



# MAINE AgrAbility

**Outreach to Land and Sea Farmers to Meet Them Where  
They Are At**

With Maine AgrAbility Specialist  
Brie Weisman, OTR/L  
And Maine AgrAbility Advisory Council Member  
Antonia (Toni) Small, E-RYT, YACEP

# Presenters



Brie Weisman, OTR/L, CAPs, ECHM, Adapt-Able Living LLC, Ellis River Farm

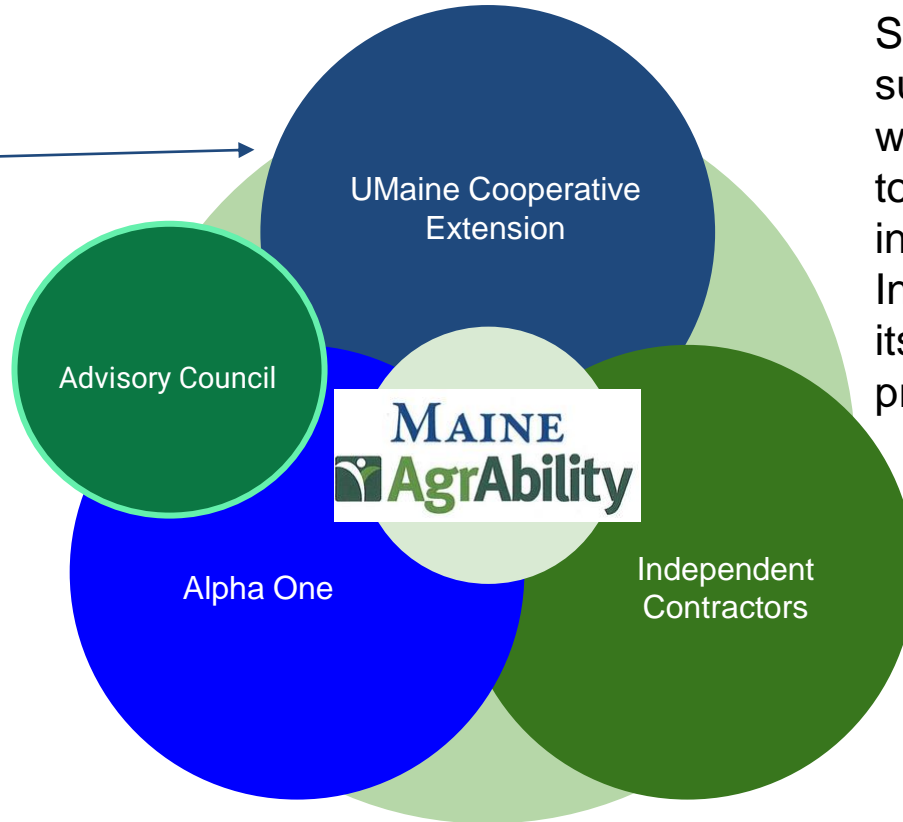
Brie has been contracted to work with Maine AgrAbility for the past five years. She has been an OT for about 14 years and has worked in hospitals, rehabilitation, nursing homes and currently works in Home Health. She also raises registered Icelandic Sheep and winter greens at Ellis River Farm.



Antonia Small, E-RYT 500, YACEP, Oryx Worx LLC, Ice House Seafood LLC

Toni has been teaching yoga and dance fitness from Port Clyde, Maine for over a decade. She began oyster farming on the side with her husband John, a fisherman, in 2016. Her work with FishAbility began in 2021.

# Who is Maine AgrAbility?



Since 2010, Maine AgrAbility supports farmers, and farm workers who experience barriers to employment such as aging, injury, or chronic illness. In 2014, Maine AgrAbility began its FishAbility and LogAbility programs.



