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Common Merganser (sawbill) hen with ducklings at Round Pond. Photo by Adam Raven

Allagash Wilderness Waterway 2024 Annual Report



Bureau of Parks and Lands

March 1, 2025



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Report Required

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW) is administered by the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). A seven-member Advisory Council works with the Waterway Superintendent in developing and maintaining a strategic plan for the Waterway and advancing its mission and goals. The Council is required to report annually to the Director of BPL on the state of the Waterway (12 MRSA § A1-C). Similarly, the Commissioner of the Department is required to report annually to the Legislature's joint standing committee on conservation matters regarding the state of the Waterway, including its mission and goals, administration, education and interpretive programs, historic preservation efforts, visitor use and evaluation, ecological conditions and any natural character enhancements, general finances, income, expenditures and balance of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Permanent Endowment Fund, the Department's annual budget request for the Waterway operation in the coming fiscal year, and current challenges and prospects for the Waterway (12 MRSA §1890 C). This report is submitted to meet both reporting requirements.

MISSION AND GOALS

Mission Statement: Preserve, protect, and develop the maximum wilderness character of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway by ensuring its ecological integrity and optimum public use through careful management as a wilderness area in the historic and modern context of a working forest. (AWW Strategic Plan, 2010)

In support of this mission, the following documents provide principal guidance for managing the Waterway:

- Maine Statutes: 12 MRSA Chapter 220, Subchapter 6 Allagash Wilderness Waterway, §1871-§1891-B
- Rules and Regulations for the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, 01-670 CMR ch. 2 (2017)
- Memorandum of Agreement between the Maine Department of Conservation (now DACF) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, February 2002
- Allagash Wilderness Waterway Strategic Plan (currently in revision), AWW Advisory Council, October 2010
- Allagash Wilderness Waterway Management Plan, Bureau of Parks and Lands, December 2012

The 2010 Strategic Plan and the 2012 AWW Management Plan include several goals, objectives, guiding principles, policies, and strategies to accomplish the mission. The plans are available online under the "Featured Links" at www.maine.gov/allagash. For the Strategic Plan, click on [AWW Advisory Council](#). For the Management Plan, click on [AWW Management Plan](#).

AWW Advisory Council Report

February 14, 2025

To: Andy Cutko, Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway Advisory Council (AWWAC) routinely schedules quarterly meetings if necessary but is required to meet by statute twice annually. The 2024 Council met in March, June, and September. If conducted in a physical location, all of these meetings are accessible to the public, but they are always accessible digitally via the TEAMS platform. This year, we were fortunate to have a full year with a full Council.

At our first meeting of the year, we were looking forward to hearing about the progress in construction plans for building three small ADA-accessible offices and three equipment storage facilities at three drive-in locations on the AWW: Chamberlain Bridge, Churchill Depot and Michaud Farm. Of these six proposed structures, only the ADA-compliant office at Churchill would be visible from the water. All of these structures were to be built with monies from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Although these projects were supported by the AWWAC, a number of AWW guides vehemently opposed them. In light of other emerging state park priorities for ARPA funding, a deadline to spend ARPA funds, and the concerns raised, BPL directed funding to other projects. Fortunately, some of the funding was used to hire an engineering firm to develop a "Scope of Work" to stabilize the historic Boarding House and Barn at Churchill Depot. Plans are being developed to build a single, large equipment storage facility that will be completely outside the "one-mile zone" of the AWW. Since time has expired for using ARPA funds, other funding will need to be sought.

We heard an excellent, illustrated report of the Campsite Inventory for all of the AWW by Noah Pollock, Stewardship Director for the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT). Noah was assisted in conducting this inventory by Supt. Deroche and several AWW Rangers. This inventory has created a blueprint for future work on sites to help enhance the user's wilderness experience.

The NFCT also provided a work crew for a couple of months to stabilize the shoreline and improve the tenting sites at beautiful Skolfield Point on Churchill Lake. Several more crews will be coming in 2025 to work on a number of different campsites.

Enoch Glidden of Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation has also completed an AWW Accessibility Assessment. The goal is for a few campsites along the water to be more accessible for paddlers with mobility challenges. New signage and an accessible privy will be installed.

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation (AWWF) continues coordinating its many activities with the BPL and AWW staff. Central to their work this past year was the presentation of Janet McMahon's Natural Resource Inventory of the AWW, along with three wonderful publications. Paul Johnson (retired fishery biologist, MDIFW) provided the information on coldwater aquatic habitat and fish species in the AWW for this report. He also kept us updated on the continued data collection on the river and several tributaries. A complete report for 2024 data will be provided in 2025.

The Foundation continues to coordinate guided river trips for a variety of groups to include middle school and high school students to Wabanaki Leaders to New Americans. They continue to work with schools in the St. John Valley to encourage students to learn about the Allagash River and its history.

