of the Bonne Bay communities from Trout River to Rocky Harbour, and from the fishery, tourism and multiple agencies with a mandate relevant to the future of Bonne Bay. Their main purpose was to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bonne Bay Marine Station and to explore how the Bay had been used in the past, how things had changed, and to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the future. The hope was that by bringing all of these parties together, the opportunities could be enhanced and the challenges overcome.

Bonne Bay is no longer only a source of food and fishery livelihoods. In addition to these, it is recognised as a unique but fragile marine environment, a tourism destination, and a beautiful area in which to live. The *Treasure and Resource* workshop focused on four main areas: i) Governance of the Bay and surrounding communities; ii) Ocean-based and Shared Activities, Safety and Marine Emergency Response; iii) Food Security; and, iv) Fisheries and Tourism. The recommendation to host this Fisheries and Tourism Forum arose from the *Treasure and Resource* Workshop. The main purpose of the Forum is to continue discussions started last October about ways people in these two industries and the agencies supporting and regulating them could work closer together in the future for the benefit of both. The forum has been designed both to provide information on programs and regulations relevant to breaking down barriers and promoting synergies between the two sectors *and* to create a forum where new ideas about future collaborations that might work in Bonne Bay can be spawned. The fishery is central to

the way of life of our communities and is vital to our tourism industry. The tourism industry brings people and wealth to the region and helps to sustain our communities and has the potential to better support fish harvesters and others dependent on the fishery. We are looking for ways fish harvesters of the area might augment their incomes (which are often too low to sustain their enterprises) and for ways tourism operators might collaborate with those in the fishery to offer authentic and interesting experiences for their clientele including fresh, healthy seafood and access to the unique culture and experience in our fishing industry.

### **3. Presentations**

#### **3.1 Juanita Keel-Ryan, Director of Tourism Product Development Division, Department of Tourism**

In her presentation “Uncommon potential” Keel-Ryan presented her department’s vision for the next several years: their objective is to double tourism revenues for Newfoundland and Labrador. She explained that tourism development includes marketing, advertising and promotion. Visitors are attracted to Newfoundland and Labrador by the advertising but once they get here they experience what is on the ground. The Product Development branch of the department is responsible for licensing tourism establishments, tourism legislation, outfitting activities.

Juanita identified 7 strategic directions for her department:

1. private and public leadership
2. setting up a tourism development board
3. sustainable transportation- Marine Atlantic, roadways
4. signage issues
5. market intelligence and research (including developing an exit survey and appointing a new director of tourism research;
6. product development innovation- tourism technology, marketing our brand and,
7. developing our workforce.

She stated that her department was supporting a lot of training and skills development to improve the human resources capacity in tourism in the province.

Our visitors appreciate the understated beauty of both natural and cultural environments and they try to keep a foot in both worlds when they explore destinations in Newfoundland and Labrador. From a fishery-tourism perspective there is work to be done to help them balance these worlds. For instance, right now no fishplant in the province will conduct tours for visitors in part because of concerns about insurance and health and safety. Visitors have indicated that they would like to see how fish is caught and processed, but current legislation is not amenable to this happening. There is demand from tourists to accompany fishers on their boats and to be allowed to catch fish and have it for their dinners. So, the

opportunity and demand exist for stronger links between tourism and fisheries but work needs to be done by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and fish harvesters to lobby for a change in the regulation. What tourists remember are things like meeting people on the wharf, speaking with them and learning about their lifestyles; participating in a small way in their lives. She gave as an example speaking to a Petty Harbour fisherman while he was splitting a cod on his wharf and the interesting experience of place that produced. On that occasion he told the group of visitors about the cod ear bones that were used in jewellery-making and about the swim bladder (sound) that allows the cod to rise from deep water to shallow water without perishing. It was memorable for many of the group because it was something they could only experience in that place at that time.

From the Ocean to the Table, visitors want the whole experience:

- The catch                      Hands-on participation, meeting the fishers
- The process                    Working with fishers, gutting and cleaning fish, learning about fish
- The story                        Hearing tales from the sea
- The table                        Preparing a meal, tasting a well-prepared meal in a fine restaurant

They want to be part of it; they want to know the process, and they don't mind getting their hands dirty. There is also a culinary component to this kind of experiential tourism, especially with lobster and crab. Chefs could be part of the process by taking the seafood the visitors helped to catch and helped to process or watching being processed and helping them wrap up the day by preparing a lovely meal for them with that food. The experience could be an entire day that would take visitors from going out on the ocean to going to bed at night. The traditional process (catch, clean, eat) will work better than the modern process (catch, offload, process, package, ship, buy).

However, it will take a while for all of these things to build. It will require an investment in time and human resources and will need interest and buy-in. It will require high level engagement from fish harvesters and processors to develop a quality service- to get a benefit for the people who live here. Marketing should perhaps focus more on fishing communities and their work than just the scenery of Gros Morne. Tourism is all about profit, jobs and economic development at the end of the day, and can be a means to preserve rural-based communities and culture. We all need to find the right fit between fisheries and tourism; we have to work together with the government departments from both levels. Eventually, this could help to preserve the cultural integrity of the region, make the sites and programs come alive again.