# Learning Objectives

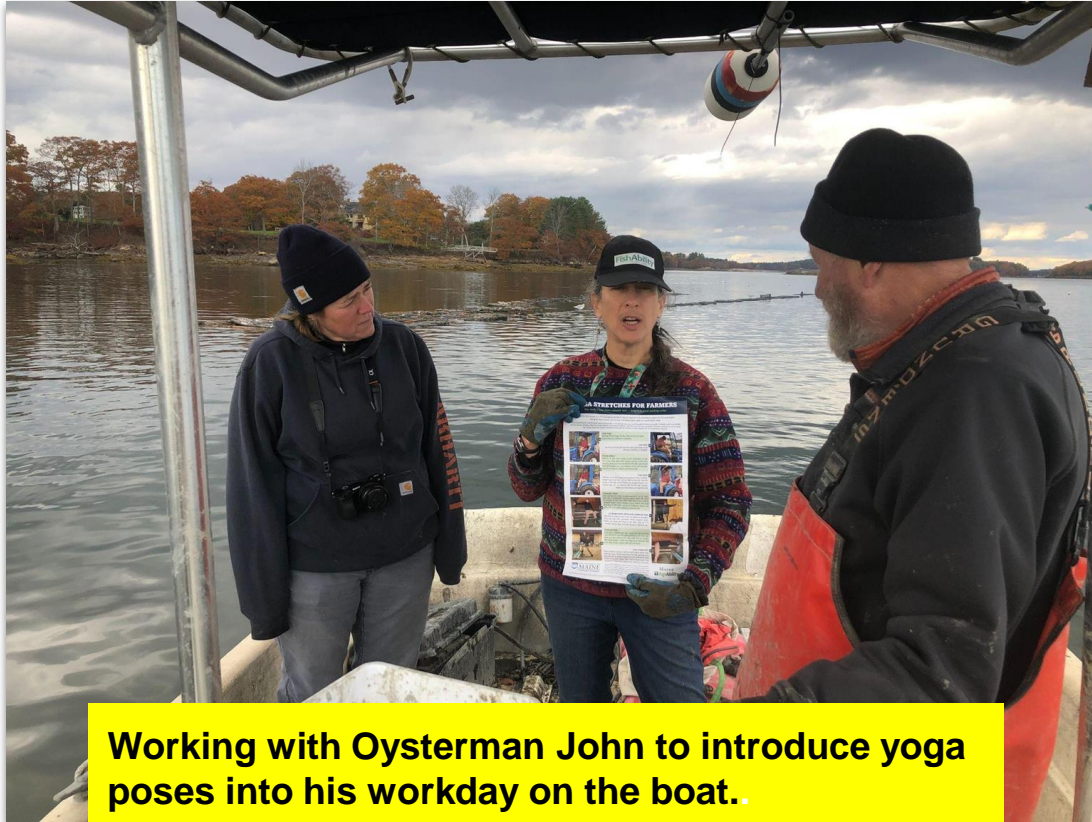
1. Learn how we developed our fishing and logging program, from our farming program.
2. Understand how we addressed the challenge of outreach to fishermen and loggers.
3. See how we adapted a product from print to our website and social media.
4. Learn how we partnered with people, resources and non-profits to increase visibility.



Brie shows lobsterman Max Oliver, a standing twist pose, to stretch his back in between trap work.



# Where We Began: In the Barn



Working with Oysterman John to introduce yoga poses into his workday on the boat.

## YOGA STRETCHES FOR FARMERS

*Your body is your most valuable tool — keep it in good working order.*

Stretch for five minutes at a time throughout the day to reap the rewards. In the morning to prepare for the work ahead, during the day to pause and recharge, and before bed to relax for a good night's sleep.

While stretching be sure to pause and breathe fully — in through the nose, out through the nose or mouth. A breath cycle is an inhale and an exhale. Inhaling, feel your lungs expand, your spine lengthen, and the crown of your head lift. Exhaling, continue to sit or stand tall, slowly expel the breath completely through the mouth or nose. Repeat 2X, 10X anywhere, anytime.



### COW POSE

Inhaling, fill the lungs. Lift the chest and feel the spine extend. Look up. Hold for 2-3 breaths.



### CAT POSE

Exhaling, tuck the chin into the chest and slowly round the back. Hold for 2-3 breaths.



### SEATED TWIST

Inhaling, sit tall, with weight evenly distributed on the sitz bones. Place right hand against outside of left knee. Exhaling, slowly turn torso and head to the left. Look toward your left shoulder, or in the direction of the left shoulder. Hold for 2-3 breaths. Repeat on opposite side.



### SIDE BEND

Inhaling, sit tall. Bring right hand up above head. Exhaling, stretch hand over head and arc body to the left. Feel the stretch in the right side of body. Look straight ahead or up toward hand. Do not collapse into the left side. Breathe deeply and hold. Repeat on opposite side.



### STANDING TWIST

Step right foot on a chair or other prop at 12" to 18" high. Feet are a comfortable distance apart. Place left hand on outside of right knee. Raise right hand out to side at shoulder height. Inhale, lengthen spine. Exhale, turn head and torso to the right. Hold for 2-3 breaths. Stand a bit taller with each inhale. Repeat on opposite side.



### STANDING TWIST WITH LONG HANDLED TOOL

With feet hip distance apart, rest a tool lightly on shoulders. Hold tool with arms extended. Inhale, lengthen spine. Exhale, turn torso and head to the right. Hold for 2-3 breaths. Inhale, return to center. Repeat on opposite side.



### WARRIOR POSE

Hold onto a support with right hand. Step left foot back about three feet, turn foot about 45 degrees left. Bend right knee and align directly over ankle. Keep left leg straight. With equal weight on both feet, reach hands skyward. Take a few deep breaths. Repeat with right foot back.



### HALF DOWN DOG

Place hands on a prop or wall at waist height. Inhale, step both feet back. Exhale, bend from the hips, pushing away from the wall to lengthen spine. Arms are extended in front of you at shoulder height. With head between arms, look downward. Keep knees slightly bent. Hold for 2-3 breaths.



