



Allagash Falls Rescue photo by Adam Raven

Allagash Wilderness Waterway 2025 Annual Report



Bureau of Parks and Lands

March 1, 2026



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Report Contents

Mission and Goals.....	2	Staff Training.....	8
AWW Advisory Council Report.....	3	Forest Operations Notifications.....	8
AWW Budget.....	4	2024 Project Accomplishments.....	9
FY24 Revenues & Special Funds.....	4	Dam Reports.....	10
FY24 Expenditure Report.....	5	Volunteers.....	11
Recreation & Visitor Use.....	6	Special Activity Permits Issued.....	11
Oversize Group Permits.....	6	Incidents.....	11
Education, Interpretation & Historic Preservation.....	7	Superintendent's Report.....	12

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 to develop and maintain a strategic plan for the Waterway and to advance 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 those 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, 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**. BPL staff are in the process of updating both the Strategic Plan and the Management Plan. Updates to the Strategic Plan will be finalized and available online in 2026. BPL staff have developed a working group to update the 2012 AWW Management Plan, and we anticipate that updates will be completed in 2027.

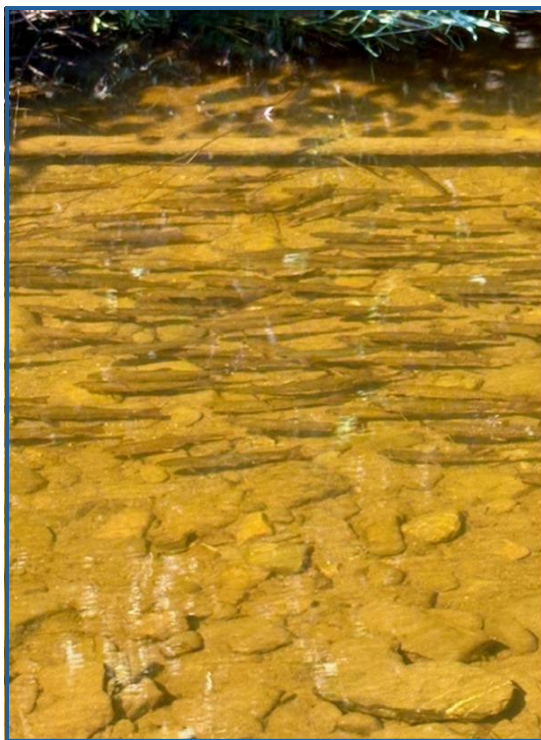
AWW Advisory Council Report

February 14, 2026

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

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway Advisory Council (AWWAC) is required by statute to meet twice annually. However, it can meet on an “as needed” basis. In 2025, three meetings were held in March, June, and September. All meetings are accessible to the public at a physical location or digitally via the TEAMS platform. Recent tradition has led to the September meeting being held at the Churchill Dam Headquarters, giving Council members an opportunity to assess some of the historic structures in the AWW.

The Council is continually impressed with the amount and quality of training provided to the Rangers. All this training is so pertinent to these jobs and the environments in which they operate daily. Some of these modules include topics such as wilderness first aid, swiftwater and deepwater rescue, the use of inReach and GPS, and chainsaw safety. In addition to these and other trainings, some Rangers have an opportunity to attend a statewide Ranger Academy. The AWWAC is highly supportive of this necessary training and thanks Mark Deroche, Superintendent, and Trevor O’Leary, Chief Ranger, for their efforts in bringing these programs to their staff.



Brook trout stacked up in the cool waters of Churchill Brook in mid-August.

Coordination with other state agencies, non-profits, and adjacent landowners is important throughout many aspects of managing the AWW. Training sessions often include the Maine Forest Service and personnel from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The AWW has a great connection with the Maine Department of Corrections. That Department operates a sawmill at its Mountain View Correctional Facility, where they have supplied thousands of board feet of picnic table stock for the campsites as well as other projects needing wood. Much of the renovation and restorative work on the campsites is done by summer crews from the Maine Conservation Corps and the Northern Forest Canoe Trail organization.

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation (AWWF) continues to fundraise and expand programs that support important scientific studies and provide education to a variety of groups to raise awareness of the uniqueness of this special place. This past year, they published *This Extraordinary Place: A Guidebook Companion to a River in Space and Time*. Their fisheries study, “Quantifying Thermal Regimes of Tributary Streams in the AWW,” continued for another year. The AWWF is hoping to acquire 1-2 more years of data. The Council sees this as an extremely important study, which will assess the value of each tributary as it relates to the future survival of Maine’s most important fish: the native brook trout. The baseline of water-temperature data in these streams will be valuable in the years ahead as waters continue to warm.