The 10-year vision for the future of the department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation is to double the annual tourism revenue; fishery tourism can help achieve that. There is a real opportunity here to do something with the fishery and tourism combination; to blend both together. The goals must be:

- Respecting local culture
- Finding a fit between community and tourism
- Preserving cultural integrity
- High quality products and experiences
- Sustainable jobs

### 3.2 Presentation by Sam Elliott, Executive Director, St. Anthony Basin Resources Incorporated (SABRI)

SABRI started in 1997. It was formed when northern shrimp quotas were increased and people in the area had the idea to use a shrimp quota to expand the region's economic base. The 15-member board formed back then included 5 fish harvesters, four representatives from the communities, four representatives from the plants, one from the St. Anthony Chamber of Commerce and one from Rising Sun Developers. They developed a 15-year agreement with Clearwater: to catch the quota and pay SABRI a 15% royalty, with the stipulation that they would have to hire fish harvesters from area. SABRI owns 25% of the crab/shrimp plant in St. Anthony, it has 3 full-time employees and manages a mussel farm that employs three seasonal aquaculture workers.

SABRI does a lot of fishery development work with small boat fishermen and plant workers in the region. They have their own fishermen's committee which has come up with initiatives such as the construction of a big cold storage facility. They were hoping more factory freezer trawlers would use the facilities to off-load their industrial shrimp with the hope that local plants could process the frozen industrial shrimp in the first part of the season and then go to fresh shrimp at the end of the season. In 2009, they helped out small boat fishermen by putting \$21,000 into bait for local fishermen, a great benefit to fish harvesters, plant workers, and the whole community through economic spinoffs.

SABRI contributes \$2,500 a year to the St. Anthony port authority to assist with costs associated with keeping the harbour ice-free. They partnered with DFA to complete the final year of science work on the feasibility and viability of a sea cucumber fishery in the region. This showed that there appears to be enough resource there to support a couple of harvesters. Another project, the toad crab fishery, has not been active for awhile. Early on, SABRI invested money in that fishery. They bought pots and put \$18,000 into trucking to Valleyfield, Bonavista Bay, because there were no processors on the Northern Peninsula.

SABRI has a partnership with the Eagle River Credit Union and NORTIP that allows the Credit Union to offer low interest loans to fishermen- up to a maximum of \$20,000. This is a big help to fishermen who do not have a large enough enterprise to get loans from their own financial institutions.

SABRI partnered with DFA in 2009 after most of the plants in their area stopped processing cod because of the scarcity/glut situation they found themselves in. The local plants found it was difficult to hire plant workers in such a volatile environment where there was no continuity of supply. Workers would be called when the fish came, work until it was processed and then be laid off again, involving owners in overtime costs and other overhead they couldn't reclaim. In addition, the individual harvester with the quota was not making much money for his catch.

SABRI came up with the idea that the way to solve this was for the individual harvester to become the primary processor of the fish. When fishermen involved in this project catch their cod they gut it, split it, put it in salt. They do that right on their boats, and when each tub is full, they seal and date it. Each individual then brings the tubs of salted fish to the plant, where he sells it for a higher price, and where

it can be eventually finished off by plant staff working normal hours. This way, the harvester gets a reasonable return for his fish and the plant reduces its overhead. Quality control is guaranteed because each harvester's name and information is printed on each tub. The fish is processed directly in the boat with no unnecessary handling.

This program was successful in its first year with several harvesters trying out the pilot project. SABRI is currently working on identifying some niche markets for the salt cod, and will eventually involve more harvesters in the area. Sam also mentioned the possibility of using Japanese traps to hold cod alive and remove it only as needed for fresh sale or salt curing.

It is with small projects like these that small communities can hope to maintain a fishery and keep their fishermen gainfully employed throughout the various fishing seasons.

SABRI is interested in more than the fishery. They have invested 15.7 million in infrastructure, \$190,000 in scholarships, and \$500,000 in community development in the region, in addition to directly employing more than 225 individuals from the area. During the past few years they have seeded a project that turned into 1.4 million dollar tourism-trails project in the region, which will be clewed up this year.

### **3.3 Presentation by Sheila Earle, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Federation of Co-ops**

Sheila Earle introduced herself as a member of the Department of Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development (INTRD), and explained how the Dept. of INTRD became involved with the NL Federation of Co-operatives through a request from a group of craftspeople on the south side of Bonne Bay.

Sheila's presentation spoke of the co-operative development regional network formed in the province. She talked about the links between the Federation of Co-operatives and the INTRD and their purpose to support co-ops for fishery, aquaculture, services, and other types of for-profit and non-profit enterprises. She believes that a fishery-tourism co-op is a great idea for the Bonne Bay area and can see that in the future such a co-operative could be a way for tourism operators and fish harvesters to come together. Such an approach may not sustain the community on its own, but would help sustain the local fishery, help tourism prosper and contribute to the general sustainability of the region.

