Interviewee Name: Rebecca O'Keefe

Project/Collection Title: Gendered Dimensions of Climate Change Impacts, Adaptive Capacity, and Resilience in Maine's Coastal Fisheries

Interviewer(s): Jessica Bonilla, Kristin Zunino, and Michelle Hanselowski

Interview Location: Corea, Maine

Date of Interview: October 19, 2023

Interview Description: This interview with Rebecca O'Keefe, conducted by Jessica Bonilla, Kristin Zunino, and Michelle Hanselowski, delves into O'Keefe's experiences and involvement in various environmental and fisheries-related initiatives in Maine. O'Keefe discusses her engagement in shoreline cleanups, the establishment of the Traps to Treasure program, and her interactions with local fishermen. The interview also touches on O'Keefe's perspectives on environmental stewardship, generational influences on environmental behavior, and her collaboration with individuals and organizations in the region. Throughout the interview, O'Keefe reflects on her personal journey and the challenges she faced while advocating for environmental conservation and sustainable fishing practices. The interview provides insights into O'Keefe's unique role as an activist and her efforts to bridge the gap between environmental conservation and the fishing community in Maine's coastal areas.

Keywords: Maine's Coastal Fisheries, Gendered Dimensions, Climate Change Impacts, Adaptive Capacity, Resilience, Corea, Maine, Fishery, Sardine Factory, Environmental Stewardship, Traps to Treasure Program, Shoreline Cleanups, Sustainable Fishing Practices, Activism, Collaboration, Environmental Conservation, Fishing Community

Length of interview: 1:35:46

Transcribed by: Michelle Hanselowski and Ludwin Moran Sosa

Rebecca O'Keefe: [0:00:00] – so well and was such a good student he got a scholarship to Brown [University], and so I'm going like, "We did it our way." When I got there, he was sitting around with all his friends, and they'd all be talking. He'd always be telling stories. He didn't email because we didn't email. We didn't text. He called. He said, "Mom, I'm starting to really appreciate the way we grew up because nobody has any stories. I'm always having all the stories about this adventure and that adventure." So, growing up with a different background didn't hurt them – I hope – too much. Anyway, that's the story of that. Yeah. So, I'm going to pour the tea. [Recording paused.] – and was doing a lot of damage all the way from the pond up, and they were knocking down all the trees and everything. So, it was really – I'm just watching it dry out now, which is making me really happy.

[Recording paused.]

Jessica Bonilla: [0:00:57] Becky, what'd you have for breakfast?

RO: [0:01:01] I had oatmeal with walnuts, bananas, and blueberries.

JB: [0:01:4] Okay. That's it?

RO: [0:01:06] That's it.

JB: [0:01:07] What'd Art [Rebecca's husband] have for breakfast?

RO: [0:01:010] Cheerios and coffee, and maybe Bran Flakes.

JB: [0:01:15] Was he in a good mood this morning?

RO: [0:01:17] He kissed me goodbye while I was still asleep.

JB: [0:01:19] Okay. Good. [laughter] Alright, we're recording. Let's start. This is Jessica Bonilla. I'm here with –

RO: [0:01:37] Becky O'Keefe.

JB: [0:01:39] It is October 19th, 11:27 [AM]. Where are we today?

RO: [0:01:45] We are a mile in the woods on Forbes's Meadow in the town of Gouldsboro, sitting on my porch.

JB: [0:01:53] Beautiful. Can you tell us your age?

RO: [0:01:57] I will be seventy in a few days.

JB: [0:02:01] And your home state?

RO: [0:02:04] Connecticut. I grew up in southern Connecticut.

JB: [0:02:07] And what would you consider your home port?

RO: [0:02:11] My homeport?

JB: [0:02:13] Where you spent the most time on the water or working.

RO: [0:02:18] Well, I've lived here since I was twenty-four. So, this is where I consider home.

JB: [0:02:34] So you'd say Corea?

RO: [0:02:25] Corea. Prospect Harbor. Our address is Prospect Harbor.

JB: [0:02:30] Okay. And your highest education level?

RO: [0:02:33] High School.

JB: [0:02:34] High school? Your email? We didn't get your email. What's your email?

RO: [00:02:42] Becky O'Keefe, fifty-three. So that's BECKYOKEEFE53@gmail.com.

JB: [0:02:49] Wonderful. How would you introduce yourself to a new person or a crowd or people?

RO: [0:03:01] I am a person that loves to live in the woods. I love to work with the land and gardens. I am a very earth-based person. I believe I'm a very authentic person, and I don't really care much about impressing anyone. I guess I'm just a down-to-earth person.

JB: [0:03:33] How would you describe your role in the fishing or aquaculture industry in Maine?

RO: [0:03:40] I guess I would describe it as the spouse of a fisherman and the person that provided a home, meals, comfort, [and] security when he'd come in off the water. A lot of times, he would say when he came in, it was so peaceful to come into the woods. I would just say the homemaker.

JB: [0:04:07] Okay. I know you have experience clamming, and that was something that you and Art, your husband, did together. Do you remember how long ago that was and how many?

RO: [0:04:20] Yeah, it was before we had children. Also, when our first son was born, there wasn't much work in town here for women, except for in the factory. I wasn't a factory worker. I had lived in Vermont, and I wanted to own my own land. I read an article in the *Maine Times* – and that was probably in 1976 or 1975. I read an article about people coming back to the land in Maine. It was talking about the price of land here and that you could make a living by clamming and being self-employed and self-reliant. So, I took a trip from Vermont here to see if I could find some land, and someone had said to me, "Look east of Ellsworth because that's where you can afford it." After looking around at a lot of different pieces of land – many of us back-to-the-

landers, floating around looking at the same pieces – I found this piece of property, and I fell in love with the meadow. I never thought about how will I get in and out of here, how I would ever raise a family here, how I would do anything here other than I wanted to be in here. I went out fishing with my neighbor out at the end of the road, Charles Haycock, and we came into a wharf, and that's where I met Art, at the wharf. Very quickly, we moved in together, and he adopted the lifestyle. We were living in a little cabin across town and then in tents our first summer when we started building this. The only way to make money was clamming for both of us – clamming, and he cut firewood. So, when you go out clamming, it was a rough introduction to me because I've never worked in a man's world, and the language is something else. We'd get up and go out in the morning or whenever. Sometimes, we'd get up when it was still dark, or the tides changed. It was predominantly a male world. There was one other woman, her name was (Mary Ann?) Kennedy. She was clamming with her husband. So, I was competing with her because I'm very competitive. I couldn't compete with the men because they were stronger and faster, but I could compete with her. I always just would look over and watch how many rollers she would get and make sure I was keeping up. It was a really great time because you didn't need any money. Art and I bought a canoe; that was our craft. We made the rollers, and we pulled, so we just need a pair of boots. We didn't even need a hoe; we just needed some gloves and boots and go out for two and a half hours. Your day was over. You came in. There were buyers on the shore because the clams were so sought after, especially in Gouldsboro. There was a really great – pulling was a new method of digging clams, which was different than digging, and we were getting really clean clams. I just remember it being really wonderful. Our day would be over maybe by ten o'clock or, depending on where the tide was, just a couple of hours. I did that until our son was born. Then, when it was a really big tide – they're called big tides when you can get more clams because the tide stays out longer – I would get someone to watch my son, and I'd go out with Art and clam. Gradually, my homemaker/mother side dominated, and Art continued clamming and then started to lobster fish. That's kind of where my start with clamming was, but I only remember one other woman out there. To this day, I see her, and we both respected each other because we were in a world that wasn't really a woman's place. Oh, my dad – I had to tell you this. My dad came once, and we took him out clamming. The language out there – I don't want to say it on the interview, but when fishermen and clammers are out there, and they're hollering to each other, I think it was an eye-opener for my dad because the way I was raised was not like on a clam flat, and he couldn't believe I was out there with these guys and the way they talked and stuff like that. But I think he got a kick out of it. "That's how they talk in the Army," he said. He said, "Oh, that's how we talked in the service."

