



# The Recreation Management Plan for the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail

2004-2014



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION

Bureau of Parks and Lands

December 2003

**THE RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR  
THE PUBLIC ISLANDS ON THE MAINE ISLAND TRAIL  
2004-2014**

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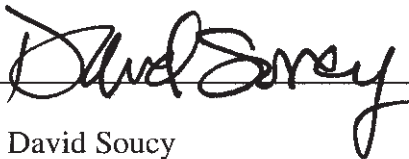
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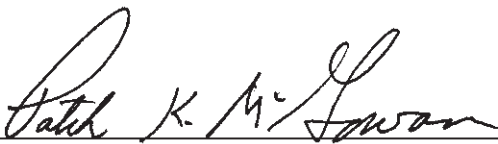
December, 2003

## ADOPTION CITATION

In accordance with the provisions of 12 M.R.S.A., §1833 (2) and §1847 (2), *The Recreation Management Plan for the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail* is hereby adopted.

Recommended:   
David Soucy  
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Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

Date: 12/16/03

Approved:   
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Commissioner  
Maine Department of Conservation

Date: 12/8/03

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Stephen Spencer, Recreation Specialist  
Bureau of Parks and Lands

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## I. INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Planning Process .....	i
Management Goal & Objectives .....	iii

## II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### A. Description of BPL Coastal Islands

1. Size, Location, and Character of Properties.....	1
2. Geological Resources.....	2
3. Natural Communities.....	3
4. Wildlife Resources.....	4
5. Cultural Resources.....	4

### B. History of the Maine Island Trail & Recreational Use

1. Traditional Recreational Use.....	5
2. Formation of the Maine Island Trail.....	6
3. From Stewardship to Management.....	7
4. Benchmarks to Guide Future Management.....	11

## III. RECREATION MANAGEMENT

### A. Recreational Use Issues & Actions

1. Public Access Along the Maine Island Trail.....	13
2. Social/Ecological Carrying Capacity.....	15
3. Recreational Development on Individual Islands.....	18
4. Fair Use Allocation.....	19
5. Impacts	
a. Ecological, Cultural, & Aesthetic .....	21
b. Wildlife.....	23
c. Campfires.....	25
d. Human Waste.....	27
e. Pets.....	29

<b>B. Management Programs</b>	
1. Partnerships & Collaboration.....	31
2. Visitor Education.....	31
3. Site Maintenance.....	33
4. Environmental & Social Monitoring.....	35

## **IV. OTHER CONCERNS**

<b>A. Administrative Issues</b>	
1. Roles of the Managing Partners.....	37
2. Enforcement.....	38
3. Fire Control.....	39
4. Insect/Disease Control & Nuisance Species.....	40
5. Leases.....	41
<b>B. External Influences</b>	
1. Promotion of the Resource and Boating.....	42
2. Impacts from Nearby Waters.....	43
3. Mainland Launch Sites.....	44

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Summary of Major Recommendations.....	46
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### **Bibliography**

#### **List of Tables**

Table 1: BPL Islands With Significant Archeological Sites.....	4
Table 2: Recreational Use Impacts, 1988-1994.....	8
Table 3: Recreational Use Impacts, 1995-1998.....	9
Table 4: Notably Impacted BPL Islands, 1995-1998.....	9
Table 5: BPL Island and Mainland Site Additions, 1999.....	10
Table 6: Recreation Management Strategies, 1999-2003.....	10
Table 7: Maine Island Trail Composition, 2003.....	13
Table 8: Summary of Recreational Use Impacts, 1988-2003.....	22

## VI. APPENDIX EXHIBITS

### Appendix A: Acknowledgements

1. Planning Advisory Committee Members
2. Administrative Support
3. Grant & Foundation Support

### Appendix B: Trail & Island Information

1. Map of the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail
2. Public Trail Islands by Acre
3. Coastal Island Recreational Experience Spectrum
4. Island Use Guidelines, 2004
5. Island Carrying Capacity Guidelines, 2004
6. Visitor Logbook Data: Amounts and Types of Use, 2002
7. Visitor Logbook Data: Camping & Day Use, 2002
8. Sample Logbook Page: Steves Island, 2003

### Appendix C: Field Stewardship Programs

### Appendix D: Visitor Education

1. Leave No Trace on Maine's Islands
2. *Fragile Islands* brochure
3. Sample Island Signs: Steves Island, 2003

### Appendix E: Island Compendium

1. Map of the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail
2. Regional Maps of the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail
3. Island Information Pages

# **PART I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **Overview of the Planning Process**

This document, *The Recreation Management Plan for the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail, 2004-2014*, constitutes a framework of management for the recreational resources on the 45 state-owned islands on the Maine Island Trail. Prepared in partnership by the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA), the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL), the Planning Advisory Committee, and island stakeholders between January, 2002 and December, 2003, it is the first set of guidelines to be adopted by the Bureau for these properties. The plan presents goals, objectives, and strategies for land protection and stewardship on the public islands between 2004 and 2014. For simplicity, the term “public islands” is used throughout to identify these lands; the properties are also referred to as “state-owned,” “BPL,” and “Bureau-owned.” This document does not address the state park islands, the public coastal islands managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W), the National Park Service (NPS), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS), or private islands that allow public use.

This plan is unique for several reasons: it is the first completed after the Bureau’s revised Integrated Resource Policy was published in December, 2000; it is the only one written by a partner managing entity; it has significant financial implications for both the Bureau and the partner(s); it addresses visitor use of a land base that is different than most of the other Bureau holdings—specifically 45 distinct and diverse island recreation properties, dispersed along more than 325 miles and proximate to hundreds of coastal communities; it focuses on recreation, rather than on integrated resource allocation, because the islands were selected specifically for public use in the 1980s; and finally, it is a plan that addresses both Trailwide issues and island-specific concerns.

Input from a diverse group of island stakeholders was critical during the creation of this plan. Formed in January 2002 the 24-member Advisory Committee met three times and reviewed several initial drafts. (See Appendix A:1.) MITA and the BPL hosted a series of public meetings in April, 2002 (Wiscasset, Ellsworth) and November, 2002 (Falmouth, Rockland, Ellsworth) to solicit feedback on preliminary goals, objectives, and issues. Over 150 individuals attended these meetings; 25 additional letters were received.

The final draft dated June, 2003 was presented to the public for input in July, 2003 in Portland, Rockland, and Ellsworth. Thirty-five individuals attended these meetings. Following the public forums, five comments were received. All of the feedback and advice—from the Advisory Committee and the general public—was considered, and most was incorporated into the final plan. The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund provided partial funding for this project.

The plan outlines a vision and framework for sustainable public island recreation on the Maine coast between 2004 and 2014. The plan consists of six main sections.

- *Part I. Introduction.* An overview of the process and the goal and objectives.
- *Part II. Background Information.* A description of the public islands and a brief history of the Trail and recreational use.
- *Part III. Recreation Management.* A look at the methods for addressing the core issues on the public Trail islands including strategies and programs.
- *Part IV. Other Concerns.* An overview of both the internal administrative considerations and the external influences that will affect this plan.
- *Part V. Conclusion.* A summary of the key recommended actions.
- *Part VI. Appendices.* A collection of resource materials, additional suggestions, and the individual island information pages.

