



SCUTTLEBUTT

Brunswick, Maine

**A Guide to Living & Working
Near the Water**



A Little Bit about Brunswick, Maine

Condensing the rich and dynamic history of Brunswick into a brief introduction for a guide that aims to inspire exploration and celebration of the waterfront is no small task. So, we encourage you to dig deeper by reading more online or visiting places like the Joshua L. Chamberlain Museum, the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, the Pejepscot Historical Society, and the Curtis Memorial Library.

Prior to the town's establishment, the Wabanaki people were drawn to the falls on the Androscoggin in the spring when vast numbers of sturgeon and salmon were available for harvest. The coastal shoreline, with its extensive tidal flats, offered clams and quahogs, sustaining Indigenous communities for many months during the year. Traces of their ancient campsites can still be found along the town's coastline today, identified by substantial shell deposits known as middens. Importantly, the Wabanaki people continue to inhabit these lands, and sea-run fish and shellfish remain vital to their traditional diet and cultural practices.

Established in 1628 under the name Pejepscot, Brunswick attained official incorporation in 1739, marking the beginning of its multifaceted journey through time.

In 1739, Brunswick was incorporated as a township, taking its name from the Duchy of Brunswick in connection to the English monarchy. Initially governed by town meetings, open to all registered voters, the town transitioned to a council-town manager government in 1969—a structure that remains in place today.

Brunswick's maritime history has significantly shaped its identity due to its location along the Androscoggin River and its relation to the coast. The town emerged as a hub for shipbuilding in the 18th and 19th centuries, with shipyards dotting the shoreline and fostering a vibrant maritime community. Additionally, Brunswick thrived in commercial fishing, as local harvesters ventured into the Atlantic from the waterfront, not only sustaining the community but also contributing to the town's economic vitality.

The Androscoggin River falls powered Brunswick's mills and economic growth, fueling industries from lumber to textiles until 1955. Despite economic diversification, the river's health and accessibility still support local businesses, maintaining the town's maritime heritage and its cultural and economic link to the waterfront.

Local Governance in Brunswick

Brunswick operates under a town council system, a form of local governance designed to address the specific needs and concerns of residents. Maine is a home rule state which means that local municipalities like Brunswick have the authority to create and manage their own local governments within the framework established by state law.

At the heart of Brunswick's local government is the town council. This body is comprised of elected representatives chosen by residents during regular elections.

The town council plays a pivotal role in making decisions that impact the community. They convene regularly in open meetings, providing residents the opportunity to witness and participate in the democratic process. During these meetings, council members discuss a range of issues affecting Brunswick, from zoning regulations to budgetary matters and even marine resources.

Understanding how the town council operates is essential for residents who want to actively participate in local governance, and its especially important for people with businesses in the community to pay attention because new ordinances and zoning have the potential to impact their businesses.



Brunswick by the Numbers

Brunswick has jurisdiction over approximately 3,900 acres of waters on Northern Casco Bay, of which approximately 41% (1,600 acres) is intertidal, 37% (1,450 acres) is shallow water, and 22% (850 acres) is deep water.

Over 90% of Brunswick moorings are in either Maquoit Bay or Mere Point Bay (including 148 at Paul's Marina).

Brunswick is home to 41 licensed lobstermen. Many of these lobstermen land their catch in neighboring communities like Cundy's Harbor and Phippsburg.

The Town of Brunswick consists of 61 miles of coastline on Northern Casco Bay and 20 miles of frontage along the Androscoggin River.



Scan the QR code to read Manomet's report that summarizes findings from six towns in Casco Bay, including Brunswick, and highlights broader challenges to coastal access in Maine. It includes examples of successful local strategies, such as landowner outreach and land trust collaborations, that could guide future municipal or statewide access initiatives.



What is the Working Waterfront?

Under Maine's current use taxation policy, "working waterfront land refers to a parcel of land, or a portion thereof, abutting water to the head of tide or land located in the intertidal zone that is used primarily or used predominantly to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities."

But the working waterfront is far more expansive than that. The working waterfront in Brunswick is home to commercial fishermen including intertidal harvesters and lobstermen, recreational boaters like kayakers and charter vessels, aquaculture, and the marinas and boatyards that provide storage, fuel, and supplies.

For many that rely on the waterfront for work, the working waterfront also includes all of the infrastructure necessary to do business, whether that infrastructure is on the water or not. Places like marine stores, trap shops, bait, and gear storage are also a vital part of the working waterfront.

Did you know?

Commercial fishing in Maine is worth nearly 1 billion dollars and provides nearly 26,000 jobs in the state. According to the Maine Office of Tourism, a substantial number of visitors cite lobster and seafood as compelling reasons for their travel to the state.