JB: [0:09:27] Was it unusual for women at the time to be buying their own land and coming out here?

RO: [0:09:37] I lived on a commune for three and a half years in Australia. I grew up in a suburban upper-middle-class family. Once I lived off the grid on a commune, I could never go back to living the way I was raised. I had broken up with the guy I lived with in Australia, and I didn't want anything to do with men. I knew I had gained a lot of skills in Australia on the commune that I knew I was able to build. I knew I could cut firewood. I knew I could take care of myself. So, when I came back to the States, I never doubted it. I just knew I wanted to have my own land and build a house. I'm really grateful I met Art because not many men back then – I think I was resented by a lot of the local women because of my attitude. I wasn't falling in line

where I should, and I remember that. I remember feeling like, “Ooh, they don't like me. I'm a little too independent.” That was kind of the sense I got. But that's why the other clammer woman and I got along because she didn't care either. No, there wasn't – I don't know if there was. I don’t think I met other women out here. But I did meet – I'm trying to think. I can't really remember back what it felt like.

JB: [0:11:19] You said that around the time that you guys were clamming that there was this new method, pulling method. What was that?

RO: [0:11:26] Pulling is where you go out to really deep mud. You have to wait for the tide to – you start to go out to the edge of the channels where the mud is really soupy and soft, almost like quicksand. You see the hole, the clam hole, and it's a little teeny thing, about a quarter inch, like an oval. You push your hand down in – you have a rubber glove. You push your hand down along the length of the oval, and you cup the bottom of the clam – it's down about six to seven inches – with the bottom of the tips of your fingers, and then you pull it up. So, it was very clean, but it was a certain way of moving. You could not stand still, or your feet would stick in, so you had to keep twisting your ankles and twisting your feet, or else – when people started clamming, they’d get stuck, and they’d go, “I can't move.'” So, it was one of those things you had – you leaned on your roller, and you walked, walked, walked, twisting your feet and pulling, dropping them and pulling, dropping them in. It had to happen really quick because the tide comes in really quickly along the channels. It’s not like it takes a long time for it to get to the shore. I always remember this term – David (Wailing?) – he actually lives out at the end of the driveway in the trailer. He'd go, “Tide coming. Get in the boat. Tide coming. Get in the boat.” Because the people furthest out would see it coming. It would rush in. Then you make sure you got all your rollers in your boat, and you were back in the boat and floating in. But it was just so fun to make money being out in nature and just being involved.

JB: [0:13:16] How many years did you guys do that for?

RO: [00:13:22] I'd say four or five – well, we got together in '77, and our son was born in '82. I worked doing that straight up to when he was kind of born and a little afterward. There really was no work in town for women other than the factory.

JB: [0:13:51] Did you know a lot of women that worked at the factory?

RO: [0:13:54] Most every fisherman's wife did. My neighbor did. Yeah, everybody’s – the women all worked there. They were very incredible. The women that worked in the factory were very skillful at what they did. But it wasn't my skill.

JB: [0:14:14] Were the days long for the women working in the factory? What was that like?

RO: [0:14:27] I think what I've noticed growing up in the era I did, my mom and Arts' mom, is that they kind of did what was expected of them because homemaker and factory worker were all – this is what you did. No one really questioned that there’s another role or another way to be a woman. The days at the factory, those women – it was competition there, just like on the clam flats. They would be cutting the heads and tails off the herring that would come in, pack them in

boxes, and their hands would fly, like you couldn't even see what they were doing. There'd be women that would be known for – “This person is the queen of packing." She could pack this many cases. You got paid by the case, so just like blueberry raking or something, which families did more then, the women would go early, I think start around seven, be in a huge line along the table. They’d talked like crazy – packing, talking, packing, talking, packing. Then their day would be over, and they'd go home. A lot of women in Corea worked at the factory. I would say a lot of fishermen's wives worked in the factory. I always have to laugh because they were probably better homemakers than I was. When Art was a fisherman, he'd be out there, and he'd hear – we didn’t have cell phones. There would be a CB radio, and he’d hear on the radio, "Well, Mama made today a big chocolate cake, and I've got some hot stew." And Art's out there with a peanut butter and jelly because I didn't make cake and hot stew for him to take out there. So, a lot of women would wake up at four o’clock, prepare lunch for their fishermen husbands, and then go down to the factory and work, then come back and prepare dinner. So, the same support system was happening, that they were the homemakers, but they were also working in between. I know that the older men got a lot better food in their lunch boxes than my husband did.

JB: [0:16:49] Would you say most families with a spouse fishing had to have supplemental income coming in, so most women had to have jobs or other forms of income?

RO: [0:17:08] I don't know that for sure. I know so many women worked at the factory. We didn't really need my income when I was raising the children for a while because we lived very modestly. So, I'm not sure what other people's overhead is, but it did appear that most women had work. I think they could work in Ellsworth. They could work at Wyman's Blueberries. They could work at Kelco. A lot of the same women that worked at the factory would make wreaths. I made wreaths with Downeast women. I learned to make wreaths, and that was another way I could make income and support what we were doing. When my youngest son was two, Art said he needed me to go back to work because I think we were starting to feel that one income wasn't cutting it.

JB: [0:18:07] And when you refer to the factory, you're referring to Stinson.

RO: [0:18:11] Yes, yeah.

JB: [0:18:15] When you first moved to Corea, was that a pretty active site? Were most people working there already?

RO: [0:18:22] Yeah, it was in the heyday. It was one of its most successful periods of time. It's been through a lot of iterations, but at that period of time, the herring boats were coming in. The herring was being piped into the factory. They worked around the clock. I don't think around the clock, but they worked every day, winter and summer. They bussed people in from Jonesport. There would probably – I might be making this number up – over a hundred women on the packing line. They'd bring women in. They'd get a bus and bring them in there from different areas. I think that was when Stinson's factory was very, very successful. I'm actually really involved with seeing Stinson's factory turn into something else right now, a multi-purpose facility, because the last of the single-species mega cannery kind of factory is not what people want to do anymore. We had an auction, and no one from the quote “industry” showed up, and

these three gentlemen that I had been talking to ended up winning the bid. They're trying to turn it into a multi-purpose facility where there can be a lot of aquacultures, maybe some food trucks. They're doing a lot of different things and breaking the factory up. I'd like to see Sarah Redmond, who is an aquaculture – or other people who are entrepreneurs – be like an incubator for small businesses. A lot of women are owning their own business now. So, when I've talked to some of the old timers that wanted to continue to see it as a factory, I would say, "I have young children. Young children don't want to be factory workers. That's gone. Women do not want to be factory workers. They want to be entrepreneurs and owners of their own businesses." That's what I see changing is that women have confidence now to say I can run a business, and I can do this. I'm hoping some of those women will find a home in the factory, whatever it is, and that it will be a vibrant place again. But who knows?

JB: [00:20:47] Can you describe a little more how you came into being involved in all that?