# What is Fishing in Maine?

**MAINE SEAFOOD FOR EVERY SEASON**  
Maine Sea Grant, June 2014

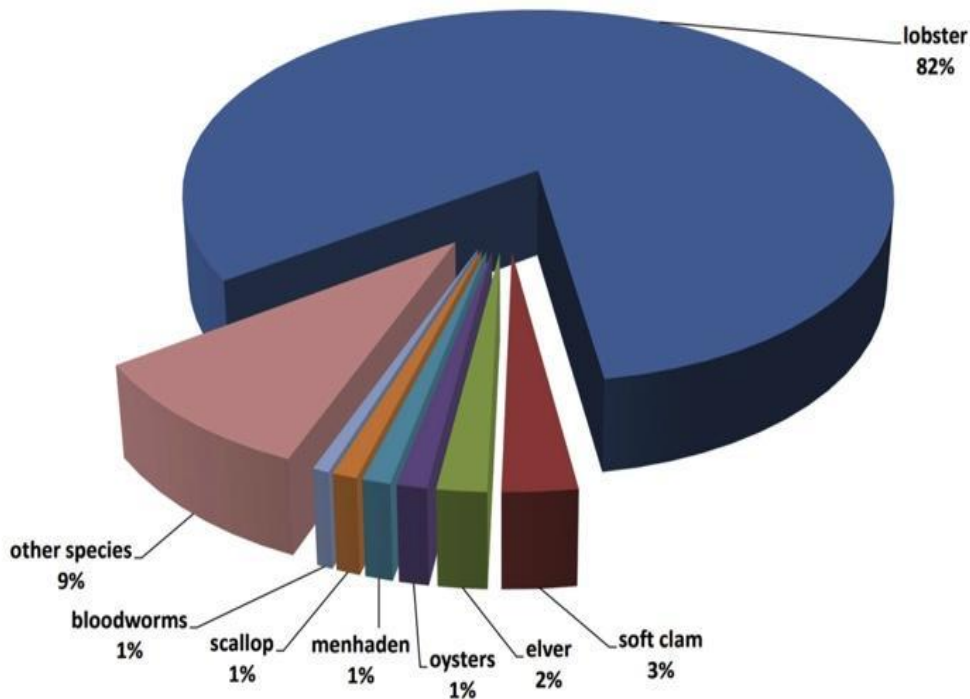
■ In season  
■ Peak season

[Click here for accessible PDF](#)

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
alewife, blueback herring												
black sea bass*												
bluefish												
crab												
cod												
clams, hard												
clams, soft-shell												
dogfish												
eel												
flounder, plaice												
flounder, winter												
flounder, witch												
flounder, yellowtail												
hake												
haddock												
halibut, Atlantic												
herring												
lobster												
mackerel												
monkfish												
mussels												
oysters												
periwinkles & whelks												
pollock												
redfish												
salmon												
sea scallops												
sea urchin												
sea vegetable												
shad												
shark												
shrimp												
skate												
smelt												
squid												
striped bass*												
swordfish												
tuna												

**Preliminary 2021 Commercial Maine Landings By Ex-vessel Value**

Total: \$890,668,873 as of 3/31/2022



# Fishing the Water



In the photo that has launched a thousand memes, lobsterwoman Virginia Oliver tossed back an undersized lobster as she and her son, Max, haul together in Maine. At 101 years old, Virginia may be the oldest lobsterwoman in the world. JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF



# Farming the Water



Dana, maneuvering oyster cages on his farm.



Oysterman Jordan, using knee pads to reduce knee pain.

