

Figure 1. Vicinity map.<sup>1</sup>

**Location:** South of Dodge Point, Damariscotta River, Newcastle, Lincoln County, Maine

**Purpose:** Standard lease for suspended culture of American/eastern Oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) and European oysters (*Ostrea edulis*)

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Report Preparation: Katie von Hohenleiten, Geoff Shook, and Meryl Grady

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all figures in this report were created in ArcGIS Pro version 3.3 using digitized NOAA Nautical Charts or geo-referenced aerial photographs provided by The Maine Office of GIS.

<sup>2</sup> Present for June 17, 2025 site visit

<sup>3</sup> Present for June 26, 2025 site visit



**Application Overview**

The applicant, FareWell LLC, is requesting a 3.60-acre standard lease south of Dodge Point in Newcastle for the suspended culture of shellfish. This proposal would have gear on site year-round with cages being sunk to the bottom and suspended trays remaining submerged below the surface during the winter months.<sup>4</sup> The applicant currently operates four Limited Purpose Aquaculture sites (LPAs) within the footprint of the standard lease proposal – PSMI821, PSMI921, PSMI1021, and HBUR122 (Figure 4).

**General Characteristics**

On June 17, 2025, Department of Marine Resources (DMR) scientists assessed the proposed lease site. DMR scientists arrived on site at approximately 11:15 AM. Due to a technical difficulty on June 17, 2025, DMR scientists were not able to assess bottom characteristics of the proposed site. DMR scientists revisited the proposal on June 26, 2025, to assess bottom characteristics. DMR scientists arrived on site at 1:32 PM on June 26, 2025. The proposal is approximately 461 feet east of the western shoreline of the Damariscotta River at mean low water (MLW). The western shoreline of the Damariscotta River in the vicinity of the proposal consists of a primarily rocky shoreline that leads to mixed forest uplands. One gravel beach was observed approximately 1,426 feet north of the proposal.

**Depth**

On June 17, 2025, DMR scientists began collecting depths at the proposed site at approximately 11:18 AM. The tide was rising with next high tide predicted to occur at 4:32 PM (Table 1). Depths were collected at the proposal corners and determined to be between 11.6 and 17.6 feet. Correcting for tidal variations derives water depths at the corners of the proposal to be approximately 11.2 to 17.2 feet at mean low water (MLW, 0.0 feet). Approximate depths at mean high water (MHW, 9.4 feet<sup>5</sup>) at corners of the proposal are 20.6 to 26.6 feet (Table 2). Water current was determined to be flowing in a northerly direction at the time of the site visit.

**Table 1.** Predicted tidal heights in Walpole, Maine.<sup>6</sup>

Date	Time	Height (ft)
2025/06/17	3:50 AM	9.5 H
2025/06/17	10:23 AM	-0.2 L
2025/06/17	4:32 PM	8.9 H
2025/06/17	10:44 PM	0.7 L

<sup>4</sup> Application page 4,8.

<sup>5</sup> MHW in Walpole is 9.4 feet, NOAA Tide Station 8416731

<sup>6</sup> <https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/noaatidepredictions.html?id=8416731>



**Table 2.** Collected and derived depths at corners of the proposed lease area.

Corner	Measured Depth (ft)	MLW Depth (ft)	MHW Depth (ft)
A	12.8	12.4	21.8
B	11.6	11.2	20.6
C	13.7	13.3	22.7
D	17.6	17.2	26.6

**Bottom Characteristics**

On June 26, 2025, DMR scientists observed the bottom characteristics of the proposed lease site via a remotely operated vehicle (ROV). Bottom characteristics were categorized using the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS), a national standard for describing features of the marine environment (Table 3). Sediment information was determined based on visual analysis of the video. The bottom of the proposed lease site is composed of mud with an overlay of sheet algal bed.

**Table 3.** Bottom characteristics of the proposed site.

Substrate Origin	Substrate Class	Substrate Subclass	Substrate Group
Geologic Substrate	Unconsolidated Mineral Substrate	Fine Unconsolidated Substrate	Mud
Benthic/Attached Biota	Aquatic Vegetation Bed	Benthic Macroalgae	Sheet Algal Bed

**Position and Distances to Shore**

The measuring tool in ArcGIS Pro 3.3 was used to verify the distances and bearings between proposed lease corners. Distances to shore were determined using the measuring tool in ArcGIS Pro 3.3, a nautical chart provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the application coordinates (Table 4, Figure 2,3).