RO: [0:20:55] Well, we had this corporation, it was an overseas corporation called American Aquafarms. It was going to come in and buy the factory. It was going to put pens – you might be familiar with the pens they were going to be put in Frenchman's Bay. The fight was going on in Frenchman's Bay to save the bay, as well as the parallel fight was going on to save our community because they were going to rip down the factory. The model they had was this massive, massive thing, and they said they would employ three hundred people. I went to fight because I could do it here. I tried to support what was happening there, but we could be very effective on the ground here, trying to make it impossible for them, trying to scare them out of town, saying, "We don't want you here." Because this was going to be where they were going to process everything. We had protests. We had listening sessions. They never really listened to us when other industries tried to come into town, like the LNG, [Liquefied] Natural Gas. They would all come in, and we would protest, and they would say, "Well, we don't want to be where we're not wanted." So, we tried that, "We don't want you here. You're too big. We want to be local." They didn't hear that. So, we started a moratorium. It was actually really funny because I'm on the Solid Waste Committee, and one of the select people—one of the people from French Bay United called me and said, "Becky, I think you can stop American Aquafarms with the solid waste restrictions." He said, "But the chairman of solid waste can't stop it, so you're going to have to stop it." I remember thinking, "What? I don't know how to stop this." So, I was gardening one day – I'm a gardener, a professional gardener – I was gardening with my client, and I said, "Vicky, I'm very, very worried. There's a lot of pressure on me to try to stop American Aquafarms from coming to Prospect Harbor." I said, "It's way over my head. I do recycling. I do transfer station stickers. I don't stop corporations." She said, "I'm going to give you the number of a very nice person, and I recommend you calling it. He's a lawyer from Washington, and he lives here in the summer." So I called it, and I was very nervous. I said, "Hi, my name is Becky O'Keefe. I need to talk to someone about American Aquafarms and it coming in and my role. I just don't know what to do." He said, "Where are you?" I said, "I'm here in Winter Harbor." He said, "When can you meet?" I said, "Now." Well, anyway, we met, and he orchestrated the moratorium we put into place. He said, "What you need to do is you need to put a moratorium on fin-fish aquaculture until you can rework your ordinances. So, we got that through. The thing is, I have been on committees for a lot, so I have a lot of relationships within the community. He said, "Can you talk to the chairman of the select board?" I said, "Oh, yeah. Yeah." So, I think when you are in a community, and you make connections, they come back to serve you if you have an

open dialogue. Politically, we're not aligned, but we care about our community. So, that moratorium got put in place. It's still in place. It ended up – the fight over in Frenchman's Bay, as well as our moratorium, sent them packing. I remember being at a hearing, and they were talking about American Aquafarms and what they were going to do. Sarah Redmond – I had been talking about [how] I didn't believe that young people want factory jobs, that we're going to bring this in, and we're going to bus in people to work in the factor, and it's not going to serve our community, and that there's a better used for this facility. Sarah Redmond, a very talented and capable woman with Springtide Seaweed over there, stood up and echoed it. She said, "We need to grow this from the inside out, support the young people that are in our community, inspire young people, women, all these people to be entrepreneurs, and start their own businesses. We don't need a corporation coming in and bringing in people from out of state [or] out of the country to work in our community." When that meeting ended, I went over to her place the next day, and I said, "You and I are on the same page. How do we stop this? What do we do moving forward?" There was a wonderful flotilla that was a protest flotilla out in Frenchman's Bay. I was on her boat. She and I went out together. It was really, really lovely because there were all these lobster fishing boats, and we were in this little Boston Whaler, and the swells [of] everyone's boats – we're circling around this big protest. After we went through Bar Harbor, we all dispersed; everyone went back to their harbors. This was in protest of American Aquafarms. She and I tucked in behind the Hop, which is an island, and we just sat there for a minute, and a whole pod – I think it's called a pod – of harbor porpoise rose up and circled, swimming around our little, tiny Boston Whaler. The Hop is where they were going to sink one of the pens because it's such a deep hole, and we just both sat there and went, "Oh my God. This is their home. We can't let this [happen.]" It was almost like they were saying, "Thank you, ladies, for being there." I don't want to say men weren't fighting it. But there were a lot of women who were instrumental in stopping that. Leslie Harlow started the flotilla. There were a lot of – I don't know. I don't know why I felt like it was a lot of women involved, but I was involved with a lot of different women that were trying to stop that from happening. Now, I talked to the selectman, and I said, "I don't want American Aquafarms to say, 'We are going to stop it.'" He was kind of perturbed with me. He said, "Well, if not them, then what?" I said, "Well, a multi-purpose facility, and we'll make it happen." I was promoting this idea with another woman – Schoodic Rising. We started this thing trying to have something where it would almost be like an incubator for small businesses connected with the waterfront. So, I was talking around town, and I got a call from a person – this was a couple of days before the auction. He said, "Becky, what is your idea? What are you trying to do with the factory?" We had talked to the Corea Co-Op. We went down to the Corea Co-Op and said, "Can we go in together? Instead of bidding against each other at the auction, can we all go in with an idea of we want to see this different and not bid it up but bid together and make it so we got it and share vision?" So, we did talk to the Corea Co-Op board. Then, this gentleman called me. He called me back and said, "Becky." He asked me what my ideas were, and he said, "Can you come up and meet with my partners?" I said, "Yeah. I have a doctor's appointment this afternoon. Maybe I can do it after that or tomorrow." He goes, "Can you be here in twenty minutes?" I'm going, "I can do that, too." I ran up there. There were three gentlemen around a table, and I was again out of my comfort zone, but sometimes, when you believe in something, you just take a deep breath and dive in. They sat around. We shared. One of them said, "I'm in it to make money." I said, "I'm in it to protect the working waterfront." The other one said, "I'm in it to …". We just sat there talking. Then, when he said to me, "Keep this under your hat. Don't mention [it]," I went out, and I thought, "Oh God, I'm going to be caught

up and put in a trunk." I've just met with the Mafia or something. So, I came home and said, "Oh my God, I don't know what I've got myself into, but these were trying to collaborate." So, the next day was the auction. I got there early because I'd been hearing rumors it was going to be stopped and that American Aquafarms was not going to allow it to be auctioned off. One of the guys was in his truck there early. I went up and said, "Tim, what did you guys decide?" He said, "We're going to bid on it. We want to do this." I went, "Really?" I said, "Well, we have no money to put in this, just ideas." He said, "No, I think it's a good thing." It was so funny because it was a very special day. I said, "I've heard that the auction is going to be canceled." He said, "Well, you better find that out." So, I went in and found out it wasn't. These three partners, that are now the owners, just bought it on faith. He said, "Sometimes I get a gut instinct that something's right to do and is a good deal, and it's something I should do." He said, "I have that feeling here." At the auction, it was wonderful because no industry showed up. It was them and someone from out of state that had a business, but it was more like wharf work, sea walls, that kind of stuff. He asked me to go find out what they were doing here. I went over, found out, and reported back to the Mafia. So, when our bid happened, it got to a certain point – and this is a huge factory. It had sold at one point for twenty million. It stopped at 975,000. They called the owners – not the owners because American Aquafarms was out of it. It ended up selling for $975,000, not even a million. We were all elated. But what the problem has been that the ordinance in town for commercial fisheries meant that everything that went in there had to be associated with the water. You couldn't even store recreational vehicles. I'm seeing brewpub. I'm seeing food trucks. I'm seeing education. I'm seeing museums. I'm seeing a lot of different things in there. The big buildings out back, they were frustrated because they had an offer from a company – I believe it's Wyman's – that wanted to store boxes in there, and they couldn't because they weren't associated with the marine industry. The ironic thing is that the boxes have always been stored in there when it was Stinson's. The owners would say if we had a lobster on top of these boxes, it would be okay. But because there's a blueberry on top, it's not okay. So I joined with this fellow, Bill Zoellick, who really believes in this new iteration of this, to try to help change the ordinances in this community so that this new vision of the factory can happen. Because we've, over this summer, networked with a lot of the Working Waterfront Coalition up and down the coast. Again, a lot of women – Natalie, Rebecca – a lot of women involved in this. We brought up some aquaculture people. We brought up someone from Sea Meadow. They all looked at it, and the thing is so vast that industry doesn't need as much as that's there, but boat storage does. Wyman's does need those back buildings. We need to make it legal for them to do it. So, my work shifted to helping to draft changes to the ordinance. Back in the truck with Dana saying, "What do you think we should do?" He said, "It should go into commercial." There's no commercial, but there is general development. So what we're doing now, and there's a hearing next Tuesday on the changes – we've drafted it – that general development, which will allow them. We put how much proportion as a footnote needs to be associated with the working waterfront to protect the working waterfront, but then allow the other industries or businesses on the back part because they need an anchor tenant to pay the bills so that they can bring in aquaculture and stuff up front, but they can't do that because they need to rework the way the factory looks, and they need some money coming in. So, the factory was there; it was a vibrant part of our community at one point as a huge factory that hundreds of people worked at, many women, over a hundred women. But that model is over and done with. At this point, I never thought I'd find myself trying to rework a factory. That's not where I thought I was going at this point in my life. But when you see a cause, and you see it needs you to help – I do care about