Finally, we’d like to applaud all the well-trained staff who carry out day-to-day operations on this magnificent piece of Maine, and the administrative staff who meet the needs of all who work in this wilderness setting.

Submitted per Maine Statutes,

Peter M. Bourque, Chair, AWW Advisory Council



Allagash River native brook trout
Photo by Adam Raven

Fiscal Year 2025 Allagash Wilderness Waterway Budget

Funding Source	FY25 Q1	FY25 Q2	FY25 Q3	FY25 Q4	General Operating Budget
General Fund (All Other)	\$123,063.54	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$183,063.54
AWW Account (Capital)	\$81,360.00	\$0.00	\$68,559.00	\$21,581.00	\$171,500.00
Total	\$204,423.54	\$20,000	\$88,559.00	\$41,581.00	\$354,563.54**

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, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Revenue from fees for FY25 totaled \$227,596.89.*

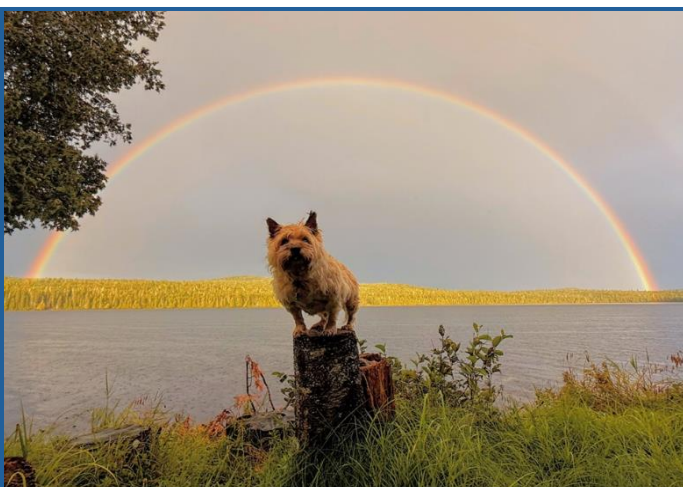
*Both numbers include \$74,762.58 in grants from state agencies.

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 FY25 was \$182,959.83.*

** The General Operating Budget shows only those General Funds and AWW Dollar Account funds used for daily operations. Other dedicated funds and separate General Fund allocations for salary and benefits are reflected in the expense report shown on page 5.

Fiscal Year	Revenues from Fees
2020	\$140,739.12
2021	\$106,968.15
2022	\$190,773.27
2023	\$169,468.06
2024	\$159,712.27
2025	\$227,596.89

Fiscal Year	Revenue to AWW Account
2020	\$91,315.01
2021	\$58,234.45
2022	\$133,096.60
2023	\$115,484.85
2024	\$103,429.75
2025	\$182,959.83



View of a rainbow over Round Pond from the ranger station
Photo by Adam Raven

AWW Endowment Fund: \$33,512.30 is in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway endowment fund as of December 31, 2025. This is an interest-bearing trust account.

AWW Donations Account: \$10,442.33 was in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway donations account as of June 30, 2025.



Night sky over Round Pond
Photo by Adam Raven

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Fiscal Year 25 Expenditure Report (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)

Expenses - FY25	AWW Account (dedicated revenue) Z221-88	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		714,262.26					714,262.26
Professional Services		2,260.47					2,260.47
Water Tests		761.68					761.68
Gas (for equipment)		4,155.44					4,155.44
Lodging, Meals, Mileage		256.00					256.00
Electric							0.00
Other Utilities							0.00
Misc. Rents		1,520.60					1,520.60
Rent - Buildings and Office		2,286.67					2,286.67
Rental of State Vehicle		62,023.94					62,023.94
State Vehicle Operations							0.00
Rental of Private Equipment		130.00					130.00
Repair - Equipment		7,271.76	302.50				7,574.26
Repair - Boats		4,763.19	1,165.60				5,928.79
Repair - Roads and Grounds		945.00					945.00
Repair - Buildings		4,055.66					4,055.66
Repair - Misc.							0.00
Trash Removal							0.00
Snow Plowing		3,450.00					3,450.00
General Operations		520.10					520.10
Non-Employee Settlement							0.00
Occupational Health/Rehab							0.00
Employee Training		8,653.85					8,653.85
Food		3,530.19					3,530.19
L.P. Gas		8,173.89					8,173.89
Natural Gas							0.00
Fuel Oil							0.00
Firewood							0.00
Misc. Supplies (Industrial, etc.)		50,242.34	111.52				50,353.86
Equipment & Technology (Radios, Boats, etc.)		18,947.08	4,562.18			45,420.00	68,929.26
Clothing		1,069.22	1,961.00				3,030.22
Printing and Publishing		558.70					558.70
Equipment							0.00
Grants to Public/Private Organizations							0.00
Administrative Charges*			276.56				276.56
Material Purchases for Resale							0.00
CAP Land							0.00
CAP Equipment						321,440.00	321,440.00
CAP Buildings & Improvements							0.00
CAP Structures & Improvements						130,948.24	130,948.24
CAP Infrastructures & Improvements	78,228.50						78,228.50
TOTAL EXPENSES*	\$78,228.50	\$899,838.04	\$8,379.36	00.00	00.00	\$497,808.24	\$1,484,254.14