The AWW Ranger Staff continues to receive both intensive and extensive training on a weekly basis. Much of this training is focused on safety and how to respond to accidents. Two of the Rangers have completed the three component (240 hrs.) of the Bureau of Parks and Lands Ranger Academy.

And finally, we would be remiss if we didn't give a big Thank You to Kevin J. Brown, Chief Ranger who retired this past fall after 25 years of service on the AWW. We wish him the very best in retirement.

We also applaud the promotion of Trevor O'Leary as the new Chief Ranger and look forward to working with him in the future.

Submitted per Maine Statutes

Peter M. Bourque, Chair AWW Advisory Council



Fallfish at Round Pond Photo by Adam Raven



Native Brook Trout caught near Five Finger Brook campsite Photo by Adam Raven

Fiscal Year 2023 Allagash Wilderness Waterway Budget

Allotment Source	FY-24 Q1	FY-24 Q2	FY-24 Q3	FY-24 Q4	Total
General Fund (All Other)	\$88,000	\$20,000	\$12,593	\$13,401	\$133,994
AWW Account (Capital)	\$120,000	\$90,000	\$20,000	\$60,000	\$300,000
Total	\$208,000	\$110,000	\$42,593	\$73,401	\$433,994

Revenue From Fees

BPL collects fees for the following activities in the Waterway: camping, portage services, sporting camp leases, and tolls to cross Churchill Dam. Fiscal year reporting is July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Revenue from fees for FY24 totaled \$159,712.27.

Maine law requires that a portion of revenues received from camping fees be set aside in a non-lapsing account to be used for capital improvements in the AWW. The calculated revenue to this account for FY24 was \$103,429.75.

Fiscal Year	Revenues from Fees
2019	\$180,914.32
2020	\$140,739.12
2021	\$106,968.15
2022	\$190,773.27
2023	\$ 169,468.06
2024	\$ 159,712.27

Fiscal Year	Revenue to AWW Account
2019	\$121,804.61
2020	\$91,315.01
2021	\$58,234.45
2022	\$133,096.60
2023	\$115,484.85
2024	\$103,429.75



Supper's almost ready at Sam's Campsite on Umsaskis Lake
Photo by Adam Raven

AWW Endowment Fund: \$28,383.43 is in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway endowment fund as of December 31, 2024. This is an interest-bearing trust account at the Department of Treasury.

AWW Donations Account: \$9,490.21 was in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway donations account as of June 30, 2024.



Night sky over Round Pond
Photo by Adam Raven

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Fiscal Year 24 Expenditure Report (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)

Expenses - FY24	AWW Account (dedicated revenue)	General Fund (general operations)	Loon Account (dedicated revenue)	Enterprise (W) Account (dedicated revenue)	Donations Account (dedicated revenue)	ARPA Expenses (federal funds)	TOTAL
Salary and Benefits		685,521.78					685,521.78
Professional Services		578.80					578.80
Water tests		983.32					983.32
Gas (for equipment)		12,317.82					12,317.82
Lodging, Meals, Mileage		855.89					855.89
Electric							0.00
Other utilities							0.00
Misc. Rents							0.00
Rent - Buildings and Office		2,058.00	686.00				2,744.00
Rental of State Vehicle		35,000.00					35,000.00
State Vehicle Operations							0.00
Rental of Private Equipment							0.00
Repair - Equipment		7,137.74					7,137.74
Repair - Boats		1,475.53					1,475.53
Repair - Roads and Grounds		5,074.52					5,074.52
Repair - Buildings		3,432.33				2,533.30	5,965.63
Repair - Misc.		691.98					691.98
Trash Removal							0.00
Snow plowing							0.00
General Operations		1,483.36			26.17	2,118.32	3,627.85
Non-Employee Settlement							0.00
Occupational Health/Rehab							0.00
Employee Training		3,973.90					3,973.90
Food		2,051.58					2,051.58
L.P. Gas		7,419.30					7,419.30
Natural Gas							0.00
Fuel Oil							0.00
Firewood							0.00
Misc. Supplies (Industrial, etc.)		13,203.04			161.63		13,364.67
Technology (Radios, etc.)		14,059.13	863.12		161.94		15,084.19
Clothing		6,378.17					6,378.17
Printing and Publishing		5,897.38					5,897.38
Equipment		45,567.06			340.20		45,907.26
Grants to Public/Private Organizations							0.00
Administrative Charges*			299.18	98.82	397.59		795.59
Material Purchases for Resale		2,045.10					2,045.10
CAP Land							0.00
CAP Equipment						6,160.00	6,160.00
CAP Buildings & Improvements						2,412.80	2,412.80
CAP Structures & Improvements						65,478.68	65,478.68
CAP Infrastructures & Improvements	3,650.00					4,396.05	8,046.05
TOTAL EXPENSES**	3,650.00	857,205.73	1,848.30	98.82	1,087.53	83,099.15	946,989.53

*Includes a total of STA-CAP and DI-CAP on all expenditures and late fees. CASH BALANCE IN AWW ACCT AS OF 7/01/24 was \$407,867.50

Recreation & Visitor Use

Total public use for the Waterway was up 4% in calendar year 2024. Total camping nights were up 8%, while day use was up 2.5%. Sporting camp use was down 11% in the 2024 season, partly due to the lack of ice on Chamberlain Lake in early 2024.