While the plan anticipates resource and recreation management challenges and external pressures along the coast that may develop between 2004 and 2014, time and experience may call for modifications. MITA and the BPL will review this document annually and, if substantial changes are required before 2014, they will be made after providing an opportunity for review with the Advisory Committee and the public.

## **Management Goal & Objectives**

The following goals and objectives were developed by MITA and the BPL, with input from the Advisory Committee and the public. They serve as the philosophical framework for the management process on the public Trail islands. Below, each objective is described in detail to provide the necessary context for understanding the strategies described in the text to follow.

**Goal:** To provide an opportunity for visitors to discover and enjoy a coastal water trail in a manner that conserves the outstanding natural and cultural values of the state-owned islands on the Maine Island Trail.

### **Objectives:**

- Manage the islands individually and as part of the Maine Island Trail.
- Preserve the natural and cultural resources on the islands.
- Protect the relatively wild character of the islands and favor natural processes.
- Provide the setting for a high-quality coastal island recreational experience.
- Ensure equitable access to various users.
- Instill an ethic of responsible and safe low impact use on the Trail.
- Enlist visitors in island stewardship.
- Manage by voluntary compliance through published guidelines where and as long as practical.
- Encourage public participation in the on-going process.

*Manage the islands individually and as part of the Maine Island Trail.* The main body of this document is designed in format and content to address broad Trailwide recreation issues and the Island Compendium contains individual information pages for the public Trail islands. (See Appendix E:3.) Thus, this structure emphasizes that these properties are managed both as part of a trail system and as individual lands.

***Preserve the natural and cultural resources on the islands.*** The public islands were evaluated and selected for public recreational use in the 1980s, at which time it was determined that low impact visitation was compatible with the existing natural and cultural attributes. (See Formation of the Maine Island Trail, p. 6.) It is the intention of this plan to allow for responsible island use that will continue to sustain the island resources without negatively impacting them.

***Protect the relatively wild character of the islands and favor natural processes.*** Visitors to Maine’s undeveloped coastal islands often comment on a sense of wildness that they experience. This “feeling” is partly a result of the natural landscape of rock, sand, soil, and vegetation that shows little evidence of human management or modification. Another element of this sense of wildness is the dynamic coastal environment where strong weather and climate processes mold many of the islands’ physical and biological characteristics. Blow down areas of trees occur naturally on islands with even-aged stands, for example, and while a blow down event may be perceived as a conflict to recreational use, it is the intention of this plan to favor natural changes over intense management. This objective, however, is not rigid. There may be cases where it is appropriate to proactively or reactively manage a natural process in support of the islands’ long-term wild character, availability for recreational use, and visitor safety. In most cases, the existing designated campsites and trails will remain open. Lastly, the wildness factor is fragile and can easily be degraded by thoughtless acts of users or by inappropriate management.

***Provide the setting for a high-quality coastal island recreational experience.*** The term “coastal island recreational experience” defines the type of experience being managed for on the public Trail properties and on the water trail that links the launch sites and these islands together. Components of this experience include:

- the sense of the relatively wild, undeveloped character of the islands in contrast to the developed and busy land and seascapes nearby;
- the interrelationship between the sights, sounds, and natural elements of the ocean, wind, fog, salt air, and tides;

- the powerful sense of solitude, as well as the opportunity for reflection and self-discovery, that island visitors value;
- the sense of adventure and exploration evoked on coastal expeditions;
- the personal challenge of self-sufficiency in terms of both boating and camping skills;
- the presence of minimal structures and educational signs as opposed to intensive recreational development and stern regulations; and
- the exposure to fish, birds, mammals, wildlife habitat, in-shore and ocean-going vessels, scenic lighthouses, and navigational buoys.

The coastal island recreational experience on these public Trail islands is diverse. For example, some islands are more wild, some are located close to populated mainland communities, some require advanced skill to reach, and some have a tradition of heavy use. The Coastal Island Recreational Experience Spectrum indicates how the islands span this continuum. (See Appendix B:3.) Effective management should accommodate a diversity of experiences and resource settings.

***Ensure equitable access to various users.*** From a public use perspective, the islands appeal to a broad range of individual and group users—families, friends, camps, kayak outfitters, schooner groups, boy and girl scouts, schools, etc.—that arrive in a variety of watercraft for differing amounts of time. Some boaters travel the Trail with the intention of a half-hour day stop at one destination island on a weekend afternoon, others journey for a week-long regional trip to explore a cluster of public Trail islands, while some venture out for a three-month expedition traversing the entire Trail from Portland to Machias. The type of boat used to reach an island, the number of people in each group, and the length of stay have an impact on the coastal island recreational experience. To date, the following large and small watercraft are used to visit the Bureau-managed islands: power boats, sail boats, personal watercraft, kayaks, canoes, and row boats. It is the intention of this plan to provide for fair access among these various users.

***Instill an ethic of responsible and safe low impact use on the Trail. Enlist visitors in island stewardship. Manage by voluntary compliance with published guidelines where, and as long as, practical.*** Through the belief in the goodwill of island visitors to voluntarily care for the properties they visit, MITA and the BPL have prioritized educating the island-going public about low impact visitation and recreational use guidelines. (See Appendices B:4 and D:1) Volunteer stewardship and caretaker programs have been developed to assist with island monitoring along the Trail. It is the intention of this plan to continue with the voluntary model, within determined levels of allowable change.

***Encourage public participation in the on-going process.*** A model based on the described voluntary compliance to recreational use guidelines must involve island stakeholders in the decision-making process. If those who care about Maine's public islands participate in shaping their future, they are more likely to adhere to guidelines in the field and/or support them within local coastal communities.

## **PART II**

# **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

## **A. DESCRIPTION OF BPL COASTAL ISLANDS**

### **1. Size, Location, and Character of Properties**

Scattered along several hundred miles of coast between Portland and Machias, the 45 public islands on the Maine Island Trail represent a diverse sample of the more than 4,000 islands on the Maine coast. The majority of these properties are undeveloped with recent human intervention being limited to the occasional cleared camping area and a small footpath leading from a campsite to the shoreline.

In their distribution along the coast, these state-owned, recreational use lands follow the general pattern of all of Maine's coastal islands; they are grouped within discrete bays, in the lower reaches and mouth areas of major rivers, or offshore. (See Appendix B:1.) In many cases, the largest bays containing the islands are separated by geographically prominent headlands such as Small Point, Pemaquid Point, and Schoodic Point. Island groupings are also separated by larger expanses of open water such as the western side of Penobscot Bay.

In addition, the locations of the islands range from inshore, protected parts of bays and rivers to more exposed offshore areas. The inner islands are similar to adjacent areas of the more protected mainland while the outer islands share similarities with other islands open to the more severe conditions of the ocean. In general, island groupings share common physical attributes, plants and animals, and human use of the local area.

