



Town of Cutler Cutler Harbor Public Access Project (Part II)

“As a result of the project, public access to Cutler Harbor has been greatly improved. This facility is much better at accommodating the multiple users who need access to the Harbor. Now when my husband and I have to take people to the Little River Light House for tours or overnights it is so much easier to get them and their gear on the boat. No more walking over the beach! We are very thankful to the Maine Coastal Program and Maine DOT for their financial support. Without it, we would not have been able to make this happen.”

Cynthia Rowden, Chair, Board of Selectmen
and Member of the Friends of the Little River
Light House

PARTNERS

Maine Department of Transportation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (completed October 2016)

The Cutler Harbor public access project was completed to enhance public access to the water and improve overall functionality for commercial and recreational users. The project included additional parking, installation of a new floating dock system, improved beach access and stabilization of the eroding shoreline. A Coastal Community Grant was utilized to purchase construction materials for nine floats.

THE CHALLENGE & APPROACH TAKEN

In spite of its small size, Cutler Harbor is extremely busy throughout the year. The harbor is home to a successful commercial fishing and shellfish industry, aquaculture, seasonal sight-seeing tours, nature cruises and recreational boating. A small town owned property, located off Route 191 in downtown Cutler, is currently the only site in Cutler Harbor that provides access to the public-at-large. The site provides several important marine functions including access for recreational boating, scenic tours, parking and beach access, launching boats and access to offshore island and conservation lands.

Due to its small size (approximately .25 acres) the layout of the site did not always meet the demands being placed on it. With the absence of a float or dock, there was no public location for loading and unloading gear or passengers, which at times made access over the beach unsafe. Parking often overflowed onto Route 191 interfering with safe traffic flow. Beach access was over a makeshift path.



COASTAL COMMUNITY GRANTS: Public Access

With financial assistance from Maine Department of Transportation Small Harbor Improvement Funds and the Maine Coastal Program's Coastal Community Grant, the Town was able to implement the following improvements:

Construction of a Floating Dock – The floating dock system includes 9 floats which provide short term dockage, safe access, and gear loading/unloading capacity during all tides. The dock system also includes piles for anchoring the floats and supporting vessel maintenance and repair.

Shoreline Stabilization/Parking: The shoreline was stabilized using rip rap and the added space helped to create additional parking.

Improved Beach Access: A new set of stairs was installed for safer and more convenient access to the beach.

The end result of this project has been greatly improved access to the water, particularly from the new floating dock.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Town has gained valuable experience in understanding how to leverage multiple funding sources and local resources to complete a project. In addition, having input from multiple stakeholders was critical in understanding the needs of the property and garnering support from the town. This has been particularly evident in comments around improving access to the sand beach for recreational use and in talking with those who used the property to get to their boats. These and other comments helped to influence the location and layout of the floating dock system.

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