The Tramway Historic District was the Waterway’s most visited day-use destination for 2024. A trail counter (DataNet) was used for the fourth summer season to help give more accurate data on the use of the Locomotive Trail. The counter was placed near the trail parking area from May 2, 2024, to October 31, 2024. The total day use for that period was 2,170 visitors. This number represents a 20% decrease from the previous summer and a reduction of 46% over the past two years during the same time. Data collected showed that most visitors came to the Trail around midday, and Saturday and Sunday were the most popular days. Identifying future trends in this District is important because of the potential for overcrowding. Therefore, the trail counter will be placed in the same location during the same period and will have the same calibrations in the coming seasons.

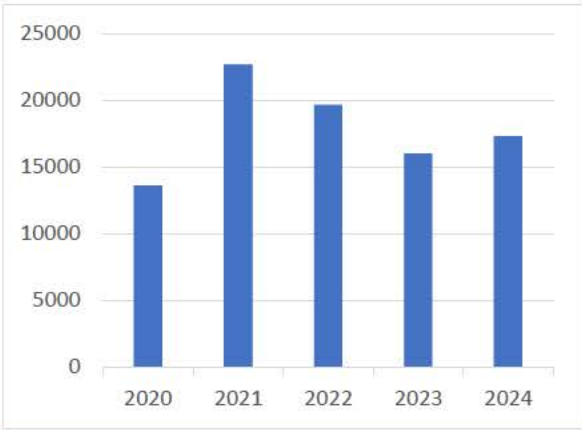


During the winter, the trail counter was used from January 1, 2024, to March 31, 2024, and placed on the snowmobile trail between Chamberlain and Eagle Lake. Data collected showed that during that period, 2,467 people visited the locomotives; this is a decrease of 4.5% from the last winter season. Saturday and Sunday remain the busiest days, respectively. The busiest Saturday during that period showed 138 visitors. The trail counter will continue to be placed in the same location along the snowmobile trail in the coming years to help track visitor use trends. All AWW lakes were free of ice by April 28, 2024. This date represents an earlier-than-average ice-out for the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Lakes for the second consecutive year. Ice did not form on the headwater lakes until mid-January, which was the latest in recent memory based on reports from long-term anglers and the proprietors of Nugent’s Sporting Camps. Anglers reported good spring fishing through mid-June.

The Allagash River had slightly higher-than-normal water levels for most of the 2024 season, making for excellent summer and fall canoeing. The Allagash River flow in the Town of Allagash never fell below 450 cubic feet per second (cfs) until the end of September. The years of 2022 and 2023 were also considered high-water seasons, with the Allagash River never getting below 600 cfs. For comparison, during a typical year, water levels in late summer are often between 300 & 400 cfs, and sometimes even lower, making the journey for some paddlers much more challenging as they seek the deeper channels to avoid hitting rocks and dragging their canoes.

Year	Parties	Persons	Camping Nights	Sporting Camp Days	Day Use	Total Visitor Days
2020	950	3,163	13,613	3,314	14,151	31,078
2021	1,195	4,969	22,711	3,295	13,137	39,143
2022	1,030	4,420	19,684	3,546	11,144	34,374
2023	1,098	4,065	16,024	3,364	10,669	30,057
2024	948	4,083	17,364	2,927	10,945	31,306

Five-Year Camping Use Comparison



Oversize Group Permits

Group camping on the AWW is limited to twelve people. In the past, several organizations were allowed an exemption to this limit. These groups have been grandfathered and are given a permit to allow more than twelve people. In 2024, only two exempt organizations requested to use an oversized group permit. Seven oversized group permits were issued to the two exempt organizations.

Year	Exempt Organizations	Permits Issued
2021	1	2
2022	2	8
2023	2	8
2024	2	7

Education, Interpretation & Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation

AWW staff continue to support and promote the historical preservation aspects of the Waterway by collecting, interpreting, and displaying artifacts found by rangers and park visitors. The artifacts found are displayed at the Churchill Depot History Center. The History Center is a popular stop for all Waterway users and many others who visit the North Maine Woods. Our Churchill Depot rangers do a tremendous job providing interpretive tours at the History Center. The tours occur daily during our peak season and are much appreciated by everyone who visits. A self-guided interpretive resource was developed in 2022 and remains posted in the History Center. AWW rangers Cameron McIntosh and Liam Rodgers led several personalized tours to various youth groups.