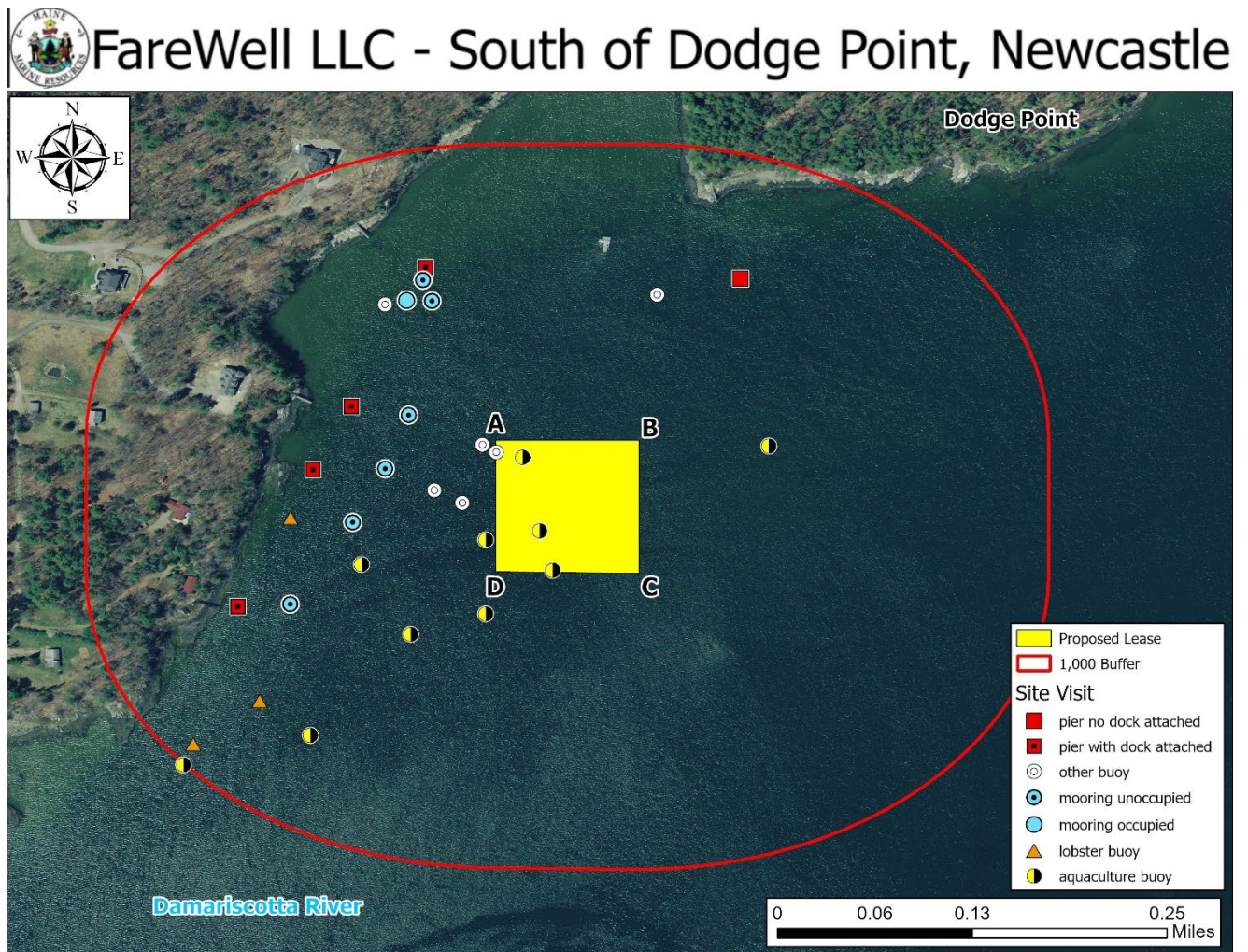
**Application Coordinates (WGS84) – 3.60 Acres**

<u>Corner</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	
A	43.982444°	-69.566254°	then 350 feet at 090° True to
B	43.982444°	-69.564924°	then 450 feet at 180° True to
C	43.981209°	-69.564924°	then 350 feet at 270° True to
D	43.981224°	-69.566254°	then 445 feet at 001° True to A



**Table 4.** Approximate distances from proposal corners to surrounding features (Figure 2,3).

Feature	Distance
Corner A to western shoreline of the Damariscotta River at MLW	~461 feet to the west
Corner B to western shoreline of the Damariscotta River at MLW	~797 feet to the north
Corner B to Wiley Point at MLW	~2,309 feet to the southeast
Corner C to Wiley Point at MLW	~2,209 feet to the southeast
Corner C to eastern shoreline of the Damariscotta River at MLW	~2,559 feet to the southeast
Corner D to western shoreline of the Damariscotta River at MLW	~586 feet to the northwest
Corner D to red navigational day beacon "16"	~4,454 feet to the south