What is Access and Why Does it Matter?

Access to the waterfront is important to the people of Brunswick for many different reasons including:



- Recreation and Wellbeing**
- Community Gathering Spaces**
- Economic Development**
- Ecological Importance**
- Aesthetic and Cultural Value**
- Historical Significance**
- Education**
- Business and Transportation**

Access to water for commercial fishing typically refers to the legal and practical ability of fishermen, including clam harvesters, to engage in fishing activities and be able to enter and traverse the waterfront.



When hiring a contractor or landscaper, ensure they possess the necessary credentials and certifications to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge for your area. If you have questions about your property, you or your contractor should reach out to the Town of Brunswick's Code Enforcement office for assistance. (207-725-6660).

Services in Brunswick:

Well Tree, Inc.

Driscoll Excavation & Tree Co.

Preserving Access

If you are a homeowner interested in helping to protect and maintain access to the working waterfront, the three most effective tools to consider are public access easements, right-of-way agreements, and working waterfront covenants.

What are Public Access Easements?

Formal agreements by coastal property owners to allow shellfish harvesters or fishermen to traverse their property for waterfront access. Easements stick with the property even when ownership changes, effectively preserving access to the waterfront for future generations.

What are Right-of-Way Agreements?

Similar to public access easements, except they are NOT permanent. They are flexible agreements that preserve waterfront access for limited periods of time and only to specific individuals, if desired. This is a good way for a coastal property owner to allow working waterfront access on their property temporarily without fully committing to a public access easement.

What are Working Waterfront Covenants?

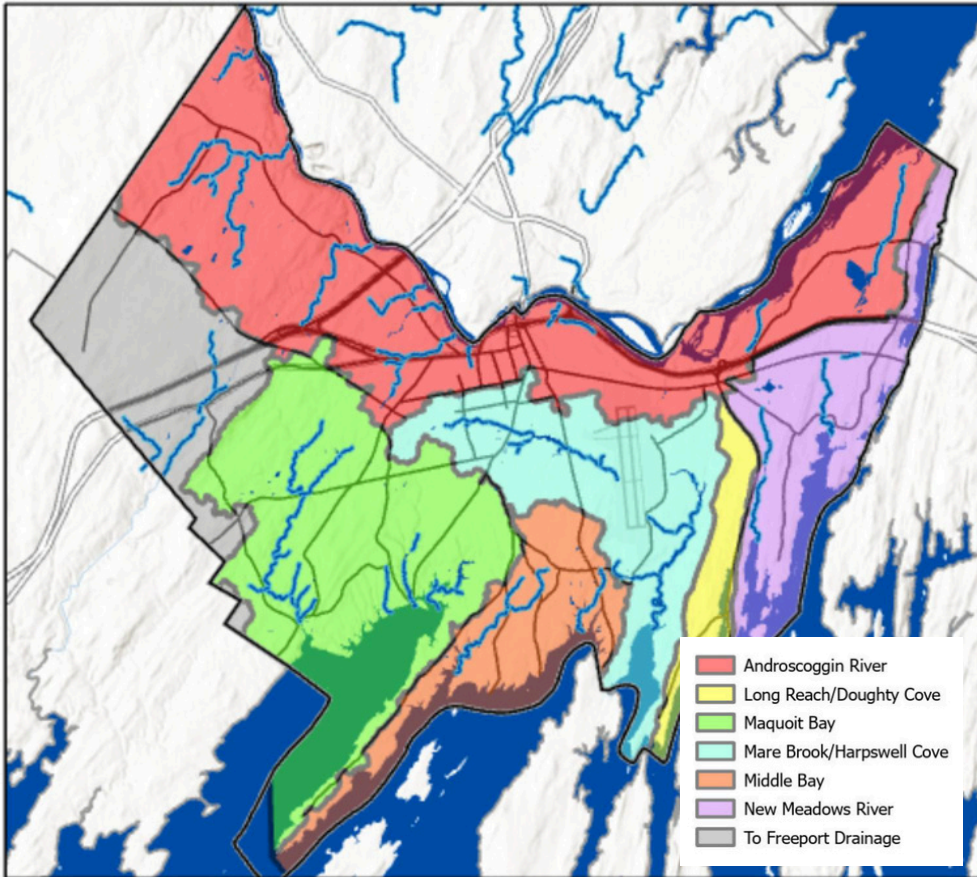
These are legal agreements between the owner of a waterfront property and one or more holders to ensure permanent access to, and affordability of, the waterfront real estate for commercial fishery uses. Holders are typically Maine DMR but can be another governmental entity or nonprofit organization. A right of first refusal is granted to the holder of the covenant, allowing the holder to direct any potential future sale of the property. They are permanent agreements that prevent the future alteration or development of waterfront property in ways that restrict its use for commercial fishing activity.