Outreach and Education

AWW Superintendent Mark Deroche visited the Camp Kieve & Wavus senior management team this past fall to continue discussing camper experiences, Waterway expectations, and safety topics. AWW Rangers Keith Turdo and Cameron McIntosh participated in the two-day Camp Kieve & Wavus trip leader training in June 2024. The AWW ranger-led safety training highlighted a variety of "what-if" scenarios and provided Q&A opportunities to over one hundred youth trip leaders. AWW rangers will continue to attend the Kieve/Wavus training every spring. The AWW team will attempt to schedule similar meetings with the Chewonki Foundation, Maine High Adventure, and other similar organizations that lead youth trips on the Waterway every season. These meetings aim to provide the senior management teams and trip leaders an opportunity to ask Waterway staff questions about rules and regulations, safety issues, emergency operating procedures, and various other topics to help prepare their campers for quality adventures on the AWW.



Ranger McIntosh providing interpretive training at the AWW History Center

Chief Ranger Kevin Brown provides water and ice conditions and other pertinent seasonal and site-specific updates to interested people who have signed up for the AWW "Conditions and Alerts" page linked to BPL's website. These "Conditions and Alerts" currently go out to 5,197 subscribers.

Initially launched in May 2014, the AWW video series continues to be a valuable tool for educating potential visitors about various aspects of the Waterway.

AWW Ranger Trevor 'O'Leary and Cameron McIntosh assisted and made brief presentations to several groups of youth and First Light representatives sponsored by the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation (AWWF) as part of their Youth on the Allagash.

The AWW staff spend time every day informing and educating many Waterway visitors on a variety of topics, such as essential safety tips, canoe/camping skills, rules and regulations, the history and culture of the AWW, recreational and sightseeing opportunities, and information about AWW flora and fauna.



A captivating sunrise from Churchill Dam

2023 AWW Crew



2024 ranger team on the Churchill Dam fishway: Right to left (back row): Kevin Brown, Cameron McIntosh, Dalton Kelly, Trevor O'Leary, Jay Young, Adam Raven, Liam Rodgers, Keith Turdo, (front row) Madi Martin, Justin Buck, Mark Deroche, Bob Johnston, Ed Palys



AWW Rangers participating in the swift water rescue certification course.

Staff Training

The remote and rugged nature of the AWW requires that Allagash Rangers be well-trained and prepared for various incidents. They are often the first responders to emergencies in this vast wilderness, and visitors depend on them to provide the help they need. The AWW team expanded the early spring training from two days to a five-day in-house training focused on emergency operation procedures, understanding rules & regulations, enforcement & compliance techniques, effective customer service, radio & GPS use, equipment maintenance & repair, interpretive methods, and team building. The ranger team reviews many possible scenarios, and all staff are encouraged to practice these procedures regularly throughout the season. Below are some of the other required and specialized training Allagash Rangers completed during the 2024 season:

- Two-day Bureau of Labor Standards annual training – All staff
- Two-week Interpretive Ranger Academy – Ed Palys
- Two-day Chainsaw Safety – Justin Buck, Liam Rodgers and Adam Raven
- (NEW) Two-day Swiftwater Rescue Certification– All staff
- U.S. Power Squadron Boating Training – Justin Buck, Liam Rodgers and Adam Raven
- Cyber Security Training – Mark Deroche, Kevin Brown, Jay Young and Trevor O'Leary
- National State Park Leadership School – Mark Deroche
- One-day Maine Forest Service Short Haul Rescue – All Staff
- Two-day Riparian Ecosystem Training (River in Space & Time) – All Staff

Forest Harvest Notifications

In 2024, 25 active Forest Harvest Notifications (FONS) were within the Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW) mile zone. One of the FONS was within the mapped visual area of the AWW. The visual zone harvest applications were granted using the original conditions to minimize the visual impact of the harvest area, associated skid trails, harvest roads, and log landings. The site was inspected and approved before any harvest activity. AWW Superintendent Mark Deroche and Public Lands Regional Manager Jacob Guimond inspected the harvest site in December 2023. Seven FONS were received for road construction within the AWW mile zone. All roads were in areas not visible from the watercourse. All roads were associated with timber harvests adjacent to the AWW. After harvest activities have ended, most roads are blocked at or beyond the mile zone. Additional guidance regarding timber management in the one-mile zone is within the AWW rules.

There were three applications for road construction within the ¼ mile new construction zone. These applications were approved with the condition that the roads be blocked at or beyond the mile zone after harvest. These roads will not be visible from the watercourse or provide access to sensitive areas of the Waterway. There were two applications for herbicide use within the AWW mile zone. The approved applications were for roadside brush control and forest management.

Projects Accomplished by Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors in 2024

Chamberlain Lake District:

- Installed a new table and tarp poles at Donnelly Point and McCarren Campsites.
- Built 25 new tables for various AWW districts.
- Implemented leakage mitigation project at Telos Dam.
- Replaced and stained multiple campsite signposts.