*Includes a total of STA-CAP and DI-CAP on all expenditures and late fees. CASH BALANCE IN AWW ACCT AS OF 7/01/25 was \$512,598.83

Recreation & Visitor Use

Compared to 2024, public use in 2025 for the Waterway was up 10%, camping nights were up 2.5%, day use was up 21%, and sporting camp use was up 17%. Total visitation remained within historical ranges (see the chart below for comparison). The most popular points of entry for parties starting canoe trips were Chamberlain Thoroughfare Bridge (298 parties, 30%), Churchill Dam (266 parties, 27%), and Umsaskis Lake (121 parties, 12%).

The Tramway Historic District remains the Waterway's most visited day-use destination. AWW day-use visitation figures from the North Maine Woods checkpoints indicate that 1,988 (22%) AWW guests visited this district in 2025, up 9% from 2024. A trail counter (DataNet) was used for the fifth summer season on the Locomotive (Ghost Train) Trail. The counter was placed near the trail parking area from May 2, 2025, to December 1, 2025, but due to a malfunction, data was only collected from July 27 through December 1, 2025. The total number of visitors for that period was 2,428. The 2024 trail counter figures from July 27 through October 25, 2024, recorded 1,455 visitors. The total number of visitors for the same time in 2025 was 2,196. The busiest visitor use of the trail has historically occurred during the early autumn season, when canoeist visitation at the Historic Tramway District is low. This past year, 52% of all recorded trail visitation occurred between September 13 and October 25. The busiest days for trail use during the summer and autumn seasons were Saturday and Sunday. Identifying future visitation trends in this District is important as we strive to avoid overcrowding and maintain wilderness character.

During the winter, the trail counter was used from January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025, and placed at the same location as in the previous four years on the tramway portage trail, which becomes the snowmobile trail between Chamberlain and Eagle Lake. Snowmobilers use this trail while traveling the Waterway, touring and fishing, and in some cases visiting the locomotives. Data show that during that period, 2,495 snowmobiles passed by the trail counter, representing a 1% increase from the 2024 winter season. February was the busiest month for traffic on the trail with 1,504 snowmobiles, representing 60% of total visitation. Of the total winter trail visitation, 51% occurred on Friday and Saturday.

All AWW lakes were free of ice by April 26, 2025, two days earlier than in 2024. This date represents an earlier-than-average ice-out for AWW headwater lakes for the third consecutive year. Ice did not fully form on the headwater lakes until mid-January 2025, a rare occurrence. Anglers reported average to good ice fishing in winter 2024/2025, and the same observations were made during the open water fishing throughout the AWW during 2025.

The Waterway had abundant water throughout the summer, with good precipitation, maintaining excellent paddling conditions into early August. The water levels in the river sections dropped fast when the precipitation slowed, with daily cubic feet per second (CFS) averages dipping below 300 for much of the remainder of the paddling season. Tapering precipitation in the region required water releases at Churchill Dam to be conducted on an as-needed basis for paddlers from mid-September through the end of the canoe season. According to USGS flow gauges, the Allagash River reached a high of 14,400 CFS on April 28, 2025, and a low of 260 CFS on October 21, 2025.

Allagash Public Use from 2021 to 2025						
Year	Parties	Persons	Camping Nights	Sporting Camp Days	Day Use	Total Visitor Days
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
2025	996	4,016	17,801	3,416	13,221	34,438

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 2025, only two exempt organizations requested to use an oversized group permit. Six oversized group permits were issued to the two exempt organizations.