Frenchman's Bay, but my work is now trying to make this be successful. There are a lot of people working in Frenchman's Bay to protect that, but I want this a vibrant place where young people and businesses can come in. It will be a vibrant place again. I see a lot of women there. My husband will say, "Why are you so involved in the factory?" I go, “Hmm, it’s bigger than that. Bigger than that.” It has to do – but I have to do this piece in order to make these three gentlemen who believed in this be successful. If they aren't successful, they are going to flip it. Who is going to come in again? Some scary big monster from another country and try to take over our town. So Sarah Redmond and I believe in this iteration and that it can be a multi-purpose facility, and so do these three guys. We're just trying to make it happen. Anyways, that's a long way around, saying what happened to the factory and where it is going now, but we're hoping if you check back in five or ten years – I would like to see a brewpub there. I would like to see something like Chipman's Wharf in Milbridge or Thurston’s. I would like to see education – dive instructing. I would like to see marine repair. I would like to see a museum. I would like to see the recycling of lobster traps with the things. So, there's a lot of things, but this is the first step we have to make them successful so that these ideas can actually take off in that facility. Long way around to that.

JB: [0:38:16] Amazing. Recycling lobster traps reminded me of the work you did with the group of women. Can you tell us about that?

RO: [038:25] Yeah. Oh my god. Great group of women. It's called Rozalia Project. Also, this is a boat. This is a woman, Ashley, from Vermont. She has a sixty-some-odd foot sailing vessel that she goes up and down the coast with a skeleton crew but with maybe five or six volunteers. All of them that I worked with this year were women that were on board. I don't want to say men aren't into the environment, but women have a huge passion around protecting the environment and going out and fighting for it. So, she goes up and down, and they target areas. I had kayaked out to Outer Bar with a friend of mine one year – with two friends – to pick up. We do shoreline cleanups because I'm on the Solid Waste Committee, and that's something I organized – shoreline cleanups – and got out there. It was so overrun with traps that we were just stunned. It was thousands of traps. I mean, at least over a thousand. We started stacking them up because I said, "Let's stack it up. Let's have an image here so that when the fishermen are going in and out, they aren't tangled in the rose bushes. There's a big pile, and they'll see how many traps are here." So, we stacked about seventy traps. They all fell over in a winter storm, but that's all we could do; there was no way in our kayaks we were pulling any traps off of there. I don't know how I connected with Ashley. Oh, I know. It came from MITA, Maine Island Trail Association. They target islands that are public on the Maine Island Trail Association to clean up, and they targeted Outer Bar as being a real problem. I have written the governor about this, and I said, “The wire traps on the shoreline are literally a superfund site. There’s so many. There’s so much plastic, there's so much rope, and they're starting to get grown into by the rose – the rose bushes are coming through them. Rocks are being piled with them. You're never going to get them out. The plastic's breaking off. It's getting into the – I said, "This is a problem.” In the old days, lobster traps were wooden. They broke apart when they were no longer used or got lost at sea, and they would end up on the shores as driftwood, and then we'd all make crafts from them, be little [inaudible] a little of this, a nice wooden this. Old fishermen didn't have the wealth that young fishermen have now; they valued each trap. Dana, the person whose truck I sit in all the time, said that when they lost a trap, they would go looking for it on the western shore of this or on the

eastern shore of that. They'd go with their stern person out walking along, looking for their wooden trap, and they'd bring it back. Well, the metal traps, when they came in, it wasn't evident at first that this was going to happen. But the first few seasons I was doing shoreline cleanups, you'd come around a cove, and I'd go, "Oh, dear, oh dear," and we'd try to cut the rope off and bring it in and bring the plastic in and try to carry traps in. Then it became such a problem. There was no way you were going to hit the shorelines where these were or the islands. I think there was a lot of awareness starting to grow. I remember sitting across from a woman, Sue, down at Maine Coast Heritage Trust. I think there was a meeting down there, and we were talking about the derelict traps. She and I looked at each other, and we shook our heads. We said, "This is going to be huge." Because it was just the start. She taught me – her son, Sue (Gott?), I think. Her son was a fisherman, and she taught me how to have traps strung out in a line that us as citizens could go out and get the derelict traps, put them in a string, and then a buoy on them, and a lobsterman could come in and haul them in, like ten at a time, pile them on the boat. We could take them ashore. In the beginning, that felt doable. We went to Inner Bar and did that. We went to Moose Island, and I had several – a couple of fishermen, not a lot – one from Corea and one from Bunkers Harbor – that helped us bring them in that way. Sue, her son – they were doing this on another island. So, that was kind of – we were getting like, "Ooh, we got thirty-six traps off." But when it becomes a thousand traps, you throw up your hands. This year is the second year Rozalia Project and MITA have teamed up together to try to get the traps off of Outer Bar. It's one of the worst places they've ever seen. We don't know what created it. My husband tells me his thoughts. I have my thoughts. But it's like, whatever it is, they're there, and they need to come off because they're breaking down. I worked with this gentleman called [Campbell] "Buzz" Scott. We started a program called Traps 2 Treasure, where we identified if we give fishermen a better option, rather than cutting their old traps off at sea, which they could do when they were wooden, to bring them ashore and bring them to a place that will recycle them. So, Traps 2 Treasure's up at our transfer station. He trains young people to be divers – works with the high school. He's a very passionate person about the ocean. So, we have that now. It's up there, and thousands of traps there. Now, the fishermen like that they can bring the traps in. I know that people used to take old traps out, the metal traps, and dump a whole load of them. I know that for a fact because I've had a fisherman tell me that. So, some of these traps end up on the shore because of storms, but some end up on the shore because they're no longer tethered or fished. Buzz does his diving. He's gone down with divers to retrieve the ones that are on the bottom. He sees the old traps buried in the bottom with their tops sheared off, with this metal sticking up, scraping the bottom of groundfish like flounder and stuff. The flounder go across, and they're getting scratched up along the bottom. So, the problem is there. The solution is going to take a lot of money to take stop adding to the problem. That's what we said – stop. Stop throwing traps overboard. How do we get them ashore? How do we recycle them? This is all going to be coming to a head, I think, in the next five years. I heard a show yesterday on Maine lobster fishing, and someone's question is, "What about all the ghost traps and derelict traps?" And the person said, "There's a lot of things behind the scenes happening now." I think Buzz, the guy who got the NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] grant in conjunction with Ashley, who does the Rosella project – she got the same NOAA grant. They shared it to get the traps out of the water, off the islands. The thing with Ashley is that because she's doing research just like you all with your NOAA grants, you have to show data; you have to show findings. Her group of women – the (might?) is out there, and we're cutting the traps apart. We're hauling them. The guys are throwing them on. We're getting them off the islands. Ashley's crew is documenting –