Eagle Lake District:

- Replaced the old woodstove and repaired the Eagle Lake ranger station chimney.
- Replaced tables and repaired table seats/tops at various campsites on Churchill and Eagle Lake campsites.
- Repaired the outhouses at Scofield Cove and Point campsites.
- Rebuilt the fireplaces at several campsites.
- Made some minor repairs to the Eagle Lake Ranger Station.
- Assisted the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT) crew on shoreline restoration work at Scofield Point and Cove campsites.

Churchill Dam District:

- Finished staining the pole barn.
- Replaced tables, tarp poles, and fire grates at Churchill Dam, Jaws, and High Bank campsites. Built a barge for shoreline and campsite restoration projects on Churchill Lake.
- Made minor repairs to walkways and the interior of the history center.
- Removed debris and cleaned the entire shop yard.
- Installed a new wood stove at HQ.
- Reorganized firewood and filled woodsheds at Churchill Dam.
- Made repairs to outboard motors. Cleaned debris, built a new table, installed a new woodstove, cleared blowdowns, rebuilt spring box, and replaced the water drainage system at Camp Pleasant.
- Assisted the NFCT crew with training on equipment, loading material, and helping with Jaws campsite updates.

Umsaskis District:

- Replaced several tables and tarp poles.
- Stained and straightened campsite signs.
- Cleared debris and mowed Ferry Landing and Cedar Spring campsites.
- Made repairs to the deck at Camp Drake.
- Painted the interior of Camp Drake.

Round Pond District

- Replaced tables at six campsites.
- Repaired tables at five campsites.
- Replaced or repaired tarp poles at seven campsites.
- Replaced bog bridging at Turk Island and Five Fingers campsites.
- Stained and straightened campsite signs throughout the district.
- Rebuilt and repaired all fire pits at campsites.
- Cleaned out the Round Pond spring.
- Kept the Fire Tower Trail clear all season.

Michaud Farm District:

- Installed new tables and tarp poles at Big Brook North, McKeen, Taylor Landing, Ramsey Ledges, Cunliffe Depot, and Dead Water South campsites.
- Built new steps at Allagash Falls outhouses.
- Finished building the second cell at the new Twin Brook campsite.

Allagash Lake District:

- Installed new tables and tarp poles at various campsites.
- Trail maintenance on the Carry Trail and Allagash Mountain Trail.
- Repaired fire pits.

Other Allagash Wilderness Waterway Projects:

- Five-person NFCT crew provided shoreline restoration, rebuilt stone steps, built tent pads, developed buffer zones between campsite cells, and improved Jaws campsite to accommodate visitors with mobility challenges in the Churchill Lake District over 8 weeks.
- Cleared Tramway and Train Trails.
- Restocked remote ranger stations with propane, table stock, and fuel.
- Stockpiled yards of gravel, super humus, loam, and sand at Churchill Dam for campsite projects.
- Cleared Tramway exhibits.
- Cleared the following trails:
 - Churchill Dam to Big Eddy
 - Round Pond Mountain Trail
 - Allagash Mountain Trail
 - Lookout Trail (Eagle Lake)
 - Indian Stream Trail
 - Tramway Portage Trail
 - 19-designated snowmobile trails



New stone steps at Scofield Point Campsite.

Dam Reports

Churchill Dam – Rebuilt in 1997, the dam is a 24 ft. high by 460 ft. long earthen and concrete structure. It stores water to provide recreational flows in the Allagash River. It is also managed to provide optimal fisheries habitat for the native fishes of the Waterway. The dam has significant cracks in the right upstream retaining wall and a discernable deflection in that same wall. AWW staff placed elevation monitoring pins in the retaining wall to monitor movement in 2012. There has been no movement in the retaining wall since the monitoring pins were placed. The deep gate supporting structure suffered significant damage from a passing logging truck or similar equipment in 2018. The dam was hit again in the fall of 2020, damaging the galvanized railing on the downstream side of the deep gate that had been previously marred. No one reported hitting the dam. An engineer was hired to draft plans to repair that damage in 2020. Those repair plans are projected to be put out to bid sometime in 2026. A 2022 inspection of the dam's fishway system revealed a need to replace six attached concrete baffles that have deteriorated over time. The baffles remain functional for now but are also projected to go out to bid for replacement in 2026. John Skelly inspected Churchill Dam from the Maine Emergency Management Agency on September 4, 2020. AWW staff should continue to adhere to the following inspection recommendations:

1. Continue to monitor and record any cracking and bowing in the fishway wall abutting the road. In the event of new cracking, please let MEMA know before repairing the damage.
2. All vegetation on the dam and 10-20 feet beyond the footprint should be removed and/or managed to prevent any embankment seepage.
3. Any operation and maintenance procedures for the dam, including but not limited to vegetation removal, gate mechanism operation, and exercising, should be drafted and incorporated into everyday operations.
4. Review operations to prevent potential overtopping of the dam, and when practicable, consider dewatering upstream and downstream faces of the dam to inspect for any signs of seepage and degradation.

