



P.O. Box 1633 ~ Blue Hill, ME ~ 04614
~ www.fobhb.org ~

Hello Friends of Blue Hill Bay,

This past summer things seemed to be finally getting back to normal on the Bay. While the pandemic disrupted all of our lives, FOBHB continues to be diligent in keeping up with our efforts to advocate for the conservation of the Bay's unique esthetic qualities and natural resources. Though there are challenges on several fronts, we are making our environmental concerns known at both the state and local level.

Hardwood Island

As many of you know, in 1999 FOBHB first organized around the proposed expansion of an industrial salmon farm off Hardwood Island in Blue Hill Bay. While we were eventually successful in keeping the operation limited to shellfish, the "polar circle" fish pens remained in place. Along with being an eyesore they were also a serious hazard to navigation. This fall, after more than 20 years of pushing back against the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), we were successful in seeing that the lease holder withdrew from their lease and removed all the fish pens. A long-time effort on our part but definitely worth it.

Black Island

In our stand against the industrial salmon farm off Black Island however, we weren't quite as effective. Cooke Aquaculture, a Canadian owned multi-national corporation, is the only salmon farm operator in Maine's coastal waters with 25 lease sites totaling nearly 1,000 acres. Despite a large fish die-off at the site in 2021 caused by poor husbandry/site maintenance, several legal findings and fines issued by the Department of Environmental Protection for polluting Maine's waters, and objections to the lease from environmental organizations, including FOBHB, the DMR renewed their lease for 20 years! Unbelievable. Be assured, this is a site we will continue monitor to ensure environmental compliance.

Blue Hill Bay Mussels

There is good news on the local front. Blue Hill Bay Mussels is a locally owned shellfish aquaculture company operating in the Salt Pond and off Hardwood Island. Over the past 20 years Evan Young has been a strong advocate for protecting the Bay's water quality and has worked closely with FOBHB to ensure his aquaculture methods are sustainable. We have supported his lease renewals and see him as a model for small-scale locally owned shellfish aquaculture. Recently, in conjunction with the Downeast Institute, he has developed a golden mussel. The shell has a distinctive gold color, rather than the traditional black, and it grows faster with a thinner shell allowing for a fuller and tastier mussel. We're excited about Evan's success and proud to support such a great steward of the Bay.



Rockweed Harvesting

Another growing concern for Blue Hill Bay is the mechanical harvesting of Rockweed along the shoreline intertidal zone. Rockweed serves as an important habitat for many juvenile marine species and is an integral part of the larger marine ecosystem. The Maine Supreme Court, in 2019, ruled that Rockweed harvesting in the intertidal zone requires the permission of the adjacent landowner. Unfortunately, mechanical Rockweed harvesting continues, mostly ignoring the Court's decision. We have heard that calls to the DMR and Marine Patrol either go unanswered or become bureaucratic questioning of the caller. While there have been no reports of mechanical harvesting in Blue Hill Bay it is occurring Downeast. If you suspect Rockweed harvesting in the intertidal zone, please get in touch with FOBHB or the Maine Marine Patrol.

Harbor Dredging

The proposal to dredge an all-tides channel to the Blue Hill town dock continues to be debated. The Army Corps of Engineers participated in an August town hall meeting in Blue Hill and at this point the Corps has made preliminary approval for the project. To date the town has spent approximately \$160,000 just for studies and planning. The current projected cost is approaching \$3.5 million with Blue Hill tax-payers needing to come up with 20%, nearly \$700,000. At the meeting several people questioned the project's cost, limited benefits, additional post-dredging expenses and impact on the town's taxpayers. Whether to move forward with dredging and how to fund it will eventually come to a town vote. Stay tuned.

Dottie Hayes Scholarship

For 2022 the Dottie Hayes Scholarship was awarded to GSA graduate Ellen Larrabee of little Deer Isle. She is pursuing a Marine Science degree at the University of Maine. Congratulations Ellen.

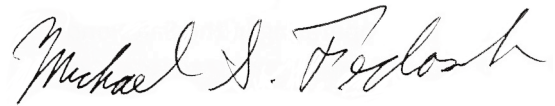
The Board thanks you for your continued support of our conservation efforts with Blue Hill Bay. We are also looking for a few people to join the board who share the passion for the Bay and can spare a little time and energy as we move forward. Please contact Mike Fedosh at mike@fobhb.org

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

Preserving the natural ecology, traditional marine fisheries and unique aesthetic quality of Blue Hill Bay since 1999.