



January 2026

Submerged Lands Newsletter

A yearly update of developments in the Bureau of Parks and Lands - Submerged Lands Program for submerged land lessees, easement holders and other interested parties.

The Submerged Lands Program

Maine's submerged lands and publicly owned waters belong to everyone. Our coastal waters, Great Ponds and international boundary rivers are held in trust for all citizens to use and are managed for Public Trust Rights that include fishing, fowling, and navigation. These waters and the lands beneath them are a finite resource that must accommodate many uses such as commercial and recreational fishing, recreational boating, commercial shipping, aquaculture, and other users. Private water-dependent structures such as wharves, piers, and floating docks are allowed, provided they do not unreasonably interfere with the public's use of these public waters. **Permanent structures of any size and large temporary structures require a lease or easement issued by the Bureau of Parks and Lands (Bureau) for the right to be placed on or over publicly owned submerged lands.** Permanent is defined as occupying submerged lands owned by the State of Maine for seven consecutive months during any one calendar year. These leases may only be granted if the structure is for a water-dependent use and can be located so that it does not interfere with Public Trust Rights or access to waterfront properties. New non-water-dependent structures including, but not limited to, residential dwellings, restaurants, and fill are not considered a Public Trust Right and are thus generally not permitted, regardless of size.

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Important Dates

January 1 - Annual Lease Fee
Invoices Sent
February 1 - Payments Due
April - HMA Grant Opens
May - HMA Grant Closes
June - Easement Registrations
Invoices Sent
July - Renewal Notices Sent
July - Revaluation Notices

Online Payments with PayMaine!

We can now accept payments online for some of our annual rental fees and application fees.*

- Step 1: Go to gateway.maine.gov/ACF/PayMaineEntry
- Step 2: Select Invoicing
- Step 3: Select Submerged Lands from the program list
- Step 4: Select ACH debit or credit card
- Step 5: Click the continue button

Have your customer ID or invoice number ready.
Payments are subject to service fees. * Not available for Slip
Rental fees. Additional payment instructions online at:

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/about/submerged_lands.shtml

Welcome

1 2 3 4

Select Department Select Products Customer Information Pay

Payment Type Program Payment Method

Invoicing Credit Card
 Direct Charge ACH Debit

Continue

Submerged Lands Supports Public Water Access

The Submerged Lands Program uses revenue collected from submerged lands conveyances to fund public water access projects, provide effective harbor management, and ensure continued Public Trust Rights for Maine Citizens. Below are the recipients of our ninth annual Harbor Management and Access Grant program.

2025 Harbor Management and Access Grant Recipients

Town	Project	HMA Funds Requested	Waterbody	Type of Use
Boothbay Harbor	Float & Piling Replacement	\$15,000	Boothbay Harbor	Recreational/Commercial
Brooksville	Float Replacement	\$15,000	Buck's Harbor	Recreational/Commercial
Chebeague Island	Float Replacement	\$15,000	Casco Bay	Recreational/Commercial
Monhegan Plantation	Wharf Improvements	\$6,128	Monhegan Harbor	Recreational/Commercial
Yarmouth	Float Replacement	\$15,000	Royal River	Recreational/Commercial

Additional Projects Funded in 2025



Maine Boating Facilities Program received funds for floating dock system replacement at **Rangeley Lake State Park**.



Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife received funds for boat launch reconstruction at **Cold Stream Pond**.



Maine Island Trail Association received funds for ongoing management of coastal islands.



State of Maine Harbor Masters Association received funds for two annual harbor master training and certification events.



Maine Department of Marine Resources received funds for shellfish monitoring.



Bureau of Parks and Lands Real Property Division received funds for repairs to **Eagle Island Pier, Songo Lock, Popham Pier, & Barrett Park** in Boothbay.

Annual Reminders

Renewals—Most leases and easements are issued for a 30-year term. Several months prior to the end of the term, the Bureau sends a notice that you will need to apply for a new 30-year conveyance. This is sent during the summer months when it is easier to check measurements and take photographs. The renewal process includes sending notification to the municipality and in certain situations, to others within close proximity to the site, informing them that a renewal application is being reviewed by the Bureau.

Modifications—Please keep in mind that any changes to your structure, including the addition or removal of floats (seasonal or permanent), may require your lease or easement to be updated. If you are planning any modifications, please contact us.

Sale of Property—If you have sold or are planning to sell your property, please remember that your submerged lands lease or easement must be transferred or assigned to the new owner. To transfer a lease, please contact us for an application that would be filled out and returned by the new owner. The \$100.00 application processing fee can be paid by either party. **Changes in ownership name from an individual to a Trust also require a transfer of the conveyance.**

Prohibition—New Law for Maine's Waters

A new law effective September 24, 2025, prohibits the use or placement of nonwater-dependent floating structures (NWFS) in, on, or over inland and coastal waters. These structures, including but not limited to floating camps, restaurants, hotels, and billboards. NWFS encroach on the transitory public trust rights of fishing, fowling and navigation, and are now prohibited in the State of Maine.

<https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.aspx?paper=HP1182&item=5&snum=132>



2025 SUBMERGED LANDS PROGRAM ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In 2025 the Bureau received 122 applications. 50 remain pending. In 2025 the Bureau reviewed and finalized 95 applications; of which 23 applications were resolutions from 2024 submissions. Of the 95 processed; 26 projects that were exempt and did not need a conveyance, 0 applications were withdrawn and 69 resulted in the issuance of a lease or easement. Of these 69 leases and easements there were 9 amendments, 10 renewals of expiring conveyances, 14 transfers, 32 new conveyances, and 0 Sunken Log Salvage Authorizations. The following list indicates the types of leases and easements approved or amended in 2025 and the total number of leases and easements in the Submerged Lands Program.

	Leases	Easements
Private piers/floats	26	7
Utility cables and pipeline	5	1
Commercial marine facilities	10	0
Commercial Fishing	4	5
Public service or public facilities	6	1
Dredging	4	—
Sunken Log Salvage	0	—
TOTALS	55	14

Total Program Conveyance Totals: **Leases—1,616** **Easements—819** **Dredging Leases—6**