Lock Dam – This historic dam changed the course of water that initially flowed down the Allagash and into the St. John River. The water now flows south down the East Branch of the Penobscot. The structure is 179 years old and began as an earthen dam that remains roughly 15 ft. high and 280 ft. long. The timber facing on the dam was replaced with riprap during the winter of 2008–2009. The three-foot diameter spillway gate and outlet pipe installed in 1961 were replaced with a new outlet structure in 2018. The new outlet structure was constructed using precast concrete sections. Exposed sections were faced with wood timbers. The dam has a timber crib spillway with a three-foot drop to protect against the upstream migration of invasive fish species. John Skelly inspected this dam from the Maine Emergency Management Agency on September 4, 2020. AWW staff adhere to the recommendations that vegetation on the dam and 10-20 feet beyond the footprint should be removed and/or managed to prevent further embankment seepage.

Telos Dam – This is a remnant of the timber crib dams that were once common in Maine's Northwoods. During the log driving days, these dams moved logs and pulpwood to downstream mills. The structure is a 20' high by 240' long rock-filled timber crib dam. The entire structure above the sill was replaced in 1982 using the original plans. There is some documented movement of the rock-filled piers and misalignment of the dam's upstream and downstream surfaces. There is significant leakage under the north end of the dam. The wooden timbers are weathered and show some signs of rotting. The Bureau has been monitoring pier movement since 2012. In the past, significant movements have been documented in the piers on the north end of the dam (piers #4 and #5). AWW staff have continued to monitor pier movement every year since, with no visible movement observed since 2012. The four primary gates were replaced, lifting mechanisms were rebuilt over five years, and the last gate was replaced in 2012. In 2017, Waterway staff applied a layer of rock to the upstream face and below the dam's spillways. This effort was a stop-gap repair to reduce leakage under the dam. BPL contracted Baker Design Consultants in 2015 for condition assessment and repair recommendations for Telos Dam. The report recommended reconstructing the upstream face and channel aprons to correct structural deterioration leaks or rebuild the dam altogether. The Bureau does not presently have funds to cover the substantial estimates necessary for either effort. Waterway management is committed to seeking the funds required to repair or replace Telos Dam in the future. John Skelly inspected Telos Dam from the Maine Emergency Management Agency on September 4, 2020. AWW staff continue to adhere, as much as possible, to the following inspection recommendations:

1. Continue to monitor and record any settlement, leakage, and boils in the gate channels and piers.
2. All vegetation on the dam and 10-20 feet beyond the footprint should be removed and/or managed to prevent any embankment seepage.
3. Consider dewatering upstream and downstream faces of the dam to inspect for signs of seepage and degradation.
4. Consider replacing damaged timbers and following guidance on repairs outlined in the 2016 independent consultant report.

AWW management was supported by Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife (DIFW) fishery biologists from the Greenville region in conducting the second Telos Dam flow studies of Webster Stream since 2022. This year's two-part study was performed to provide valuable data related to a 2024 leakage mitigation exercise performed by AWW rangers and volunteers. The 2024 flow study was done before and after 100 burlap bags of organic matter were placed on the upstream side of Telos Dam at the two easternmost gates. The flow study before mitigation efforts revealed that the leakage at Telos Dam had increased by approximately 32 cubic feet per second (cfs) since 2022. Following the stop-gap measures, the flow study indicated the exercise was effective, slowing leakage by approximately 37 cfs. The flow studies show that mitigation efforts are effective, slowing the leakage on the two easternmost gates. The AWW and DIFW teams plan to continue annual mitigation efforts and flow studies to preserve the dam's integrity until funds are secured for a rebuild or complete replacement. Efforts are also being made to secure funding for updated engineering and cost analysis, which was last completed in 2015.

Volunteers

During 2024, 47 individuals donated 2,240 hours to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. Volunteers helped Waterway staff accomplish the following tasks during 2024:

- Shoreline and campsite restoration at Churchill Dam and Churchill Lake.
- Camp Drake restoration.
- Replaced, repaired, and leveled outhouses.
- Performed campsite maintenance.
- Cleared existing trails.
- Built new tables and tarp poles.
- Tramway restoration maintenance.

The estimated value of volunteer hours is \$35,840.00.

Special Activity Permits Issued

- One permit was issued for the Can-Am Sled Dog Race to cross the Waterway at Round Pond.
- One permit was issued with the Biodiversity Institute for Bald Eagle Research.
- One permit was issued for limited use of snowmobile on the north shore of Allagash Lake for blazing the restricted zone boundary.



Ranger McIntosh with the NFCT crew with their Scott canoe barge.

Incidents

Many of the incidents listed below were handled by AWW staff with assistance from the Maine Warden Service and/or the Maine Forest Service. AWW rangers have benefitted from the ongoing good relationship established with both of these agencies. The rapid response of MWS and MFS to requests for assistance is sincerely appreciated by AWW staff and Waterway visitors.