Sheila presented Information on the purpose of co-operatives, how they are formed, and gave examples of successful co-ops operating in Newfoundland and Labrador. Focussing on fishery co-operatives, she outlined the primary aspects:

- A fishery co-op is owned by members that use its services.
- A fishery co-operative is a business; its primary focus is the delivery of services.
- It requires start-up capital as equity and generates revenue to cover its costs.

It distributes profits back to its owners, but can retain profits for the future needs-of the business.

It is not based on amount invested, but rather on overall revenue.

Fishery co-ops operating in Newfoundland communities include Petty Harbour and Fogo Island fisher co-ops, Northeast Coast Sealers' Co-op, Torngat Fisheries Co-op, Rising Sun Fishermen's Co-op, Ramea Co-op. Some are very active, some struggle; they are similar to regular businesses.

If Bonne Bay tourism and fishery entrepreneurs want to start a co-op, they would need to make investments or shares to start the company. The co-op would need a minimum of 3 people or companies to start. The investors are the owners/operators; this could include primary harvesters, processors, purchasers, consumers, fishery organizations, tourism operators, and so forth.

Co-ops are legally incorporated, they may hold licenses, borrow money, and sign contracts. They have limited liability for their owners. They pay business taxes, and like any business, their goal is business self-sufficiency. Members invest in the co-op and own it; each member has a single vote. The primary goal is quality services; profit generation is secondary. Shares do not appreciate in value; profits are returned to members based on use of co-op services.

Fishery co-ops are unique business models. Fishery co-ops can lower costs and increase profits for members through collective purchasing, shared facilities, joint processing arrangements, volume marketing, joint branding, stable sales and pricing, consistency of supply and sharing of ideas on how to generate the revenue.

Fishery co-ops are created under legislation by the provincial government. They have incorporation requirements, governance/voting procedures. The legislation covers rights of members, financial management, audit and disclosure regulations, regulations concerning pay-out of surpluses (profits) and wind-up and receivership. Membership is flexible and may increase/decrease over time.

Sheila suggested that the reason why the co-op model is successful is that members benefit directly from services, they have members' support and trust; there are generally good communications and opportunities for member input; there is a knowledgeable board of directors, quality management and staff committed to self sufficiency. There is collective ownership and control; members have a say in business operations; decisions are made locally in the interests of members; investment is shared, thereby reducing costs for members; members share services (equipment, storage, processing facilities) and profits based on the use of co-op services.

She also touched on a new initiative of the Federation of Co-ops- Advocate Youth Services. In Baie Verte a youth co-op provided services for seniors, held tea parties and bake sales and raised money to build a playground. This brought the community together as a whole; the youth had more respect for the seniors and the seniors saw another side of the community's youth. The co-op has a succession plan in place to ensure that when the present members leave the community or come of age that there are younger members behind them. This type of initiative might work to encourage recruitment into the fishery of young people, a problem that was strongly identified by local fish harvesters.

Sheila suggested that in considering the formation of a new co-op people would need to establish a steering committee to lead the process. They would need to hold co-op orientation workshops, which the federation would be happy to help plan and present. The steering committee would also have to

conduct an initial assessment of business feasibility requirements and determine the potential for member interest, after which a business plan and specific by-laws would have to be created. The Federation would assist in preparing this information.

Sheila outlined the following resources available to community groups interested in investigating the feasibility of a community co-op:

1. Development Support Services
  - a. INTRD/NLFC- Co-op Zone- Regional co-op developer's network
2. Federation of Co-ops
  - a. Co-op development training modules
  - b. Coop equity investment fund- max 30K- requires matched funding
  - c. research and information services
3. INTRD Community Capacity Building program
4. Agriculture Canada
  - a. Co-op development initiative CDI- grants for innovative co-op projects up to 75K per annum
5. WS Briefs: funding available to form youth co-ops as well

### **3.4 Presentation by Anita Best, Community Coordinator, CURRA Project on the Idea for a Waterfront Festival in Bonne Bay**

At the Bonne Bay meeting in October there was some talk about organizing a Waterfront Festival in Woody Point- Norris Point. Anita's presentation introduced participants to the website for the New Bedford Massachusetts Waterfront Festival. That festival is an annual event celebrating commercial fishing, America's oldest industry. The festival takes place on the waterfront in New Bedford, the largest fishing port in the USA. It takes place around the end of the tourist season, so it is not primarily a tourist event but rather a celebration of the occupation of fishing and the impact it has on the community's economy, culture and social organization.

The Waterfront Festival is funded by several organizations: the fishermen's associations, trade unions, trade associations, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Fishing supply companies have a large presence at the festival, with displays of fishing equipment, engines, boat prototypes appearing alongside arts and craft displays. The municipality of New Bedford is involved and offers free admission to most events. It is a family festival, with all kinds of activities for children, including much involvement beforehand with the city's schools. One of the favourite displays is the long banner that outlines the waterfront area fences, consisting of marine drawings and paintings done by hundreds of local elementary school children.