Allagash Group Camping		
Year	Exempt Organizations	Permits Issued
2022	2	8
2023	2	8
2024	2	7
2025	2	6

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 are displayed at the Churchill Depot History Center. The History Center is a popular stop for all Waterway users and for many others who are passing by during their visit to the North Maine Woods. Our Churchill Depot Rangers do a great job providing interpretive tours at the History Center. The tours occur daily during our peak season and are much appreciated by everyone. A self-guided interpretive resource was developed in 2022 and remains posted in the History Center for visitors when Rangers are unavailable. AWW Rangers Cameron McIntosh and Nate Granger led several personalized tours to various youth groups and some of the NMW's land manager teams.

Outreach and Education

AWW Superintendent Mark Deroche continues to meet with the Camp Kieve & Wavus senior management team each season to discuss camper experiences, Waterway expectations, and safety topics. AWW Rangers Alissa Lutz and Cameron McIntosh participated in the two-day Camp Kieve & Wavus trip leader training in June 2025. They also spent a day with the senior management and a trip leader team at Maine High Adventure. The AWW Ranger-led safety training sessions highlighted a variety of "what-if" scenarios and provided Q&A opportunities for over 100 youth trip leaders. The AWW team will attempt to schedule similar meetings with other organizations that lead youth trips on the Waterway every season. These meetings aim to provide the senior management teams and trip leaders with 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.

Chief Ranger Trevor O'Leary provided updates on water and ice conditions, along with other pertinent seasonal and site-specific information, to interested people who have signed up for the AWW Conditions and Alerts page linked to BPL's website. These important updates currently go out to nearly 6,000 subscribers.

For the first time, several land manager groups scheduled tours of Churchill Dam and Churchill and Eagle Lakes and were guided down Chase Rapids by Ranger McIntosh. These tours provided our neighboring land managers and foresters with an opportunity to experience the Waterway by canoe, visit our campsites, and learn why the AWW is unique. Rangers O'Leary and McIntosh also provided online Powerboat Squadron and on-the-water boat training to members of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail and the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC). Rangers also gave brief presentations to several gateway community youth groups sponsored by AWWF as part of their Youth on the Allagash Program.

Several new outreach engagements included Ranger Bob Johnston participating in an Eagle Scout presentation ceremony. He also visited Camp Androscoggin and Kent Hill School to help develop an AWW trip curriculum and an on-site mock campsite for training purposes. Ranger Lutz visited with Girl Scout groups in the Town of Allagash for a Q&A on outdoor opportunities for women.

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

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.



Ranger Bob Johnston participated in the Eagle Scout presentation for volunteer Sawyer Rose.

2025 AWW Ranger Team



2025 ranger team during swift water rescue training at Churchill Dam. From left to right: Mark Deroche, Fletcher Marquis, Bob Johnston, Adam Raven, Trevor O'Leary, Caryl O'Leary, Nate Granger, Jake Jarnagin (AWW Intern), Alissa Lutz, Cameron McIntosh, Jonathan Hinson, Ed Palys (missing: Rangers Jay Young and Thomas Craley)



AWW Rangers at Maine Forest Service Short Haul Extraction Training

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 has developed an annual early season 8-day Waterway Ranger Academy, partnering with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's (DIFW) Maine Warden Service (MWS) and DACF's Maine Forest Service (MFS), to provide Rangers with a variety of training focused on emergency operation procedures, understanding rules and regulations, enforcement and compliance techniques (effective customer service), radio and GPS use, swift water and deep water rescues, wilderness first aid, life flight and MFS short haul helicopter extraction, resource stewardship, MFS siltation response, and team building. The AWW Ranger team reviews many possible scenarios, and all staff are encouraged to practice these procedures regularly throughout the season. Rangers also participate in district training focused on proper use of equipment, equipment maintenance and repair, boating instruction, visitor education and interpretation, and campsite maintenance. Below are some of the other required and specialized training Allagash Rangers completed during the 2025 season:

- Two-day Bureau of Labor Standards annual training – All staff
- Two-week Enforcement and Compliance Ranger Academy – Alissa Lutz and Cameron McIntosh (Trevor O'Leary and Mark Deroche served as cadre for the Academy)
- Two-day Chainsaw Safety Training – Nate Granger
- U.S. Power Squadron Boating Training – Nate Granger, Jonathan Hinson and Thomas Craley
- Cyber Security Training – Mark Deroche, Jay Young, Trevor O'Leary, and Alissa Lutz

Forest Harvest Notifications

In 2025, 51 active Forest Harvest Notifications (FONs) were conducted within the AWW one-mile zone. No visual zone FON applications were registered in 2025. Five FONs were received in 2025 for new road construction or improvement to existing roads within the AWW ¼ mile zone. All the roads were associated with harvests adjacent to the AWW, and none were in areas visible from the watercourse. After harvest activities have ended, most roads are blocked at or beyond the one-mile zone to ensure sensitive areas, such as campsites, remain protected from unauthorized access.