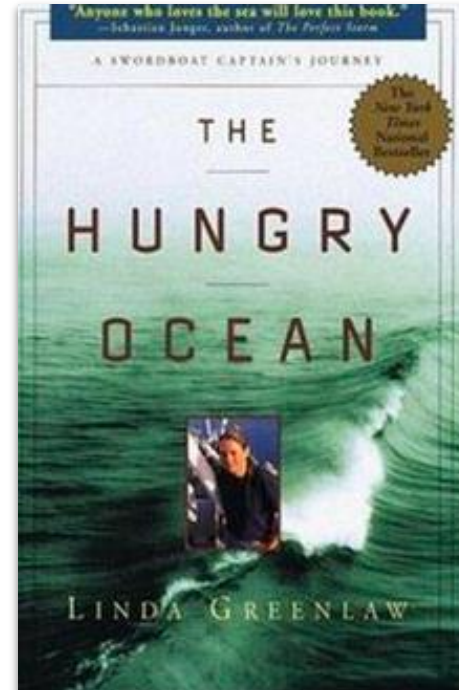
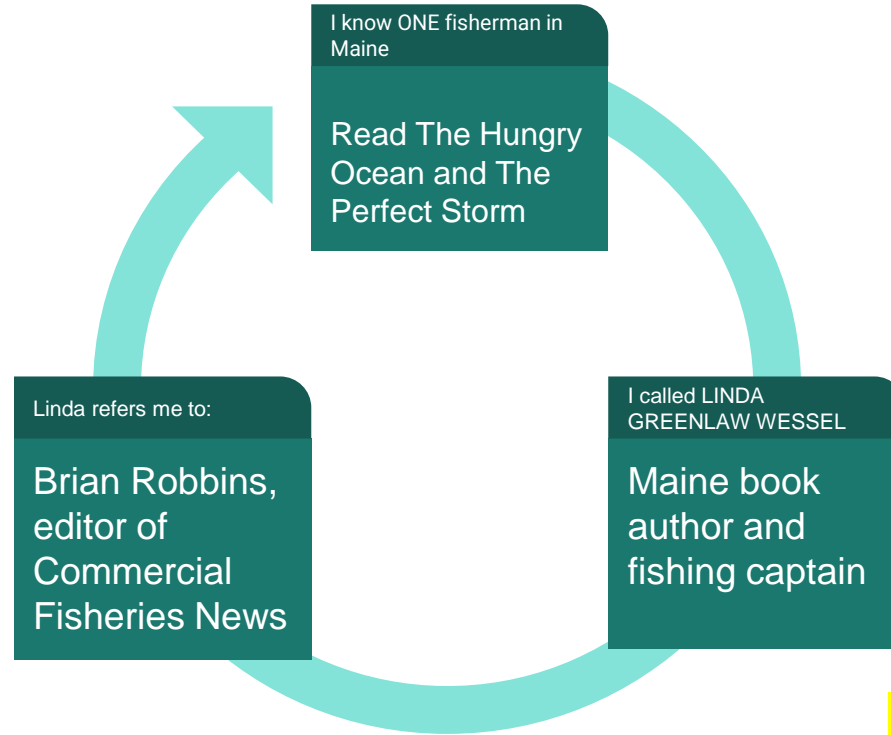


# Something's Fishy

- In 2014, Maine AgrAbility began serving Fishermen a part of Maine Agriculture.
- No one on staff fished, grew up in a fishing family or grew up on an Island.
- Geography challenge: AgrAbility staff primarily inland and there's 3500 miles of coast.
- No one on our Advisory Council represented the fishing industry.
- One fishermen served since 2020.
- Attended the annual Fishermen Forum since 2015.



# Who do I know that fishes?



Sally Gall, Jacket cover image  
Anthony Loew, author photo

# Using trade journals to reach Fishing clients

## ME FishAbility: fishing after a stroke

By Brian Weisman,  
Occupational Therapist

**S**trokes are the fifth most common cause of death in the U.S., affecting up to 30% of Americans. Most strokes are the result of a blood clot to the brain, which can cause brain damage, disability, and death.

Recognizing stroke symptoms and obtaining fast treatment is a key element in the greatest chance for full recovery. While people who've

suffered strokes tend to have lifelong effects, receiving treatment within three hours is essential in minimizing its effects. Stroke is a traumatic brain injury that can cause severe cognitive issues, difficulty communicating, vision and hearing loss, weakness on the affected side, and mobility issues.

Possible stroke symptoms include sudden onset of the following: dizziness, trouble walking, loss of balance/coordination, trouble seeing in one both eyes, severe headache without clear cause, numbness of the

face, arm, or leg, confusion/trouble understanding others.

Working fishermen are often far from emergency medical care, so that quickly identifying a stroke victim and obtaining the swiftest possible evacuation is critical for the best possible recovery outcomes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourage using FAST to determine if someone needs medical intervention.

**F = Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

**A = Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**S = Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is speech slurred or strange?

**T = Time:** If you see any of these, call 911 immediately.

About half of all strokes are preventable. To reduce your risk of stroke, maintain a healthy weight; eat a balanced diet; don't smoke; limit alcohol intake; exercise; and see your primary care provider regularly. ■

### Jeff Edwards: post-stroke fishing

Lobsterman Jeff Edwards suffered a stroke in 2018. He returned to lobstering six months later.

**What do you like most about work?**  
Being on the water, always seeing something new.

**What are the hardest parts of your job since the stroke?**  
By the end of most workdays, my ankle hurts from dragging it around.

**Is there some advice you'd give your younger self?**  
Loss weight. I was heavy and my blood pressure was a bit high, that contributed to it. And I didn't go to the doctor enough.

**Do you use adaptive techniques?**  
My strength is good enough, but I have to literally watch my right hand as it doesn't just drop traps. It will if I don't concentrate. And now, if my sternman's directly behind me, I can't hear him. We're looking into a backup video mirror system.

I immediately thought I could bounce right back, but it was a long time recovering.

**Is there some advice you'd give your younger self?**  
Loss weight. I was heavy and my blood pressure was a bit high, that contributed to it. And I didn't go to the doctor enough.

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**For more information (including this and other interviews), please visit Maine FishAbility at <https://maine.fishability.org>. ■**

he's trying to get my attention.

