Mapping Access to the Intertidal in Six Towns in Casco Bay

An inventory by Manomet

manomet

Authors

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Cover photo: New Meadows River. *Photo by Manomet staff.*

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Executive Summary

The wild shellfish industry is the second largest fishery in the state of Maine by economic value, and is an important part of many of Maine's coastal communities. However, shellfish harvesters are facing an increasing loss of access to intertidal mudflats where they make a living. This trend is driven largely by changing coastal property ownership and gentrification, which accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is part of a broader trend of dwindling working waterfront access.

Before identifying strategies to protect and improve access for shellfish harvesters, we first need to understand where harvesters are currently accessing the coast, where access has been lost, and where it might be a priority to acquire in the future. To do this, we partnered with six towns in Casco Bay—Brunswick, Harpswell, Arrowsic, Georgetown, Phippsburg, and Yarmouth—to collaboratively inventory their intertidal access points. We found that across these towns, 65% of all identified access points were across private property, and the majority of these were informal agreements with landowners, underscoring the precarious nature of access to the coast. The vast majority (78%) of all identified access points were walk-in sites, often foot paths to the shore, followed by boat ramps, wharves, or marinas.

Harvesters digging clams in the mudflats. ***Photo by Knack Factory and Maine Coast Fishermen's Association***

This report provides an overview of the findings across those six towns and presents a picture of the changing landscape of coastal access. While this report is focused on Casco Bay, the situation in these six towns is not unique, and towns across the coast of Maine are facing similar challenges. We also present several examples of actions that towns have taken to protect or enhance access, including outreach to landowners and collaboration with land trusts, which may inform other municipal or statewide efforts to ensure access to the coast into the future.

Context

The wild shellfish industry is an important part of the fabric of Maine's coastal communities and holds great economic, social, and cultural value in the state. In recent years, the industry has suffered from a loss of access to the intertidal zone where clams are harvested. Numerous factors are driving this trend, including changing coastal property ownership and gentrification, competition for space and parking at public boat ramps, and a fragmented statewide approach to identify and preserve working waterfront areas (MCFA 2020; Carey 2021; Zoellick et al. in press).

Harvesters access the coast and the mudflats in several ways. Some flats can be reached on foot or by truck or ATV, while others require using canoes, rowboats, airboats, or other watercraft. The decision about where to harvest on a given day involves a complex series of considerations around the weather, the tide, the season, the shell stock of a certain flat, how recently it was harvested, where to park, and more. The changing nature of access to the coast adds another layer of complexity for harvesters.

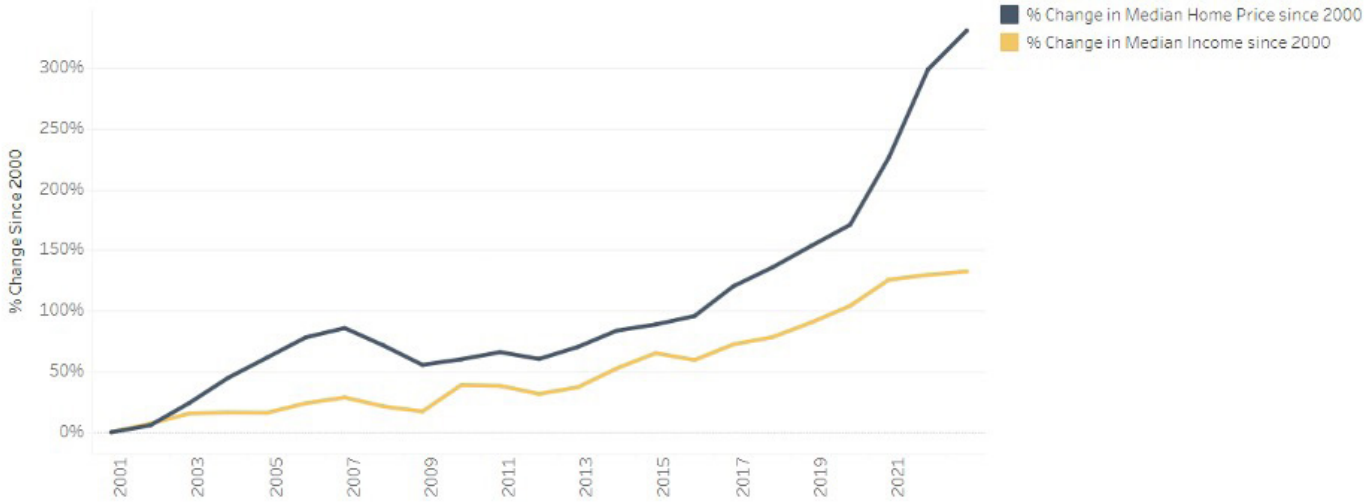

Figure 1: Relative increases in income and home price in Maine

Source: https://mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/housing-affordability-indexes

Paths to access the intertidal cross a mix of public and private property. Maine law stipulates that the public has a right to "fish, fowl, and navigate" in the intertidal zone between the mean low- and high-water marks (Duff et al. 2016). The challenge is getting there to exercise those rights. Public and conserved lands provide important access to the intertidal for many harvesters along the coast of Maine, but these sites are often too far apart, may not be located adjacent to productive mudflats, or may have long paths that make it difficult to transport gear and clams (Zoellick et al. in press). As of 2016, only 12% of the coast of Maine was in public ownership (Duff et al. 2016). Crossing private property to reach the flats introduces additional layers of complexity. Most harvesters rely on informal, or "handshake", agreements with homeowners and business owners along the coast to park on and walk across their property to reach the intertidal. These agreements are inherently tenuous, usually not written down or formalized in any way. In some cases, harvesters make use of public rights-of-way (ROW), or specific easements or ROWs that stipulate access for commercial harvesting, but these arrangements are infrequent.