Projects Accomplished by AWW Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors in 2025

Chamberlain Lake District:

- Made new site markers for the winter campground.
- Built all the tables and distributed throughout the AWW.
- Assisted in the flow study at Telos Dam.
- Oversaw the NFCT and MCC crews for the summer work projects.
- Jacked, leveled and secured Round Pond Camp (CTB).
- Oversaw the visiting artist while at Lock Dam camp.
- Stained CTB Ranger Station.
- Repaired several picnic tables, outhouses, tarp poles, fireplace grates and rock rings at campsites.

Eagle Lake District:

- Repaired several picnic tables, outhouses, walkways, fireplace grates, and rock rings at campsites.
- Stained and worked on the Eagle Lake Ranger Station.
- Leveled a campsite at Thoreau Campsite.

Churchill Dam District:

- Planned and conducted AWW Ranger Academy.
- Cut two very large dying trees from Scofield Campsite.
- Rebuilt the aging, six-place canoe trailer and added lights.
- Removed a dead moose that floated up against the dam.
- Repaired several picnic tables, outhouses, tarp poles, fireplace grates, and rock rings at campsites.
- Cleared the fisherman's trail on the west side of the river.
- Installed new flooring in the bedrooms at Churchill Dam Ranger Station.
- Repaired the canoe portage trail.
- Cleared trees that fell during a storm at HQ and boat launch.
- Removed an old outhouse.
- Finished staining outbuildings in maintenance shop area.
- Reorganized the barn and moved all the outboard motors to a different outbuilding.
- Cleared around Camp Pleasant Ranger Station to support proper drainage.



Allagash Moose (Photo by Adam Raven)

Umsaskis District:

- Built a new picnic table at Meadow Campsite.
- Removed two dead moose from the Long Lake Thoroughfare paddle route and the Ledges campsite.
- Repaired several picnic tables, outhouses, tarp poles, fireplace grates, and rock rings at campsites.

Round Pond District

- . Repaired several picnic tables, outhouses, tarp poles, fireplace grates, and rock rings at campsites.
- Cleared the Round Pond Fire Tower Trail several times.

Michaud Farm District:

- . Assisted IFW Fishery Biologist in the AWWF feeder stream temperature monitoring project.
- Created new custom waterproof First Aid Kits.
- Hauled 530 5-gallon pails of gravel through Twin Brook Rapids to the new East Twin Brook Campsite for the NFCT crew to finish campsites and privy trail before the start of the canoe season.
- Repaired several picnic tables, outhouses, tarp poles, fireplace grates, and rock rings at campsites.
- Cleared the access road to the Joe McKeels gravesite.



Common Merganser (Photo by Adam Raven)

Allagash Lake District:

- Built three new picnic tables at Outlet, Ledge Point, and Sandy Point campsites.
- Repaired several picnic tables, outhouses, tarp poles, fireplace grates, and rock rings at campsites.

Other Allagash Wilderness Waterway Projects:

- The four-person NFCT crew and three-person MCC crew provided shoreline restoration, rebuilt stone steps, built tent pads, developed buffer zones between campsite cells, and improved the Gravel Beach campsite to accommodate visitors with mobility challenges in the Chamberlain Lake District over 8 – 12 weeks.
- MCC cleared several miles of roadway access to Telos Dam.
- Cleared Tramway and Train Trails.
- Restocked remote ranger stations with propane, table stock, and fuel over the winter season.
- Rangers used an underwater camera to find leakage at Telos Dam.
- A Telos Dam/Webster stream flow study was conducted by DIFW Fishery Biologists and AWW Rangers.
- Stockpiled yards of gravel, super humus, loam, and sand at Chamberlain parking lot for NFCT/MCC campsite projects.
- Stored 6,000 feet of spruce planks at Chamberlain parking lot.
- Cleared Tramway exhibits at Chamberlain Lake.
- Cleared the following trails: Allagash Mountain Trail, Lookout Trail (Eagle Lake), Indian Stream Trail, Tramway Portage Trail, and 19 designated snowmobile trails.