taking note of the trap tags because they're dated. How long ago was this trap lost and sent up there? Who does it belong to? We don't want to know who it belongs to; we're just mostly looking at – or, does it belong to the same fisherman? Is this a pattern that they have? Always Clorox bottles. How many pieces of plastic? How much length of rope? I have the statistics of – I think we got some close to six hundred traps off this year and four hundred something last year – several dumpsters all taken to recycling in Steuben. She's got the statistics on how many lengths of rope. We don't know what to do with the rope. I wish there was something to do with the rope because it's a huge amount of waste. I think this group of women were really into it. Laura Ludwig was one of the persons on the boat. I had gotten to know her years ago when we were starting Traps 2 Treasure. She worked out of Augusta, and I don't know if she was with the Maine Lobstermen's Association or she was helping us to understand how we could recycle. She might have been with Maine Recycling or something. She was on the boat. She took the summer off to be a volunteer on the boat. So, I know they pick up crew from all over the country that come because she'll say to me, "I'm picking up two crew out of Boston, and we're heading up." After they left us, they went to Bois Bubert out of Steuben and Milbridge area to clean up that island. But that island [is] nothing like Outer Bar. They say we have another year or two on Outer Bar. So, we'll see, once we clean up Outer Bar, will the pattern of traps coming on change? That's what their statistics are taking – are fishermen changing their behavior? It's a very delicate line because I am married to a fisherman. I have to be very careful that I don't alienate them or make them angry at him, and they cut his traps. So, when I've been to the Co-Op meetings asking about donating to Traps 2 Treasure because we're providing this, I have to go, "I speak for myself, not for my husband. Please don't take it out on him. But this is what we're doing." So, I have a very delicate line. Ashley's great because she just wants to party. She says, "Let's throw a big party [and] include the fisherman. That's how we can get them in. We get some beer, and we get some music, and we'll get them." To this day, I have not had fishermen helping. Maybe one or two. I even had one fisherman – and this might be saying too much. I don't want to say this. Anyway, they see the problem, and they want us to pick up the problem. I know that fishermen are helping in other places. It's like, how do we reach them? How do we get them to be partners in helping? I actually went to a trap maker in the area and asked if they – this is when we were trying to recycle the traps. We have to take the bricks out because you can't crush them with the bricks in there, and the weight is – they actually get sent to Canada, the traps, and they have a big grinder. The net and all the fluff, they call it, is extracted and made into bricks. The metal is sent down to the mid-coast of the East Coast here and made into the upholstery of our cars – the dashboards. Not the upholstery – the dashboards and the plastic used in our cars. I went to this trap person, seeing if they could work with us in partnership to make it easier to get the bricks out of the traps. This is the kind of thing you have to tease out where are the problems. Getting the bricks out of the traps takes a huge amount of time to cut them out. I asked if they could make a trap door on the outside that was easier for us to access. I said, "We're trying to recycle the traps." And she basically said in her words, "What happens to the traps after they leave here is not my problem. It belongs to the fishermen. It's their problem." And I said, "Well, there's such a thing as product stewardship, which you try to see how your product is going to end up in the end of its lifetime." We kind of disagreed, and I said, "I'm just asking to brainstorm on how could you make a trap that has an easier …". I said, "If we don't do something, these traps are going to be illegal, and they're not going to be able to use these again." She asked me to leave her store. That was sad. That was very sad because that was not helping us to solve a problem. I don't want to see them be illegal because they're very much easier than the wooden traps for the fishermen

to use and stack and everything, but they are an environmental hazard. That's way off course.

JB: [0:52:19] No, that's great. That's exactly what we want to hear. You're definitely in an interesting position, being an activist and really caring for the environment. How have you noticed how you feel about things –? Where do you think the disconnect is with fishermen? How do they not see –? How do you think they view the environment and they interact with it? How is that different from how you might view it?

RO: [0:52:47] Well, when I asked Art this back when we were first doing shoreline cleanups, and I was finding Clorox bottles. I used to do this environmental program in the schools; each grade had a different topic, and third grade was shoreline. We'd do a shoreline cleanup. I asked Art, I said, "Why are the Clorox bottles out there? People know better than to throw. Why can't they just bring their lunch bag back or their water bottle back or their gloves back with them?" He said he thought it was not generational, that it came down family lines. That son worked with father. Father throws it over; son throws it over. That son works with his son; that one throws it over – and it was coming down family lines. So, when I started doing this project in the school, I said, "I have to interrupt this family line." So, that's when we started doing the shoreline with third graders. I took them out, and we were picking up; we put all our trash together, seven Clorox bottles, fifteen water bottles, this, that, and the other thing. So, we were talking about the garbage and how it got there. I said, "What is a Clorox bottle doing in the bushes?" I said, "How'd it get there?" He said, "Probably just floated in there." I said, "What was it doing in the ocean?" Because I thought it belonged in the laundry. They go like, "Because we've done thrown it there." And I said, "Well, how come you done throw it there?" "Because it was done empty." And I'm going like – I said, "Well, it didn't go anywhere, ended up in the bushes, and now we're picking it up." So, we are sort of sitting there, and I said, "Well, how can we stop this?" I said, "How many of you fished with your mother or your father?" Eleven hands went up. I said, "How many of you think you can mention it to your mom or dad the next time you're out with them, that maybe we should bring it back?" And all hands went down. All I can think is that maybe they – I mean, I don't know if you know. There was a period of time when anti-smoking happened, and kids would come home, and if their parents smoked, they're going like, "You're killing yourself. You're killing yourself." I know my husband used to smoke until our kids cried that he's killing himself, and that made him stop. So, this is the same thing. I go like, "Okay, maybe they can't say anything, but maybe that son who was in third grade when he has his boat, and he goes out, and he goes to throw his Clorox bottle over, that one little boy will remember that it didn't belong over there." So, to me, I don't know – it's education, it's interrupting patterns, and I think it's very hard to change the fishermen that are fishing now, except for – Art's married to me and I think he's also an environmentally aware person. He brings his stuff ashore, but he's not your traditional fisherman. So, I don't know how this is going to stop other than a little bit at a time, and scolding doesn't work really well. Scolding is hard because I do roadside cleanups, too. There are some personalities that – you're picking up the roadside, and we all are out there picking up the roadside, and some will drive by and throw their coffee cup right in by you just to say, "Oh, pick this up." So, you're not going to get rid of that person, but if we can start to get the balance of people being more aware of their behavior. So, it'll be interesting once we get the shorelines cleaned up. We're starting to see less and less of the garbage accumulating now. I think it's just awareness, and I think people think the ocean is away. They don't know that it took a trip and ended up back. Our families travel a lot, and we go to the Caribbean or Florida even.

You go to shorelines, and they're just trashed. Maine is ending up that way now, and that breaks my heart. You go into a shoreline, and you just look and go, "Oh, no." That's why I have such a passion. I want young people to go to that shore and see pristine shoreline, not garbage and ropes and traps. We've got to (arrest?) it here in Maine. I think we've got so much environmental awareness that there's going to be a big push to care about our shorelines and our oceans. I mean, it starts in the ocean. That plastic thing, oh my God, that vortex out there in the Pacific is just – that was a movie I showed at that environmental thing, and some people cried. It's awareness. People are not aware of what their behavior does. Anyway, that's it. I don't know how it's going to change. Slowly, slowly, really slowly. Maybe with more women out there fishing. Women will bring that awareness to it. I think way more awareness to it.

JB: [0:58:36] Alongside trash, whether here or in your travels to the Caribbean, what other changes have you noticed in the marine environment?