On private land, harvesters have identified changing property ownership as one of the biggest drivers of loss of overland access to intertidal flats. Real estate pressure increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, making coastal properties unaffordable for many local residents and accelerating gentrification along the coast. The Maine Association of Realtors reported that the number of homes sold in Mid-Coast and Downeast counties increased 24% in one year, from 2,899 in 2019 to 3,594 in 2020 (Maine Association of Realtors 2023). Maine's six coastal counties have also seen a steady increase in the number of annual home sales over the last decade, with 6002 homes sold in 2010 and peaking at over 11,400 sales in 2020 and 2021 before decreasing slightly in 2022 (Maine Association of Realtors 2023). The cost of homes has also skyrocketed while income levels have not kept pace, with a 331% change in medium home price since 2000 and only a 132% change in medium income across the state of Maine during the same period (**Figure 1, Maine State Housing Authority, n.d.**). Many of these homes have been purchased by out-of-state residents (30-33% statewide from 2020-2022, according to Landry 2023), who often do not understand what it means to live on a working waterfront. Harvesters who previously had "handshake" agreements with coastal homeowners to access the shore through their properties are finding that new owners often will not honor those agreements. The increase in short-term rental properties

has also impacted access to the coast, with owners putting seasonal restrictions on when harvesters may cross their properties to access the flats, or in some cases revoking permission altogether (Zoellick et al. in press).

This loss of overland access for harvesters has cascading effects for coastal communities. Limitations on walk-in access can lead to overcrowding and competition for parking at public access points. While some walk-in paths are used solely by the shellfish fishery, many of these access points are shared by other commercial and recreational users, so their loss has implications beyond shellfish harvesters. In addition, a shrinking number of access points increases the distance that a harvester has to travel – hauling gear and shellfish across land, or sometimes traveling several miles by boat in dangerous conditions, particularly in the winter months. These changes may increase the risk of injury and have direct implications for physical health, according to research led by Tora Johnson and the Downeast Health Research Collaborative (Maine Monitor, February 2023). Identifying opportunities to protect and enhance access to the intertidal is crucial to support the wild shellfish fishery into the future.

Project Background

From 2022 to 2023, Manomet partnered with several towns in Casco Bay to conduct an inventory of access points to the intertidal on both public and private land. The project initially came out of discussions within the Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group, where the loss of access was identified as a shared challenge facing almost all of the towns in the region, and across the state. The goal was to support the efforts of municipal shellfish committees, harvesters, and town officials to identify opportunities to preserve or enhance intertidal access. To do that, an understanding of where these access points are located currently, and where access has been lost, is a critical first step.

Manomet worked with the towns of Brunswick, Harpswell, Georgetown, Yarmouth, Arrowsic, and Phippsburg to inventory intertidal access. This occurred primarily through discussions with shellfish committees, town staff, and harvesters, and was an iterative process that spanned several months in each town. After the inventory was complete, Manomet discussed priority actions to address intertidal access with each town. Specific steps taken by each town are further described below.

Methods

Planning

In each town, the project was first introduced at a shellfish or marine resources committee meeting to discuss the approach and any particular considerations for the town. Manomet staff developed a list of parameters to collect at each access point, as well as data sharing agreements to govern the ownership and use of the data gathered during the project. This was particularly important, as information about access across private property is sensitive in nature and sharing it publicly could compromise agreements between harvesters and private landowners. Manomet staff also developed GIS-based and/or print maps for each town to use for the participatory mapping process. For some towns, data and reports from previous efforts to gather information about shore access were compiled to use as a starting point for the inventory.

Participatory Mapping

The specific approach to this inventory process varied slightly in each town. In most towns, Manomet attended a second shellfish or marine resources committee meeting, and led a discussion among the committee and any harvesters or other community members in attendance to document locations that are used for access. In some cases, this occurred by projecting a digital map on a screen and entering points and associated data directly, and in other towns a print map was used with small stickers to indicate access points, and notes about each

point were taken to be digitized later. This process took anywhere from an hour to several hours depending on the number of access points in town and how much discussion there was among participants. In several towns, Manomet staff also met separately with individual harvesters, municipal marine resource administrators, and shellfish wardens knowledgeable about current and lost access in town to document their knowledge either before or after the discussion with the full shellfish or marine resources committee.

Data Compilation

Once the mapping was complete, data were digitized using GIS software, and reviewed to fill in gaps and ensure information was entered correctly and consistently. Access points were cross-referenced with tax maps in each town to identify the property owner, whether public or private, to help facilitate any actions the committee chose to take to address access at a particular parcel. In some cases, questions came up about the status of public access related to existing ROWs or paper streets, and additional research and outreach to town assessors helped fill in some of those gaps. Once the dataset was organized and completed in each town, draft products were developed and shared back with the committee for feedback and discussion, and any needed revisions were made.