On the schedule page of the web site there is a map of all the locations on the waterfront and the events scheduled in each location. There is a concert stage, a large tent that can seat 150-200 people,



and a myriad of smaller tents where visitors can watch films, attend poetry readings, learn to mend nets or tie knots, try delicious local seafood recipes, hear storytellers and ballad-singers, and purchase artworks and crafts. There are boats anchored along the pier; visitors can go aboard and see the trawlers and smaller vessels.

The former *Effie M. Morrissey*, the vessel used by Captain Bob Bartlett of Brigus, is anchored there. It is currently designated by the United States Department of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark as part of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, right on the waterfront. You can see her name underneath the new name *Ernestina* painted on top. You may read about the history of this vessel on Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effie\\_M.\\_Morrissey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effie_M._Morrissey).

During the Festival all kinds of things happen out on the waterfront: shanty-singing, storytelling, authors who write about their work fishing, or their adventures at sea are there to read and discuss with the audience and the next generation of fishers. Young people talk about their experiences as novices in the fishery including, for instance, young women who fish in Alaska. There are also native people from other areas- aboriginal people, who talk about native fishing and farming in their regions. There is a farmers' market where you can buy local produce and homemade bread, cream, eggs, salt fish and sausages. There is an entire area for demonstrations of how to prepare seafood that run all day long, with chefs preparing food from different cultures and local women and men showing you how to cook their favourite recipes and giving out samples at the end of the demonstrations. Portuguese dishes are very popular; people line up to get a taste of a traditional seafood dish. The demonstrations are being videoed at the same time and shown later on the community television channels. Visitors can copy down the recipes: Spanish food, Mexican food sometimes Louisiana Cajun dishes. The cook is usually a local person, not often a professional chef, just an ordinary housewife cooking in her own unique way, demonstrating her family recipes.

There are exhibitors, both corporate and artistic; most of the themes are sea-related or marine-related. One of the large sponsors is the US equivalent of IMP in Newfoundland. They put on a trade show on the wharf, displaying innovations in cod trap technology, crab pot technology, and fishing clothing. Thousands of people go through each day. Non-profit exhibitors, such as community development organizations, fishermen's organizations, line the wharves in little tents, giving out brochures and information about their organizations and conducting various demonstrations (CPR for drowning). There are ongoing coast guard search and rescue demonstrations in the harbour and on the piers, with the Coast Guard members passing out information about their search-and-rescue activities and their daily work.

The artists who are brought in to perform usually are musicians and singers who sing about the sea and life on the sea, shanty-singers and folk trios. The local Portuguese community brings in *fado* singers and other artists who perform traditional Portuguese songs and dances. There is a strong Cajun music showing from Louisiana fishing ports. Films and videos about the sea and fishing, including environmental issues and political struggles, can be watched all day in the film tent, with intermittent panel discussions between the filmmakers and the audience, usually of working fish harvesters.

Best suggested that a major Festival such as this could be a goal to be worked toward, starting with a small community-based effort in Bonne Bay, if there is enough interest, and gradually building to a grander celebration over a number of years. A fall festival could be a companion to the Trails Tales and Tunes Festival which takes place in the spring. Local involvement would be necessary, on both sides of Bonne Bay, to make sure that the entire Bay is included. Right now we have small farmers' markets and some local homemade culinary and craft products that could be sold. There are local musicians, crafters and artists that could be involved. NIFCO and NFB films could be shown at the Bonne Bay Marine Station, which could also host scientific talks and discussions related to research that is and has been done in the area. There are restaurants and accommodations on both sides of the Bay that could benefit from the spin-offs of such a festival, including the local water-shuttle operator. Obtaining the necessary permissions to sell and/or process seafood at such an event may be a challenge for harvesters and tourism operators to confront.

The web site for the Working Waterfront Festival is: <http://www.workingwaterfrontfestival.org/>. The 2010 Festival takes place on September 25 and 26.

### 3.5 Andrea Maunder, Chef/Restaurant Presentation

Andrea Maunder joined the meeting via *Skype* from her restaurant in Clarendville. She spoke of her restaurant Bacalao in St. John's. Bacalao is three years old, and is managed by Andrea and her husband, who is the chef. The whole concept of Bacalao developed from the idea of trying to use only local ingredients of the highest quality to provide a unique dining experience for visitors and local residents. They noticed that no one was doing an "upscale version of NL food relying almost completely on local produce and product" and knew that this concept was a winner in many other cities. They source as much as they can from local suppliers and import what they cannot get locally. As of this past June Bacalao was the only restaurant in St. John's able to offer cod pot cod, a product of a Fogo Island co-operative. This is high quality fish, still alive in the pot when brought to the surface, bled immediately, gutted and processed. The fishermen are able to get a higher price for this fish and our customers are happy to pay more because they recognize that the quality is higher. It is a win-win situation. Also, there is no damage to the ocean floor and no by-catch, so it is an environmentally sustainable method.- this year they are hoping to get the catch from other fishers to supply their new location in Clarendville.

