



Kennebunk River Harbormaster

Annual Report - 2025

Executive Summary

The 2025 boating season on the Kennebunk River was characterized by relatively mild weather patterns, delayed recreational activity due to extended spring rains, and continued focus on navigational safety and infrastructure improvements. Key efforts during the year included dredging coordination, upgrades at Government Wharf, enhanced training with regional emergency partners, and progress toward improved water quality and tidal monitoring. Regulatory updates and public safety measures remained a priority as the Harbormaster's office continued to serve the community and visiting mariners.



Weather

The year 2025 began with weather and tidal conditions that were far more subdued than those experienced the previous year. Extra-high tides (11 feet and above) occurred during the final three months of the year and, fortunately, did not coincide with major storm fronts affecting our communities.

Spring rains significantly dampened recreational boating activity until the July 4th weekend. Cooler temperatures associated with prolonged rainfall kept many vessels in their slips until mid-July.

Dredging of the Navigational Channel and Mooring Basin



In late July, a visiting team from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers advanced the dredging of the navigable channel and mooring field in their project timeline. The team conducted extensive bottom geology testing to evaluate physical and chemical sediment properties, determine whether materials were classified as “suitable” or “non-suitable,” and perform elutriate testing, which simulates water quality conditions following sediment disturbance.

During the off-season, residents and visitors may have observed a Prock Marine Company tugboat, dredge, and spoil barges operating in the river. Prock Marine Company has been contracted to dredge slips at the Arundel Yacht Club, Yachtsman Hotel and Marina Club, Kennebunkport Marina, and The River Club. Prock Marine is a Maine-based family business that is also completing a much-needed reconstruction of the Cape Porpoise Pier, including wharf infrastructure, buildings, and systems.



Hazard Buoys off Gooch’s Beach

This marks the third year that hazard buoys will be installed off Gooch’s Beach to designate the swimming area as a **no-boat zone**. Boaters are reminded to respect and obey these buoys and lifeguard instructions. These measures are in place to ensure the safety of all beachgoers.



Floating Debris

During 2025, the volume of floating debris was consistent with typical seasonal levels. Debris primarily consisted of large deadfalls carried downstream, along with the occasional inshore ghost piling or log brought in by tidal action.



Boating Safety & State Regulations

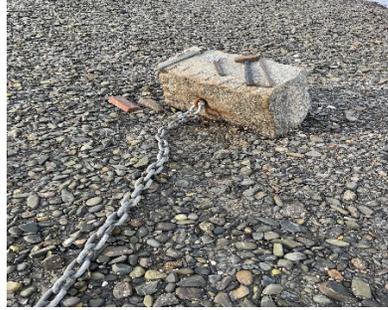
Effective **January 1, 2026**, children **12 years of age or younger**, including operators of that age, must wear a **U.S. Coast Guard -approved personal flotation device (PFD)** while on any recreational watercraft that is underway. Operators aged 12 or younger must also carry a **Boating Safety Education Card**.

Exceptions to this requirement include: - When the child is below deck or inside an enclosed cabin - When the watercraft holds a valid USCG Certificate of Inspection

In addition, Maine law requires proof of boat operator training for anyone **born on or after January 1, 1999**, who operates a motorboat over 25 horsepower or a personal watercraft (PWC). Proof must be in the form of a physical Boating Safety Education Card or a printed certificate demonstrating completion of a NASBLA-approved course, and must be carried onboard for inspection.

Current Maine boating laws may be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/docs/maine-boating-laws.pdf>

Boaters are reminded to ensure that a properly fitted PFD is available for every person onboard, especially infants and young children. And as the Skipper, notify that all passengers are familiar with their location.



Moorings

New **2026 mooring forms** are now available for download at:
<https://www.kennebunkmaine.us/178/Harbormaster>

Completed mooring registration forms must be submitted with payment (check only) and mailed or delivered to the Kennebunk Police Department.



Training

Multiple on-water training sessions were conducted throughout the year using the Harbormaster's rigid inflatable boat (RIB). These sessions involved Kennebunk Fire Rescue, Kennebunkport Fire Department, and Gerry Dworkin of Lifesaving Resources.

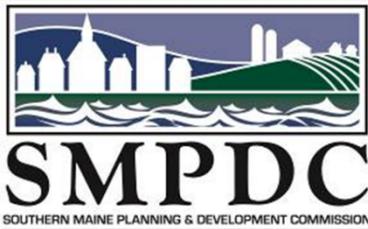


Government Wharf Improvements

New floats were installed at Government Wharf, including a significant hardware upgrade and a 16-foot extension. These improvements were purchased through the Harbormaster's office and supplied by Custom Float Services of South Portland.



Water Quality & Monitoring



During the summer of 2025, river water temperatures appeared cooler than in previous years. While no empirical data is available to confirm this observation, extended spring rains into early summer may have contributed to this effect. Water clarity was moderate throughout the season.

Additional water quality sampling was conducted at Chick's Marina, though results were not available at the time of this report. Ongoing communication with the U.S. Geological Survey's hydrologic monitoring group is exploring opportunities for permanent water quality and velocity monitoring within the Kennebunk River. These discussions may result in the establishment of additional testing sites.

A new tide sensor has been installed at Government Wharf through the support of the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC). The sensor includes a QR code that allows users to access real-time tide data and daily tidal reports.

The Kennebunk River Watershed-Based Management Plan may be accessed here:
<https://www.wellsreserve.org/writable/files/KennebunkRiverWBMP.pdf>

Thank you for your continued support and guidance throughout the year. It remains a privilege to serve the Towns of Kennebunk and Kennebunkport as Harbormaster.

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