2024 Incidents

- Rescue, extraction, and first aid assistance for a hypothermic capsized canoeist on Allagash Lake.
- Rescue, extrication, and first aid assistance for a camper with an axe wound on Allagash Lake.
- Recovery of several capsized canoes in Chase Rapids.
- Extrication and first aid assistance of a camper with an axe wound on Churchill Lake.
- Recovery of a pinned canoe at Chase Rapids and assistance reconnecting the group.
- Recovery of pinned canoe and gear in Chase Rapids.
- Providing support for the extraction/short haul of a snowmobiler who broke through the ice on Churchill Lake. Also assisted in removing the snowmobile from Churchill Lake.
- Rejoining stranded camp leaders with their group on Chamberlain Lake.
- Night transport of a stranded camping party on Chamberlain Lake.
- Recovery of an inReach device.
- Extraction and first aid assistance for a camper with head trauma on Round Pond.
- Rescue of a dog and extraction of a camping group from Allagash Falls.
- Search and rescue of a lost fisherman in the Michaud Farm District.
- Extraction and first aid assistance for a camper experiencing illness at Michaud Farm.
- Assistance to trip leaders separated from their group at Michaud Farm.



AWW and MFS rangers during short-haul extraction training.

Superintendent's Report

The AWW staff have great respect for our thoughtfully crafted mission statement:

Preserve, protect, and develop the maximum wilderness character of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway by ensuring its ecological integrity and optimum public use through careful management as a wilderness area in the historic and modern context of a working forest.

We begin each season by reading and reflecting on how these dynamic words were intended to guide our behavior and decision-making when interacting with our visitors, woods, and waters. We take great pride in being caretakers of one of our nation's most unique natural resources, fully understanding the responsibility attached to that role and adhering to our mission. With that focus, 2024 was another fruitful year of activity, progress, and collaboration with our dedicated partners and volunteers on many meaningful projects. We concentrated on enriching the Waterway by expanding safety/operations training, continuing necessary ecosystem research, developing interpretive tools and programs, making campsite improvements and vital wilderness shoreline enhancements, and keeping our visitors safe, helping them have a memorable adventure. The highlights and achievements identified in this report result from the unwavering passion and commitment of our staff and many invested colleagues.

Since our rangers are often the first responders for various challenging situations with the public in the heart of the North Maine Woods, we have expanded our annual emergency operations training courses. Moving forward, our staff will receive annual training for swift water rescue certification, wilderness first aid certification, and short-haul victim extraction. We also extended our in-house training, adding three days for staff to have more time to concentrate on understanding rules and regulations, proper enforcement/compliance techniques, best practice customer service, radio/inReach/GPS use, equipment repair/maintenance, emergency operations field scenarios, working with our agency partners, interpretive opportunities, understanding the unique AWW riparian ecosystem and watching for and reporting environmental threats, e.g., siltation and invasive species. Ultimately, we want our rangers to have the best chance of being successful while serving the public and our natural resources, especially during emergencies. Our rangers also participated in several specialized training courses. Ranger Ed Palys spent two weeks at the BPL Maine State Parks' Interpretation Academy. The entire Waterway team participated in the first-ever two-day Swift Water Rescue Certification Course. We also continued our two-day staff camping training and were joined by ecologist Janet McMahon, who provided a comprehensive report on her Natural Resources Inventory Project.

In 2024, AWW personnel provided valuable assistance in planning and logistics for the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation's Coldwater Fisheries Habitat Water Temperature Monitoring Project. During the third year of this project, remote temperature data loggers recorded water temperatures in six tributaries to the Waterway's headwater lakes and eight tributaries to the Allagash River. Additional water temperature information was obtained from the USGS gaging station located in the lower reaches of the Allagash River. Results from 2022 through 2024 have been summarized, and tributaries have been prioritized according to their potential to maintain conditions

that will allow brook trout in the AWW to adapt to future temperature increases. This monitoring will continue through the summer of 2026, when the five-year results will provide a more accurate representation of the baseline thermal conditions currently provided by these tributaries, information not available before the AWWF undertook this project. Also, an August reconnaissance trip to areas near the confluence of nine tributaries to the Allagash River north of Long Lake was investigated for their potential to provide cool water refuges for the river's brook trout. In collaboration with AWWF, later in the summer, Fishery Division personnel from IF&W's Ashland and Greenville offices obtained temperature and oxygen profiles from the headwater lakes. This updates information that has been collected since 1958 on the ability of these lakes to support their native cold-water fish species.

We hosted the September AWW Advisory Council meeting at the Churchill Dam headquarters. We had a productive, well-attended meeting providing a tour of Churchill Lake campsites to show the NFCT's shoreline restoration and campsite improvement projects. Additionally, the AWW team hosted another appreciation luncheon in August for DIFW, MFS, and the North Maine Woods (NMW) staff to celebrate the legacy of Chief Ranger Kevin Brown, who retired in September after 25 years of dedicated service to the AWW.



