Maine Dredge Team Meeting Notes

October 1, 2026

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Updates (presentation available)

- **Camp Ellis Shore Damage Mitigation Project – Spur Jetty Construction (Saco, ME)**
  - **Description**: Construction of 750 linear foot (lf) stone spur jetty attached to the existing northern jetty at the mouth of the Saco River to reduce wave height and energy that is contributing to shoreline erosion and subsequent damages to structures, residential homes, roadways, and utilities at Camp Ellis Beach in Saco, ME. Additionally, 73,000 cy of sand will be placed at Camp Ellis Beach.
  - **History**: This area experiences shoreline erosion exacerbated by the existing Federal jetty. Under the Continuing Authority of Section 111 of the 1968 River and Harbor Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. §426(i)), USACE may investigate, study, and implement structural and non-structural measures for the prevention or mitigation of shore damages attributable to Federal navigation works.
  - **Status**: Construction began in July 2026; first 100ft of spur to be completed by mid-October; project must be completed by August 2027
  - **Cost**: $24 million (Mohawk Northeast, LLC)
  - **After-action report needed**: Multiple complaints were reported from fishermen regarding the contractor deviating from the published haul route without advanced notice. USACE will ensure all contractors going forward are aware of the requirements and coordinate appropriately with DMR.

- **Bar Harbor Breakwater (Bar Harbor, ME)**
  - **Description**: Repair damages to the breakwater between Bald Porcupine Island and Porcupine Dry Ledge as well as a portion of the breakwater beyond Dry Ledge. The repair work consists of altering the seaward slope of the breakwater from 1 vertical (V):1 height (H) to 1V:1.5H and raising the crest elevation to 11.4 ft to account for sea level rise. The crest width will also be narrowed from 20 ft to 10 ft.
  - **History**: Breakwater construction was authorized in 1888 and completed in 1917. It sustained significant damage during the winter storms of 2015 and 2018, which resulted in decreased functionality of the authorized structure and an overall loss of protection to the port of Bar Harbor.
  - **Status**: Contract awarded January 2026 and ends in 2028; stone coming from Rhode Island by truck and barged out to the site; construction began in late spring 2026; de-mobilization will occur in November and contractor will return in the spring

- **Portland Harbor Obstruction (Portland, ME)**
  - **Description:** In 2024, an obstruction was identified within the Portland Harbor FNP. Survey results identified a shoal/object at -30.8 ft MLLW off Holyoke Wharf within the authorized -35 ft MLLW. The obstruction was determined to be a hazard to navigation in Spring 2025. It appears to be a 32-foot-long by 2-foot-wide wooden wharf piling that is lodged in bottom sediments and sticking up above the channel bottom at a low angle. The length of the pile extending below the mudline is unknown. The objective is for the piling to be removed and disposed of in its entirety. If removal below the mud line is not feasible, the portion of the pile above the mudline and below -35.5 ft MLLW or deeper will be removed.
  - **Status:** Contract awarded; pre-construction and partnering meetings held in September 2026; anticipate work to be completed over the course of one day in the first week of November.
  - **Cost:** $236,500 (AGM Marine Contractors)

- **Kennebec River FNP Maintenance Dredging – U.S. Navy supported (Bath, ME)**
  - **Description:** Periodic maintenance dredging by the Navy of the lower Kennebec River south of Bath, ME near Doubling Point, Popham Beach, and Bath Reach located just south of Sagadahoc

Bridge. The Navy funds this activity and requires approval by the USACE regulatory section. The channel is 500 ft wide and maintained at -27 ft MLLW, extending approximately 13 miles from the river mouth to the City of Bath. Maintenance dredging up to -35 ft MLLW is authorized at Doubling Point. Up to 90,000 cy of material would be dredged annually over a 10-year cycle.
    - **Disposal:** Bath Reach in-river site near Bluff Head or nearshore placement sites south or west of Jackknife Ledge
    - **History:** Project was constructed in 1943 and last dredged in 2024-2025.
    - **Status:** Contract awarded; dredging window from December 1, 2026 – January 25, 2027
    - **Cost:** $2,890,200 (Manson Construction)