For more information:
accessingthemainecoast.com



What is a Watershed & Why Does it Matter?

No matter where you reside in Brunswick, your address likely falls within one of the town's watersheds. Watersheds, also called "drainage basins" or "catchments," are areas of land that collect and direct water, including rainfall and snowmelt, from higher elevations through creeks, streams, and rivers to a common outlet like a lake or ocean. Comprising both surface and groundwater, watersheds are crucial for ecological balance, providing habitat for diverse species, safeguarding drinking water supplies, and supporting marine life. Explore the map below to identify your watershed and consider ways to contribute to its preservation in your own backyard!



Learn more

Maine Department of Agriculture,
Conservation, and Forestry
Brunswick Topsham Land Trust



Fishing for Striped Bass



Maine's striped bass regulations cover all Maine coastal waters up to the head of tide in all rivers. In addition, there are often special regulations in effect from December to June in the Kennebec, Sheepscot, and Androscoggin Rivers and related tributaries. Most importantly, it is unlawful to fish for, take, or possess striped bass in federal waters. To learn more about fishing for striped bass, regulations, and size limits, scan the QR code.



A rising TIDE lifts all boats.



For more information about tides around Brunswick, scan this QR code.

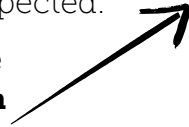


**Share your love for
Maine waters on
social media & use
#LoveMaineWaters**

Conservation and Coastal Living

- Remember that the rain and snow that runs off your property impacts the groundwater and marine environment. Limiting runoff from your property is important in protecting the marine environment, groundwater, and your well.
- Trees and other vegetation are essential in controlling and retaining water on your property.
- Use rain barrels and vegetated swales to conserve water.
- Help your well to recharge by watering by hand.
- If you must use a sprinkler, set a timer and limit use.
- Minimize lawn area and keep a vegetated buffer at the shoreline in order to filter runoff.
- Minimize the need for fertilizer by using a mulching blade on your mower set at 4 inches and leave the clippings to become nature's fertilizer.
- Avoid using pesticides.
- Clean up after your pets.
- Get your septic system & well inspected.

**Scan here to learn more about the
Town's Conservation Commission
and related initiatives.**



Aquaculture



Brunswick hosts multiple aquaculture businesses primarily cultivating American oysters, with some also farming kelp and hard shell clams. Additionally, the town is involved in native quahog clam restoration efforts, utilizing floating culture bags for growth before transplantation. These farms, often marked by labeled floats reading "Sea Farm," feature visible floating bags on the water's surface, while some employ bottom gear, some farms also operate in intertidal zones near the shore.

Intertidal Fisheries

There are currently 63 commercial shellfish harvesters licensed by the Town, approximately 30 of which are full-time. A number of worm harvesters also use the Town's mudflats, however, these licenses are provided by the state and are not town specific so the exact number is unknown.



Learn more about
Marine Resources in
Brunswick

The Town of Brunswick issues shellfish licenses specifically for intertidal resources. Unlike other fisheries regulated at the state or federal level, coastal towns individually manage their shellfish resources. In Brunswick, a Marine Resource Committee, consisting of shellfish harvesters and community members, convenes monthly. This Committee advises the Department of Marine Resources on license numbers and conservation measures, such as seasonal and area closures. Town shellfish licenses permit the harvesting of hard shell (quahog) clams, soft-shell clams, and razor clams. There are distinct rules for commercial, recreational, and student licenses.

Did you know? Brunswick was the second-largest shipbuilding town in the region during the late 18th to late 19th centuries, second only to Bath. Notably, between 1815 and 1840, 97 vessels were launched in Brunswick. Shipyards owned by the Pennel and Skolfield families, located in what is now Pennelville and near the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust's Skolfield preserve, were prominent. The Pejepscot History Center now occupies the former Skolfield family residence.

Commercial Fishing



Commercial fishing involves catching fish for the purpose of selling them. Although there are no facilities for landing lobster and fish directly in Brunswick, there is significant commercial fishing activity in the waters off the coast of Brunswick. This includes activities such as lobstering, tuna fishing, and pogy fishing. Many fishermen residing in Brunswick choose to land their catch in nearby locations such as Cundy's Harbor or Portland.

What's a Sturgeon?