For a more detailed description of our approach, see the companion document Guide to Developing an Inventory of Access Points to the Intertidal, which provides a step-by-step guide for municipalities looking to undergo this inventory process. It includes several resources developed for this project including a list of data fields collected for each access point and data sharing and data use agreements that were used to ensure proper data ownership and use.

Results

Ownership, Status, and Types of Access Points Identified

Across the six towns participating in this project, a total of 257 access points were documented. Of these, 65% of the access points were on private property, 20% were on municipal property, 8% were on state property, and 7% were on land trust property (**Figure 2**). One path to access the mudflats crossed property owned by three different entities (state, federal, and land trust). The proportion of private access ranged across the six towns, from 45% in Phippsburg to 86% in Georgetown (**Figure 3**).

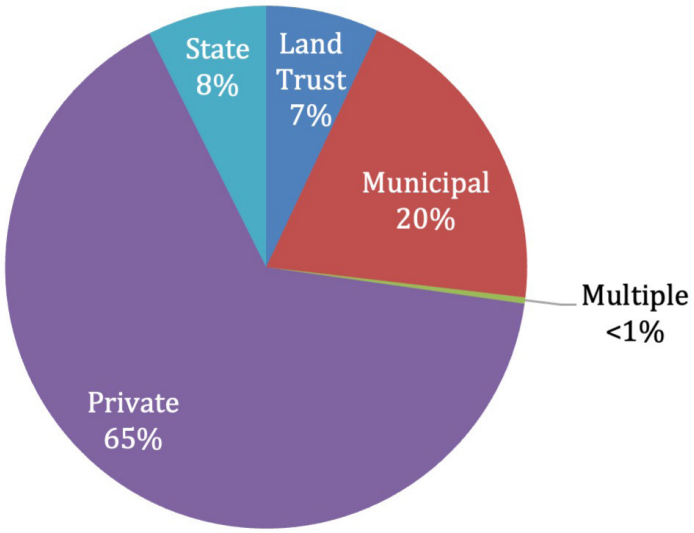

Figure 2: Ownership of the access points across the six towns in this project. Two-thirds of the access points were across private property, another 28% were on municipal or state property, and the remaining 7% crossed land trust property. One of the access paths crossed property owned by three different entities (state, federal, and land trust), and is identified here as "multiple" ownership.

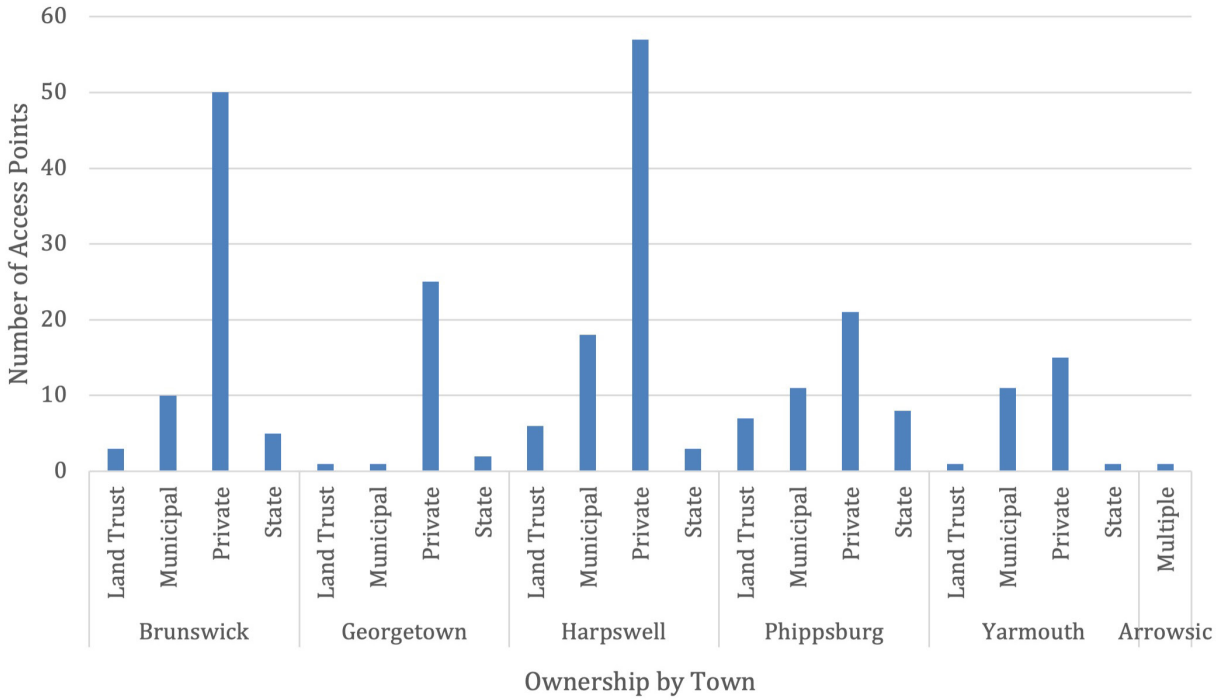

Figure 3: Ownership of access points in each town. Georgetown had the highest proportion of access across private property (86%), followed by Brunswick (74%), Harpswell (68%), and Yarmouth (54%). Phippsburg was the only town where less than half of the identified access points were on private property (45%).