**Do you have any tips to share?**  
Strokes are serious. Get help immediately. Without Carolyn [Jeff's partner] pushing me to go in, I'd have died or been too debilitated to work.

**If you have a stroke, don't drink alcohol; it'll impair brain recovery.**  
What's the one thing you can't leave the dock without?

My sternman. I can't safely handle alone now.

**For more information (including this and other interviews), please visit Maine FishAbility at <https://maine.fishability.org>. ■**



Lobsterman Jeff Edwards.  
Photo courtesy: Tony Graham

## Read Now ISLAND DESIGNS

### CALVIN BEAL 28

LOA: 28'9"  
Width: 15'  
Beam: 14'2"  
ABOAT  
Built by SW Boatworks



SW Boatworks™

THE HOME OF  
CALVIN BEAL

&  
YOUNG BROTHERS  
BOATS

SW Boatworks™

Lamoine, Maine  
(207)-667-7427

www.swboatworks.com

Contact Captain Stewart Workman at:  
swboatworks@gmail.com



### CALVIN BEAL 36

LOA: 36'  
Width: 13'9"  
Beam: 11'

Built by Calvin's Boat

CALVIN BEAL 30 - 34 - 36 - 38 - 42 - 44 - 46  
YOUNG BROTHERS 30 - 33 - 35 - 38 - 40 - 42 - 45 - 46

CUSTOM FINISHING OF ANY HULL • REPAIRS • REPOWERS • HULL & TOP KITS

- Writing articles for **Commercial Fisheries News (CFN)**
- Researching a health care topic related to fishermen and providing information with OT perspective.
- Interviewing a fisherman with that health care issue.
- This has resulted in new clients.
- Increased visibility
- Building trust in the fishing community.

MAINE  
AgrAbility



# Just like with land farmers...



Working with lobsterman Jeff in Owls Head to modify his boat to increase his function after stroke with R side effect.

## The “Kitchen table conversation”

- Discuss goals and limitations
- Needs in the home - access, personal care, AT
- Discuss tasks, equipment, boat/logging/yard layout
- Task needs based on the season
- Current disability management
  - Pain
  - Mobility or adaptive equipment

“They love what they do, they want to work for the long haul.”

Learning longevity in the lobstering world with 103 year old lobsterman Virginia Oliver.



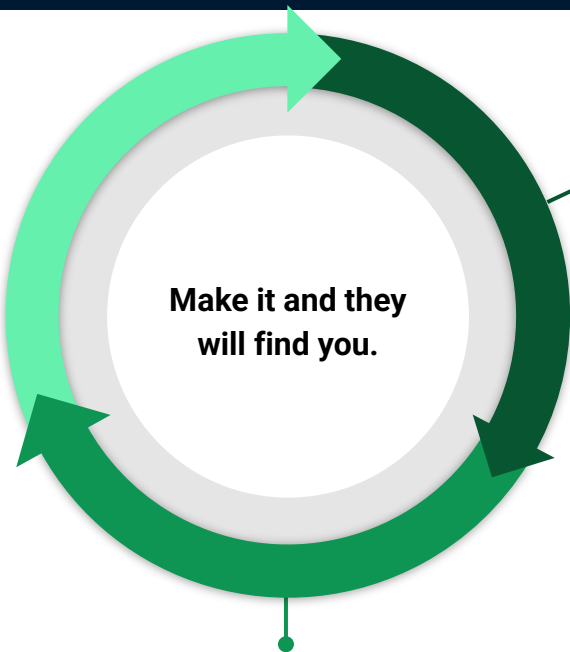
# Product Adaptation

## YOGA STRETCHES FOR FARMERS

*Your body is your most valuable tool — keep it in good working order.*

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While stretching be sure to pause and breathe fully — in through the nose, out through the nose or mouth. A breath cycle is an inhale and an exhale. Inhaling, feel your lungs expand, your spine lengthen, and the crown of your head lift. Exhaling, continue to sit or stand tall, slowly expel the breath completely through the mouth or nose. Repeat 2X, 10X anywhere, anytime.



Toni: Oryx Worx - yoga/aquaculture  
+ fisherman's wife

+

Monique: MCFA, Wellness for  
Fishermen + lobster family member

+

FishAbility staff

=

Product Adaptation for Fishermen

Cindy Wallach, Producer at Mongoose Film  
University of Vermont  
PenBay Community Health

# The Campaign

## Work Task:

### Putting the boat on the hook

The work isn't over when you get to the wharf. You may be done tugging and pulling on traps, nets, or cages, but you've still got to get the boat on the mooring. Depending on how your boat is set up, that can also require some acrobatics, maneuvering, and heaving that can put some wear and tear on your muscles.



photo credit: Nicole Wolf

## Stretch Break!

### Standing side bend

Take two minutes after you put the boat on the hook to do a couple of side bends that can help release some of the tension from the day. Simply put one arm over your head and bend to the opposite side. Hold for at least 30 second and then do the other side.