- **Isle au Haut Thoroughfare Maintenance Dredging (Isle au Haut, ME)**
    - **Description**: Mechanically dredge approximately 3,355 cy of shoaled material from the channel, composed primarily of sand, gravel, and cobble. The FNP is 1,200 ft long by 75 ft wide and currently authorized to -6 ft MLLW. This proposal includes a one-time, advanced approval to dredge to -7 ft MLLW with 1 ft of overdepth for a maximum of -8 ft MLLW. The FNP will be shifted 200 ft to the southwest of the existing location and include some areas not previously dredged. The proposed dredging window is September 15 – April 1.
    - **Disposal**: Flake Island Disposal Site (FIDS), approximately 1 nautical mile (nm) northwest of the FNP; benefit to juvenile lobster and juvenile cod habitat by increasing bottom complexity; approval of FIDS allows for disposal over the next 5 years – USACE does not have plans to use it; could be used for other projects
    - **History**: Last dredged in 1979 also used FIDS
    - **Status**: Pre-solicitation notice posted August 18, 2026; anticipate contract solicitation in October 2026

- **Searsport Harbor Maintenance Dredging (Searsport, ME)**
    - **Description:** Mechanical maintenance dredging of approximately 40,000 cy of mixed sand and silt that is not suitable for open water disposal due to elevated mercury levels. The channel is 3,500 ft long and 500 ft wide with a 1,500-ft-wide turning basin in front of the piers at Mack Point. It is authorized to a depth of -35 ft MLLW with 2 ft of overdepth.
    - **Disposal:** Proposal includes the construction of two confined aquatic disposal (CAD) cells – one starter cell and one primary cell – just west of the FNP. The top 3 ft of sediment in the starter cell location (~ 5,200 cy) would be held in scows during construction. Sediment below the surficial layer (~17,000 cy), which is suitable for open water disposal, would be taken to the Rockland Disposal Site (RDS), approximately 25 nm south of Searsport Harbor. Then the top 3 ft of sediment from the starter cell and primary cell location (~10,200 cy) would be placed into the starter cell. Next, the remaining suitable material in the primary cell footprint (~44,500 cy) would be taken to RDS. Finally, the unsuitable materials from the FNP would be placed in the primary CAD cell. Approximately 3 ft will be left at the top of the cell for natural cap.
    - **History:** First constructed in 1962; no maintenance dredging has been conducted
    - **Status:** Public information meeting held June 24, 2026; CZM conditional concurrence received; WQC expected mid-October 2026; targeting dredging winter 2027-2028

- **George's River Maintenance Dredging (Thomaston, ME)**
    - **Description:** Maintaining the channel to -16 ft MLLW by removing ~80,000 cy of primarily fine grain, silty material with low levels of sand.
    - **Disposal:** Potential placement locations undergoing early analysis and coordination with state agencies; material is suitable for open water placement aside from a small area which is not proposed to be dredged; Lobster Council Zone D contested placement in Muscongus Bay; USACE is evaluating next steps
    - **History**: Project authorized in 1896/completed in 1903; last maintenance dredged in 1977
    - **Status**: Design work began in spring 2026; construction anticipated to take 4-5 months; targeting 2027-28 dredge window

- **Union River Maintenance Dredging (Ellsworth, ME)**
  - **Description:** Maintenance dredging of anchorage to the authorized -6 ft MLLW. Material quantity estimated at ~6,000 cy.
  - **Disposal:** Unsuitable for open water disposal; scoping upland placement – preliminary acceptance at Juniper Ridge landfill; evaluating dewatering options on a barge or in adjacent parking lot
  - **History:** The existing project was completed in 1911, which authorized a depth of -6 ft MLLW and a width of 120-200 feet; last dredged in 2014; 2025 design would realign entrance channel to avoid shoaling on the eastern bank and improve navigation
  - **Status:** 30% design achieved in July 2026; anticipate WQC/CZM submission in November 2026; solicitation expected in 2028