During spring, Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) can often be observed leaping from the waters of the Androscoggin River, visible from both the Brunswick-Topsham bridge and the 250th Anniversary Park. These remarkable fish can weigh over 600 pounds, stretch up to 13 feet long, and live for as long as a century. As anadromous fish, they commence their lives in freshwater and later inhabit saltwater during adulthood, returning to freshwater solely for spawning. Historically, their ability to access freshwater spawning grounds was impeded by dam construction for milling purposes, resulting in substantial population declines. However, a combination of dam removals and fishing moratoriums has facilitated their recovery, making their presence a common sight during springtime. It's against the law to catch Atlantic sturgeon for any commercial or recreational purposes because they're protected under the Endangered Species Act.



Invasive Plants and Other Species

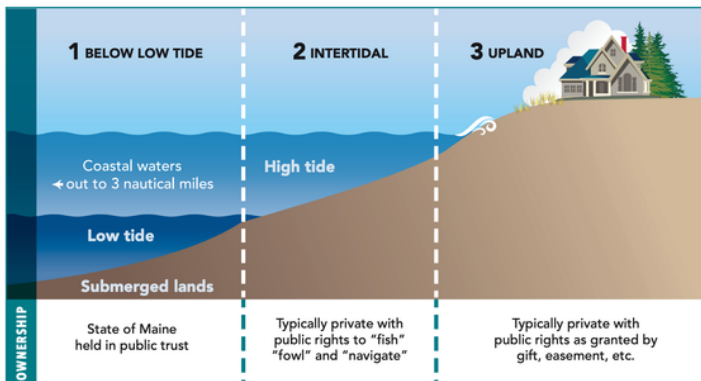
Invasive species, such as European green crabs, are non-native plants and animals that disrupt ecosystems by consuming native species' food, overtaking habitats, and proliferating without natural predators. These species often arrive via ships' ballast water, packing materials, or the release of non-native



aquarium species. The European green crab, for instance, appeared in Casco Bay in the 1900s and exploded in population by 2012, devastating native shellfish and eelgrass beds along the Brunswick shore. Efforts to combat their spread include trapping programs organized by the town, conservation groups, and even students from Brunswick High School. Visitors can learn more about these initiatives at the kiosk on the shore near Wharton Point in Maquoit Bay.

Fishing, Fowling, and Navigation

In Maine, it is legally established that the public has the right to engage in fishing, fowling, or navigation on privately owned intertidal land, whether for commercial purposes, sustenance, or recreational enjoyment.



Scan the QR code
to learn more.



Did you know?

Scientific studies have shown that certain Insect Growth Regulators (IGR), neonicotinoids and insecticides adversely affect aquatic invertebrates, especially molting shellfish such as lobsters and crabs.



How to make lobster stock

Yield: Makes 6 or more cups

½ cup olive oil

Shells from 5 cooked lobsters, rinsed

1 onion, roughly chopped

2 bay leaves

10 peppercorns

In a large stockpot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the lobster shells and sauté for 1 minute. Add enough water so that the pot is $\frac{2}{3}$ full, then add the onion, bay leaves and peppercorns. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for several hours or overnight. (The longer it simmers, the better.) Using tongs, remove and discard the large shells, then strain the stock through a fine sieve twice.

Recipe from the New York Times

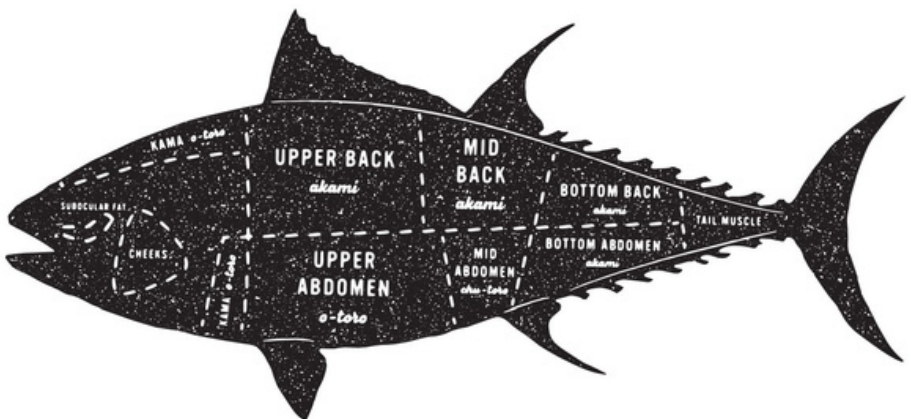
Did you know?

Thomas Purchase, the first English settler in Brunswick, established a trading post at Fort Andross where he bought and sold salmon, sturgeon, and shad. Beyond his role as a fisherman, Purchase was also a farmer, hunter, and cattle raiser.



