

Friends of Harriet L. Hartley Conservation Area (FHLH)
“Protecting the Future of Belfast Bay”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FHLH taps Environmental Law Institute to recommend best practices for aquaculture projects

The working title for our project is “Fish Forward: Best Practices for Maine Aquaculture.”
– Jane Earley, FHLH Board Member

[BELFAST, MAINE – Tuesday, March 22, 2022] – We are pleased to announce that FHLH has engaged the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) to investigate and recommend improvements in Maine’s process for regulating industrial-scale aquaculture projects. The centerpiece of the 15-month study is a White Paper highlighting a suite of “best practices” drawn from successful projects and the regulatory requirements they met. The project is supported by a dedicated grant from a Fund at the Maine Community Foundation.

ELI investigators will define what “sustainable aquaculture” means economically, socially, and environmentally. They will also explore the possibility of creating a ranking system for evaluating projects, using systems pioneered by other organizations such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch Program.

To test the utility of its “sustainable” definition, the ELI team will identify up to three existing projects and evaluate them according to the proposed criteria in the definition. Atlantic Sapphire’s Florida facility and the Finger Lakes Fish facility in New York are examples of possible choices.

A significant portion of the ELI investigation will examine the federal and state regulatory programs for permitting industrial aquaculture projects. The focus will be on the laws and regulatory authority at federal, state, and local levels with an emphasis on Maine’s current ability to promote, permit, and regulate sustainable projects as defined and exemplified in ELI’s work.

By drawing from the experiences of existing industrial-scale aquaculture, ELI’s analysis and recommendations can strengthen Maine’s laws, support its regulators, and address the priorities of our coastal communities when evaluating future projects.

More information on ELI’s mission, history, and accomplishments is found here:

www.eli.org