Dam Reports

Churchill Dam – Rebuilt in 1997, the dam is a 24-foot-high by 460-foot-long earthen and concrete structure. It stores water to provide recreational flows in the Allagash River and is also managed to provide optimal habitat for the native fishes of the Waterway. The dam has significant cracks in the right upstream retaining wall and a discernible deflection in that same wall. AWW staff installed elevation-monitoring pins in the retaining wall in 2012 to monitor movement. 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 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 in 2020 to draft plans to repair that damage. Those repair plans are projected to be put out to bid sometime in 2027. 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 2027. John Skelly inspected Churchill Dam from the Maine Emergency Management Agency on September 4, 2020. AWW will 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 wooden timbers. The dam has a timber crib spillway with a three-foot drop to prevent upstream migration of invasive fish species. John Skelly, from the Maine Emergency Management Agency, inspected this dam 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 log-driving days, these dams helped move logs and pulpwood to downstream mills. The structure is a 20-foot-high by 240-foot-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 stopgap repair to reduce leakage under the dam. BPL contracted Baker Design Consultants in 2015 to conduct a condition assessment and provide repair recommendations for Telos Dam. The report recommended reconstructing the upstream face and channel aprons to address structural deterioration and leaks or rebuilding the dam altogether. 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 continues to be supported by the DIFW fishery biologists from the Greenville Region in conducting annual Telos Dam flow studies of Webster Stream. This exercise began in 2022 and provides valuable dam-leakage data, showing that leakage mitigation efforts (submerged burlap bags filled with organic material) conducted by AWW Rangers have been effective. In October 2025, AWW Rangers used underwater cameras along the dam's face to identify leakage points. A large 3'x3' hole was discovered near the bottom of one of the unused gates. AWW staff have made plans to repair the gate, which should help reduce unwanted leakage. Once the hole is repaired, another flow study will be completed in the fall of 2026 to determine the effectiveness of the repairs. The AWW and DIFW plan to continue flow studies and check elevation pins annually to monitor the dam's integrity until funds are secured for a rebuild or complete replacement.

In early 2026, DACF secured new funding available through a Maine Governmental Facilities Authority bond that will provide resources to assist in reevaluating the dam and cover architectural and engineering costs and permitting. Once complete, additional funding will be raised for any significant structural work needed. Though AWW staff will explore multiple sources, Land and Water Conservation Fund will be the primary funding source.

Volunteers

During 2025, 68 individuals donated 1,072 hours to the AWW. Volunteers helped Waterway staff accomplish the following tasks during 2025:

- Shoreline and campsite restoration at campsites on Chamberlain Lake
- Tree work at Churchill Dam
- Lock Dam cabin maintenance
- Campsite maintenance
- Trail work
- Built new tables, tarp poles, and outhouse
- Milled and delivered spruce plank table stock
- Built gas storage sheds

The estimated value of volunteer hours is \$34,388.00.

Special Activity Permits Issued

- One permit was issued for the Can-Am Sled Dog Race to cross the Waterway at Round Pond (T13R12).
- One permit was issued with DIFW and University of Maine to conduct bat research within the restricted zone.
- One permit was issued to Nugent's Sporting Camps for drone use on the leased property for marketing.



ADA-style moldering privy at Gravel Beach campsite on Chamberlain Lake, built by the NFCT crew and volunteers.

Incidents

Many of the incidents listed below were handled by AWW staff with assistance from the MWS and/or MFS. AWW Rangers have benefited tremendously from the ongoing good relationship established with both agencies. The rapid response of MWS and MFS to requests for assistance is sincerely appreciated by AWW staff and Waterway visitors.

2025 Incidents

- Assisted Allagash Headwater Lakes Snowmobile Club in assessing and transporting a seriously ill snow sledder.
- Responded to a report of suspected cardiac arrest on Telos Lake.
- Responded to a lost paddler during a high wind event at Allagash Lake.
- Responded to a report of a pinned canoe at Round Pond Rips where we assisted the youth group in getting set up in a campsite for the night. Rangers removed the canoe the next day.
- Assisted in evacuating an injured youth group trip leader and transporting to the rendezvous point. We transported the replacement leader to the awaiting campers.
- Investigated a report of a verbal altercation between two camping groups during a campsite dispute.
- Responded to a pinned canoe and temporarily lost paddler in Chase Rapids.
- Responded to a distress call with paddlers stuck at the top of the Allagash Falls. The MFS Short-Haul Helicopter and MWS assisted in the removal of the two paddlers.
- Responded to a fatality and assisted in the recovery.
- Responded to a paddler who lost his canoe and returned the canoe to the paddler.
- Assisted a lost paddler in finding his group on Umsaskis Lake.