Buying local seafood was one of the difficult things they encountered in the beginning. Networks didn't exist or, if they did, a newcomer couldn't tap into them, and that's still a challenge. It's great for customers at the restaurant to make a link between the product they are eating and the source. Too often the produce, meat, and fish served in restaurants comes from large grocery chains that have no local connections. It is important to keep those local connections. Andrea reported that they use local lamb, beef and vegetables whenever possible. They don't serve jumbo shrimp or other Asian species. They serve locally caught swordfish and locally raised mussels and scallops.

Product pride- Andrea and Mike just returned from a wine-tasting trip to Europe which ended with two days in Barcelona. Andrea noted that the market in Bocaria had stalls with beautiful fresh local produce. She remarked especially on the stalls selling salt cod, "beautiful salt cod thickly cut, gorgeous. I know

where that fish comes from—Newfoundland!” She remarked that we lack that pride in Newfoundland. For the Spanish it is a special product, a gastronomic pleasure. They do more with it than we do in Newfoundland. The time has come for local people in Newfoundland to recognize that we have to support our local economies, we can’t be importing pesticide-laden foods from California and China. She thinks people are coming back to the realization that what we have here is far better nutritionally and taste-wise and from an ecological standpoint. When tourists go somewhere they are looking for local seafood. They are thrilled when they learn about our practice at Bacalao; they want as much as we can get of local product. Andrea thinks that there really is a huge need for a more reliable source of local products for restaurants. Many other St. John’s restaurants are following their lead.

A participant asked the question: How did you make salt fish a more interesting dish for diners who are not accustomed to eating it? Andrea responded by saying that they decided to have *bacalao du jour*, every day a different salt cod dish. It might be fish and drawn butter, a local delicacy, or one of the many ways that salt fish is prepared all over the world. Currently they have 355 ways to make salt fish, and they incorporate it into other kinds of recipes, for example, they make a *Salad Nicoise* with salt cod instead of canned tuna. They make *Bacalao Russe*, very popular on cooler days, which is basically a pasta salad with iceberg vodka and salt fish; a salty, smoky, creamy dish. They make salt cod curries; Thai curries use fish sauce to season it, but they find that salt cod does the same thing and lends itself to more presentations. She suggests that people can use their imaginations and invent their own recipes.

Another participant asked about the difficulties/obstacles they faced in obtaining local fish. Andrea replied that it continues to be a challenge. Sometimes they hook up with local suppliers. They are trying to make direct links, such as the one they have made with Fogo. They make links with local farmers for their vegetables, in season. They sometimes get a call from local growers who are selling; sometimes they obtain produce from local co-operatives. She told a story about setting up the new restaurant in Clarendville. She was in the local Dollar Store and ended up in the same aisle as an older couple shopping there. They told her they were setting up a fish store in Clarendville and that they were preparing and salting the fish themselves. She told them she was setting up a restaurant and they made a deal. This gentleman sold salt fish with the skin on, which she prefers and cannot often find.

Andrea was asked: “How much cod do you sell in a year?” Her answer: “In 5 months we sold 1500 pounds of the fresh cod pot cod, 3,000 pounds of fresh cod from other sources and 3-4,000 pounds of salt cod. We expect that with our second location we will sell a lot more.” Bacalao prefers the salt cod with the bone out and the skin on. They like to work with local fish harvesters who can provide this product.

Bacalao pays the local suppliers a much higher price than they usually get and they think the fishermen are very pleased with the return on their investment. Last season, once the cod pot cod supply was gone, they were able to obtain hook-and-line cod from the Fogo fishermen. Cod pot cod was the best quality, but line caught cod was a very close second. One woman customer said that eating that cod was a life-altering experience.

Andrea was asked if they serve other, so-called underutilized, species. Andrea replied that they do serve these unusual offerings whenever they can obtain them. She remarked that they are much easier to find in other countries. For instance, she noticed a lot of things on stands in Spain that she wasn't familiar with, but that Spanish people were buying. She would like to see sea urchins in greater use in Newfoundland. She went out with a Spanish family to gather sea urchins, waded out in hip waders, and used a big flat-bottomed Plexiglas box and tongs. They made the most gorgeous paté she had ever eaten.

Andrea would like to see more reliable sources of squid, whelks, tuna and swordfish, sole, mackerel and herring. She would love to serve these species in the restaurant. She wants to start working more with capelin; the plant in Clarenville packages it. She notes that Italian restaurants take whole smelts, flour and fry them as a particular delicacy; she wants to use Newfoundland capelin in a similar manner.

Andrea said that the whole *raison d'être* of Bacalao is to pull all that is wonderful in Newfoundland together and present it. They are located in a heritage house, there is local art on the walls, they serve local beers and locally produced food. They are trying to promote to the world what Newfoundland and Labrador have to offer.