RO: [0:58:47] I think the trash that we notice in the Caribbean was coming off cruise ships because I think there was a time when trash from New York City would be taken out a certain amount of distance and dumped. That was how they dealt with their trash. I think, cruise ships, you can get a certain amount of distance away from shore and dump. So, I know these Caribbean islands that were third world, very tiny islands, there were perfume bottles from France, there was a high heel shoe – these are not things that – cream rinses that the people on the island were using. These were coming in off of boats. I don't think we have that problem here. I think we have it from the marine industry. The fishing industry is showing up here. That's why I think the work that Rozalia Project does – documenting, repeating, and going back to places – will really help to say, "Is this starting to slow down? Is it changing? Is the awareness helping the shore?" It's a big project to get it off the shore for right now and out of the oceans because it is breaking down, and it's ending up in the – they're saying how much plastic is in everything. It's in us now, the micro – whatever they're called.

JB: [1:00:10] Microplastics. Can you run down –? You're so involved, and I want to note the different organizations and stuff you've been involved in for different projects. I didn't know about Traps 2 Treasure.

RO: [1:00:32] Yeah, I think what happens is when I see a problem, I want to fix it. When we first came here, there was no recycling. It was like, "Oh." Oh, I joined the Solid Waste Committee because I wanted to get out of the house, really, and I saw a problem with solid waste. We had a dump that was closing, people were dumping their garbage in the woods, and we weren't recycling. I had a one-year-old, and I didn't feel like I could say, "I'm going crazy. I need to get out of here." But I could say, "I have a committee hearing – a meeting. I have to go to the solid waste meeting, and I could go out." So, I started getting involved with things I could leave the house for in the evening and beyond. Committees are so wonderful because it's a really lovely way of working within your community and people – when you have a good committee, and you can communicate, and you're all on politically different sides – your age is different, where you're coming from is different, and you have a problem you need to solve, and you put your two cents in, and you talk about it – "That's a good idea. "That's not going to work.Who votes for this?" – it's a lovely way as a community to solve some of the problems in your community. So, the solid waste community I've been on forty years. It became evident we needed recycling. So,

started Coastal Recycling with other communities; a bunch of us were saying we need recycling. That's since folded, but we did have recycling. So, that committee I sit on. That has had a lot of iterations. A lot of things – we've brought the transfer station in. Trying to clean up the shores, clean up the roadsides is all part of the solid waste. Then the whole traps thing happened. I was adamant about the traps, and I was the gardener at an inn down in Corea, Oceanside Meadows. He was a huge marine biologist, and he had someone called Buzz Scott that he knew was into the traps. He said, "Becky, I want to introduce you and Buzz because Buzz is working with kids out of Sumner, and he's out of Newcastle, and he's into the trap problem. I think you two should get to know each other." So, Buzz and I got together, and we were totally on the same page. The idea that he had was that we'd start a place called Trap 2 Treasure; the kids would volunteer to help us collect the traps and recycle them – do the actual breaking down of the traps – in trade for being trained divers. He does a lot of diving. He would work with the certifying divers in this community, in the school, and then those kids would come to Traps 2 Treasure. We got Traps 2 Treasure because I was on the Solid Waste Committee, I sit in the truck with Dana, and I went to the select board, and I said, "You know I'm passionate about this shoreline stuff." I said, "Is there any town land we could start Traps 2 Treasure on." And they said, "There is three acres up beside the transfer station," and they voted to let us have it for a dollar a year. So, we had land cleared and stuff. [Buzz] had raised money. I went around all the co-ops [and] got money to start it. Buzz has been really integral at keeping it going. In the beginning, I'd go up there because [inaudible] rope off, coiling rope, doing this, and then it was trap after trap. I'm going like, "Wait a minute, this is not what I want to be doing. This is for the kids to be doing." And what happened is COVID hit. So, the volunteer labor that we had from the kids – he could not work with the children in the school anymore. They could not work where we were recycling traps. My interest – not interest in it, but my involvement in Traps 2 Treasure took a side thing that I started working with Rozalia Project. He built a crusher, the first crusher on the East Coast; he built this wonderful crusher. I like to be really efficient, and I thought getting all the netting out was not as efficient as I thought we could be. Getting the bricks out, yes. So I traced the trap all the way to Canada, and that's when I found out you don't need to take the netting out, that they actually use that stuff. So, anyway, I started saying, "Okay, Buzz, you do your thing." It had to shut down for a while. Finally, rather than manning it – I used to go up there on Sundays from 12:00 to 4:00 and sit there while fishermen brought in their traps. Then we said, "This is a ridiculous waste of time. Let's just put a sign that says, "Traps deposit far back as you can." It's been much better because now fishermen don't have to call and make an appointment. In the beginning, it was so – I can't believe it way back there – we were separating out good traps for startup fishermen. We're going like, "Oh, well, this isn't that bad." So, I was saying to co-ops – I was going like, "Any startup fisherman could come here and get a trap. Five-dollar donation to Traps 2 Treasure." We had so many thousands of traps come through there, and there was no way we could keep sorting them out. So, there's some really good traps in there, and I cannot believe the traps that fishermen are getting rid of these days. I mean, I go, "Whoa, that should be a trap for some young person who needs to start up." But anyway, that's how I got involved with Buzz on that. Then I told you the American Aquafarms saying – I just couldn't believe what was happening there, and I got called to say, "Stop it." I was going like, "Stop." [laughter] So, the moratorium went through, and I did that. Now I'm involved with this because I want to see that. Then I got asked to sit on the board of Frenchman Bay Conservancy because that's what I am. So, I'm on that. Sometimes, I say to my husband, "Honey, you should get more involved in the community." He goes, "You're involved so much; you're doing it for both of us." I go, "Okay."

But I'm trying to get my sons to be part of their community because it needs people; it needs the community to help it work – the meetings, the planning board. We are so lucky that we can go to a town meeting and have involvement. We're so lucky we can go to a select board meeting and have a comment against something or for something; We're so lucky our voices can be heard. In a lot of places, in a city and stuff, you're kind of anonymous. But here, I mean, they need people on committees. I just got asked to sit on a committee for Gouldsboro shore, which is looking at climate resiliency, and I went, "Nope. Nope. No, no." There are lots of people who can do that. I'm over my head on committees, things I have passion [for]. I think that that's what I would love young people to know: that you can make a change in the community. Who knows where this factory thing is going, but if my legacy is that that's a vibrant place after I pass, I'll be really happy. That has a new iteration, and I'll go, "Yeah, we didn't go camping much this summer, but boy, that factory, it's a good place." [laughter] It's really hard because fisherman is a very hard job, and they're very exhausted, and there's not much energy left after that day. I know that it's a very physically hard job. I think Art's support of me being involved is his way of being involved because the amount of times I say, "I got to go to a meeting. Dinner is there; warm it up, I got to go to this," that is supporting me to be able to do what I'm doing, I guess. I'd have to say that. Look at Cindy Thayer, who started Schoodic Arts for All. The Navy base closed down. She says, "What are we going to do with that? We need something here for people to do." Schoodic Arts for All is vibrant. So, sometimes ideas just need a seed, and then you just need to figure out how to grow that into fruition. There's a lot of things – Schoodic Arts for All, I hope this factory – just came from an idea and a belief that you can do it. I think women are definitely – when we get back to our women, I think they have visions, and they're not afraid to go for the visions as much. But anyways, that's that.

JB: [1:10:35] That's wonderful. I think the last question we'll ask is if you could tell policymakers in Maine what the biggest priorities should be to help them working in fisheries adapt to environmental changes, what would you tell them? I can repeat that, too.

RO: [0:10:51] Yeah. [laughter]

JB: [0:10:52] If you could tell policy makers in Maine what the biggest priorities should be to help people working in fisheries adapt to environmental changes, what would you tell them?