Standing side bend



<https://extension.umaine.edu/agrability/fishing-resources/>





# Oyster Farm/Lobster Trap Yoga



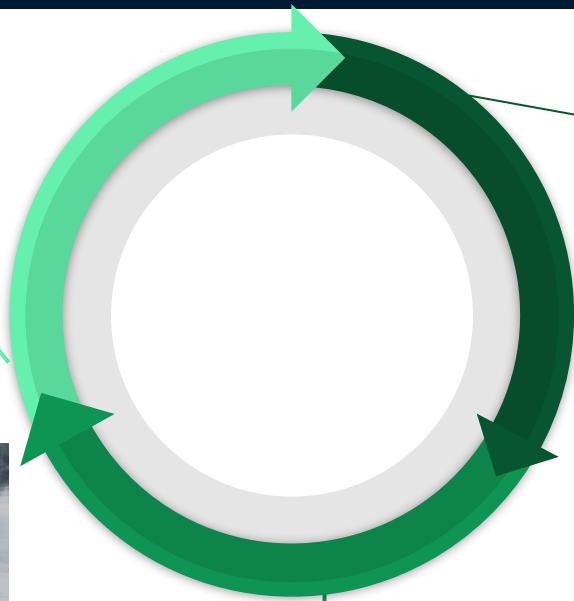
Eros Oyster Farm



"Tough Catch" Filming

# Going OUT of Your Comfort Zone

Furthered connection with Dana,  
Senior Extension manager &  
Aquaculture lead for University  
of Maine.  
Results: oyster farm tour and  
yoga modeling and he advertises  
for us.



Took advantage of Maine Sea  
Grant to attend webinar on scallop  
farming.



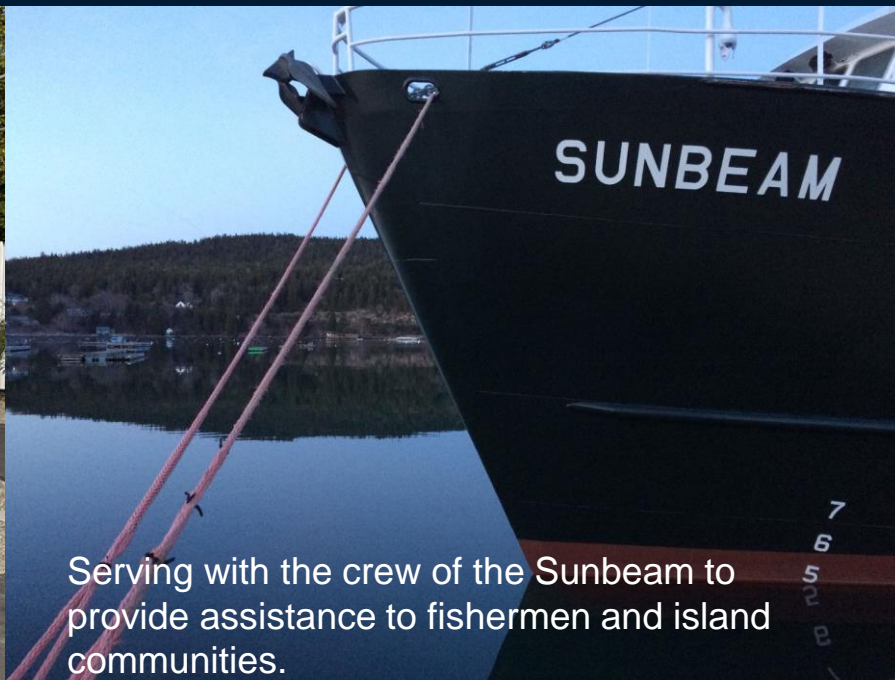
John scalloping with lantern  
nets.

Used the chat room to inform about  
FishAbility.  
Results: 2 clients! 2 CFN interviews!





# Supporting other agencies who support fishermen



Serving with the crew of the Sunbeam to provide assistance to fishermen and island communities.

Raised money for Maine Coast Fishermen's Association by running in team relay with the Maine Marathon. Donated \$700. Gained friends and goodwill.

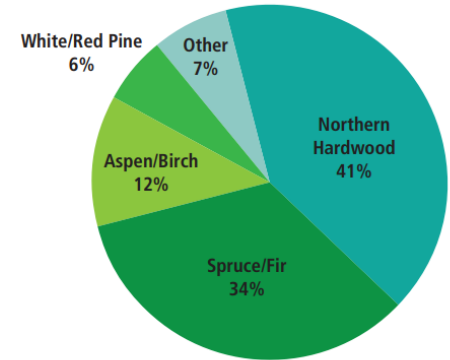
**MAINE**  
 **AgrAbility**



# What is logging in Maine?

- Maine forest contains 39% hardwoods and 61% softwoods
- Only 5% of wood in Maine is harvested as clear cut
- Maine has 39 commercial tree species
- ME has 200 forest products employing 24,000 people
- ME still a leading producer of paper and wood products.
- The Maine Forest Service estimates that some 500,000 acres of forest is harvested each year, with about six million cords of wood removed. The wood harvest has remained largely stable for several years.
- <https://mainetree.org/forests-for-maines-future/forest-facts-resources/>

Maine Forest Types



Source: USDA Forest Service, Forest Inventory and Analysis

Hudson is in a Hood Crane loader with a slasher.