AWW and MFS rangers during short-haul extraction training.

Superintendent's Report

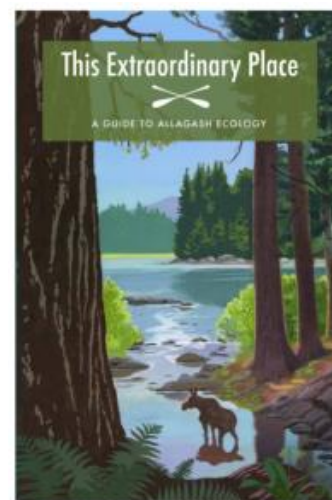
In 2025, the AWW added new staff, promoted veteran staff, benefited from both new and ongoing partnerships, held multiple specialized training sessions, and continued important fisheries research and infrastructure projects. We started out the year by welcoming 20-year veteran Michaud Farm/Chamberlain Lake Ranger, Trevor O'Leary, into his new role as AWW Chief Ranger. This position was vacated following Kevin Brown's retirement in September 2024. A real Moosetowner (Allagash native), Trevor is a seventh-generation descendant of the settlers who first arrived in the Allagash region in the 1830s, and he has a lifetime of relevant personal and professional experience recreating, guiding, logging, and raising his family along the shores of the Allagash River. For the past 20 years, Trevor has been an exemplary AWW Ranger. He has served the public, his fellow Rangers, our many partners, and our prized Waterway with great care, compassion, character, and competence. He has a Paul Bunyan-sized reputation for his woodsmanship, boating skills, mechanical and carpentry abilities, skills in operating equipment, capacity to lead, vast knowledge of all things Allagash, and his pursuit to always give his very best to everyone. Trevor recently served as leader for the Enforcement and Compliance Maine State Parks Ranger Academy and has taken on the important role of Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) chainsaw safety instructor. This past year, Trevor was instrumental in expanding our AWW Ranger training curriculum, ensuring our AWW Rangers are better prepared to assist the public in Maine's most remote wilderness. Trevor is also proficient in operating our three dams, many solar and generator systems, and maintaining our wide range of equipment and facilities throughout the AWW. A DIFW Game Warden recently told me that "Trevor embodies the spirit of the Allagash," and I think that says it all.

Though Trevor's skills are impressive, he is by no means the only highly skilled staff member. The AWW team continues to strive to train all rangers to excel at serving the public and protecting our natural resources. A highlight from this past June's Waterway Ranger Academy was our AWW team's training session with the Maine Forest Service Rangers' short-haul helicopter extraction team. Trevor had suggested during training that Allagash Falls would be a likely location for short-haul rescues. Three weeks to the day of that training, two paddlers were stranded at the head of the raging 40 falls, and Trevor, with Rangers Alissa Lutz, Adam Raven, and Fletcher Marquis, responded and radioed for a short-haul rescue. The AWW and MFS Rangers worked together, just as they had practiced, rescuing the paddlers from certain catastrophe (see the report cover photo). Because the AWW team places so much emphasis on training for emergency situations, it was very special to see that the training saved lives.

In addition to partnering with other organizations for staff training, in 2025, we partnered with the MFS helicopter and forestry enforcement rangers to conduct annual flights to observe recent harvest locations within one mile of the AWW. These flights enable the AWW to ensure land managers are adhering to harvest notification expectations, monitor siltation issues, observe road development leading to the AWW restricted zone, and identify other natural resource irregularities that could adversely impact the Allagash watershed. This partnership has enabled the AWW team to effectively conduct quality oversight of thousands of acres that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Like the MFS, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail organization and the Maine Conservation Corps assist the AWW with vital projects. This year, they helped AWW personnel complete many projects in the Chamberlain Lake District that were originally identified in the 2023 comprehensive campsite assessment/inventory. NFCT Stewardship Director Noah Pollock provided oversight and training for the 4-person NFCT crew, which coordinated with the 3-person MCC crew on multiple projects. Together, they worked on shoreline erosion control and wilderness shoreline augmentations, built many new level tent pads, planted native species to provide a natural buffer for screening between campsite cells, fashioned multiple rugged stone step access points, built an ADA-style moldering privy, and both built new trails and modified existing trails to improve accessibility for visitors with mobility challenges at Gravel Beach campsite. The two crews used four Scott canoes all summer to haul hundreds of yards of organic material, gravel, sand, and mulch. The crews were also supported by 28 volunteers who provided 644 hours of aid.