These public islands range in size from mere ledges with only patches of land exposed at high tide to 221-acre *Jewell Island* in Casco Bay. Most of the properties (36 out of 45) are small, less than two acres. (See Appendix B:2.) Overall, the diversity of islands' shapes and acreage is one of the greatest assets of the Trail. Although use is somewhat limited on the small ledges and bars, opportunity is not directly restricted by size; the physical attributes of an island and the character of the surrounding waters and lands are also important factors. A picnic on a half-acre island can be a recreational high point. While the larger islands may seem to offer the potential for greater activity, this often is not the case. Challenging topography and difficult access often

limit the availability of these larger islands. Many of the more popular and heavily used islands are one to two acres in size.

Overall, the state-owned islands reflect the geological and environmental changes that occur as one proceeds east along the Maine coast. The increasingly cool and more maritime climate at the eastern end of the Trail significantly affects both the vegetation and wildlife on the islands and in surrounding waters. Human use of the coastal waters also changes as one moves eastward from Portland to Machias with eastern areas tending to have somewhat lower levels of development and somewhat less recreational use, although there are significant local anomalies such as the Mount Desert Island area.

## **2. Geological Resources**

For the majority of the properties, the bedrock geology is the primary factor in determining overall shape and topographic character. Almost all of the islands have a fairly wide zone of exposed bedrock around the shoreline. This area provides an opportunity for visitors to see and enjoy the island features and often provides a durable surface for recreational activities.

Since the Maine coast was recently glaciated, the islands' surficial materials are generally thin and the bedrock is either bare or close to the surface. The overlying composition of this unconsolidated material is an important factor affecting soil conditions and resulting vegetation. The surface layers range from thin organic soils to somewhat thicker deposits of post-glacial marine clay. In general, they are between several inches and 10 feet deep.

The western part of the coast, from Casco Bay to Port Clyde, is underlain by layered metamorphic bedrock that trend NNE-SSW. This creates a landscape of islands, island groups, bays, and headlands that also stretch NNE-SSW. The islands are distinctly long and narrow. From Port Clyde east to Machias granite is the primary bedrock and, since it imparts little 'grain' to the landscape, the islands and island groups are more round or circular in outline. In all areas, the local bedrock conditions, such as the amount of fracturing or the erosion resistance of the local rock type, determine much of the local topography and soil composition of the islands.

### **3. Natural Communities**

Each individual public island has its own distinct natural community profile based on its location on the coast and its history of human use. The majority of the islands have a mixture of habitat types including thick spruce stands, open meadows, successional forests, thin soil rock environments, and many near-shore habitat types.

Maine lies in the northern hardwood forest region of the northeastern United States and the forests of the coastal region are strongly influenced by the relatively cool waters and frequent summer fogs of the Gulf of Maine. Inshore islands tend to have vegetation similar to that of the adjacent mainland areas. Offshore islands tend to be dominated by spruce forests that are better adapted to cool maritime conditions. Island vegetation along the coast is also affected by a pronounced increase in the maritime condition as one moves down east. East of Penobscot Bay, the summer water temperatures remain cooler, the duration of fogs is longer, and the growing season climate is cooler. In extreme down east sections, this maritime influence is present to the extent that some islands have sub-arctic plant species.

In addition to local climate factors, human use of some islands and the resulting modification of the vegetation from fires, forest clearing, logging, grazing of domestic animals, and other activities have significantly affected overall plant life. Humans have introduced some non-native species such as Asiatic bittersweet and black swallowwort to the islands. Often the presence of successional species such as birch and poplar are indications of old open fields used for agriculture. During the past 50 to 70 years, many islands that were cleared, burned, and/or grazed are now growing back into wooded areas. These regenerating forests support relatively mature, even aged stands of spruce. Natural factors, such as high winds and thin soils, often cause a significant blow down of the spruce trees while insect pests and disease, such as the spruce beetle and the eastern dwarf mistletoe, have thinned the forests as well.

According to the state's Biological and Conservation Data System files at the Maine Natural Areas Program, there are no rare botanical features on the 45 public islands. More

research is needed, however, to confirm the lack of rare ecological resources on these islands. (See Environmental & Social Monitoring, p. 35.).

#### **4. Wildlife Resources**

Wildlife diversity is also an important attribute of the recreational opportunity presented by this public resource. Wildlife species of particular note among the coastal islands include eagles, ospreys, deer, raccoons, seals, porpoises, and a variety of waterfowl and shore birds including colonial seabird populations.

The original screening of the state-owned islands in 1987 identified islands where human access would pose a threat to wildlife resources, particularly nesting birds. These islands were then transferred to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) for management and were not opened for recreation. Current data from IF&W indicate that there is no significant wildlife resources associated directly with the 45 islands discussed in this plan. However, it is important to note that there may be significant seabird and eagle nesting or other sensitive wildlife in the adjacent areas surrounding those properties.

#### **5. Cultural Resources**

Maine’s coastal islands have been used by humans for more than seven thousand years. Native American archaeological sites as well as remains and structures that date from colonial to modern times have been identified on several of the BPL islands. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission lists significant archeological sites on seven islands.

Table 1 <b>BPL ISLANDS WITH SIGNIFICANT ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES</b>	
Little Chebeague Jewell Basin Perkins	Fort Apple Little Crow

## **B. HISTORY OF THE MAINE ISLAND TRAIL & RECREATIONAL USE**

### **1. Traditional Recreational Use**

The coastal islands of Maine are truly a unique resource to the eastern seaboard of the United States. Collectively, and in some instances singularly, islands have drawn people for a variety of reasons since man first maneuvered sailing ships through them to discover their resource bounties and those of the mainland, the inland passage entrances to which the islands guarded. Activities on the islands have ranged from the quarrying of building stone to sheep grazing; from storing petroleum products to the defense of harbor facilities during all of this country's major wars; from illicit smuggling of nationwide prohibited goods to providing respite to the nation's wealthiest families; from storing lobster traps to individuals foraging for daily food and shelter from nothing more than the island's natural resources. Others are drawn to the sheer cliffs, quiet forests, sheltered beaches, and expanded vistas of the islands to escape the pressures and anxieties of the 'business as usual' urban and suburban syndrome.<sup>1</sup>

As outlined by Conkling and Timson in A Management Plan for the Unregistered Coastal Islands of Maine (1979), Maine's coastal islands have been a draw for thousands of years. The popularity of the remote islands was identified as early as the 1970s: "Maine's coastal islands are irresistible attractions. During the summer, passenger boats to the islands are full, turning away people at the docks. There are as many leisure craft plying the waters to the islands on Labor Day weekend as there are islands along the coast."<sup>2</sup>

While there are no empirical data on recreational use before the 1980s, many aspects of what island managers now see as current public use probably began to develop during the 1960s. In these times, "permissive trespass" was a widely accepted practice and, as a result, recreational boaters visited many islands. In most cases, transient cruisers did not make a distinction between public and private ownership of Maine's coastal islands.

During the 1970s and 1980s, three factors occurred that would progressively and significantly change recreational access on the coast of Maine in ways that continue through the

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<sup>1</sup> Conkling & Timson, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

present. First, the number of coastal boaters—local residents, summer residents, tourists, sailors, camps, and educational groups—grew due to the economic climate, thus increasing the demand for island access. Second, there was an increase in kayaking on the coast that led to higher island impacts as people began camping on the islands rather than sleeping aboard their boats. Third, changes in ownership and management of islands began to reduce access to many islands, leaving a smaller number of public and private islands available for public use.