**Figure 2.** Proposed lease area with site visit observations.

***Pursuant to statute and regulation, aquaculture leases are evaluated in consideration of applicable decision criteria. The Site Report documents DMR’s observations of the area and other information, in consideration of those criteria, as noted below:***



### **(1) Riparian Ingress and Egress**

During the site visit on June 17, 2025, DMR scientists observed four piers with docks in the vicinity of the proposal. In Figure 2, starting north and heading counterclockwise, one dock was approximately 610 feet northwest of the proposal and had two dinghies, two kayaks, and one small, inflatable boat stored on it. The second dock was approximately 370 feet to the west-northwest and had an approximate 20-foot powerboat tied up to it. The third dock was approximately 445 feet to the west and had kayaks and paddle boards stored on it. The fourth dock was approximately 640 feet southwest of the proposal and had three kayaks stored on it. DMR scientists also observed a pier approximately 780 feet north of the proposal. The dock associated with the pier was stored on the shore at the time of the site visit (Figure 2).

DMR scientists observed seven moorings in the vicinity of the proposal. The closest mooring was unoccupied and located approximately 229 feet west of the proposal. Other unoccupied moorings observed were approximately 570 feet northwest, 495 feet northwest, 270 feet west, 349 feet west, and 513 feet west of the proposal. The occupied mooring was located approximately 520 feet northwest of the proposal and was occupied by an approximate 20-foot powerboat (Figure 2).

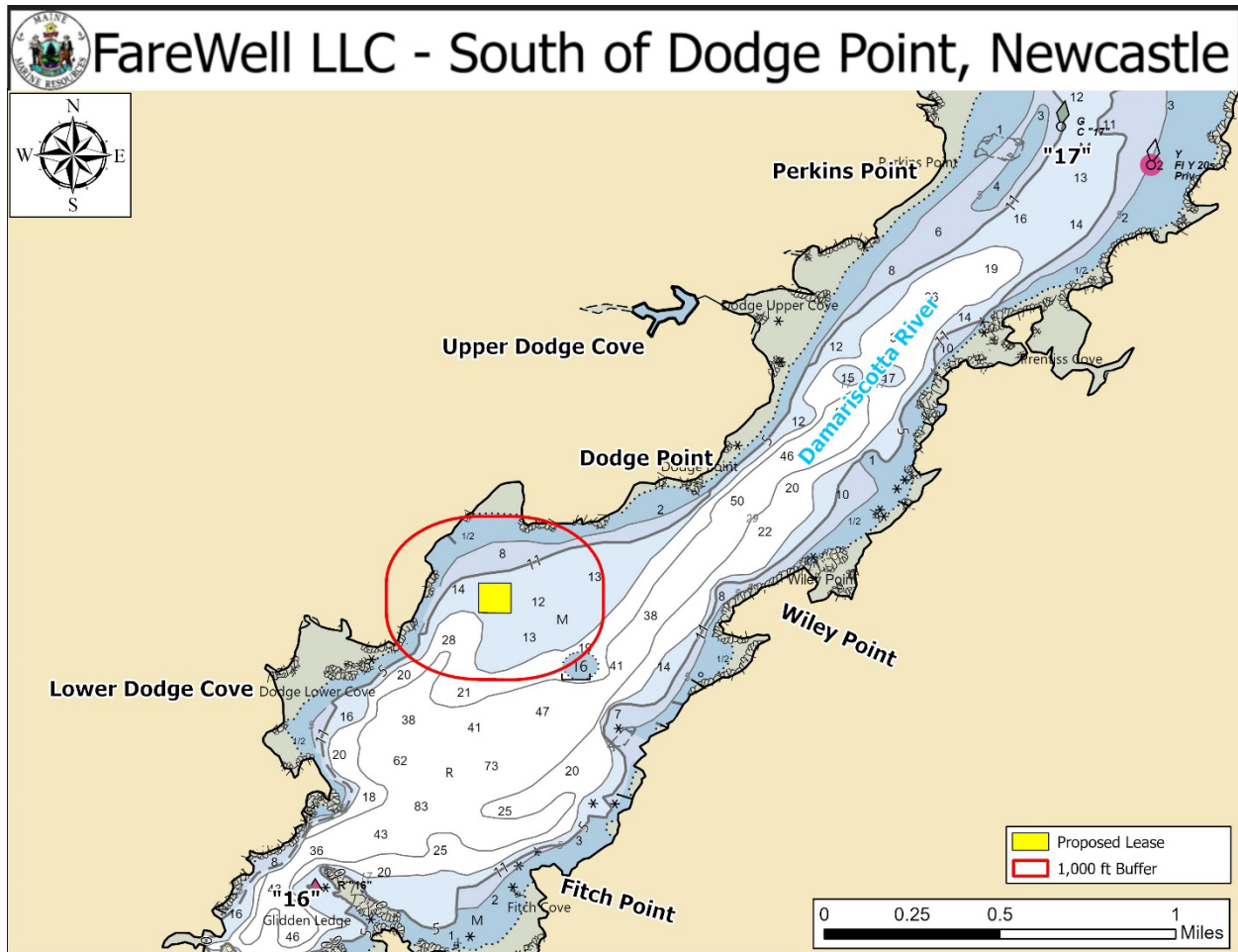
A Harbormaster Questionnaire was completed by the local Harbormaster and submitted to DMR on March 19, 2024. The Harbormaster indicated that there are several docks and moorings in the vicinity of the proposal. Depending on boat size, the proposal could have a negative impact on riparian ingress and egress. The Harbormaster also indicated there are permitted moorings within the boundary of the proposal.