To learn more about Bacalao restaurant visit their web site: <http://bacalaocuisine.ca/>. Local restaurants in the Bonne Bay area serve fresh seafood obtained from the several fish plants in Rocky Harbour, Woody Point and Trout River, products including lobster, cod, mackerel, herring, halibut, shrimp, crab, capelin, sole and turbot. These restaurants are listed below:

Chanterelles Restaurant at the Sugar Hill Inn (<http://www.sugarhillinn.nf.ca/index.htm>)

The Old Loft ( <http://www.theoldloft.com/>)

Neddie's Harbour Inn (<http://www.theinn.ca/>)

The Seaside Restaurant in Trout River (<http://www.grosmorne.com/victorianmanor/seaside.htm>),

Java Jack's (<http://javajacks.ca/>)

The Lighthouse (<http://www.seasidesuites.ca/restaurant.html>),

Earle's Newfoundland Mug-Up and Jackie's Restaurant in Rocky Harbour

Pittman's Restaurant in Norris Point

#### **4. Question-and-Answer Panel**

The panel members were John Lubar, Area Director - Western Newfoundland & Southern Labrador Fisheries & Oceans; Darrell O'Brien of DFA, Sheila Earle of INTRD and Juanita Keel-Ryan of TCR.

In introducing the panel, Dr. Neis outlined the challenges facing the industry: overcapacity; low fish prices; need for marketing of local seafood products; more access to fish resources; fish resource decline, i.e. shrimp; low levels of employment at processing plants translating to low incomes for plant workers.

There were several questions read by Ms. Best that had been sent in by e-mail and telephone. These were presented and answered by an e-mail exchange with Transport Canada representative James Pennell:

1. What are the regulations around taking visitors/family members in fishing boats? For recreational purposes? To observe fishing activities?

If visitors/family members were not paying in any way for the trip, it would be ok with TC. The vessel must have lifesaving equipment onboard for the complement. If the vessel is over 15 GT. it would have a Safety Inspection Certificate, the number on the SIC should not be exceeded.

2. Can tourists participate in the "food fishery"? What are the regulations concerning this?

This could be an issue with Department of Fisheries, Not sure who can take part in the food fishery.

3. Who can we call if there is a safety incident in Bonne Bay? Someone falling overboard or injured?

Report the incident to a Marine Traffic Center. St Anthony would be the nearest one telephone # 709 454 3852, but I think they usually forward it to St. John's. I don't have the e-mail addresses. These centers are manned for 24 Hours.

Other answers that came from DFO and DFA representatives: Search and Rescue headquarters are in St. John's but they are all around the island. The Rescue coordination centre- will figure out how to respond- similarly for oil spill. \*16 on cell phone is supposed to get you to search and rescue-If on the water- call on channel 16- distress call or Mayday and get through that way.

4. Who is responsible for oil-spill cleanup in Bonne Bay?

The person responsible for the spill is responsible to make arrangements for the cleanup, if it is a case where the person responsible is not known, report it to a Marine Traffic Center & it would be followed up the same as in Question 3.

5. What would a fish harvester need to turn his fishing boat into a boat that could take tourists out for tours? The best answer that I can give to this Question is that they contact the nearest Marine Safety Office, & they would follow it up with them

6. What aspects of recreational boating are covered by TC?

Recreational boating is covered under the Pleasure Craft Regulations. TC has small boating officers that enforce these regulations.

7. Who are the local contacts for TC in the Gros Morne area--numbers, web sites, e-mails?

It would be Corner Brook 709-637 4390. The e-mail Address is [james.pennell@tc.gc.ca](mailto:james.pennell@tc.gc.ca)  
Corner Brook Office Telephone No.709-637-4390

8. Who issues licenses for boat tours? TC certifies tour boats.

Questions were asked from the floor and from the anonymous question box that was available for those who did not wish to be associated with particular questions. Anita Best and Trevor Sparkes read the anonymous questions.

The following is a summary of questions and answers:

Q1. Right now, can a fish harvester sell to the general public or family members?

A1. Fish harvesters are only permitted to sell to a licensed buyer, a buyer licensed by the Province of NL. Fish harvesters may set aside some of their catch as "personal use" provided it is duly noted in their logbooks and may process it for that reason. Restaurant operators may get an "in-province trade license" which enables them to purchase unprocessed product, but they still have to buy from a licensed buyer. The minimum-processing requirement for cod in the

province: it has to be sold salted or filleted- not allowed legally to sell it fresh/whole. Harvesters can get exemption from that minimum processing requirement at the minister's discretion- reviewed on case by case basis.