## **2. Formation of the Maine Island Trail**

In 1975, at the conclusion of a two-year coast wide census, the state of Maine determined it owned 1,299 islands, rocks, and ledges along the coast. Four years later, Philip Conkling and Barry S. Timson of the Mahoosuc Corporation submitted A Management Plan for the Unregistered Coastal Islands of Maine to the then Bureau of Public Lands. In their plan, the coastal water trail concept was first mentioned: “Some of the larger unregistered islands appear to have regional or statewide recreational potential either for day use or overnight camping. A number of these islands are distributed between Muscongus and Blue Hill Bays and represent the core of what some day might be a state coastal park system for those cruising the Maine coast.”<sup>3</sup> The Bureau never officially adopted the 1979 document but it kept it on file.

In the mid-1980s, the Bureau contracted the Island Institute to revisit and evaluate the 125 islands that were originally noted in the 1979 management plan as having recreational potential. The survey identified 40 properties that could support public recreation based on accessibility, durability, and lack of sensitive wildlife species. Dave Getchell, Sr., who was part of the evaluation team, revisited the water trail idea in “Island Trail,” written for the Institute’s annual publication, The Island Journal, in 1987. Three concepts were important to Getchell:

- the public islands would form an island trail allowing the already increasing boating public on the Maine coast to make day and overnight stops;
- the trail would direct the expanding boating public to appropriate island destinations where access was permitted; and,

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<sup>3</sup> Conkling & Timson, pp. 28-29.

- since the Bureau did not have the resources to manage the islands, the recreational users themselves would become directly involved in the stewardship of the trail through a volunteer, membership organization.

In early 1988, the Island Institute submitted a proposal to the Bureau to create the Maine Island Trail Association and, in April 1988, the Association was created as a partnership between the Island Institute, L.L. Bean, and the then Bureau of Public Lands. In 1993, the Maine Island Trail Association separated from Island Institute, becoming its own non-profit organization.

### **3. From Stewardship to Management**

The goal of the Maine Island Trail is to establish a model of thoughtful use and volunteer stewardship for the Maine islands that will assure their conservation in a natural state while providing an exceptional recreational asset that is maintained and cared for by the people who use it. *–MITA's Mission Statement*

From the beginning, the Maine Island Trail Association created a community of volunteers to steward the Trail properties and track levels of recreational use and environmental conditions. Knowing that island use was already increasing, MITA believed in the concept of people voluntarily caring for the properties they visited. In 1989, MITA launched the Adopt-an-Island Program to partner island visitors with properties for stewardship and, through its membership, MITA asked visitors to submit Coastal Island Use Logs to help track use levels and related impacts. The Association set up the spring and fall Cleanup Program in the early 1990s and, by 1994, the Annual Trail Trip had become part of MITA's stewardship programs. The weekly monitoring program that began in 1989 continued through the early 1990s and became its own distinct volunteer program in 1995. (See Appendix C.)

Education was important to the stewardship model from the beginning. Between 1988 and 1994, MITA prioritized reaching visitors with low impact guidelines before they left the mainland. Its educational tools included the Maine Island Trail Stewardship Handbook & Guidebook, newsletters, and outreach through boating and conservation events on the coast.

In general, between 1988 and 1994, volunteers observed signs of recreational impact on some of the more popular islands, including *Jewell*, *Little Snow* and *Hells Half Acre*.

Table 2 <b>RECREATIONAL USE IMPACTS, 1988-1994</b>
Soil erosion and compaction in use areas Firewood collection and cutting Human waste deposits Campfire impacts (e.g. fire scars)

Most notably, *Jewell*, with a longstanding tradition of use, bore impacts of steadily increasing recreational pressure from the general public. As a result, the Jewell Island Committee was formed in 1991, and, in 1992, privies and sanctioned fire rings were installed to help mitigate human waste and fire issues.

Also in response to the general observed impacts, MITA created the *Fragile Islands* brochure in 1995 to educate users about low impact principles and, since then, over 75,000 brochures have been distributed. (See Appendix D:2.) The Monitor Skipper Program was formalized in 1995 to ensure weekly island visits to track impacts. The first educational signs discouraging tree cutting were posted in 1996. That same year, the Maine Island Trail Stewardship Handbook & Guidebook expanded its low impact section to include suggested guidelines for group size and length of stay in an effort to limit impacts, and a pilot island sign project was launched in Casco Bay. In 1997, the Guidebook had an expanded section on tent sprawl. Thus, in the period 1995 to 1997, MITA began to shift its focus from self-directed, volunteer stewardship to more proactive education and management.

While the aforementioned outreach initiatives reached many island users, the lack of an entry gate to the Trail or a registration system through which to contact users resulted in many visitors arriving on the islands with little or no education. Between 1996 and 1998 the catalogue of recreational use impacts grew to include a more extensive list of ecological, cultural, and aesthetic concerns.

Table 3 <b>RECREATIONAL USE IMPACTS, 1995-1998</b>
Soil erosion and compaction in use areas Loss of ground cover in use areas Firewood collection and cutting Wildlife disturbance Shell midden digging Graffiti on historic buildings Human waste deposits Litter and rock art Social crowding and noise Campfire impacts (e.g. fire scars)

Monitoring data at the time showed these notable impacts on 13 public islands in Casco Bay, Western Rivers, and the Deer Isle Region.

Table 4 <b>NOTABLY IMPACTED BPL ISLANDS, 1995-1998</b>		
<b>Casco Bay</b>	<b>Western Rivers</b>	<b>Deer Isle</b>
Jewell Little Chebeague Basin Little Snow	Fort Crow Thief	Wheat Harbor Steves Hells Half Acre Potato Sellers

In general, the factors causing increasing recreation use levels and impacts on the islands were:

- the islands’ proximity to population centers and to each other,
- the ease of access (whether islands were close to shore or far out across open waters), and
- the 'friendliness' of the islands for general recreational use (accessible landings, ample picnic areas and campsites, and scenic footpaths).

Between 1997 and 1999, with funding from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, MITA executed “A Project to Increase the Number of Public Use Sites on the Maine Island Trail” in an effort to ease the pressure on the heavily used public islands. Seventeen new Bureau properties were added to the Trail in 1999.

Table 5 BPL ISLAND & MAINLAND SITE ADDITIONS, 1999	
Eagle Island State Park Bar Island Indian Point Havener Ledge East Barred Doliver John The Sands	Roque Bluffs State Park Fort Popham State Historic Site Dodge Point Public Reserved Land Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site Birch Point State Park Owls Head Light State Park Fort Point State Historic Site Holbrook Island Sanctuary Lamoine State Park

At the same time the Trail was expanding and diversifying—in 1999 there were 110 sites including 48 public islands, 48 private islands, and 14 mainland properties—use continued to increase on the public islands. Based on data collected by MITA volunteer stewards and island caretakers as well as information submitted by users in logbooks and Coastal Island Use Logs, MITA estimates that overall recreational activity on the state-owned Trail islands increased by 50% between 1996 and 2003. MITA theorizes that demographics and the economic climate, coupled with the nationwide boom in outdoor recreation and sea kayaking specifically, spawned this increased interest in Maine’s public Trail islands.