Of the access points identified on private property, only 4% were 'secured' through any written or legal agreement with the landowner, most often a right-of-way (**Figure 4**). The remaining 96% were through informal agreements with private landowners, sites where the access agreement was uncertain, or sites where access had been lost or was a priority to acquire in the future. This highlights the precarious nature of access along the coast, as informal agreements can be revoked at any time if the landowner changes their mind for any reason, and do not transfer with changes in property ownership. There were 28 locations identified where access had been lost across private property, two sites where access was lost on municipal property, and one on land trust property. Fourteen locations had an uncertain status, and were identified as needing further investigation to determine the nature of access, if any.

The vast majority of the identified sites were walk-in access points (78%)[1], followed by boat ramps, wharves, or marinas (13%), including a handful of sites that provide tidal boat access only (**Figure 5**). Some sites were accessed in multiple ways (e.g., sometimes a boat ramp may be used for walk-in access). Three percent of the identified sites do not currently provide access, but were often identified as a priority to investigate further for potential future access.

1 The ownership and status of all 257 access points were documented during this project, but the remaining data fields are complete for a subset of the data. This is in part due to time constraints during the participatory mapping process and the need to prioritize which information was most important to collect, and in part due to uncertainty about specific locations. For the remaining statistics, percentages are reported for the subset of access points for which the information was collected, and those numbers are included in the figure captions.

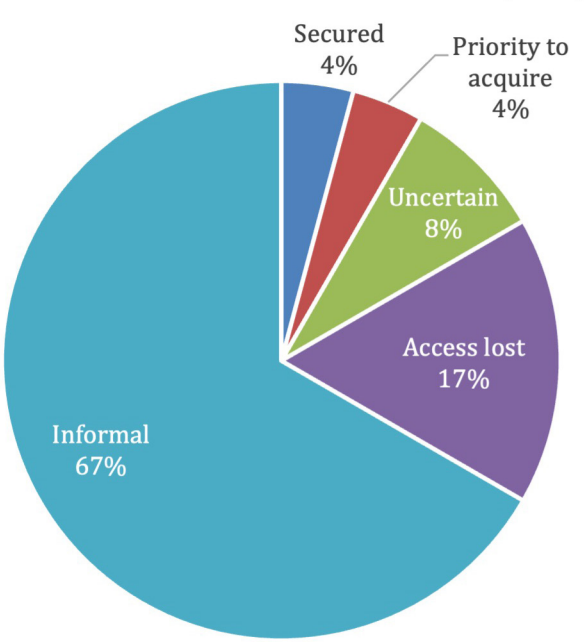

Figure 4: Status of access on private property (n=168). The majority of access across private property is through informal agreements, with only 4% of the sites identified as 'secured' through any written or formal agreement, usually a ROW. Access has been lost on 17% of the sites documented on private property, and a handful (4%) were described as sites where it would be a priority to acquire access in the future. Sites where the status of access was uncertain, or needed further investigation to determine whether access existed and through what mechanism, made up 8% of the sites on private property.

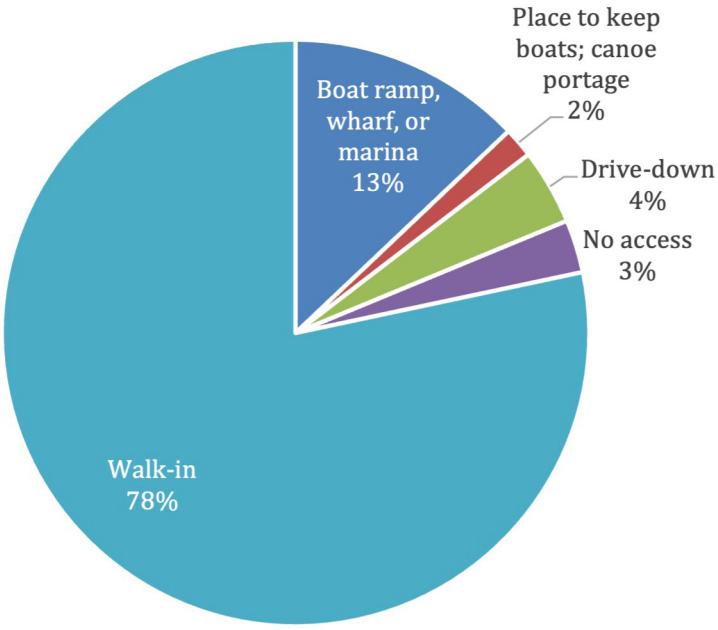

Figure 5: **The type of access across six towns (n=240).** Walk-in access represented the vast majority of the identified sites, followed by boat ramps, wharves, or marinas.