State Updates

- **Solid Waste Rulemaking (Eric Hamlin, DEP)**
  - DEP is in the early stages of rulemaking for 06-096 CMR ch. 400-420 Solid Waste and Septage Management. One in-person and one virtual meeting were held in September 2026 to solicit public input on updates for DEP to consider. Public comments can be sent to SolidWasteRules.DEP@maine.gov. DEP anticipates the full rulemaking process could take 2-3 years to complete.
  - The solid waste rules include Ch. 418 Beneficial Use of Solid Waste. There are existing permitting procedures for beneficial use of dredged sediment for beach nourishment, but not for dune reconstruction/shoreline stabilization or thin layer placement for wetland restoration (although there is an existing pathway to permit innovative/pilot projects). Other rule chapters address topics such as general standards, transportation, and storage, which may also play a part in beneficial use projects.

- **Proposed revisions to 38 MRS §480-D (9) (Meredith Mendelson, DMR)**
  - DMR has collaborated with DEP to propose changes to standards under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) for dredging. This section of NRPA outlines DMR's role in agency consultation to evaluate potential impacts to the fishing industry. However, the existing wording and requirements can cause confusion around the scope of DMR's input. The proposed revisions will be introduced in the ENR Committee this legislative session.

Local Updates

- **Portland Harbor CAD cell management (Steve Wolf, EPA)**
  - EPA has been conducting CAD cell monitoring during dredging operations. In the first dredging season, maneuvering and position of the scow over the CAD cell was done with a tugboat, which led to sediment stirring up and remaining in the water column for a longer period of time instead of settling into the cell. Because of this, a turbidity curtain was recommended at the CAD cell for the next round of dredging. Last season, a spudded platform within the CAD cell appeared to be a key element in allowing initial settlement of material prior to maneuvering the scow out of the cell. The turbidity curtain did not appear to be critical in limiting suspended solids transport. Therefore, it is EPA's recommendation that a turbidity curtain is not needed for the upcoming season.
  - This is the last winter of dredging under the Portland Harbor Commission permit. The CAD cell will not be at capacity when this season is complete, so other applicants will be allowed to request to use it for individual projects in the future.

- **Rachel Carson beneficial use pilot project overview (Bri Benvenuti, Ducks Unlimited)** (presentation available)
    - Thin layer placement, hydrology restoration, and berm removal project to increase marsh elevation to keep pace with sea level rise – testing the feasibility and ecological outcomes of this technique so it may be applied more broadly
    - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approached USACE in 2018 for a small amount of sediment to test thin layer placement
    - Dredged material is categorized as a solid waste under State of Maine regulations – placement of dredged material other than beach nourishment and nearshore placement does not have an established permitting pathway
        - Solid waste rules contain provision for innovative uses/pilot projects
    - USACE approved USFWS's request for sediment in 2023 while the dredge work was being contracted – misalignment of timelines
        - USFWS/DU would need to move and fund the sediment on their own because USACE had to stick to their schedule – lost the opportunity for hydraulic placement
        - The National Wildlife Refuge had to be licensed as a transfer station due to the amount of time the material needed to be stored before application to the wetland
    - Dredging occurred in January 2024 - ~1,000 cy of sand was moved ~ 5 miles using 12 cy dump trucks and front loaders (~ 70 trips to upland stockpile location)
        - Number of trips per day was limited in order to avoid the need for a traffic study under the solid waste rules
    - Screened sand was trucked back to the marsh
        - Low ground pressure equipment worked on construction mats to minimize wetland impacts
        - Spread 3-6 inches of dredged sediment over 1-1.5 acres and saw an increase in elevation
    - Marsh hydrology restoration using runnels and berm removal resulted in significant revegetation – no need for planting at this time
    - Need to think about how to adaptively manage these types of projects within the regulatory framework
    - Challenges: logistics and timing – receiving the material while other components of the project were still coming together; permitting processes unclear
    - Successes: demonstrated feasibility of mechanical placement; DEP process flexibility; created working and trust-based relationships with regulators