In April of 1999, MITA and the BPL hosted the first Island Stakeholder Meeting to discuss the increased use pressures on the public islands. Between 1999 and 2003, they worked collaboratively with island stakeholders to tackle public island management; eighteen meetings united over 500 concerned individuals. Through the public forums, advisory sessions, and meetings with key user groups, the stakeholders participated directly in the creation of the following new strategies: (See Appendices B:8 and D:2-3)

Table 6 RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, 1999-2003		
Voluntary Guidelines	Site Management	Visitor Education
Island Capacity Limits Campsite Capacity Limits Two-Night Length of Stay 12 Person Max. Group Size* Single-Party Islands <i>*reduced to 10 persons in 2004</i>	Designated Campsites “Small Group” Sites Site Maps Site Hardening Area Closures Campsite Restoration	<i>Fragile Islands</i> brochure <i>Store to Shore</i> brochure Leave No Trace Workshops Leave No Trace Signs Island Logbooks Sharing Ethics Principles

Between 2000 and 2003, MITA photographed all of the public Trail islands, including the landing points, paths, and designated camping areas. In addition, anecdotal comments on ground conditions were recorded and island maps were created over these three years. In August 2003, MITA staff members traveled the length of the Trail documenting impacts and rating each public island on the Coastal Island Recreational Experience Spectrum. (See Appendix B:3.) Despite the fact that estimated use increased dramatically between 1996 and 2003, the baseline data that has been collected, coupled with visitor logs, indicate stabilizing conditions, a testament to the good efforts of visitors to protect the island environments.

While the developing management model incorporated direct land and human use management in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the spirit still focused on volunteerism and stewardship. Voluntary compliance to guidelines on Maine's public coastal islands was, and still is, unique. Most lands statewide and nationwide are managed by rules, regulations, permits, and fees. For these reasons, the Maine Island Trail and the partnership between MITA and the Bureau has become a national model. The managing partners believe that, in most cases, visitors can manage their use in a responsible and ethical manner.

In summary, between 1988 and 1994, MITA set up volunteer stewardship and outreach programs to help care for the Trail properties. From 1995 to 1998, MITA observed impacts, identified issues and concerns, and increased its education and monitoring initiatives. Between 1999 and 2003, MITA and the BPL worked with stakeholders to develop strategies to address recreational impacts on the public Trail islands.

#### **4. Benchmarks to Guide Future Management**

Thus, this plan does not begin with a blank slate. Rather, the proposed actions for 2004 to 2014 are based on lessons learned since 1988. Most notably, MITA and the Bureau:

- identified an island stakeholder constituency that is vital to the success of public island management and learned that partnerships with local communities, traditional users, and key user groups are instrumental;

- established goals for visitor experience and environmental conservation through the island capacity process (1999);
- formalized low impact island use guidelines through a partnership with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (2000);
- field-tested proposed practices—voluntary guidelines, site management, and visitor education—on the public Trail islands using volunteer stewards and island caretakers; and
- established an informal data collection process to document impacts and catalogue change on the state-owned Trail islands.

## **PART III**

# **RECREATION MANAGEMENT**

## **A. RECREATIONAL USE ISSUES & ACTIONS**

### **1. Public Access along the Maine Island Trail**

#### Management Issue

In some sections of the Maine Island Trail, there are insufficient day and overnight areas available for public use. In addition, there are portions of the Trail that pose a challenge in terms of safe boating distances between stopping places, especially for human-propelled boats.

#### Background Information

To provide adequate sites for safe travel between islands and to accommodate increasing demand, 90 sites (net total) have been added to the Maine Island Trail since 1988. As of 2003, there are 129 sites that comprise access opportunities along the Trail.

Table 7 MAINE ISLAND TRAIL COMPOSITION, 2003	
103 Islands	26 Mainland Sites
54 privately-owned islands 45 Bureau-managed islands 2 state park islands 2 federally-owned islands	11 mainland State parks 9 mainland campgrounds 5 private mainland campsites 1 federally-owned mainland site

Throughout the years, membership in MITA has allowed the public access to private Trail sites, under the condition of responsible low impact use and volunteer stewardship. MITA membership is not required for access to the public Trail islands.

Based on current recreational demand for island access and safe boating distances for human-propelled craft, there are identifiable gaps within the public island portion of the Trail. There is insufficient capacity to support the current need for public access in Casco Bay, Muscongus Bay, and Merchant's Row. Segments where there are too few sites to support safe

Trail travel include Port Clyde to Owls Head, Brooklin to Schoodic Point, and Schoodic Point to South Addison. The additional public and private island and mainland sites added to the Trail over the years have helped to provide important access opportunities.

### Desired Outcome

The Trail will be expanded within its boundaries and outside its borders— north of Machias, south of Portland, or up additional rivers—to provide adequate day and overnight stops for a variety of recreational boaters including human-propelled craft.

### Recommended Actions

- Assess Trail access to additional appropriate island and mainland properties within the state of Maine’s holdings and interests, including:
  1. Land managed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands that is not yet on the Trail.
  2. Lands managed by Inland Fisheries & Wildlife that could be transferred to the Bureau for Trail access because there are no current wildlife protection needs and because managed, low impact recreation would not preclude future wildlife habitation.
  3. Lands managed by Inland Fisheries & Wildlife that could be shared with the public with posted closure to recreational activity during nesting seasons.
  4. Land for Maine’s Future-sponsored islands and mainland sites appropriate for low impact recreational use.
- Apply management goals and objectives outlined in this plan to each new state-owned island added to the Maine Island Trail.
- Investigate Trail access to federally owned island and mainland properties such as additional USF&WS holdings and NPS properties.
- Explore new partnerships with existing individual and non-profit landowners to encourage public access to their properties or to purchase public access rights to their lands. Access rights could be in the form of a lease, fee, easement, or other interest.

- Continue to expand the Maine Island Trail to include more private islands and mainland sites to help disperse visitors away from heavily used islands.

## **2. Social/Ecological Carrying Capacity**

### Management Issue

Demand on some of the public islands is so high that it is necessary to limit use to protect the condition of the islands and the visitor experience.

### Background Information

Research nationwide reveals that when visitors have expectations of a natural setting, their perception of environmental impact is often more sensitive than that of an ecologist. (Bob Manning, University of Vermont) For example, when people viewed informal paths through grassy areas, they reported the effect as degradation at a much lower environmental threshold than a botanist. This tendency to describe what are adverse aesthetic impacts as ecological damage has been observed along the Maine Island Trail. While not entirely conclusive, it appears that protecting visitor satisfaction levels may be a means of avoiding environmental damage.