RO: [0:11:02] Diversify. Help them diversify because, I think, so much is happening in the lobster industry [and] people involved, and it's already happened over this period of time. The lobster industry is not going to be very strong – be as strong as it is for very much longer. I think the lobsters are going places. I think helping fishermen to find new careers – I'm thinking off the cuff, okay? – with their boats, with their knowledge, with their experience, that can be another career. I know they've done this with (TA?) training. They did this once before when we had a lull. They offered us money to retrain, and I said, "It could be the fisherman, or the fisherman's spouse could retrain so that not all the income was in the fisheries." Because they were worried – at one point, I think was in the '80s, the fishing industry was going down. I said, "Art, so what do you want to do? What do you want to be? Do you want to train? Do you want to get your captain's license?" He said, "Nah, I just want to be a fisherman." That was his thing. Well, I took herbalism classes and courses. They didn't care what I did, and then I built an office so I could do a mail-order wreath business. I had to take a course. I had to complete a business plan, but they

gave me money if I did the business plan. I presented it, and they okayed it. In our shop that we have in Corea, I had a friend build out, insulate, and put a heated tile floor in one section so I could run my computer down there and have an office for my wreath business and do mail order wreath business. But Art wanted to die a fisherman. He did not want to change. But that's not the case with all of them. I look at Joe Young; he started Lunch on the Wharf. He took that training and the money and started that. I look at Danny Rodgers, who I think – I don't know if he took the money, but I know he saw that taking people out for the experience of catching your own lobsters was a way he could use his boat and not be hauling. So, I would say it's just like what's happening with the coal industry. You can't approach it as like we're taking your job away because you're a polluting job. It's almost like, what skills do you have? How can we bring this industry to you or you to that industry so you can continue to do the work you've been trained to do your whole life, and you like to do, and you find pride in but do something good for the environment? I mean installing solar panels, wind – all the stuff. There's a lot of work in the environmental movement, and it has resistance because it looks like people taking stuff away. I feel like with the lobster industry, there's a certain nature to the lobster person that they want to be on the water; they want to be self-reliant; they want to be the owner of their own business; they want to be in charge of their own day; they don't want to answer to anybody. [There's a] certain amount of risk-taking, certain amount of working in nature. You have to say, okay, what are those characteristics that make that person a lobster fisherman, and how do we find industries that support that character? I don't know what that is, but I would say – they're talking about getting traps with no rope, and I think that's going to be a waste of time because, I'm sorry, the industry is not going to be that vibrant. How do you find your trap? There are going to be so many traps lost down at the bottom of the ocean with radio waves being pumped out of them. It's like, "Hmm, let's monitor the whales. Let's put something on the whales. Let's track where they're going. Let's slow the boats down." I think we're going to go through a lot of stuff, but I don't know what lobster fishermen can do. I don't know if there are as many people getting into it today as it did because of the cost of a license, a lot of restrictions, and stuff like that. It's a little bit more burdensome. My husband's having to do all this data work now because they're monitoring things – very much like what Rozalia Project does, but he's having to track everything that comes in – is it a shedder? Is it a –? They're trying to understand it better, and he doesn't like doing that. I mean, that's not why he's a lobster fisherman to be filling out forms. I don't know. I think there was a day when you made a lot of money really quick. You look at all the young fishermen, the guys in the harbor, they've got massive boats, they've got a massive amount of debt, and that scares me because they took on the debt when the industry was strong without thinking, "Will the industry support this debt moving forward?" And it's not just in their boats; it's in their trucks, it's in their toys. They have a lot of debt, and that worries me because if it goes bottom up, what are they going to do? I don't know. I guess I would say – I don't know what the industry will be. I don't know what it will be. But a lot of things, like lobster fishermen, are now diversifying, and being kelp fishermen or aquaculture people in winter are growing oysters. I think the ones that are seeing the vision for the future coming are diversifying. If we can help them to diversify and make it easier and not cost-prohibitive – I don't know. I don't think we're going to go that way because we're so close to retiring, but the younger kids might. I don't know. What do you think? Oh, I'm about to ask you a question. [laughter] What do you think about the women?Are there going to be women out there that want to fish?

JB: [1:18:03] Oh, yeah.

RO: [1:18:04] Yeah. They want to do different stuff, or do they want to be lobster fishermen? Or do they want to do other stuff out there?

JB: [1:18:10] I think it's exciting to see so many women enter the aquaculture world and seaweed farming, which is such a good carbon capture. So, I think it's exciting to see where things are going. Fun to watch.

RO: [1:18:23] I think it's really funny because a lot of times it comes down to bravery, and a lot of times when you grow up – my generation – we didn't pump our own gas. No one pumped gas; a gas station attended did that. I remember when it was self-serve pumps. The first time I pumped my own gas, I went, "I can pump gas. Oh my gosh." I felt like my mom was still going to full service. I was going, "Mom, it's really okay. You just …". Then it happens when you learn to change your own tire. I've been the kind of person that I didn't want to answer to any man. I didn't want to be dependent on a man. So, I took a Volkswagen maintenance course. I needed to know that I could survive on my own. I think young women are so much more there. My generation was the cusp of beginning to say women's lib [liberation], and we can do this and everything. I don't want to be equal. I don't want the man's job, but I want to be able to do what I want to do without me feeling like, "Can you help me?" When I see some of these women out lobster fishing, I go like, "You go, girl. You're brave. You're out there in the waves and the scary stuff, and you're handling it." I don't know if I'm brave enough to do that because I haven't experienced it yet. It's so weird that I've been married to a fisherman for all these years, but I've never been out lobster fishing with him because I had my career and his career. Mine is a land-based career, and his is a water-based career. Now I feel like, "Well, I need to go out one day to at least know what being by the crashing surf feels like." I'll be going like, "Art, you're a little too close. Let's back up. I think you're too close." He did flip his boat once when he was younger. Scared me half out of my wits. It ran ashore and ruined [inaudible]. I think young women just have more faith in themselves and capability. It's a mindset. It's not anything to do with how we're. It has to do with how you're raised or how you think. Maybe strength-wise, we're not as strong, but ability-wise, in our heads, to solve problems and to work together with other people and to nurture – those are all qualities that I think women bring to this whole change. They're going to bring the environment and care for the environment with them into the future of whatever happens out on the water.

JB: [1:21:18] Awesome. That was awesome. I definitely want to note that we're at your home, where you did most of the building.

RO: [1:21:27] Yeah. Well, that was another thing – I didn't want to work in the factory, and Art could make more money than me, and I liked the challenge of building. Again, it was a book. I was going, "Okay, I can do this." And then, when I got to plumbing, I said, "I know I can glue this together. I can do that. I can do this." Or electricity, it's just like – now, I would go on YouTube. Then, it was like, just get a book and learn how to do it. When I went out with Sarah Redmond on the flotilla, and we were the tiniest boat out there, we were surfing their wakes and everything. I was so proud of her. I was just going, "Oh my God, I'm so happy I'm in your boat. Look at us." So, when you're just out here, and you're just doing your thing, I just love it when I see women being strong. Not feisty. You don't have to be feisty. I'm trying to do a delicate

balance, but strong and confident and [with] conviction. I think that's why – when I said I'm authentic, I don't worry about what I appear as a female. I don't worry about if they go, "Oh, Art's wife. How does he live with her?" I've never cared how I looked. I mean, I care how you look, but I didn't care if I was appropriately dressed or something. That was never – it was mostly what was in my heart that I wanted to do with that. So, I show up in some pretty funky outfits. That's not where my care is at. I am really proud of women these days, and I wish I could jump in and start over and have more company on the thing because it has been a lot of dealing with men. I tell you, going into the Corea Co-op board meeting makes me more scared than climbing up on ladders, [or] anything. I took a deep breath because I don't want those guys getting mad at me or talking to me in a way that's going to make me feel bad. So, I took a deep breath. I go, "Okay, I can do this. These are men. I don't care. It's okay. Going in." Same thing with those three men that called me up to talk. I went, "Becky, they called you. They want to know your idea. You just walk in there, and you talk to them." So, I go, "Okay, don't put me in the trunk." When they said this is under the radar, I'm going, "Under the radar. Got it. Got it. Okay. I promise I won't tell anyone." What do you think? Do you think young men are more receptive to women? Or do you still have a male thing that's going on?