The 2025 list of partnerships also included a close collaboration with the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation (AWWF). AWWF Executive Director Dan Dinsmore described 2025 as a period of growth for the organization, marked by the strategic expansion of its flagship Youth on the Allagash (YOTA) initiative. Most notably, YOTA secured unanimous approval from three St. John Valley school districts to make a three-night Allagash expedition a universal experience for every eighth-grade student. This programmatic momentum was further bolstered by the successful publication of the second AWW pocket companion guidebook, *This Extraordinary Place: A Guide to Allagash Ecology*, which has garnered statewide visibility. This comprehensive take-along guide helps paddlers to understand the ecological importance of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. The guide's information is based on Janet McMahon's vital ecological assessment of the Waterway and is presented through engaging storylines, accompanied by firsthand accounts from Waterway visitors. A map, photos by numerous photographers, and drawings by Alison Carver bring the guide to life.



Superintendent's Report

The 2025 collaboration with the AWWF not only included new initiatives but also the continuation of prior projects. AWW personnel continued to aid in both planning and logistical support for the AWWF's Coldwater Fisheries Habitat Water Temperature Monitoring Project. During 2025, remote temperature data loggers were deployed to record water temperatures in seven tributaries to the Waterway's headwater lakes, and in 10 tributaries to the Allagash River north from Long Lake to the Michaud Farm. Tributaries were prioritized based on their vulnerability to temperature increases and their potential to maintain conditions that allow AWW brook trout populations to adapt to predicted temperature increases. A late August 2025 trip from Long Lake to Michaud Farm also provided the opportunity to assess the waters around the confluence of nine tributaries with the river for their potential to serve as cool-water refuges for brook trout. A report, "Quantifying Thermal Regimes of Tributary Streams in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway," includes results from 2025 and the three previous years of the project. It can be accessed on AWWF's website, www.awwwf.org. The project will continue through the summer of 2026. The results of this study will inform current and future management decisions to conserve the AWW's brook trout populations.

While the AWWF conducted scientific studies, Haley Johnson of Waltham, Massachusetts, ensured that the Allagash also saw its fair share of artistic endeavors. Selected from among a strong group of candidates from seven states, Haley Johnson was the 2025 Allagash Wilderness Waterway Artist in Residence. During her two-week stay in the Allagash, Haley focused on capturing and preserving fleeting moments and fragments of time. Her paintings often depicted encounters with wildlife and landscapes that she photographed, with emphasis placed on the colors and textures the camera couldn't capture. Her works also attempted to replicate the experience of wildlife encounters, with animals in motion, camouflaged against their surroundings, and the ephemeral qualities of the experience. Haley had an active two-week adventure with AWW Rangers, touring Chamberlain, Allagash, Eagle, and Churchill Lakes, climbing Allagash Mountain, and attending an AWW Ranger training. She was the first Resident Artist to visit Allagash Falls. When complete, an example of Haley's work will be dedicated at the Bureau of Parks and Lands offices in Augusta.

Another notable source of support in 2025 was the AWW Advisory Council. The AWW team continued hosting the September Council meeting at the Churchill Dam headquarters. We had a productive, well-attended meeting. Afterwards, Rangers provided opportunities for attendees to canoe and tour Eagle and Churchill Lakes. Additionally, the AWW team hosted another appreciation luncheon in August for DIFW, MFS, and the North Maine Woods staff.

As the above examples show, the AWW owes a great debt to our supportive partners and friends from DIFW, MFS, NMW, AWWF, and the AWW Council, volunteers, and our neighboring landowners. However, I want to end by thanking our AWW Rangers, without whom our organization could not function. They represent everything our mission stands for by taking good care of our guests and providing an amazing experience.

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, required evacuation, experienced illness, had pinned canoes, lost gear, had 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 to ensure our guests had an enjoyable wilderness adventure. It is the efforts of our staff, along with the work of our partners, that make it possible to preserve this truly special land both in the present day and in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Deroche
 Superintendent
 Allagash Wilderness Waterway



AWW Ranger Fletcher Marquis poling upstream from Allagash Falls.



View of Churchill Dam, taken from a helicopter while inspecting harvest operations with the Maine Forest Service.

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
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• **Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**
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www.maine.gov/ifw/

• **Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry**
Bureau of Parks and Lands
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www.maine.gov/allagash
www.parksandlands.com



2025 Resident Artist, Haley Johnson, with some of her artwork on the historic Lock Dam cabin porch.

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.



A misty morning on the shores of the Allagash River (photo by Adam Raven)

THE Allagash WILDERNESS WATERWAY

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Administration 2025

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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