According to Dawson and Hendee in Wilderness Management: Stewardship and Protection of Resources and Values, establishing carrying capacities in recreation settings is accomplished without rigid technical specification. Carrying capacities take into consideration the experience that is being managed for as well as the natural resources. Capacities are based on a holistic, integrated approach rather than scientific formulas.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, the camping capacities for the public Trail islands were proposed by experienced managers and campers and were broadly reviewed through stakeholder processes. The following goals for the capacity guidelines, length of stay, and group size were set in 1999:

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<sup>4</sup> Dawson & Hendee, pp. 233-234.

1. to protect island environments from the effects of overuse, and
2. to maintain the potential for a high quality visitor experience.

In 1999, pilot camping limits were implemented on the 11 most heavily used public Trail islands. A group of island stakeholders and resource managers, the Capacity Advisory Committee, was created in 2000. Capacities were adopted for all 38 public islands with overnight use that year and campsite-specific capacities were created for several islands. The limits have been reviewed and updated each year. Twenty-one public islands were identified as 'single party' islands in 2001; the available camping area is so limited on these properties it was determined they were best suited for use by one party.

In addition, a maximum group size of 12 persons traveling the Trail was adopted in 1999 to discourage excessively large groups. (This guideline was changed in the fall of 2003 after analysis of available camping space and sharing principles on each island. The new group size limit is 10 persons traveling the Trail.) Lastly, a two-night length of stay guideline became effective in 1999 to encourage sharing and prevent negative impacts of soil compaction and vegetation disturbance often associated with longer stays. (See Appendix B:4-5.)

Since the adoption of the capacities, length of stay, and group size guidelines in 1999, overall compliance has been increasing each year. Many of the commercial outfitters have reduced their group size to adhere to the recommended limits and there have been very few reports of extended stays. As of 2003, the most difficult constituencies to reach with this information are the scouts, camps, schools, and church groups, especially those coming from out-of-state, that lead one or two trips to Maine's islands a year. According to the logbook data, these groups have exceeded the capacity limits on many occasions.

### Desired Outcome

Voluntary carrying capacities will help protect island environments from the effects of overuse and maintain the potential for a high quality coastal island recreational experience.

Voluntary guidelines will be in effect until compliance declines below the level at which management goals are being met.

### Recommended Actions

- Maintain voluntary guidelines (See Appendix B:4-5.):
  1. Camping capacities for islands with overnight use; review and update annually.
  2. Campsite-specific capacities where appropriate; review and update annually.
  3. Single party designations where appropriate; review and update annually.
  4. Two-night length of stay limit.
  5. Maximum group size limit of 10 persons.
- Consider day use capacity for the islands.
- Formalize visitor experience monitoring. (See Environmental & Social Monitoring, p. 35.)
- Continue with volunteer stewards and island caretakers as the educational presence to encourage compliance to these guidelines. (See Visitor Education, p. 31.)
- Make above stated guidelines regulation and intensify monitoring and education programs if and when voluntary limits are no longer effective.
- Set up an Allocation Task Force to develop registration/allocation/permit systems and enforcement protocols to ensure compliance with carrying capacity limits in anticipation of a time when sheer numbers may outstrip voluntary guidelines. (See Enforcement, p. 38.)
- Involve the public in the decision-making process and communicate new guidelines and rules in a timely manner. (See Partnerships & Collaboration, p. 31 and Visitor Education, p. 31.)

### **3. Recreational Development on Individual Islands**

#### Management Issue

Development on the public islands relates to both the total area of an island open to visitors and the extent to which those areas are hardened. Development on each island should be directly related to the carrying capacity. The on-going management challenge is how to support existing and increasing numbers of users without degrading the natural resource and the coastal island experience.

#### Background Information

Long before the formation of the Maine Island Trail, visitors created trails and campsites to suit their needs. Beginning in 1992, four years after the Trail's inception, hardening techniques were employed selectively by public island managers to control erosion, contain campfires, address human waste issues, direct foot traffic, and focus camping. Beginning in 1996, educational signs pointed visitors to the designated areas.

In the spring of 2001, staff from the BPL and MITA completed a pilot assessment study on the 12 most heavily used public islands. Island access point, trail, and campsite condition data were collected through written forms and photographs. With the help of coastal advisors in the Public Island Working Group, individual plans were created for these 12 islands and site maps were posted. As a result of this process, it was determined that additional development potential existed on *Perkins*, *Fort*, and *Jewell*.

#### Desired Outcome

Development for recreational use, including site hardening, will be restricted to the minimum level necessary to protect the natural and cultural values and the visitor experience, while at the same time expanding public access on individual islands.

### Recommended Actions

- Continue to designate the public use areas on each island and manage accordingly:
  1. Harden access points where appropriate to prevent erosion.
  2. Proactively maintain paths on the islands to encourage the use of existing trails and discourage the creation of new footpaths.
  3. Identify designated campsites on the public camping islands. Continue with the “camp only in designated sites” directive.
- Harden sites selectively for resource protection, not user convenience (e.g. erosion steps); for providing opportunity where none exists (e.g. tent platform on rocky island); and for preserving the social experience (e.g. site bounding to contain sprawl). Use construction materials and techniques that blend with the natural setting and acquire necessary permits.
- Continue with site-specific closures as necessary to protect ecological and cultural values.
- Create a framework to assess the development potential of each island; apply analysis technique to each public island to identify opportunities and constraints.
- Create an Operations Manual that specifies a ladder of site management techniques, options, and practices in line with the objectives stated in this plan. (See Site Maintenance, p. 33.)

## **4. Fair Use Allocation**

### Management Issue

There is a public perception that commercial and non-profit group use is greater than that of the general public on certain popular public Trail islands.

### Background Information

According to data collected by MITA volunteer stewards and caretakers as well as information submitted by visitors in logbooks and use logs, recreational use on the state-owned

Trail islands increased by 50% between 1996 and 2003. The input suggests that commercial and non-profit organized groups—camps, kayak outfitters, schooner patrons, boy and girl scouts, schools, etc. —caused much of this increase.

In 2003, three of the 45 state-owned islands were open for day use only and 42 were available for both day and overnight use. Overall data from the logbooks on 29 public islands with both day and overnight use in 2002 indicated that of the 3,500 visitors that signed in, 52% were there for a day stop and 48% were camping. (See Appendix B:6-7.) Over the years, concern has been raised about the large size of some day users, including schooner parties on one public island in particular, *Hells Half Acre*, and local families who frequent the public islands for lobster bakes and other daytime gatherings. In general, day visitors focus their activities on rocks, ledges, and trails while campers use these areas along with the tent sites.

In an effort to promote equitable use on the public islands between different groups with different lengths of stay, the Bureau, MITA, and visitors themselves created the Sharing Ethics Principles in 2002. These specific guidelines were incorporated into Leave No Trace principle seven, Be Considerate of Other Visitors. Between 2001 and 2003, as the number of organized entities using the islands increased, “small group” campsites were established on nine islands in an effort to ensure camping spaces for individuals and families.

### Desired Outcome

The general public and organized groups will have an equitable opportunity to visit the public islands for day and overnight use. All visitors will practice an ethic of sharing.

### Recommended Actions

- Maintain voluntary guidelines:
  1. Review the Sharing Ethics Principles annually (as part of LNT principle seven) and increase outreach to groups about island etiquette. (See Appendix D:1, p.7.)
  2. Continue to establish “small group” sites where appropriate.

