

Nathaniel Curtis¹
6 Balsam Circle
New Harbor, ME

Proceeding: Blackstone Point Oyster Co. Lease Hearing

Applicant: Brendan Parsons

Registered Participant: Nathaniel Curtis

Department of Marine Resources, Aquaculture Division

Factual Evidence Supporting Blackstone Point Lease Criteria

Navigational Clearance & Precedent

The proposed lease design ensures exceptional navigational safety, providing a 225-foot passage at Mean Low Water. This clearance not only accommodates current vessel traffic but significantly exceeds both local waterway usage and established Department precedents.

Location / Waterway	Governing Body / Precedent	Official Navigable Width	Context for Blackstone Point (225 ft)
South Bristol "The Gut" (Bridge)	US Army Corps / Local Fleet Standard	33.5 feet	The proposed passage is 6.7x wider than this vital commercial choke point.
South Bristol "The Gut" (Channel)	US Army Corps / Local Fleet Standard	50 feet	The proposed passage is 4.5x wider than the primary local commercial thoroughfare.

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Mook Sea Farm (Peters Island)	DMR Precedent (Lease 2014-08E)	80 feet	The proposed passage leaves nearly triple the clearance previously approved by DMR in the immediate area.
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Boothbay Harbor (Dock Access)	Port Navigational Regulations	100 feet	The proposed passage exceeds standard secondary access regulations by 125% .
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Muscongus Bay Aqua. (Dodge Cove)	DMR Precedent (Lower Dodge Cove)	104 feet	The proposed passage leaves more than double the clearance previously approved by DMR for dock access.
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Boothbay Harbor (Primary Fairway)	Port Navigational Regulations	200 feet	The proposed passage exceeds the width of a standard primary port fairway.
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Blackstone Point (Proposed) ²	Pending DMR Decision	225 feet (MLW)	Exceeds all local and departmental precedents for
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**safe navigable
clearance.**

Preservation of Riparian Access

The lease is intentionally sited to maintain full riparian access for surrounding property owners and visitors.

- The 50-foot setback from Hodgsons Island aligns directly with steep bluffs where vessel landings are not physically practical.
- The established, functional landing zones on the northeast gravel cove and the southern end of the island remain entirely unobstructed and fully accessible to the public and land trust members.

Efficient Gear Consolidation

This proposal represents an efficient consolidation of the working waterfront rather than a novel expansion of gear.

- The lease will officially absorb and replace four existing Limited Purpose Aquaculture (LPA) sites already operating in this exact footprint.
- Transitioning from LPAs to a standard lease streamlines operations and formalizes a footprint that the state has already authorized for active aquaculture.

The Economic and Community Value of the Blackstone Point Lease

Strengthening the Working Waterfront

Approving this lease reinforces Maine's commitment to a vibrant, sustainable working waterfront. Bivalve aquaculture must be evaluated on scientific criteria and established navigational facts to ensure the state's maritime economy can continue to thrive alongside coastal development. Protecting responsible operators sets a strong, positive precedent for the future of the industry and the communities that rely on the water.

State Revenue and Economic Impact

Maine oysters are globally recognized for their exceptional quality and taste, directly driving significant revenue and tourism into coastal communities like Damariscotta. The economic distinctiveness of this industry is recognized at the state level; the DMR specifically mandates that aquaculture data be distinguished from wild harvest landings to accurately track this vital economic driver. Supporting sustainable farm operations directly sustains a primary growth sector for Maine's economy.

Environmental Stewardship

This bivalve operation actively improves the health of the Damariscotta River. The oysters naturally filter millions of gallons of water, sequester nitrogen, and create complex three-dimensional habitats that support native marine life. This farm functions as an active restoration project, leaving the local ecosystem cleaner and more resilient.

Science, Education, and Job Creation

This farm serves as an active platform for marine science and local education. By facilitating internships for local students at Lincoln Academy and partnering with the Darling Marine Center, the operation directly trains the next generation of marine scientists and aquaculturists. It creates high-quality, year-round jobs that help keep young families in Maine and build strong local workforces⁴

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⁴ Nathaniel Curtis, 1

Operator Integrity and Community Investment

Brendan Parsons has a proven track record of elevating the local community. Through The Shuck Station, he created a true local institution that draws crucial tourism to the Damariscotta region and sets the gold standard for farmer-owned oyster restaurants. He is an intelligent, deeply caring operator who uses his business to uplift the community, support local infrastructure, and protect the river that sustains his livelihood. Approving this lease supports a responsible, proven steward of Maine's marine resources.

Sincerely,



Nathaniel Curtis