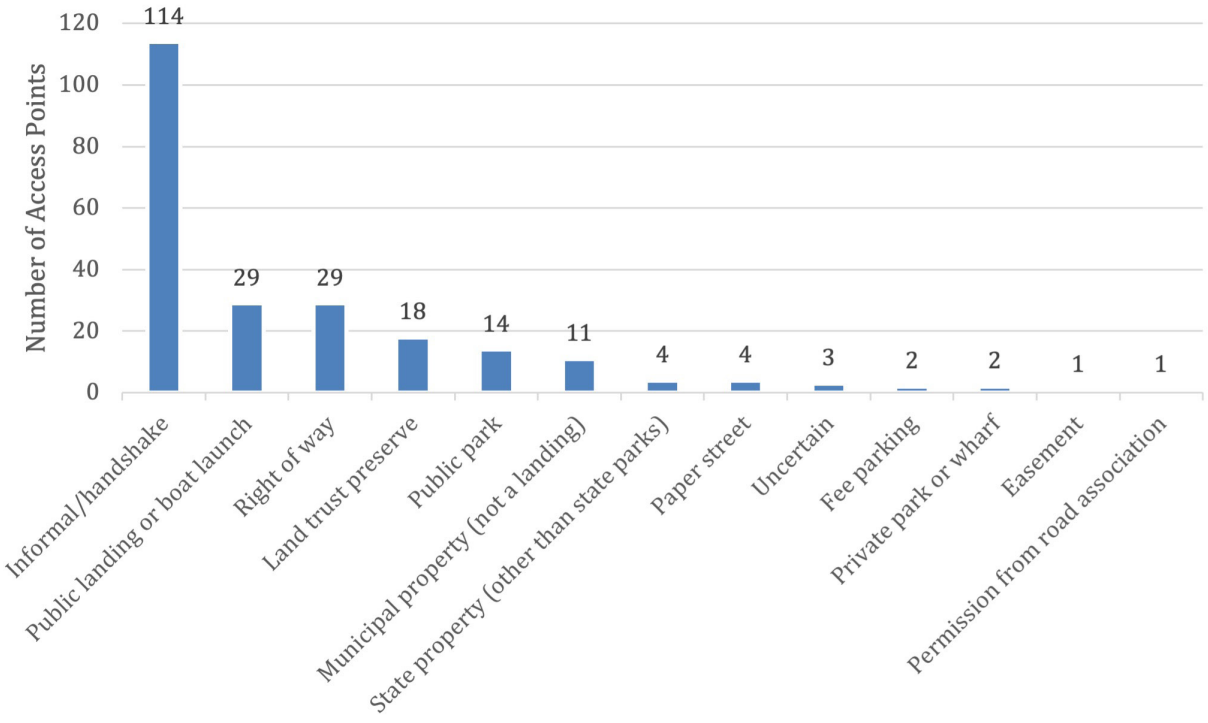

Figure 6: Legal or structural nature of access across all six towns (n=232). About half of all access arrangements were informal, or "handshake" agreements

The legal or structural nature of the access arrangement was also documented for the majority of the access points (n=232), with about half identified as informal or handshake agreements (49%), followed by public landings/boat launches and rights of way (12.5% each) (**Figure** 6). Land trust preserves made up another 8% of the sites, and state or municipal parks represented 12.5%. The remaining 6% were paper streets, fee parking, private parks or wharves, easements, written permission from a road association, or were uncertain.

A more detailed breakdown of the ownership, status, type, and nature of access within each town can be found on the Community Intertidal Data Portal and can be shared upon request.

Access Challenges Across Towns

The two biggest access challenges identified across the six towns were changing agreements with private landowners and changing ownership of property along the coast. Of the access points that were identified as lost, two-thirds were due to the property owner revoking permission for access. Two primary reasons landowners revoked access were shifts in the use of a property for short-term rentals and new development of homes on a property. Even when access is still permitted, short-term rental properties often have seasonal restrictions on when harvesters can use the property to get to the coast, usually only in the winter months. In a couple of instances, landowners cited damage to the property or overuse/crowded parking as reasons they revoked access. Decisions by road or homeowner's associations to revoke access along private roads were also cited. In several cases, harvesters learned about the change by the appearance of no trespassing signs. Another quarter of the lost access points occurred because of a change in property ownership, with new landowners deciding they did not want to continue access agreements.

Several additional barriers or restrictions to access were mentioned during the participatory mapping process. Seasonal restrictions came up frequently in relation to short-term rental properties and properties that are owned by part-time summer residents, where access is only permitted in the off season. Limited parking was a frequently cited challenge, as were limitations to launching boats at sites with inadequate infrastructure or high-tide access only. Several sites could only be accessed via long or steep walking trails that make it difficult for harvesters to use to haul gear and shellfish.

Harvesters and municipal staff also highlighted specific access points that were particularly important to the fishery. In several important bays or coves, there is a single remaining overland access point that harvesters can use to reach the flats. If lost, these flats would only be reachable by boat, which is not always possible for individual harvesters or in certain seasons or weather conditions. Walk-in access is critical across all these towns, as reaching certain mudflats by boat can be dangerous in inclement weather or when the tide is ripping.

Many of the identified access points were historically important for shellfish harvesters but are no longer used due to fluctuations in the clam resource or water quality closures. Harvesters and municipal staff noted that while mudflats may be closed to harvesting now, many of them were heavily used when they were open and may prove to be important in the future if water quality were to be improved. Similarly, flats that don't currently have significant shell stock may rebound in future years and become important again. This highlights the importance of maintaining access over the long term, even at locations that are not currently used, as once access is lost it is very difficult to regain. It also underscores the need to conduct and update access inventories every few years, as historical access points may be forgotten if the institutional memory of harvesters and municipal staff is not well documented.