- Continue to observe general public and organized group use levels through volunteer monitoring programs, island caretakers, logbooks, and coastal island use logs.
- Identify island sites that may be better suited to day or overnight use and consider managing as separate day use and camping sites.
- Establish “group use only” sites and/or islands where appropriate.
- Establish a voluntary group registration system by region (not by island) to help coordinate use. (This process would convey no right to use; it would not be a reservation system.)
- Develop a program whereby groups submit use logs at the end of the season.
- Set up an Allocation Task Force to develop registration/allocation/permit systems and enforcement protocols to ensure compliance with carrying capacity limits in anticipation of a time when sheer numbers may outstrip voluntary guidelines. (See Enforcement, p. 38.)
- Involve the public in the decision-making process and communicate new guidelines and rules in a timely manner. (See Partnerships & Collaboration, p. 31 and Visitor Education, p. 31.)

## **5. Impacts**

### **a. Ecological, Cultural, & Aesthetic**

#### Management Issue

Recreational use may impact the islands’ ecological, cultural, and aesthetic resources, the extent of which is determined by both the amount of use (number of people) and character of use (low impact or high impact).

#### Background Information

MITA has been educating users about low impact island visitation and responsible Trail travel since 1988. Outreach efforts have focused on providing information to travelers about how

to reduce impact on the fragile island environments and other visitors. While these initiatives succeeded between 1988 and 2003 and overall environmental conditions remain relatively stable as of 2003, impacts continue simply as a result of recreational use. The following is a summary of impacts on the public Trail islands.

Table 8 SUMMARY OF RECREATIONAL USE IMPACTS, 1988-2003		
Ecological	Cultural	Aesthetic
Vegetation trampling Loss of ground cover Soil compaction Soil erosion Tree cutting for firewood Campfire impacts Biohazard of human waste Wildlife disturbance	Shell midden disturbance Graffiti on historic buildings Removing stone walls	Litter Rock art Excessive noise Human and dog waste Fire scars Unattended personal property Tree limbing

As a result of education efforts and collaborative management processes, negative impacts have declined significantly since 1988. As of 2003, visitors are confining their travel to established trails and designated campsites for the most part. Sensitivity to wildlife habitat has been raised, thus reducing disturbance. Most notably, perhaps, is the vast reduction in aesthetic impacts Trail wide. Whereas litter, human waste, and other social concerns were prevalent in the mid to late 1990s, they are relatively non-existent in 2003.

Desired Outcome

Sound management actions and low impact practices by educated users will protect the islands' ecological, cultural, and aesthetic values.

Recommended Actions

- Monitor and mitigate all human impacts—environmental, cultural, and aesthetic:
  1. Continue to disseminate Leave No Trace information to users, both on the mainland and the islands. (See Visitor Education, p. 31 and Appendix D.)

2. Continue with island site maintenance through volunteer and caretaker programs and take immediate action when impacts occur. (See Site Maintenance, p. 33.)
  3. Continue with volunteer and caretaker monitoring programs as well as the annual island evaluations by staff. (See Environmental & Social Monitoring, p. 35.)
  4. Continue to identify the “high impact” individuals and groups and increase education to encourage compliance to voluntary guidelines.
  5. Continue with site-specific closures to protect the island resources.
  6. Continue with the annual State Island Report, a summary of impacts, stewardship services, and recommended actions for each island submitted to the Bureau at the end of each boating season.
- Create an Operations Manual that specifies a ladder of site management techniques, options, and practices in line with the objectives stated in this plan. (See Site Maintenance, p. 33.)
  - Protect the past, present, and future resources on the public Trail islands through partnership projects with the appropriate state agencies. (See Environmental & Social Monitoring, p. 35.)

## **b. Wildlife**

### Management Issue

Coastal island recreational use—including both travels to and from islands and time on the properties—can impact sensitive wildlife species and habitat areas. While the public Trail islands do not contain any significant wildlife resources (as defined by IF&W) directly on their shores as of 2003, the dynamic nature of animals may bring species to the islands at any time. In addition, boaters traveling the Trail may pass sensitive habitats during their trips.

### Background Information

When the initial public island survey was completed in the late 1970s, islands with significant wildlife habitat were transferred to the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.

The 40 remaining public islands that became the Maine Island Trail were considered appropriate for recreational use. Since that time, MITA has been educating island users about concerns on the coast of Maine—nesting seabirds, ospreys, eagles, and seals—through its Guidebook, newsletter, *Fragile Islands* brochure, island signs, and other outreach materials. The Association has also distributed a USF&W brochure called Island Ethics to help increase awareness about nesting seabirds on the coast. In addition, MITA volunteer stewards have been monitoring the public islands for signs of human impacts on plant and animal life as well as educating island visitors on-site about wildlife needs. Since its inception, MITA has discouraged the bringing of pets on the Trail in order to minimize habitat disturbance and harassment.

Recognizing that animals shift and move, it was understood from the beginning that islands might need to be closed for specific concerns. In 1994, state-owned *Mink Island* in Pleasant Bay was taken off the Trail due to a nesting eagle. It was put back on the Trail in 2002 after monitoring data reported that there was no longer an active eagle nest. In 2002, plans to construct tent platforms on *Stevens Island* off of Jonesport were delayed due to the presence of eagles. *Bangs Island* in Casco Bay, to be added to the Trail in 2004, has a history of nesting eiders. Reports indicate that raccoons from nearby Chebeague Island decimated the eider population. Since Bangs remains a potential nesting site, staff from MITA, BPL, and IF&W will conduct a wildlife-human use compatibility study in spring, 2004 to determine the parameters for its inclusion on the Trail.

Wildlife impacts are not a concern just on the public islands, but rather along the entire Trail route. There are many sensitive habitat islands, protected by IF&W, US Fish and Wildlife, or non-profit organizations such as Maine Coast Heritage Trust and The Nature Conservancy, in proximity to the Trail corridor.

### Desired Outcome

Educated boaters will be sensitive to wildlife values along the Maine Island Trail and as a result, recreational island use, including travel to and from the islands, will not adversely impact

animals. Signs of rare, threatened, or endangered species will trigger monitoring by the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and may result in potential site or island closures.

#### Recommended Actions

- Work with IF&W, USF&WS, and non-profit agencies that protect significant wildlife habitat on the coast to map sensitive locations that are proximate to the Maine Island Trail corridor.
- Educate island users about how to respect wildlife on the public islands and in surrounding areas. (See Visitor Education, p. 31 and Appendix D:1, pp.5-7.)
- Train stewards to identify signs of wildlife. (See Environmental & Social Monitoring, p. 35.)
- Report observations to the BPL, which in turn will report them to IF&W.
- Change public island Trail status if significant wildlife establishes residence on the islands.

### **c. Campfires**

#### Management Issue

Some island visitors believe that campfires enhance the island recreational experience. However, campfires pose significant impacts and risks that require intensive management.

