



## Shore and Harbor Planning Grants

### **Downeast Institute & Washington County Council of Governments**

*Working waterfront planning in Black Duck Cove (Fiscal Year 2020, project awarded 2019)*

*“This project was a great opportunity for us to work with people who had the expertise we needed to understand the best options for marine infrastructure on our campus. We learned how important it was to be open to ideas and to work together to conceptualize the best project.” – Dianne Tilton, Executive Director, Downeast Institute*

#### **Project Description**

The Downeast Institute (DEI), a non-profit in Beals, partnered with Washington County Council of Governments (WCCOG) for this project, which created designs for a boat ramp and wave attenuator at the DEI campus in Beals, Maine. DEI doesn't have a launch facility and DEI staff have to trailer their boats several miles to the public launch on the other side of Great Wass Island to launch them. The boat ramp would be used by DEI researchers as well as commercial and recreational users in the area. Additionally, wave conditions frequently make the pier unsafe for small boats. The wave attenuator would make the pier a safe place to tie up boats and would reduce damage to the floating docks.

The Downeast Institute hired GEI Consultants, Inc. for the boat launch and wave attenuator design. Washington County Council of Governments assisted with the proposal writing process and the search for the consulting firm after the grant was awarded.



Concept showing the DEI facility and the proposed boat launch. *Downeast Institute.*

## Project results

The proposed study was completed and GEI Consultants, Inc. provided a potential design for the boat ramp and three concept designs each for the wave attenuator and floating docks. GEI Consultants, Inc. also provided cost estimates and phasing options for the proposed updates. The Downeast Institute was planning for the construction phase of the project when the COVID-19 pandemic started and delayed their plans. As of spring 2022, DEI is revisiting the project and is fundraising for final design and construction in 2024.

## Project follow-up

DEI is currently raising money for these two projects as well as other capital improvement projects on the campus. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed this process, but they are hoping to have their funding in place to start construction in 2024 on the boat ramp if not both structures.

## Lessons Learned

The planning team learned how many variables need to be considered when making decisions about marine infrastructure. While technical expertise is important for projects like these, listening to locals who know the area is also valuable.

Dianne Tilton, the Executive Director of DEI, emphasized that it is important to put in the effort to find a good consultant for planning projects. DEI spent time finding their consultant and relied on the expertise of a wide range of people during the selection process. They made sure that they found a consultant who was willing to listen and work with them to find solutions that made sense for their unique location. Because DEI had a fixed budget for the project, they used a Request for a Quote (RFQ) process instead of a Request for Proposal (RFP). They recommend using that process if possible, because they were able to tell firms how much money they had to spend, and the firms told them what they could do with that money. If towns have a limited budget and don't have to do a competitive bid process, this may be a good alternative for finding a consultant.



*Photo: Google Earth and GEI Consultants, Inc.*

*Thank you to Dianne Tilton for her time and assistance preparing this document.*