Reflections on the Participatory Mapping Process

In addition to the data gathered, the process of mapping access points with shellfish committees yielded important discussions between committee members, harvesters, and members of the community. Some participants reflected that it was the first time they had seen the landscape of access laid out in one place, and the visual provided a sense of what access looked like in town, how precarious those arrangements may be, and where the big gaps existed along the coast. In some cases, harvesters remarked that they had more access than they realized, and others reflected that the situation was more tenuous than they had previously understood. The exercise also prompted creative ideas about strategies to address access challenges that suited the particular context of each town.

Town Action to Protect and Enhance Access

Mapping access to the intertidal represents the first step toward identifying opportunities to protect and improve access to the coast. Across the six towns, a few consistent priorities emerged as next steps to build on the inventory process. One of the highest priority needs that emerged was outreach to coastal landowners. This outreach can take several forms, from broad outreach to all coastal landowners to share information about the importance of access, to targeted discussions with the owners of properties that have recently sold, or where the owner may be open to a more formal agreement.

There were also several instances where questions remained about whether a ROW or paper street in town conferred public access, or access for commercial harvesters. Several towns also identified public landings, docks, or parcels where infrastructure improvements were needed to reduce crowding, increase parking, fix damages, or build greater resilience to sea level rise and coastal flooding. Some towns also identified parcels that are a priority for town or state acquisition if they were to go on the market, to ensure continued access into the future.

Below are examples of actions the towns participating in this project chose or plan to take to improve access to the coast.

Tidal boat ramp, Brunswick. ***Photo by Jessica Joyce***

Brunswick

With over 61 miles of coastline and 20 miles of frontage along the Androscoggin River, a large part of Brunswick's identity is built around its connection to the coastal and riverine waters, and its municipal shellfish program is a vital part of the town's long-standing coastal heritage and local economy. Of the 68 locations in Brunswick that provide (or used to provide) access to the intertidal, 74% are on private property, so outreach to coastal landowners was identified as a priority by the Brunswick Marine Resource Committee.

Changing coastal property ownership presents a risk to these private access arrangements. In Brunswick, transfers of residential real estate property nearly doubled over the last decade as compared with the decade prior, with 50 transfers of residential oceanfront property from 2001-2012 and 95 transfers from 2013-2022 (Maine Revenue Service). As previously mentioned, these new homeowners may not understand what it means to live on a working waterfront, and the importance of traditional walk-in access to the coast.

To raise awareness about the role of coastal homeowners in supporting the fishery, the Brunswick Marine Resource Committee sent letters to over 325 coastal landowners. The letters shared information about the significance of the shellfish industry to the town, expressed gratitude for the coastal landowners who make efforts to protect water quality and provide traditional foot path access through their properties, and encouraged anyone interested in providing access to reach out to the Coastal Resource Manager. In response, several coastal landowners reached out to offer harvesters access across their properties, including one who recently purchased a coastal property and would soon be moving to Maine from another state. These letters served as an important outreach tool to raise awareness about this topic and enhance access in town.

Brunswick also identified several ROWs and paper streets where the status of public access was uncertain, including several locations where a three-decade old shore access report encouraged further investigation of public access rights. Discussions with the town assessor helped clarify the status of access at a few of these sites, and the town may consider applying for future funding to conduct a legal analysis of town ROWs.

Survey of the flats in Harpswell. ***Photo by Manomet/Marissa McMahan.***

Harpswell

With over 216 miles of waterfront, Harpswell identified 84 access points (past and current), representing the largest number across all six towns. Similar to Brunswick, transfers of residential oceanfront properties increased 70% between the last two decades, from 351 transfers between 2002-2012 and 595 transfers between 2013-2022 (Maine Revenue Service).

Landowner outreach was also identified as the top priority in Harpswell, and the Harpswell Marine Resources Committee sent a letter to over 200 property owners in areas along the coast that provide important access for the shellfish fishery, including locations where access was lost in recent years. Similar to Brunswick, these letters described the importance of the fishery, thanked landowners for preserving traditional access, and encouraged them to reach out to have a conversation about ensuring access into the future. Harpswell has also hosted a 'landowner appreciation day' for the last two years, inviting community members to an informal clam cookout during the summer months to thank them for their support of the fishery. These events have been very well attended and have resulted in several landowners offering access across their properties.

Harpswell also documented several ROWs and paper streets where the status of public access was unclear, and discussed these sites with the town assessor to get more information about their legal status. This includes several paper streets that end at the coast that the town chose to retain in 2017, but whether any of them confer public access is not readily apparent. The town also identified a few additional sites that are currently under private ownership but are a priority for the town to acquire if they were to go on the market, as they provide important access to particular areas of the coast.

Sea level rise and coastal flooding also pose challenges to public landings, boat ramps, and other areas used to access the coast across the state of Maine. Lookout Point is a public landing in Harpswell with a boat ramp in need of repair, and experiences frequent flooding during particularly high tides and storm events. The town completed a resiliency assessment in 2020, and is seeking funding to build resilience at this site, which continues to be a priority for the town.