- Q2. Can a fish harvester take tourists on boat tours?
- A2. Fish harvesters may take guests on their boats as long as their boats are supplied with the necessary safety gear. They may not charge a fee. Boat operators wishing to charge fees must be certified by Transport Canada.
- Q3. What is the Dept. of TCR doing to ensure quality tourism products and operators?
- A3. In terms of regulations all are responsible for a tourism operation license. If operators are operating without a license, they should be reported. They will be asked to cease what they are doing. Mostly there is tourist accommodation licensing. Canada Select is the system they use; they have to meet at least one star under the Canada Select designation system. TCR is doing a full review of its Tourist Establishment Act now because there is no quality assurance system for other tourism operators at present. They are working to design a quality assurance program- which operators will have to meet to be marketed by the province and promoted.
- Q4. As a tourist I wonder why I can't buy lobsters from a local fisherman for a beach boil up- they get such a low price for their product.
- A4. Because it is in violation of provincial regulations. Exceptions can only be made by Minister of Fisheries in "special cases". Rural Secretariat could present recommendations from community based on research of current regulations.
- Q5. What would be involved in setting up a small herring or mackerel production business for sale to local people?
- A5. The first step would be to look to the province- submit an application to the fish licensing board for consideration as a fish buyer/seller. The cost might be as high as \$7,500. A co-operative venture might be the best way to involve both fish harvesters and marketers.
- Q6. What would it take to change some of the regulations currently in place that are obstacles to what fish harvesters and tourism operators would like to do?
- A6. What you have in this situation is a unique environment- a lot of people with a lot of different interests at the table. The current information says you cannot buy fish directly from a fish harvester- doesn't mean this will always be the case if some variation of the situation occurs. You have to make the case to the minister; the minister will take it under consideration and can change the situation. The Rural Secretariat can play a role by bringing this to the attention of the relevant government departments.

In different regions in Canada there is a great appetite for changing the way we do things. This community is trying to make the recreational fishery meet the needs of today's society in this province- you will need to work with two levels of government- etc. to do what needs to be done to make that possible. It will take a lot of work and will require convincing the elected officials that they want to make those changes.

People have to build their case; it will require doing research. Once you know what the issues are and have looked elsewhere for possible solutions, then you can make recommendations and change things. The first step is to take a look at all the rules and regulations- see what they are and how other jurisdictions have worked around them. Memorial University, through MITACS and the CURRA have a role to play here.

## 5. Discussion

Over the discussion period, a number of possible short-term and long-term solutions were mentioned and discussed. The next steps were broadly identified:

- Continue to meet to set short, medium and long-term goals
- Brainstorm possibilities for local enterprises (What do you have/want to offer visitors?)
- Identify persons in the area interested in continuing the dialogue
- Develop plans
- Identify the current regulations and barriers to co-operation between fish harvesters and tourism operators
- Seek meetings with appropriate government departments to lobby for changes
- Draw on success stories from other provinces and international jurisdictions
- Address the issue of youth recruitment into the fishery through education and hands-on activities and apprenticeships
- Plan a Waterfront Festival
- Consider starting a Co-op
- Consider a pilot project, such as SABRI did with the salt fish

### 5a. Short-term

The fishermen present indicated that at the moment there are few young people entering the fishery, and the aging population of fishermen is a serious issue. In 5 years, the local fishery labour force will be gone or retired. A short term solution is needed to at least give the fishermen hope that things will improve until the long-term plans can come into effect. Some of the ideas for what will help in the short term are:

5a.1 Finding a way to buy and hold Fishing Licenses so that they don't disappear, and are available to people who are looking to move in the same direction as the long-term goals.

5a.2 A waterfront festival taking place to extend the season in the fall and bring more income/visitors to the area. Festivals such as TTT and the waterfront festival could also include activities such as a lobster boil or fish dinner in order to promote/support the local fishery.

5a.3 With the idea of a co-op in mind, a pilot program could be developed through the co-operation of a few fisher people, a fishplant owner, and a couple of tourism operators and could be put in place much more quickly than a co-op. The pilot would serve as an experiment to see how well a co-op could function in the area, and would serve as an example/success story to other fisher people and tourism operators in the area.

## 5b. Long-term

The dominant suggestion/idea for a long-term solution revolved around the formation of a co-op involving fish harvesters, fish plant owners, and tourism operators in the Bonne Bay area. The major disadvantage brought up about this suggestion was that according to **Sheila Earle** it is a long-term solution that would take approximately 2-3 years to set up and 5 years to become established . It is important for there to be something implemented for the short-term to assist the local inshore fishery until a long term solution can come to fruition. A number of ideas were put forward as to how the co-op could benefit the area.

5b.1 **Barbara Neis** suggested that by following the example of one of the co-ops that **Sheila Earle** discussed earlier, the problem of the aging population of fishermen could be reduced. By including a youth component in the co-op as it would provide a way to educate youth about the fishery as well as get them interested and trained. The current generation of fishermen would become a transition generation to a new kind of fishery, more locally based, and perhaps with a different relationship between fish harvesters, fish plant owners and tourism operators.

5b.2 The formation of a co-op would allow the development of a Bonne Bay brand of fish. Through the co-op, the fish harvesters would be able to work more closely with the fish processors, and the tourism operators to ensure a reliable flow of fresh product to the restaurants. The example of Bacalao restaurant, as described by **Andrea Maunder**, shows that it is advantageous to both the restaurant (is able to obtain higher quality fish) and the fish harvester (is able to increase income) when they are able to work/communicate more closely.