At the time of the site visit, DMR did not observe any moorings within the boundaries of the proposal.

### **(2) Navigation**

The proposal is located approximately 461 feet east of the western shoreline of the Damariscotta River, and south of Dodge Point. The center of the main navigational channel is located approximately 700 feet east of the proposal, as marked by navigational markers "16" and "17" (Figure 3). DMR scientists observed one powerboat operating in the channel to the east of the proposal during the site visit on June 17, 2025.

The Harbormaster indicated in the Harbormaster Questionnaire that the proposal is located between existing aquaculture leases, and the addition of another lease would make navigation in the area tighter (Figure 4). The Harbormaster also indicated that there is some recreational boating within the area of the proposal.



**Figure 3.** Navigational channels in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

### (3) Fishing and Other Uses

During DMR’s site visit on June 17, 2025, no commercial or recreational fishing activity was observed within the boundaries of the proposed lease. DMR observed three lobster buoys within 1,000 feet of the proposed lease. The closest lobster buoy was observed approximately 501 feet west of the proposal.

During the site visit on June 17, 2025, DMR scientists observed four teal-colored buoys in the vicinity of the proposal. One buoy was within the boundaries of the proposal. The other three buoys were located approximately 32 feet, 82 feet, and 150 feet west of the boundaries of the proposal. The purpose of the buoys was unknown (Figure 2) (Image 1).

The Harbormaster indicated in the Harbormaster Questionnaire that there is some recreational fishing within the area of the proposal, as well as commercial aquaculture.



**Image 1.** Two unknown teal buoys in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

#### **(4) Other Aquaculture Uses**

There are four aquaculture leases and eight Limited Purpose Aquaculture (LPA) sites within 1,000 feet of the proposed lease. The applicant currently operates four LPAs within the boundaries of the proposal - PSMI821, PSMI921, PSMI1021, and HBUR122. If this standard lease is granted, all four LPAs would be relinquished.<sup>7</sup> There are four additional LPAs approximately 840 feet southwest of the proposal. RPAN120, RPAN220, RPAN320, and RPAN420 are held by Rochelle Panichelle.

There are three standard aquaculture leases and one experimental aquaculture lease within 1,000 feet of the proposal. DAM DL2 is a standard lease approximately 180 feet southwest of the proposal. DAM DL4x is an experimental lease approximately 570 feet southwest of the proposal. Both DAM DL2 and DAM DL4x are held by Glidden Point Oyster Company. DAM DPT is a standard lease approximately 361 feet northeast of the proposal and is held by Dodge Cove Marine Farm. DAM DP is a standard lease approximately 427 feet north of the proposal and is held by Muscongus Bay Aquaculture (Figure 4).

During the site visit on June 17, 2025, DMR scientists observed several aquaculture buoys in the vicinity of the proposal (Figure 2). Three aquaculture buoys within the boundaries of the proposal, as well as one approximately 25 feet west of the proposal, were associated with LPAs PSMI821, PSMI921, PSMI1021, and HBUR122. An aquaculture buoy located approximately 144 feet southwest of the proposal was labeled 'DAM DL2', as well as two additional buoys located

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<sup>7</sup> Application page 11



approximately 295 and 330 feet southwest of the proposal. Additionally, an aquaculture buoy located approximately 317 feet east of the proposal was labeled 'DAM DPT' (Figure 2).

