

WORKING WATERFRONT FESTIVAL PRESS RELEASE



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2008 WORKINGWATERFRONT FESTIVAL TO FEATURE FLUME TANK Festival visitors can see how fishing gear works underwater

New Bedford, MA, August 13, 2008— Visitors to the 2008 Working Waterfront Festival will have a unique opportunity to see an underwater simulation of how fishing gear works. The festival takes place in New Bedford, America's largest commercial fishing port, on Saturday and Sunday, September 27th & 28th. More than simply a celebration, the Working Waterfront Festival is a unique opportunity for the public get a first hand look at the culture and traditions of the commercial fishing industry and for the working waterfront community to tell its own story. The event presents all that goes into bringing seafood from the ocean to the table in a way that is hands-on, educational and fun.

Through a partnership between the School for Marine Science and Technology at UMass Dartmouth (SMAST), the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and the Center for Sustainable Aquatic Resources (CSAR) at Memorial University's Marine Institute in Newfoundland, festival visitors will be able to see an underwater simulation of how fishing gear works. The Marine Institute's 750 gallon flume tank will be on display at this year's festival. The flume tank circulates water through a complex system of propellers, pumps and pipes to mimic the flowing ocean. Local net designer Tor Bendiksen of Reidar's Manufacturing has designed model nets for use in the tank.

Until recently, flume tanks were used to help gear designers create nets aimed at catching more fish. Today the tanks are used primarily to aid the industry in developing selective, energy efficient and environmentally friendly fishing gear designed to reduce bycatch. Bycatch is captured fish that cannot be sold because they are either too small or the wrong species. Since the Magnusson-Stevens Act of 1996, fishermen are under increasing pressure to reduce bycatch. Government regulations achieve this reduction in bycatch by decreasing the number of days fishermen can fish, increasing netting mesh size and closing areas to fishing. However, these measures have had devastating effects on fishing communities. The flume tank allows gear designers, scientists and fishermen to test new gear which is designed to be more selective by harvesting specific species and sizes of fish and thereby reducing bycatch and conserving the resource.

The **Working Waterfront Festival** is a project of the **Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA**, a non-profit organization. The FREE festival, a family friendly, educational celebration of New England's commercial fishing industry, features live maritime and ethnic music, fishermen's contests, fresh seafood, vessel tours, author readings, cooking demonstrations, kid's activities and more. It all takes place in New Bedford, MA, America's #1 fishing port, on the fourth full weekend of September. Navigate to us at www.workingwaterfrontfestival.org.

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