



Contact: Monica Allen
301-713-2370

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 4, 2009

**New NOAA Online Handbook Helps Teachers and Community Groups
Create an Oral History of the Fishing Culture**

A new handbook published online today by NOAA's Fisheries Service gives teachers, community groups, and the public a detailed roadmap of how to design and conduct oral history projects that celebrate the people, history and culture of our nation's coastal and Great Lakes fishing communities.

"Capturing the stories and experiences of local men and women who take part in commercial and recreational fishing and other marine-related occupations is especially important for young people growing up in these towns and cities," said Dr. Susan Abbott-Jamieson, senior social scientist with NOAA's Fisheries Service and one of three authors of *Voices from the Fisheries Handbook: Preserving Local Fisheries Knowledge, Linking Generations, and Improving Environmental Literacy*. "Through interviews with community residents, students explore the rich connections between fisheries, the marine environment, their community, and their own lives."

The idea for the handbook grew out of NOAA's Fisheries Service Local Fisheries Knowledge Project conducted in Ellsworth and Jonesport high schools in Maine from 2003 to 2006. NOAA worked with the Rural School and Community Trust and local educators to design an oral history curriculum for students who documented the fishing and maritime history of their Downeast communities.

The handbook includes sections on how to start projects, build community partnerships and integrate projects into existing curricula, among other topics.

"Students who previously saw no connection between their lives and the work of scientists, fisheries managers and seafood businesspeople began to imagine different futures for themselves," said Joyce Whitmore, a retired social sciences teacher from Ellsworth High School and a co-author of the handbook. "A student in Jonesport was so inspired by doing the research that she decided to attend college, which had not been in her plans."

Voices from the Fisheries Handbook: Preserving Local Fisheries Knowledge, Linking Generations, and Improving Environmental Literacy by Julie Bartch, the New England steward for the Rural School and Community Trust, Abbott-Jamieson, and Whitmore is now available to the public online at <http://www.voices.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.