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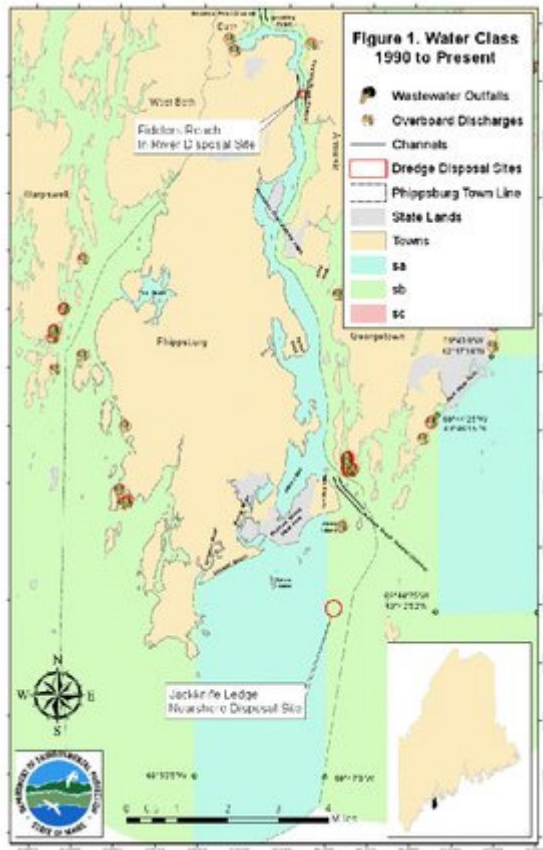
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### **Kennebec dredging: No decision**

Posted Wednesday, May 25, 2011 in [Investigation](#)



by *Gina Hamilton*

**\*UPDATE\* PHIPPSBURG** -- Whether to dredge the Kennebec River at the height of the summer season to allow passage of the USS Spruance will ultimately be decided by the Board of Environmental Protection. But the federal Environmental Protection Agency may play the truly deciding role, even if BEP allows the operation to go forward.

On the Kennebec, dredging is normally a winter event, but the Army Corps of Engineers sought a rare permit to remove 70,000 cubic yards of silt from the Doubling Point region of the river, and dumping it in river near Fiddler's Reach, and just offshore at Jackknife Ledge, across from Popham Beach.

To put that amount of silt in context, your driveway probably takes about three cubic yards of gravel to replenish it after a particularly hard winter.

Steve Hinchman, who is representing the town of Phippsburg, the Phippsburg Shellfish Conservation Commission's 40 commercial harvesters, the Phippsburg Land Trust, the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and several Phippsburg residents, appealed a conditional permit issued by former state Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Darryl Brown. The appeal is one of four filed in the case.

They will be decided by the Board of Environmental Protection.

Brown issued the permit earlier this year, on the condition that the Legislature reclassify the water quality in sections of the river below BIW where the dredged material will be dumped. The current classification, the highest possible, prohibits the disposal of dredged material.

According to Steve Hinchman, any change to the river quality classification must first be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Ed Friedman, of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, says that federal laws, such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, must also be considered by the EPA.

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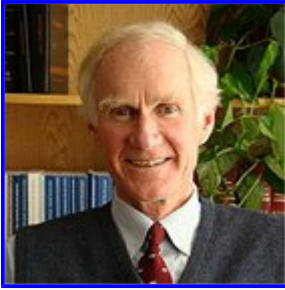
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P.O. Box 986

Bath, Maine 04530

Phone: 207.751.8565

Email: [editor@newmainetimes.org](mailto:editor@newmainetimes.org)

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