

## 12. SIGNIFICANT NATURAL FEATURES

The proposed marina redevelopment project will be taking place adjacent to and within Portland Harbor/the Fore River. The following describes the Site conditions and anticipated natural resource impacts. This material has been submitted to the MEDEP as part of a Natural Resources Protection Act Individual Permit. MEDEP approved this project in July of 2017.

### 12.1 Wetland Characterization

The proposed project will include both direct and indirect impacts to a coastal wetland. An existing sea wall is located along the Fore River within the project area. The Fore River is a tidal waterbody, and the wall defines the boundary of the coastal wetland. Figure 7-1 shows the location of the sea wall along with other property boundaries, easements, and other Site constraints. The Fore River is considered to be a wetland of special significance due to its tidal/coastal nature. In addition, the area is located within the 100-year flood plain, which also designates a wetland of special significance. A FEMA map has been included as part of Appendix A.

A Wetland Functional Assessment has been completed for the project area. This assessment confirmed the mapped wetland designation of Estuarine Subtidal Unconsolidated Bottom and also identified an area of Estuarine Intertidal Rocky Shore wetland. The Functional Assessment identified that the project area wetlands have a principal function/value of recreation, boating in particular. A number of non-principal functions were identified including habitat, production/export, sediment/shoreline stabilization, uniqueness/heritage, and visual quality/aesthetics.

In addition to the Functional Assessment, a Benthic Video Survey was completed in the project area. Six biological transects were completed by a diver on January 20, 2017. The general conclusion of this study was that the bottom of the proposed marina expansion area can be described as barren with some marine debris. There was little evidence of wildlife or plant habitat, which helps to confirm the results of the Functions and Values assessment. Further discussion of specific wildlife and plant habitats follows.

### 12.2 Wildlife Habitat

A review of available mapped data from the Maine DEP indicates that there are no Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird or Shorebird habitats located in the project area. The Functional Assessment confirmed that there were no mapped wildlife habitats, and identified the closest mapped habitat as an Eelgrass bed located 450 feet northeast of the project area. The Functional Assessment noted that habitat for fish, shellfish, and other wildlife is a non-principal function for the project wetland area. The six transects completed for the project area identified rare occurrences of kelp, frilled and burrowing anemone, "crumb of bread" and finger sponge, and orange sheathed and pancake tunicate. There were occasional occurrences of red algae in some of the transects, and the only species identified as common was mysid shrimp. No evidence of larger crustaceans like crabs or lobsters were found in the project area.

The project plan was sent to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and their review was reflected in the findings of the permits issued through MaineDEP and USACOE. It is anticipated that no wildlife habitat will be significantly impacted by the project.

### 12.3 Plant Habitat

There is no significant vegetation anticipated within the project area that will be impacted with the work. The Functional Assessment noted that the existing retaining wall is covered in rockweed. Impact to this area is only anticipated to be temporary. An eelgrass bed was identified 450 feet northeast of the project area and will not be impacted. The transects confirmed that no eelgrass is located within the project area, not finding blades or rhizomes of the species.