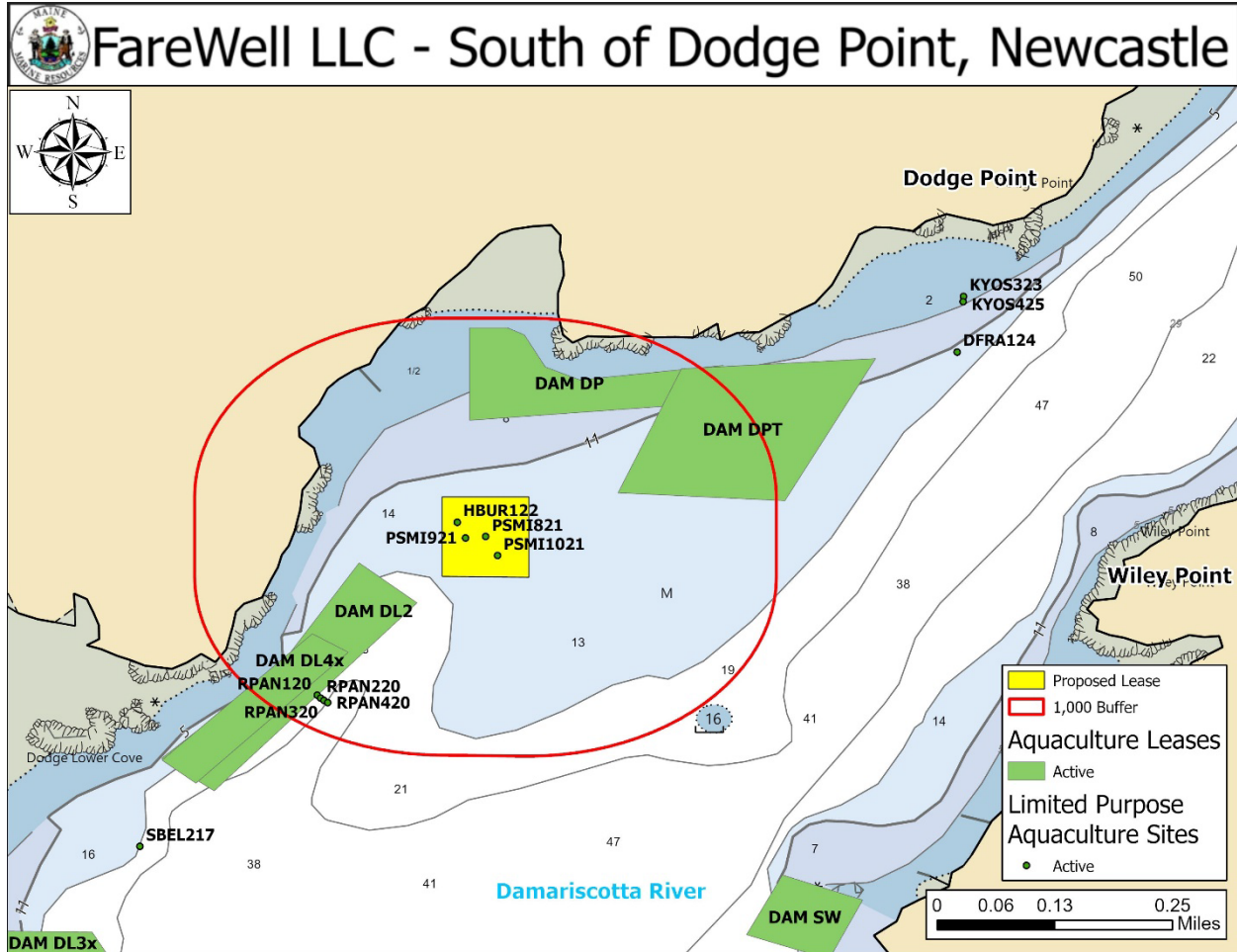


Figure 4. Aquaculture leases and LPA licenses in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

(5) Existing System Support

Epibenthic Flora and Fauna

On June 26, 2025, DMR scientists utilized an ROV to assess the epibenthic ecology of the proposed lease. The relative abundance of epibenthic flora and fauna observed in the video footage is described below in Table 5.