Flats in Georgetown. ***Photo by Manomet staff.***

Georgetown

When this project was first introduced at a Georgetown Shellfish Conservation Committee meeting, the committee did not immediately think that access was a priority issue in their town. After some discussion, the committee members realized that while they did not have any issues accessing the flats right now, the vast majority of the places where they accessed the coast were through informal agreements with private landowners, putting them in a precarious position.

After conducting the mapping exercise, the precarious nature of access was underscored as 86% of all access points identified in Georgetown are on private property. The committee identified two priority sites where the landowners may be open to formalizing an access agreement for shellfish harvesters. Committee members reached out directly to those landowners to discuss opportunities to continue access, and developed a letter to send to a local homeowner's association to thank them for providing access to shellfish harvesters in town. Manomet staff also worked closely with regional staff at Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) to conduct deed research to better understand the status of a ROW that is currently used to provide access in Georgetown. MCHT and other local land trusts have deep experience working with landowners on conservation easements or other legal mechanisms to conserve land and access to the coast and have been invaluable partners in this work in several towns.

Georgetown also experienced significant flooding and damage to roads and bridges during a winter storm in December 2022, including a closure of the bridge to Reid State Park for several weeks. These storm impacts reinforced the need to better document places where flooding or damage has occurred during large storms, and how those damages impact access to the coast.

Arrowsic

Access in Arrowsic is unique, as a single path provides access to two of the town's three shellfish flats, and the third can only be reached by boat. This path crosses three different property owners before reaching the shore—the Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Coast Guard, and The Nature Conservancy (Figure 7). There are two primary issues with this access path. The first is that the path is often overgrown with invasive plants, and at certain times of the year becomes impassable, even with semi-regular maintenance. The second is frequent high-tide flooding of a small bridge across the marsh toward the beginning of the path, which will only increase with continued SLR.

Arrowsic is currently drafting a Climate Action Plan with particular attention paid to sea level rise, salt water inundation, and habitat impacts, which can be informed by the information gathered through the access inventory.

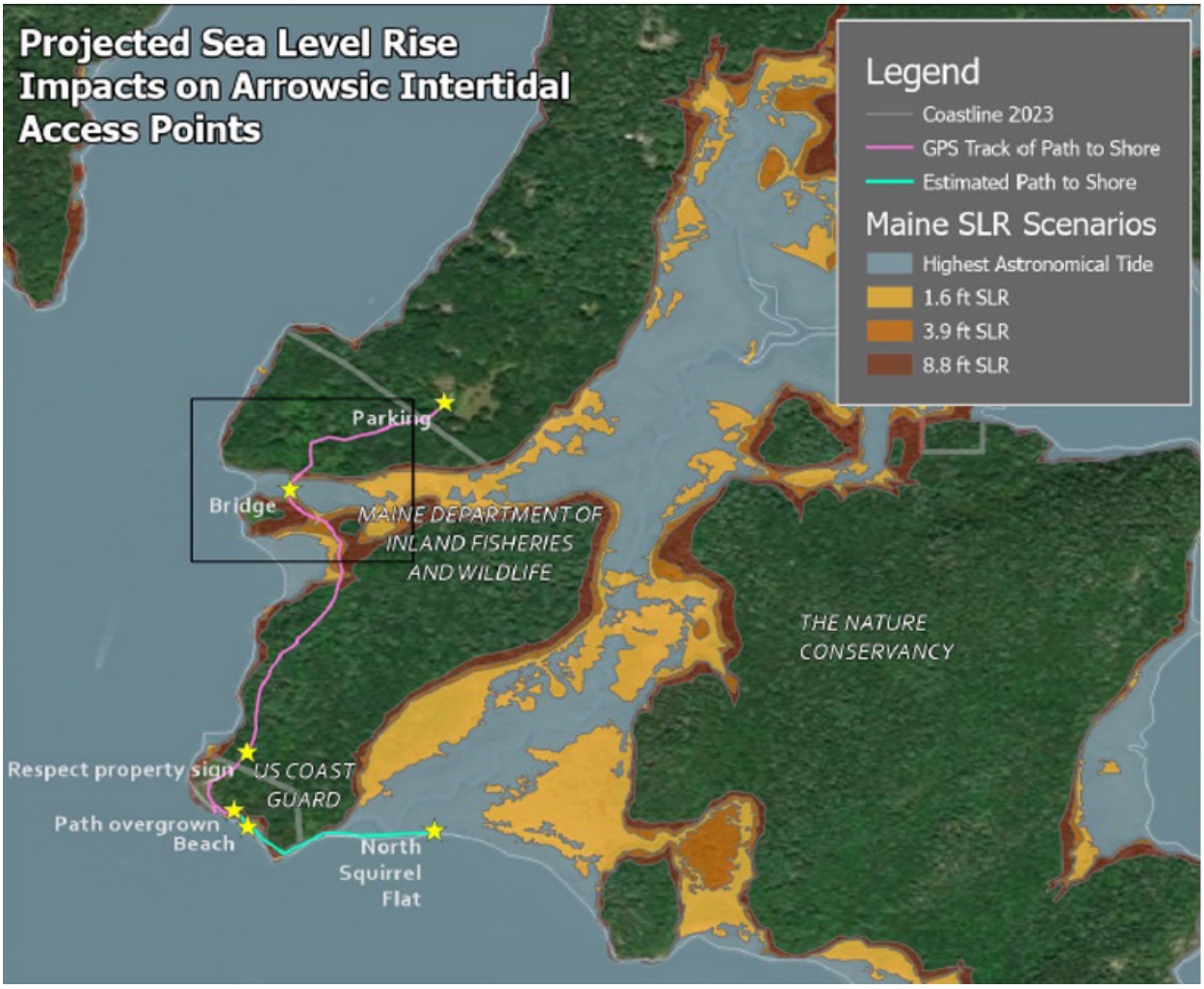

Figure 7. Map of SLR projections and Arrowsic intertidal access. The bridge used to reach the flats experiences frequent flooding at high tide, and will likely see additional impacts as sea levels continue to rise.