Chief Ranger Kevin Brown

In 2023, the AWW partnered with the Northern Forest Canoe Trail organization (NFCT) to complete a comprehensive campsite assessment/inventory. We were thrilled to continue our partnership with NFCT in 2024 by hosting a five-person crew from mid-June until mid-August on Churchill Lake, funded in part by the Recreation Trails Program (RTP). Noah Pollock, NFCT Stewardship Director, supervised the crew who compiled the long-term planning document in 2023. Noah provided the AWW Council with an overview of the planning document in March, summarizing our goals for shoreline restoration and campsite enhancement work to be accomplished in 2024 and beyond. During the summer season, the crew also enlisted the support of 27 volunteers who helped with many positive and unique improvements to the Churchill Lake District campsites. Projects completed include the removal of hundreds of feet of geotextile fabric that had become visible along the shoreline at Scofield Cove and Scofield Point; shoreline erosion control and wilderness shoreline augmentations; many new level tent pads; the planting of native species to provide a natural buffer for screening

Superintendent's Report

step access points, and privy trail modifications designed to improve accessibility for visitors with mobility challenges. All the work completed was consistent with AWW Management Plan recommendations. The goal is to continue these efforts in the Chamberlain Lake District in 2025.

Nate Allard of Somerville, Maine, was selected as 2024's AWW Visiting Artist. Renowned for his works in egg tempera and watercolor, Nate blended unique and traditional techniques and his contemporary vision to capture the essence of the AWW. He makes paintbrushes using turkey feather quills for handles and animal fur that he collects or gets from hunters and trappers. Nathan also makes most of the pigments for his egg tempera paintings by crushing rocks, minerals, and other inorganic materials in a mortar and pestle. He refines the material further by grinding it on a glass plate with a muller. Nate spent two weeks at Lock Dam on Chamberlain Lake and had the opportunity to explore and be inspired by the other headwater lakes and surrounding landscapes. Nate was especially stirred by the remnants of the old trestle on the north end of Chamberlain Lake, so much so that he returned in the fall for two more weeks to collect sketches. We look forward to seeing Nate's finished works later next year. Also, Michael Vermette and Peter Yesis, two previous AWW visiting artists, each donated notable representative works of their waterway experience. Both pieces beautify the halls of DACF's Harlow Building in Augusta and are greatly appreciated by visitors and staff.

Lastly, I want to thank our AWW rangers for representing everything our mission stands for by taking good care of our guests and amazing natural resources. We place great value on ensuring the well-being and proper conduct of everyone who recreates along our vast water trail. Our rangers responded professionally and effectively to various visitor challenges this past year, including guests who were lost, seriously injured, hypothermic, required evacuation, experienced illness, had pinned canoes, lost gear & flat tires, and needed encouragement and guidance. I received many encouraging comments and letters celebrating our team's attitude, efforts, and expertise as they went above and beyond, ensuring our guests had an enjoyable wilderness adventure. I also want to thank our supportive partners and friends from DIFW, MFS, NMW, BPL, AWWF, AWW Council, volunteers, and our neighboring landowners.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Deroche

Superintendent

Allagash Wilderness Waterway



Members of the NFCT crew showing their shoreline restoration work at Scofield Cove campsite



AWW Ranger, Ed Palys at Interpretation Ranger Academy



AWW Rangers, IF&W Game Wardens and MFS Rangers training together at Churchill Dam.

To plan a trip or learn about the Allagash Wilderness Waterway:

Visit www.Maine.gov/Allagash for the following:



See 9-part Allagash video
Also on YouTube



See campsites on Google Earth



Receive Conditions and Alerts

Request an Information Package:

Bureau of Parks and Lands
Northern Region Parks Office
106 Hogan Road, Suite 7
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 941-4014



- North Maine Woods, Inc.

P.O. Box 421
Ashland, ME 04732
(207) 435-6213
www.northmainewoods.com

- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

State House Station 41
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 287-2871
www.maine.gov/ifw/

- Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

Bureau of Parks and Lands
Northern Region Parks Office
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www.parksandlands.com



2024 AWW visiting artist, Nathan Allard, sketching assorted conifers in the woods near Lock Dam.



Additional Credits:

- A hearty thank you to all the staff in Bangor and Augusta who help with many administrative projects and provide valuable information to the public regarding the AWW.
- **AWW Logo Credit:** Jocelyn Hubbell at Parks & Lands adapted the AWW logo to reflect its status as a National Wild and Scenic River.



2023 AWW visiting artist, Peter Yesis (left), presenting his donated work "Paddling Through the Allagash" to BPL Director Andy Cutko (right).

THE Allagash WILDERNESS WATERWAY

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Administration 2024

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Amanda E. Beal, Commissioner

Bureau of Parks and Lands:

Andy Cutko, Bureau Director

Ron Hunt, Director of Operations

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