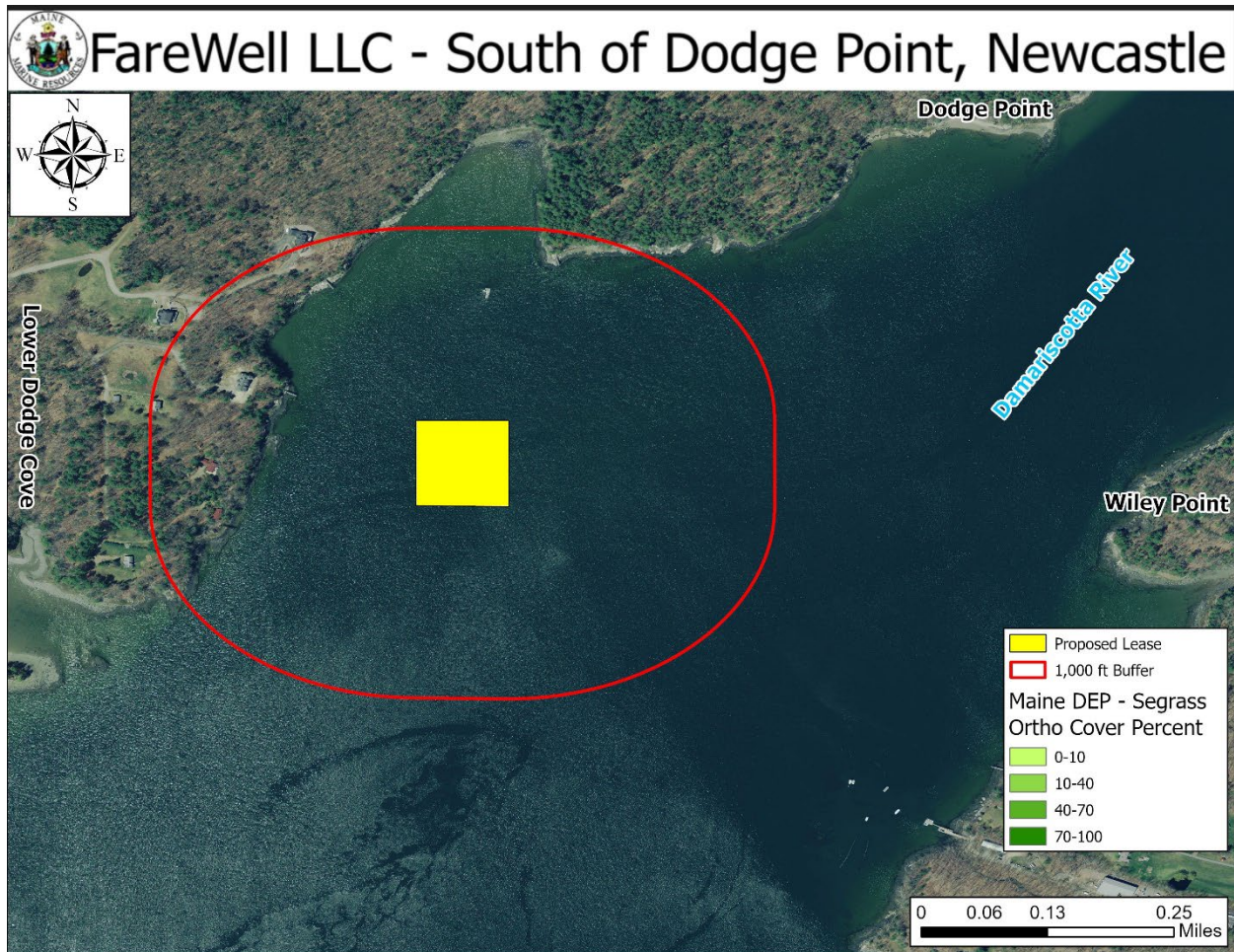
Table 5. Species observed using underwater video footage.

Species Observed	Abundance
Crab ( <i>Cancer sp.</i> )	Rare



**Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*)**

Records of eelgrass collected by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2023 indicate no mapped eelgrass presence in the vicinity of the proposal (Figure 5).<sup>8</sup> No eelgrass was observed within the boundaries of the proposal during DMR’s site visit and on underwater video footage.



**Figure 5.** Mapped eelgrass (*Z. marina*) in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

**Wildlife**

During DMR’s site visit, scientists observed herring gull (*Larus argentatus*) and great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) in the general vicinity of the proposal.

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) has jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife resources of the state. IFW also has the authority to conserve wildlife populations and their

<sup>8</sup> Data obtained from The Maine Office of GIS “GISVIEW.MEDEP.Seagrass2023”. Widgeon grass was observed only in a tributary to the Great Salt Bay, upstream of a culvert that likely restricts tidal flow. Eelgrass was the dominant vascular species in all other locations. This is the most current record of mapped eelgrass within the vicinity of the proposal.



## Department of Marine Resources Site Report

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South of Dodge Point, Damariscotta River  
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ecosystems through applicable state laws and rules. DMR provides IFW with notice and the opportunity to comment on all complete lease applications. In addition, the Site Report also includes IFW designated and mapped habitat types that are within 1,000 feet of the lease proposal, if applicable.

According to Geographic Information System (GIS) data maintained by IFW and available through the Maine Office of GIS (MEGIS), there is one mapped habitat type in the vicinity of the lease proposal. The proposal is near Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (TWWH), which is a type of Significant Wildlife Habitat designated and regulated by IFW.<sup>9</sup> Based on data maintained by IFW, it is approximately 1,052 feet from the proposal to the nearest mapped TWWH (Figure 6).