JB: [1:25:02] I think things are getting better. Yeah. But there are peripheral waves of things, but definitely getting better. Thank you so much for your time and all your contributions. This has been awesome. Is there anything else anyone wanted to ask?

Kristin Zunino: [1:25:31] If you can still record, I have a few things; I was writing down names and organizations as well as locations you were talking about, and we're going to have some maps. We would love if you could point out those areas that you mentioned. There's a few names, if you don't mind –

RO: [1:25:50] You can delete them?

KZ: [1:25:51] No. If you don't mind, if you have the last names of the people, that would be great. One of them that you mentioned was Tim, who was one of the three men.

RO: [01:26:03] Tim Ring. He's from Ring's Paving. This is why it's so wonderful. It's Ring's Paving. We've got Kevin Barbee from Barbee Construction and Josh Trundy, who is also in construction. They're all local, self-built businesses that have everything they need to turn that into what – I wrote a letter to the editor when American Aquafarms was coming, and I said, "It feels like a giant is about to step on my community, and it's about to smother who we are." Then, I reiterated what Sarah Redmond and I talked about. But these guys being local and them sharing a vision feels like I've held it – it's in my right eye. It's out there what that can be. I don't know why it's my right eye, but I always see it with that eye. I just see it over there. This eye is – another left brain or something. These guys, I think, can do it. Those are the three guys, and I think they've named themselves the Prospect Project. They're an LLC now called Prospect Project. Once we get through this hearing on Tuesday and they have freedom to do what they need to do, I really want to sit down with them and really brainstorm what they want in there and how we can bring in all kinds of stuff to make it happen and work together on it. Help them. They are a for-profit, and I'm just an idea person. But anyway, those three people work together – Prospect Project.

KZ: [1:27:54] And then you also mentioned Ashley, who helped you with the trap cleanups.

RO: [1:28:01] I want to say Ashley [Sullivan]. It's on my phone. It's Rozalia Project. If it's not Ashley Bryant – that's not a famous person's name, is it? Ashley Bryant?

JB: [1:28:16] Kobe Bryant. [laughter]

RO: [1:28:16] [laughter] I'm not saying Taylor Swift. Ashley Bryant isn't something I'm hearing from somewhere. I think it's Ashley Bryant, but I just call her Ashley, and she's with this Rozalia Project.

KZ: [1:28:30] And then Sue, who you were talking about trap cleanup with as well.

RO: [1:28:35] Oh, I believe her name was Sue (Gott?). We were at a meeting over in Bar Harbor, I think, about the problem with the debris ending up on the shores. I don't know who was there. I just remember she was there, and she and I connected. We were talking like, "What do you do? What should we do? How do we get these traps off?" And this was before it became – I call it a Superfund. I really believe it needs the attention and the money of a Superfund site. I didn't hear back from the governor when I sent her the letter. Now, I know her because she came down last year, and I shouldn't tell this story [on] the record.

KZ: [01:29:18] Awesome. Yeah, that's all the names I have for the last names.

MH: [1:29:26] I have a question. What years were the protests against the Aqua farms coming in?

RO: [1:29:32] Okay. So, last summer, we weren't protesting. It would be the summer before and into the fall. It was when we were trying to establish this – we had this moratorium. I know the moratorium is on its third six-month thing. Yeah, it wasn't last summer. It was the summer before, even before that. Whenever they were protesting out there in Frenchman's Bay, it was all happening at the same time. That made me realize that the pens were going to be situated in Gouldsboro, our waters, though we had no control over our waters. We go all the way to Bar Harbor for Goldsboro's thing. It's kind of frustrating to say, "Okay, they're in Gouldsboro waters." All the surrounding communities – Hancock, Lamoine, Bar Harbor, Sorrento – what this showed is that we are coastal community people sharing a body of water. We should all have a say on what goes on in that water, not just Gouldsboro because it's under our tax map. Our water – there's no boundaries with water. I mean, water is fluid. It goes – *woo* –whatever it does. It goes wherever it wants. So, it affected everybody out there around the whole bay. I felt like something's got to change about this. I think there was something brought up in the legislature about this. There's a lot of things that have been triggered by this. All communities that share a body of water form something that they all have to agree [on]. When I went to Dana in the truck – this is the head of our selectman, our chairman of the board – and I was talking. He was mad about this protest happening, and I said, "Well, we can't just be selfish and say, 'Okay, we allow it.' It affects everybody else. All those people see it. Acadia sees it. The water is going to pollute that thing." He said, "Well, I'm really against Bar Harbor telling us what we can do in our –

having to say what they can do over here." He said, "No one asked us about what they do with their big cruise ships we have to look at all the time." I said, "Well, maybe they should. Maybe they should say" – because you look out, and you see these cruise ships that make the islands look like they aren't islands anymore. I don't know what they are. Maybe what the effects – it's in the waters that they're anchoring. Actually, they are anchoring in some of Goldsboro's waters. But it's affecting all of us. They're running themselves 24/7, their fuel and everything. So I don't know. Maybe we should be more cooperative and have a say in what surrounds a body of water. But why am I saying that? What did we talk about? Why did you ask? [laughter]

Q: [1:32:31] Maria asked you about the protest.

RO: [1:32:33] Oh, yeah. About the protest. I was going, "I didn't have any last name in there." Thank you. That's right. One of the best things was that flotilla. If you can see a picture of that or something, that was really – over a hundred lobster boats from all over. That's when you felt a sense of community – Lamoine and Sullivan –everybody circling around. Sarah's little boat. We didn't have life [preservers]. I said, "Sarah, where are the life preservers?" She goes, "Under there." I said, "Let's put them on" because we were surfing. I said, "I don't want to end up dead out here on this thing." But no, she's a pretty courageous girl.

JB: [01:33:15] As are you. Thank you.

RO: [01:33:17] No, no. [laughter]

MH: [01:33:19] I just have one more question. When you were talking about the factory, you said there were some women who would be like the queens of packing because they were so fast. Do you have some names? Do you remember who some of those people were?

RO: [01:33:34] Oh my gosh, no. I just saw this woman in the clinic today. Her name is Marianne Urquhart, and she lives in Corea. I believe she was one of the packers down there as a young person. She would be able to tell you, and also there's some history about that. There is a documentary about the factory and a person – his name is – I just saw him the other day, Allen Workman, I believe. He's part of the Historical Society, and he's written something. He did a presentation about the history of the factory going way back when it was started. It's a really wonderful documentary to see. It's very informative, and it will show the women doing this. No, I just remember there were two or three, or there was a queen. There was someone that no one could beat her. They kind of got a rhythm, like they almost heard music in their head. They all jiggled around on their feet and doing this. They were dancing at their job. They were literally just dancing around. But his name is Allen Workman, and if I can find the documentary – I'll ask him to send it. I'll try to get it to you. Get it to Jess, and then she can pass it on to you. There were not that many men in there. The men were maybe in the machine shop cutting, making the tins, or moving things around. The men were lobster fishermen. This was women. This was just women and the factory doing that. No, I didn't see a man on the line. Yeah.

JB: [01:35:33] Awesome.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Molly A. Graham 5/10/2024