

Report from Bill Tweit

Workshop: Building Resilient Fisheries and Fishing Communities

Lenfest and Blue Conservancy Fund

29-30 May 2025

Washington, DC

This workshop was largely focused on US fisheries, with a couple of presentations on Canadian and Chinese fisheries. Attendees were from all regions of the US, many of whom were reporting on Lenfest funded projects. In addition to me, Theresa Peterson, Danielle Ringer and Andre Punt were the other participants associated with the NPFMC. Theresa and Danielle provided a presentation on their CAFA funded project and Andre served as a panelist.

The workshop provided an opportunity to review the work that Lenfest funded over the last two decades to promote resiliency in fisheries and fishing communities, and to get an overview of other related projects such as the GOA communities adaptation project that Theresa and Danielle are engaged in, allowing researchers in the field to connect. A primary objective was to identify the challenges to the implementation of strategies to increase resilience: both the ongoing challenges as well as the recently emerged ones. The conversations were remarkably open, with most participants acknowledging that further progress will likely require different approaches: building trust among stakeholders, reducing conflict, more bottom-up work, less focus on the letter of the law and more on the intent, and the ability to make fishery decisions in an environment of greater uncertainty and higher risk of failure. There was a lot of discussion of concepts such as ‘constructive failure’, broader engagement with and increased presence in communities, particularly by researchers and funders, moving away from single-species management, supporting increased flexibility among harvesters and the need to identify pathways to integrate climate science into fisheries management.