- **York County Emergency Management Agency dredging projects (Katie DeWater, York County)** (presentation available)
    - FEMA can reimburse the costs of operating the dredge under national emergencies
    - County-led coastal resilience coordination provides
        - Efficiency – one contract that several municipalities can utilize
        - Equity – small towns can access same engineering expertise
        - Sustainability – permanent county staff, equipment, and relationships
        - Scale – can construct projects that individual municipalities could not afford on their own
    - FEMA Category B – Emergency Protective Measures
        - Tied to declared disasters
        - Protects against a 5-year storm
        - Buys time for longer-term planning
        - Projects so far:
            - Wells – 8,150 cy of sand from the harbor, piped ~3/4 mile to the beach off Atlantic Avenue; 100,000 dune grass plantings

        - Saco (Camp Ellis) – 1,200 cy of sand deposited on Camp Ellis Beach; city funded additional 6,000 cy (~$500,000)
        - Old Orchard Beach – sand placement followed by dune grass planting (no dredging – sand trucked in from upland source)
    - FEMA Category G – Permanent Work
        - Fully engineered dunes can be restored to their pre-disaster design
        - Protects against a 100-year storm
        - Requires proof of maintenance, monitoring, and replenishment records
            - Without records, a town can lose its investment after a storm
        - Projects coming up:
            - MOUs with Old Orchard Beach, Saco, Biddeford, Wells, Ogunquit
            - Engineering → construction → long-term maintenance
            - Need to identify reliable funding source for construction and long-term maintenance

Adjournment

- Next meeting will likely be scheduled for April 2027. Meeting dates and materials can be found on the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) website: https://www.maine.gov/moca/programs/maine-coastal-program/dredge-team

In-person Attendance

Lauren Folkert, Anchor QEA
Heather Moretti, City of Portland
Jessica Damon, DEP
Derek DeCastro, DEP
Roger Johnstone, DEP
Cody Obropta, DEP
Sam Sheppard, DEP
Alison Sirois, DEP
Rachel Stearns, DEP
April Stehr, DEP
Meredith Mendelson, DMR
Lauren Lenderman, Ducks Unlimited
Timothy Timmerman, EPA
Steve Wolf, EPA
Juliana Berube, FWS
Helen Manning, FWS
Kate OBrien, FWS
Kim Spiller, FWS
Karl Stromayer, FWS
Thomas Wall, FWS
Jocelyn Runnebaum, Maine Coastal Program
Erin Wilson, Maine Coastal Program
Christopher Mayo, MEDOT
Nick Whiteman, MGS
Nathanial Volz, Michels
Brandon Weston, Michels
Chris Williams, NH DES
Sarah Stanley, Senator King
Michael Johnson, Stantec
Paul Sokoloff, Stantec
Katelyn DeWater, UNE/York County EMA
Miranda Cashman, USACE
Chris Chabot, USACE
Aaron Hopkins, USACE
Patrick McNamara, USACE
Matt Mroczka, USACE
Todd Randall, USACE
Coral Siligato, USACE
Jen Thalhauser, USACE
Craig Martin, USACE
Arthur Cleaves, York County EMA
Mike Fedosh, Isle au Haut
Ellen Fedosh, Isle au Haut

Virtual Attendance

Pat Hennessey, Bath Iron Works
Jen Obrin, Bath Iron Works
Derek DeCastro, DEP
Robert L. Green, DEP
Eric P. Hamlin, DEP
Alison Sirois, DEP
Jaime A. Taylor, DEP
Heidi Leighton, DMR
Bri Benvenuti, Ducks Unlimited
Bill Perry, Ducks Unlimited
Lauri Gorton, Greenfield Environmental Trust
Sean Duffey, Mass. CZM
Erin Oliveira, Navy
David Pendleton, Saco Harbormaster
Christina Breen, Senator King
Kaitlyn Shaw, NOAA
Ron Huber, Penobscot Bay Watch
John Henshaw, Portland Harbor Commission
Pam Buck, Senator Collins
Gail Kezer, Senator King
Christine San Antonio, USACE
Helen Jones, USACE
Amanda Sayles, USACE
Keith Hannon, USACE
Kelly Egan, USACE
Mark Cutter, USCG NE District