Bates-Morse Mountain Conservation Area in Phippsburg. ***Photo by Manomet/Emily Farr.***

Phippsburg

Phippsburg was not one of the original towns working with Manomet on this access project. However, access became a significant issue in the past year such that the shellfish committee was eager to address it, and Manomet worked with them to conduct an access inventory. Of all the towns in this project, Phippsburg had the highest proportion of public access points (54%), but the committee highlighted important limitations of their use of public access sites in town, including the ability to tie up boats at public landings.

After completing the inventory, Phippsburg identified a few privately owned properties to prioritize developing a written access agreement with the landowner. The shellfish committee presented the inventory to the town select board and gained their support in taking action to protect and improve access in town. They are also considering how best to incorporate the information about harvester access into the comprehensive plan, which is currently in development.

Yarmouth

Yarmouth has a smaller shellfish program than some of the other towns in this project, but accessing the flats can be a challenge. Across all six towns, Yarmouth had the highest proportion of municipal access points (39%), but also had one of the largest proportions of access points that were either of an uncertain status or were places that do not currently provide access but are priority to acquire in the future. There are also several access points that were of historical importance but have not been used much in recent years because the adjacent flats have been closed due to water quality closures.

After completing the access inventory, Yarmouth has had preliminary discussions within the shellfish committee about priority sites for outreach and further investigation.

Yarmouth shellfish survey. ***Photo by Manomet/Emily Farr.***

Conclusion

Inventorying intertidal access can help bring attention to the barriers to accessing the coast of Maine. Documenting the current state of access serves as a starting point to identify opportunities to protect and enhance access along the coast for both commercial harvesters and other users of the intertidal environment. Shellfish harvesters in the six towns participating in this process predominantly access the coast through private property, creating a precarious situation where access may be lost at any time if the owner decides to revoke permission for any reason.

The regional nature of this project provided an opportunity for towns to learn from the approaches taken in neighboring municipalities, and tailor them to fit the local context. For example, the idea of a mailed letter to landowners to share more information about access for shellfish harvesters first came up at a Harpswell Marine Resources Committee meeting and was adopted by several other towns. Similarly, a harvester in Harpswell suggested looking at the landowner/hunter 'courtesy cards' developed through the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Outdoor Partners program, spurring discussions with MCHT about the development of a written license agreement for access on private land.

This project also fits within a larger context, as challenges surrounding harvester access to the coast are not specific to Casco Bay. While the local dynamics vary from place to place, the statewide nature of this issue has created an informal community of practice and an opportunity to cross-pollinate ideas across the coast. For example, the Gouldsboro Shore team served as invaluable resources to inform our approach to this project and are statewide leaders in this work.

Several tools and resources are available to support other towns looking to inventory, protect, and enhance coastal access. This step-by-step Guide to Developing an Inventory of Access Points to the Intertidal is intended to serve as a resource for municipalities looking to conduct or update a coastal access inventory. A broader guidance document called *Preserving Access to the Intertidal* was developed by the Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group (Stetitch et al. 2022) to support anyone looking to protect or expand intertidal access in their

communities. For towns seeking resources to educate the community about living and working near the ocean, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association and partners developed *Scuttlebutt: How to Live and Work in a Waterfront Community* for Harpswell, and may serve as a model for other communities. A list of additional resources can be found in Appendix A of the Guide to Developing an Inventory of Access Points to the Intertidal.

Access for harvesters of intertidal fisheries differs from other working waterfront uses in that most are accessing the mudflats on foot. These foot paths to the shore do not fit easily within the popular understanding or definition of a working waterfront, which is often thought of as the wharves, piers, and other waterfront infrastructure needed to support commercial fisheries. These are vitally important, but it is also critical that the foot paths used by harvesters of shellfish and other intertidal fisheries are part of the overall policy solutions and public discourse about protecting and enhancing the working waterfront.

Accessing the Data

The data collected through this project have practical applications for local, regional, and statewide waterfront access planning. Getting the information into the hands of decision-makers at all levels is critical. At the same time, some of the information is sensitive in nature, and requires a thoughtful data sharing policy that was agreed upon by each participating town.

The entire data set for each participating town, including all publicly owned and accessible points as well as privately owned and accessed points, is housed at Manomet and may be made available to interested organizations and individuals by request. To maintain local control over the data, data will only be shared with explicit permission from the town shellfish conservation or marine resources committee. Each town also has a copy of its local data.

Information about public access points is available in the *Community Intertidal Data Portal*, and can be made available upon request. Generalized or aggregated information about the status of a town's access points (e.g., number of private vs. public access points, number of informal vs. formal agreements) is also available in the Intertidal Data Portal and upon request.

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