



P.O. Box 1633 ~ Blue Hill, ME ~ 04614  
~ [www.fobhb.org](http://www.fobhb.org) ~

Hello Friends of Blue Hill Bay,

FOBHB continues to be diligent with our efforts to advocate for the conservation of the Bay's natural resources and its unique esthetic qualities. Though there are challenges on several fronts, we are making our environmental concerns known at both the state and local level.

### **Aquaculture**

One primary issue of concern is the Maine Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) recent decision to now grant 20-year aquaculture leases, up from previously 10-years. This essentially allows 20 years to pass between the issuance of a lease and any comprehensive review of its environmental impact. This only increases our need to keep a close watch on aquaculture operations in Blue Hill Bay.

Recently it also came to our attention that the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development generated a marketing brochure, for global distribution, promoting Maine for industrial-scale aquaculture development. The document implies that there is state monetary incentives, help overcoming bureaucratic hurdles and academic support for this development. It also includes a list of coastal towns, including Blue Hill, that would welcome such development, even though none of the cited towns were aware, or are part of, the state's marketing promotion.

On a positive note: With input from FOBHB, our local state senator, Nicole Grohoski, proposed legislation requiring increased monitoring and more stringent standards for waste discharges at aquaculture facilities. While a watered-down version of the legislation was finally passed, we are encouraged to have made some progress with the state legislature to protect Maine's waters.

### **Rockweed Harvesting**

The large-scale mechanical harvesting of rockweed along the shoreline intertidal zone continues to be a contentious issue. The importance of rockweed as a critical habitat for juvenile marine species and as part of the larger marine ecosystem is clear. At the FOBHB annual meeting in August, Dr. Robin Hadlock Seeley of the Maine Rockweed Coalition, presented the ecological value of rockweed and the destructive impact from mechanical harvesting.

In trying to usurp a 2019 Maine Supreme Court decision, reaffirming that rockweed harvesting in the intertidal zone requires the landowners' permission, there is now proposed legislation that will deem rockweed harvesting as fishing in the intertidal zone. This change will prohibit shoreland owners from exercising their current property rights to protect the intertidal zone. FOBHB is working diligently to oppose this new legislation and to defend the rockweed ecosystem.

## Harbor Dredging

The proposal to dredge an all-tides channel to the Blue Hill town dock reached a vote at the annual town meeting in April. The Army Corps of Engineers, after years of study, proposed a \$3M plan of which \$1M would be funded by the town and need citizen approval. FOBHB wrote an opinion piece for the Weekly Packet outlining the many challenges and impacts of the dredging project. In the end the town voted 3 – 1 in opposition to the project, some people indicating that their vote was influenced by the FOBHB article.

## Dottie Hayes Scholarship

The 2023 Dottie Hayes Scholarship was awarded to GSA graduate Jillian Eldridge of Surry. She is pursuing a biology degree at the University of Richmond, Virginia. Congratulations Jillian.

The Board sincerely thanks you for your continued support of our conservation efforts in Blue Hill Bay.

We are also looking for a few people to join the board who share this passion for the Bay and can spare a little time and energy as we move forward. Please contact Mike Fedosh at [mike@fobhb.org](mailto:mike@fobhb.org)

Wishing you a Happy Holidays.



Don Eley

Board President



Mike Fedosh

Administrator

FOBHB Board Members: Tom Adamo, Dave Danielson, George Fields, Anna Hayes, Nancy Hoppin, George Knapp, Bill Matlock, Patrick Wilmerding