5b.3 Mandy Ryan of the FFAW spoke of short-term solutions: "I've been working with trying to influence community groups, festivals, and event committees. There are 10-14 "come home years" taking place this summer. I've tried to influence them to include more of their local fishery in these events (lobster boil, fish dinner) and to try to remind people of a part of our heritage by keeping our seafood products at the top of people's minds. I like the long term ideas we were talking of and would be interested in helping and taking part in them, but there are a number of short term objectives we could look at now."

5b.4 The co-op would possibly be able to open up the local fishery more to tourists through different packages, assuming the regulations are followed, to attract more visitors to our area and increase



revenue for both the tourism industry and those fishermen interested in taking part. Some ideas were to have tourists go out with the fishermen for a tour on their boats to see how they fished, as well as a more complex package where the tourists would go from the first step of catching a fish to the final step of having the fish served to them in a local restaurant.

5b.5 Walter Reid, a local fisherman, thinks Income is the biggest issue for fishermen today; it's the reason why no young people are getting into the industry. He said: "It's never been about the small boat fishermen, they've always pushed for larger boats. Until someone says that we have to look out for these small-boat fishermen, nothing is going to be solved. Tourism isn't going to solve it. This is a nice idea you have, a beautiful idea, and I wouldn't mind being involved with it but it isn't the solution. I'll be finished fishing next week and the week after I'll probably be in Alberta".

## 5c. Resources

- Gros Morne Cooperating Association (GMIST and tourism marketing)
- Memorial University through the Bonne Bay Marine Station (BBMS) and the Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance (CURRA),
- Red Ochre Economic Development Board
- Rural Secretariat
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR )
- Department of Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development (INTRD)
- Federation of Newfoundland and Labrador Co-operatives

## 6. Conclusion/Next Steps

6.1 Ken Carter highlighted the role of the Rural Secretariat and explained there are nine Rural Secretariat regions in the province. He envisioned a role for the CURRA and the Rural Secretariat through hiring a researcher to do some of the background research that will be necessary to keep this initiative moving forward. He explained that the Rural Secretariat was set up with the idea of long term sustainability of all regions of the province, and it is very much involved in getting advice into government to insure that is happening, especially on tangly issues that can't be solved by one individual group. This forum fits perfectly with the mandate of the Rural secretariat. He feels that they are making progress. In order to get that advice in appropriately, assistant deputy minister Bruce Gilbert has defined three ways through which we can get that advice and strengthen it: Community-based research, collaborative activities, and citizen engagement. The RS's role is to take that advice, what emerges from these deliberations, and bring it to the appropriate department. "I think this is exactly the kind of thing that we want to be involved in, in terms of getting those voices and ideas into the provincial government, and if necessary get the kind of changes that people think are appropriate", he said.

6.2 Ken Thomas, as the mayor of Woody Point, has agreed to bring this to the attention of the other mayors at the next Mayors' Forum, as a part of trying to raise awareness and recruiting more local people(fishery workers, tourism operators, fish plant owners, etc.) for the next set of meetings.

6.3 Sean St. George said that the Red Ochre Board is planning to be working with the current Steering Committee to organize the next meeting for late August or September, 2010.

6.4 Juanita Keel-Ryan remarked: “The tough part is trying to package all this together. The Dept of Tourism has looked into this a lot and it’s always the challenge. To have one person take the fee and then distribute the portions fairly. To take all the different pieces and sell it to the consumer. It’s possible that one of the local organizers might be interested in arranging it, but you just need to find someone able and willing to do it. If you can find the players, I promise that I’ll find someone to work with you to try to put it together. You get the players and I’ll provide/pay for the consultant. “

#### 6.5 Follow-Up Suggestions

A student-intern could be hired with support from MITACS. The student's work should fit in with the key priorities as determined by the steering group in consultation with the wider community. If the student were to start in the fall, the steering committee would identify items which are a high priority at the moment, such as addressing barriers around registration, licensing, cost etc, and some of the capacity building and assessment work around the project.

A community-based fishery initiative involving fish harvesters selling to individual community members as well as restaurant owners could be investigated. An existing model is the Off the Hook initiative operating from the Bay of Fundy. Community Supported Fisheries (CSFs) are modelled after “Community Supported Agriculture” (CSA) enterprises, which work to connect consumers to locally and sustainably grown, fairly traded foods. Social enterprises like CSFs help make sure that independent, small-scale fishing families can continue to pursue their livelihoods in an industry rapidly becoming dominated by large-scale, corporate players. More information may be obtained from the web site <http://www.offthehookcsf.ca/>. Other such enterprises in Canada and the USA are listed here: <http://namanet.org/csf>.

In order to move forward with the Forum recommendations it will be necessary to develop an action plan identifying key projects and actions (to be delivered by the steering group, student, CURRA and partners), then prioritize these and identify time-frames for delivery as well as partners and individuals responsible for carrying out the work to be done. This will be accomplished with the steering committee and representatives from the fish harvesters, fish processors, tourism operators and the wider community.