



Town of Bowdoinham

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www.bowdoinham.com

Nicole Briand, Town Manager

Memorandum

To: Selectboard
From: Yvette Meunier
Phone: 207-666-5531
RE: Ice & Smelt Festival 2026

Date: 12-23-25
Reference:
cc: Nicole Briand

This year the Ice & Smelt Festival will be on Friday, February 27th through Sunday, March 1st.

The schedule of events is as follows:

Friday, February 27

5:00 PM – Owl Prowl (All ages!)

Led by KELT & Maine Master Naturalists at Cathance Meadow Trails. Bring headlamps & traction gear!

Saturday, February 28

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM – Bryce Muir Exhibit, Merrymeeting Arts Center

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM – Ice Harvesting Exhibit, Merrymeeting Hall

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM – Hot Beverages & Art, Cathance River Gallery

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM – Movie Night: *The Secret of NIMH*, Old Town Hall

6:00 PM – Potluck Supper, Watersong Music

7:00 PM – Dance Party, Watersong Music

Sunday, March 1

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM – Bryce Muir Exhibit, Merrymeeting Arts Center

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM – Hot Beverages & Art, Cathance River Gallery

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM – Bowdoinham Fire Dept. Ice Rescue Demos, Maily Park

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM – Chocolate Inspired Lunch, Nazarene Church

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM – Snack Shack Open, Recreation Fields (by Age Friendly)

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM – Take-Out Soup Supper, Bowdoinham Food Pantry

All Weekend Long

- Smelt Fishing at D's Camps (Weather dependent)
- Ice Skating, Sledding, Snowshoeing at Recreation Fields
- Cocoa Ice Story Walk at Cathance Meadows Trail System
- Smelt on the Menu at Three Robbers Pub (While supplies last!)

- Borrow snowshoes, ice skates & XC skis from the Town Office. Contact Jason for details: 666-3101

The event will be posted for free here:

- Kiosks at the parks
- Town website, enewsletter, print newsletter, Facebook
- Community School Newsletter

Proposed Estimated Budget - \$750

Staff have been working with D's Camps (formally Jim's Camps) to create an opportunity for the public to experience ice fishing. This would entail renting a shack for a tide (\$80/shack and \$5 for bait) and supplying instructions which would be handled by D's for a fee. The Town would promote an online reservation process through the Recreation website and promote it on Facebook to allow parties of up to 4 people reserve time slots of an hour or so depending on D's workflow.

If reservations book up the town could add an additional shack. If an additional shack is warranted the Town will work with D's to determine when that could be staffed during the Ice & Smelt festival and advertise the additional option. Staff is still working on negotiating a fee which is dependent on quotes for their liability insurance and rates for additional staffing needs. A proposed budget of \$250 per shack up to two shacks has been posed by staff to D's. If acceptable staff would like to request up to \$750 to allow for some flexibility if our best guess on staffing rates (\$27.5/hour) is not as realistic for the industry and we need to further negotiate a fair price.

Any expenditure for this event are funded by the CMP TIF.