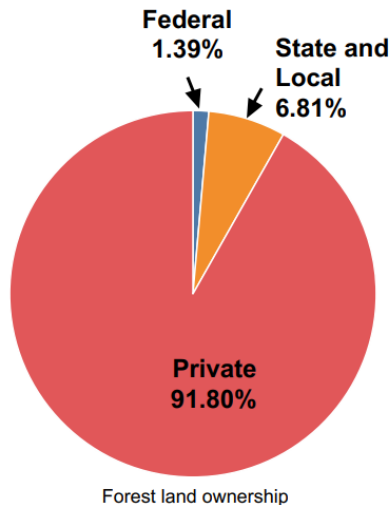
# Culture of Logging

Culture of Logging from Advisory Council Member Don Burr 20+ years logging:

“Loggers generally are introverts and like to be self-reliant. I am sure we share that with the fishermen community. I think the culture is full of self-starters, hard-working individuals driven to cut and process wood. Generally, they are bad (un-practiced) communicators. Working alone is part of the logging gig for sure. Sometimes we go weeks without talking to anyone in person on the job. We will talk on the phone or 2-way radio to coworkers at least four or five times a day more when things go wrong. The truck drivers talk all the time about nothing.”

# Not seeing the forest or the trees

Maine boasts the highest percentage of forest cover of any state, with an estimated 17.52 million acres of forest land covering 89 percent of the land area with >90% privately owned.



Source USDA forest service forest inventory and analysis

- In 2014, Maine AgrAbility began serving Loggers a part of Maine Agriculture.
- Aside from technical contacts and farmers with small woodlots, we've not yet served a traditional logger.
- No one on staff are loggers or grew up in a logging community.
- Logging yards can be difficult to get to-remote-no centralized location.
- No one on our Advisory Council represented the logging industry until 2020.



Maine's Loggers are a vital part of the forest industry in ME, worth about 7.7 billion annually. Logging added 619 million dollars in 2017.



# Who do we know in logging?

Don knows Brie from going to undergrad at Unity college. Don immediately sets up staff to meet Loggers.



AgrAbility Coordinator Lani Carlson, is an acquaintance of Professional logging Contractors director and he is a neighbor



It's a small world after all- at least in Maine

Dana Doran, executive Director of PLC taps Safety Coordinator Don Burr to be on the Advisory Council



# Mechanized logging operations stats

**No longer is the image of a chainsaw wielding logger accurate in Maine.**

- About 98% of the logging in Maine is done mechanically rather than hand cutting.
- The majority of logger companies are 10 employees or fewer.
- Maine estimates a need of 2000 loggers in the next 10 years. The mills are concerned that we don't have enough loggers to fill the demand of fiber now.
- Most common injuries to loggers: slips, trips & falls, struck-by injuries & MVA, and eye injuries.
- Basically, MLOPs loggers have similar issues to office desk jockeys. They are in a cab of a machine, with temperature control, new machines are sound proof.



Stephen in the Forwarder

# Using trade journals to reach logging clients

## Safety

**LogAbility**  
Logging for a Lifetime

Part of Maine AgrAbility

### Reducing Slips, Trips and Falls in the Logging Industry (part 1 of 2)

By Brie Weissman, OTR/L with Maine LogAbility

One fall can  
change your  
future!

Improvements in logging technology are making the industry safer and more efficient. One surprising consequence of the shift from muscle to machine is the increased risk of slips, trips, and falls (STFs) in certain situations.

Increasingly, mechanized harvesting techniques mean that many workers spend much of their day in temperature controlled cabs, manipulating joysticks to harvest wood they need never touch. These technical advances have lessened the level of fitness required to be a logger. Obesity, old age, and compromised mobility are no longer insurmountable barriers to work in the field. In fact, many loggers can no longer count on the rigors of the workday to help them maintain basic levels of fitness.

This is significant. While mechanization lessens the amount of loggers risking falling on a steep slope with chainsaw in hand, reduced athleticism increases risk of STFs on any terrain, and increases the likelihood that those falls will result in injuries. Old age, extra weight, and general reduced fitness are all factors that dramatically increase risk of STFs and resultant injuries.

If you doubt that STFs are serious enough to merit addressing, consider: An astonishing 30% of lost time logging incidents are due to STFs, with 3% resulting in deaths. Balance that against the fact that they are among the easiest, cheapest safety concerns to address.

Before we talk about prevention, let's get some definitions on the table.