Though bald eagles are no longer listed on Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) may also have jurisdiction over the management and conservation of the species based on applicable law and rule. Data collected by USFWS in 2023 by aerial nest survey shows there is no mapped bald eagle nesting site within 1,000 feet of the proposal (Figure 6).

IFW was provided with the opportunity to comment on this proposal. On March 14, 2024, a Resource Biologist with IFW responded by email to a "Request for Agency Review and Comment" stating that minimal impacts to wildlife are anticipated for this project.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/programs-resources/environmental-review/significant.html>

<sup>10</sup> Email correspondence between IFW and DMR



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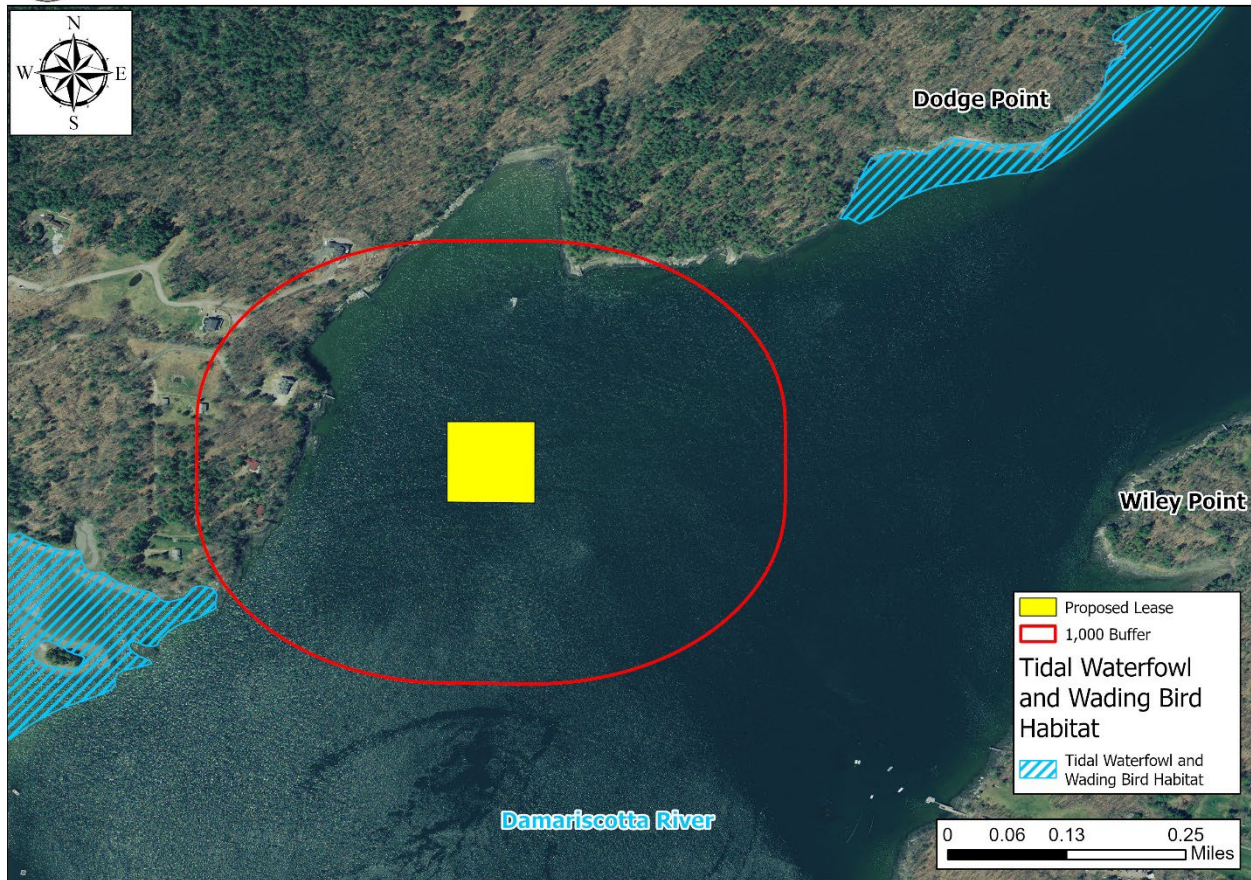


