

**Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DATE: June 28, 2019**

**HEADLINE: MAINE AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION WELCOMES RECENT UMAINE GRAD AS  
OUTREACH & DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**

**BODY:**

Afton Hupper, a recent graduate of the University of Maine, has joined the staff at the Maine Aquaculture Association (MAA) as an outreach and development specialist. Hupper is the first to hold this new position, which is a joint appointment through MAA and the National Aquaculture Association (NAA). Afton will focus on building the association's capacity to communicate effectively with its members, community partners and organizations, and the public. She will also be working to enhance and refine membership services offered through MAA, engage key stakeholders in discussions surrounding Maine aquaculture, and raise awareness about sustainably farmed seafood in Maine and beyond. A key feature of her work will be developing, improving, and streamlining communications through social media, email, and the MAA website.

Afton was born and raised in Tenants Harbor, Maine, and is a member of a multi-generational lobstering family. Her upbringing instilled in her an ethic of natural resource conservation from a young age. In 2013, she graduated from Oceanside High School in Rockland, after which she continued her education at the University of Maine. Afton received her Bachelor of Science in Ecology and Environmental Sciences from UMaine in 2017, and remained a black bear for two more years to pursue her Master of Science in Resource Economics & Policy, completing six years at Orono in May, 2019. A strong focus of Afton's educational background has been sustainable and local food systems, as she has written both an undergraduate and master's thesis on the subject. Afton looks forward to bridging her passion for supporting Maine's working waterfronts with her food systems expertise in her work with MAA, as well as learning more about aquaculture and fisheries management in Maine and the world.

As non-profit member associations, MAA and NAA have been committed to serving aquatic farmers for over a combined 69 years by advocating for members' interests at the state and federal levels, providing business support,

developing innovative farming methods to grow safe and healthy seafood, and educating the public about sustainable seafood farming practices.