**Slip:** Loss of balance due to loss of friction between your seat, grip, or foothold. Even without an associated fall, a slip can result in an injury from a violent wrench to your muscles from the effort to stay upright, or from flailing arms or feet striking something sharp or hard.

**Trips:** Loss of balance from an unexpected disruption of motion due to contact, most often by foot, with an object, or by an unexpected drop in surface. Injuries occur in manners similar to slips.

**Fall:** Loss of balance resulting in an uncontrolled drop to the ground or collision with an object, such as tripping and striking a tree.

While most STFs end with little more than a grunt and embarrassment, even short falls while standing or walking can end in injury. The majority are minor sprains, strains, or bruising, but a not insignificant number of STFs end in injuries requiring treatment, with a few ending tragically in permanent

disabilities or death. *Common sense dictates taking reasonable precautions to eliminate these hazards.*

1. Maintain fitness. Fit people suffer fewer STFs and fewer injuries from the STFs they inevitably have.

2. Stretch. Staying limber increases balance and agility, lessens injuries, improves recovery time.

3. Maintain good posture. Good posture = good balance. We're often stiff after long sessions seated in a machine or vehicle, so take a moment to stretch and unkink when finally getting out. Think military: chest out, shoulders back, head up.

4. Wear proper eyewear. Glare and bright sunlight cause fatigue and accidents beyond STFs. Sunglasses are essential safety gear.

5. Wear proper footwear for you, the task, and the weather. Footwear = tires for people.

6. Be aware that medications may inhibit coordination, balance, or focus. Ask your doctor if alternate medications may have weaker side effects, or if taking medication on a different schedule might work better for you.

7. Look out. Scan for trip hazards, slick surfaces, uneven ground. (look ahead briefly rather than constantly looking down at the ground)

8. Take care whenever carrying or moving heavy or cumbersome objects. Hold objects close to reduce strain and improve balance.

9. Stay focused. Pause work during phone use or other distractions.

10. Learn to fall safely. (This is easily learned and surprisingly effective at preventing injury.)

STFs will always be part of logging. But we can eliminate much of the lost time, injuries, and still worse tragedies caused by STFs by maintaining a safe work environment and expecting responsible preparation and best practices from our workforce. In the next issue we'll discuss how to fall correctly, and the best exercises and stretches for strengthening the core to reduce the number of STFs and the severity of injuries caused when they do occur.



For More Information, visit Maine LogAbility, part of the Maine AgrAbility program: <https://extension.umaine.edu/agrability/>

- Collaborating with Professional Logger Don Burr, member of AC of Maine AgrAbility.
- Writing healthcare articles for **Logger's Voice** with an OT perspective.
- Working with Northern Maine Community College Logging students to provide information on ergonomics and pain issues.
- Learning how the logging industry operates in Maine-Mechanized logging is prevalent.
- Onsite visits with logging operations and foresters.





# Learning about logging from the pros

Don took staff on a field trip to a logging yard to learn more about a family logging operation.

Justin is demonstrating a self loader wheeler to load logging truck.



Justin demonstrating cinching down the strapping on the logging truck.

Loggers & Fleet drivers can have a high risk of injury from heaving the strapping over a ' truck. Leading to shoulder injuries.

Got to try out the equipment. You can't learn unless you play. Checking out the Processor.





# Teaching ergonomics to MLOP students.

## Carrying weight smarter



## Finding the 3 curves of the spine





# Assessing cab transfers

- Working with Northern Maine Community College Logging students to provide information on ergonomics and pain issues.

6'7" logger



versus

5'5" logger.

Weiler Grapple  
skidder





# Goals 2023

## Fishing

- Strength and conditioning campaign
- Develop winter training in collaboration with Oryx Worx, MCFA & Community Health at PenBay hospital
- Create printed product
- Develop broader market
- Fishermen's Forum presentation
- Continue CFN article writing
- Go out on Sunbeam to do trainings
- Continue working with other state FishAbility groups.



## Logging

- Complete MLOP Spring Safety Training
- Increase visibility with workers compensation insurance companies
- Serve one traditional logging client
- Provide 3 sessions of Ergonomic training for MLOP students in the summer
- Work on yoga for loggers
- Continue Loggers Voice quarterly articles
- Attend and present at the American Logging Council Annual meeting in Newry Maine 10/23



# Takeaways

Learn about the culture of the agriculture farmers you are working with.

Make sure you get the right folks on your advisory council board to represent the different ag farmers.

If you reach out to a an agency that may support your work, but you don't get anywhere...try again.

Create a product, put it out there, and they will come.

Invite yourself to attend an event that you have no idea about and, listen, learn, and leave them with some information on AgrAbility.

Support those programs that already exist to help farmers, and good will is created.

# Resources

Connect: [maine.agrability@maine.edu](mailto:maine.agrability@maine.edu)

207-944-1533

Website: <https://extension.umaine.edu/agrability/>

- On the website you can find
  - News
  - Network Connections
  - Solutions & Resources
  - Videos





# References

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# Questions?

Thank you for attending!



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