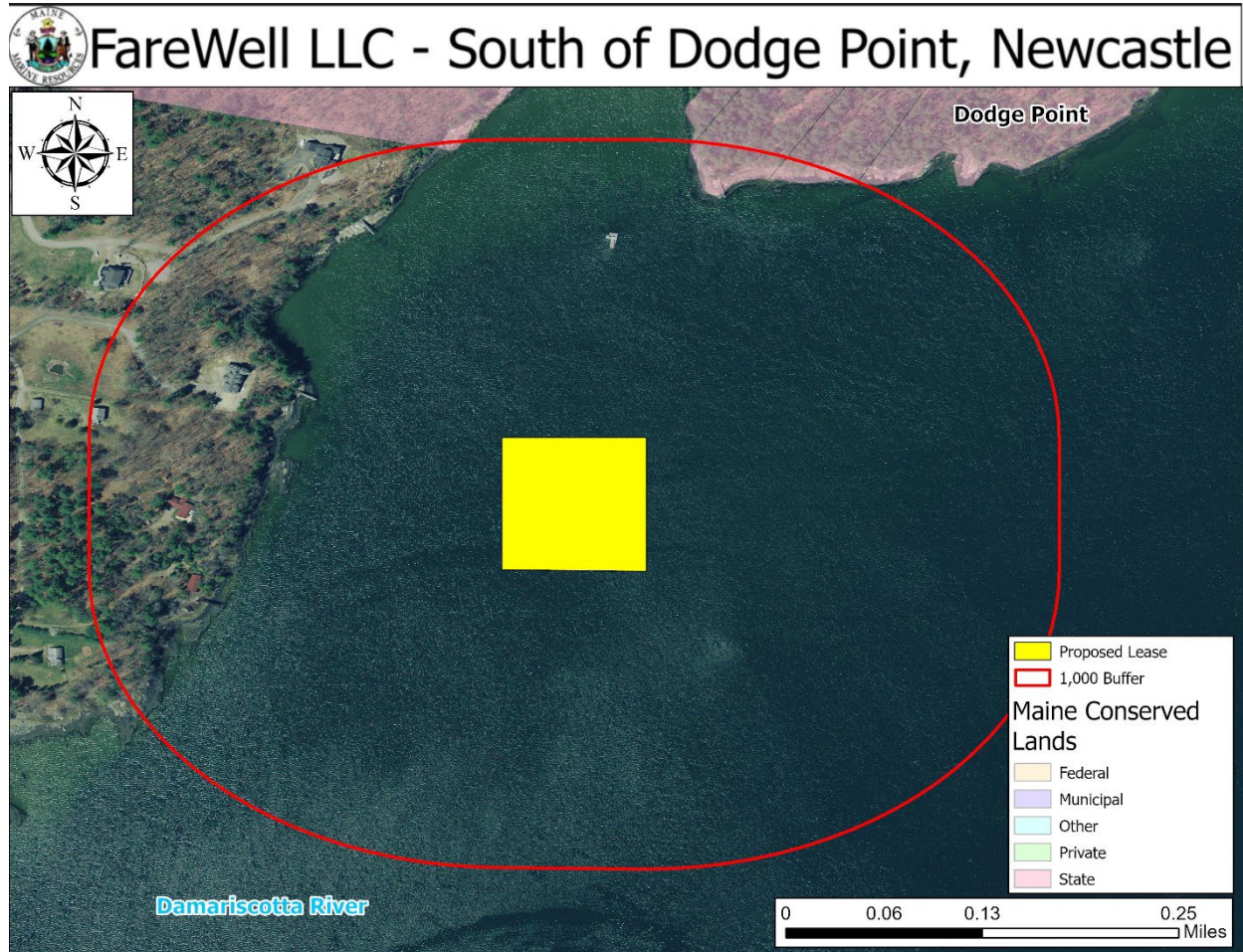
Figure 6. Mapped habitats in the vicinity of the proposed lease area. <sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Data obtained from USFWS "Bald\_Eagle\_Nests\_-\_Maine\_2023" and IFW "EHRTERN", "EHPLVTRN", "GISVIEW.MEIFW.Twwh", "ShorebirdAreas", and "SNI".



**(6) Interference with Public Facilities**

The proposed lease is located approximately 842 feet south of Dodge Point Preserve, which is owned by the State of Maine and co-managed by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (Figure 7). Dodge Point allows for general use by the public and maintains trails with shoreside access, including a public dock. The proposed lease is not within 1,000 feet of any other beach, park, docking facility, or conserved lands owned by federal, state, or municipal governments.



**Figure 7.** Public facilities near the proposed lease site.<sup>12</sup>

**(7) Growing Area Classification**

The proposed lease is currently located within an area classified as Approved by the DMR Bureau of Public Health and Aquaculture.

<sup>12</sup> Data obtained from The Maine Office of GIS "GISVIEW.MECONSLANDS.Conserved\_Lands"