Eat local... SEAFOOD

- Freeze fish in milk to help prevent the fish from getting freezer burn. This also creates a great starter for chowders.
- Buy fish in bulk in-season. Scallops, for example, are harvested in the winter but they taste so good in the summer. Scallops, and most groundfish, freeze incredibly well.
- One type of fish that does not freeze well is hake. Hake is a thinner, fragile fish and gets rather mushy when frozen at home. This is why so many fishing families used to make corned hake, which is a dish that includes the salted fish, boiled potatoes, pickled onions, and bacon fat. (All foods that keep well throughout the seasons.)
- Learn to substitute fish. When a recipe calls for cod, and you can't find cod, it's OK to try another Maine seafood species in its place. Simply adjust cooking times depending on the thickness of the fillet.
- Some old-timers use products like Cremora in place of dairy in chowders.
- Use leftover fish to make fish cakes. Mashup leftover fillets with eggs, breadcrumbs, potatoes, peppers, and onions. Roll into cakes and fry!
- Eat seafood for breakfast! (Serve fish cakes with an egg on top.)



Thank you to the Town of Brunswick's Nathaniel Davis Fund Committee for generously funding the effort to develop Scuttlebutt. This committee is charged with the responsibility of recommending projects to the Town Council that most clearly fit the terms of the will of Samuel Gross Davis that included a bequest made in memory of his father, Nathaniel Davis, born in 1791. Nathaniel Davis was "a substantial and useful citizen, the proprietor of a stationery store on Mason Street from 1825 until his death in 1866."

Seafood Spots

Cameron's Lobster House
The Fishermen's Net
Gurnet Trading Co.
Pepper's Landing
Paul's Marina
Tide 2 Table



Marine Businesses

Bamforth Marine
Johnson's Sporting Goods
Midcoast Marine Supply
New Meadows Marine
Paul's Marina



Live + Work in Maine is a non-profit dedicated to providing information and resources to talented people who want to relocate, move within, or stay in Maine. Their website is an excellent resource for those seeking training or exploring new career opportunities within marine industries - and includes a job board with career opportunities all over the state.

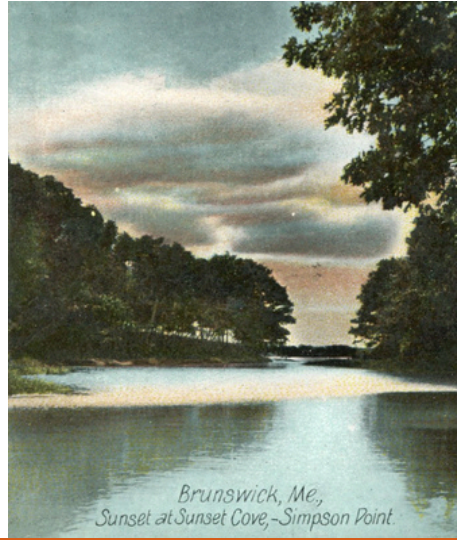
Visit liveandworkmaine.com to learn more!

More information

Learn more about Brunswick & some of the organizations and businesses in the area.

Town of Brunswick
www.brunswickme.gov
207-725-6100

Bath-Brunswick Regional Chamber
Brunswick Downtown Association
Brunswick Landing
Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust
Curtis Memorial Library
Live + Work in Maine
Maine Maritime Museum (Bath)
Midcoast Hunger Prevention Program



About the cover photo:

Two boats work around each other to catch menhaden, more commonly known as pogies. While one boat is based in Brunswick the other is based in Harpswell. In Maine, the majority of working waterfront infrastructure serves as a vital asset not only to individual towns but to the entire surrounding region.

Did you know?

Brunswick is the site of the Stowe House where Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1852.



The Maine Coast Fishermen's Association is an industry-driven nonprofit working to restore the fisheries in the Gulf of Maine and sustain Maine's fishing communities for future generations.

Together, with our community partners, we:

- Support neighbors in coastal towns like Brunswick to take action to realize a vibrant and enduring working waterfront
- Advocate for good science and fair rule-making
- Help fishing families access health and wellness resources
- Keep seafood on the menu for local families, schools, and Mainers struggling with food insecurity

Learn more about MCFA's programs like Fishermen Feeding Mainers and Fishermen Wellness, and make a donation by scanning the QR code above. Together, we persevere.



Thank you, Scuttlebutt partners & sponsors!



A Community Health Project of Mid Coast-Parkview Health, MaineHealth

For tips and local resources, find us at: Getactivesouthernmidcoast.org



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