#### Background Information

The most notable risk associated with campfires on islands is the potential of a runaway fire. Island fires have a high chance of spreading due to changeable winds, interconnected root systems, organic soils, and the lack of services to extinguish them. They frequently burn much of the organic matter that has built up over decades and is essential to maintaining plant cover. In addition, firewood harvesting is detrimental to the island ecosystem because it robs the thin island soils of a vital source of replenishment. Aesthetic impacts related to campfires include cutting, trampled, bare forest floors, fire scars, and renegade fire pits often filled with garbage.

Fortunately, as of 2003, there has only been one reported small wildfire on a public Trail island; this fire did not damage the mature forest, however it did scorch the shrub growth. MITA has recommended no fires on the Trail since its inception.

To provide the opportunity for responsible, low impact campfires on the state islands, the Bureau has put forth the following policy. As of 2003, open fires are allowed: (1) below the mean high tide, with a permit, using only driftwood for fuel, (2) in fire pits provided by the Bureau (*Jewell*, *Little Snow*, *Fort* and *Thief* have sanctioned fire rings), using only driftwood for fuel. These low impact fire locations may help reduce the risk of illegal fires being kindled in unsafe locations. Local or regional fire bans apply to the coastal islands.

In addition, as of 2003, nine public islands have been designated “no fires” islands: *Basin* in East Casco Bay (extremely flammable pine needle forest floor), *Perkins* in the Kennebec River (extremely flammable pine needle forest floor), *John* and *Little Crow* in the Mount Desert Region (tiny size and location), *Mink*, *The Sands*, and *Little Water* near Jonesport (tiny fragile nature), and two day use islands: *Bar* and *Indian Point* in Casco Bay.

Between 1988 and 2003, monitoring data revealed that there are certain islands that have a tradition of campfire use resulting in some abuses. The islands with heavy and/or detrimental campfire use include: *Little Chebeague*, *Jewell*, *Little Snow*, *Thief*, and *Hells Half Acre*. As of 2003, there are designated fire rings on *Jewell* (installed, 1992), *Little Snow* (installed, pre-Trail), *Fort* (installed, pre-Trail), and *Thief* (installed, pre-Trail).

Lastly, compliance with fire permits has been a significant problem since 1988. With no enforcement, most island users ignore the requirement to obtain a fire permit.

### Desired Outcome

Visitors will cook on cook stoves. When they choose to have fires, island users will build them only in approved locations with appropriate fuels and permits.

### Recommended Actions

- The Bureau will continue with the 2003 fire policy. This policy will be reviewed, reevaluated, and updated annually by the managing partners.
  1. Open fires are allowed below the mean high tide line with a permit using driftwood for fuel or in fire pits sanctioned by the Bureau using driftwood for fuel (*Jewell, Little Snow, Fort, and Thief* have established fire rings). Because of *Jewell's* size, collecting dead and downed wood away from the camping areas is acceptable.
  2. No fires allowed on *Bar, Indian Pt, Basin, Perkins, John, Little Crow, Mink, The Sands, and Little Water*.
- Educate the boating public about the risks of fires, guidelines, the need to acquire a permit for fires below the high tide line, how to build a safe low impact fire, and the fact that fires may not be a viable option (always carry a cook stove). Work with the Maine Forest Service for point source education at the time a permit is requested. (See Visitor Education, p. 31.)
- Continue to train volunteer stewards and caretakers to maintain designated fire rings and dismantle renegade rings. (Site Maintenance, p. 33.)
- Continue to monitor and evaluate visitor trends in relation to frequency and desire to have a campfire. (See Environmental & Social Monitoring, p. 35.)
- Continue to train field stewards to inquire with users about appropriate permits and report back to the managing entity about compliance levels. (See Enforcement, p. 38.)

### **d. Human Waste**

#### Management Issue

While many individuals and groups have embraced the carry-off principle, human bodily waste on the islands is an ongoing management challenge.

## Background Information

Exposed human waste is a biohazard. Digging cat holes to bury waste is inappropriate on islands due to erosion threats of shallow, fragile soils and high visitor use. Further, it is illegal to discharge human waste into U.S. waters within three miles of the mainland.<sup>5</sup>

Pit privy buildings have only been constructed on public islands in specific, need-based situations where setback guidelines and soil conditions could be met. (Note: The Maine Plumbing Code requires a 100 foot setback from the normal high water mark on the shore; most islands are too small to meet this standard.) There are privies on two popular Casco Bay islands, *Little Chebeague* (one privy built in 2001) and *Jewell* (four privies built in 1992), and there is a privy on *Fort Island* in the Damariscotta River. Trained island stewards maintain the sanitary conditions of these structures throughout the season. (See Site Maintenance, p. 33.)

As recreational use has increased on the state-owned properties, educating users about appropriate carry-off methods on islands without privies has become a priority for the Maine Island Trail Association. By providing techniques, resources, and guidance through its publications and Leave No Trace workshops, MITA has worked diligently to inspire the user public to take responsibility for disposing of their own human waste on the mainland. With the nationwide boom in sea kayaking, there are now several commercial products for human waste disposal on the market.

## Desired Outcome

All island users will carry off solid human waste and toilet paper to the mainland and dispose of it properly. Where privies exist, visitors will use them respectfully.

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<sup>5</sup> Friends of Casco Bay, Pumpout brochure.

### Recommended Actions

- Continue to expand human waste carry-off resource list and marine pump-out station list annually; work with marinas and campgrounds to make more pump-out stations available.
- Continue to provide human waste resource lists and training to public island visitors. (See Visitor Education, p. 31.)
- Continue to train MITA stewards to maintain the existing privies and to clean up after others when necessary. (See Site Maintenance, p. 33.)
- Work with commercial kayak retailers to encourage the sale of portable toilets that can be carried in kayaks as standard equipment when selling sea kayaks.
- Consider a pilot project whereby island stewards provide carry off methods, such as the Wag Bag™, to island visitors who are not prepared.
- Construct new privies as a last resort. (See Recreational Development on Individual Islands, p. 18.)

### **e. Pets**

#### Management Issue

Pets pose significant threats to island ecosystems, wildlife, and the visitor experience.

#### Background Information

Coastal cruising boaters often travel with their pets. Public islands that are proximate to deep-water anchorages, therefore, are often frequented by pets and their owners. These islands include: *Little Chebeague, Jewell, Little Snow, Basin, Harbor, and Hells Half Acre*. Owners typically bring their pets ashore for exercise and bathroom needs. Often pets are off-leash, excrement is left behind, and wildlife, vegetation and recreational users are disturbed. In most

cases, pets do not stay overnight, but on several popular local use islands families camp with their dogs (*Little Chebeague, Jewell, and Little Snow*). Since the Trail's inception in 1988, MITA has recommended no pets along the entire Trail.

### Desired Outcome

Pet owners will be educated about the impacts of their animals on islands and will be encouraged to leave them at home. If pets are brought ashore, owners will keep them on leash at all times and will remove their waste.

### Recommended Actions

- The Bureau will continue with the 2003 pet policy: leashed pets are allowed on public islands; dog waste must be carried off the islands. This policy will be reviewed, reevaluated, and updated annually by the managing partners.
- Continue to educate the boating public about the risks of pets on island ecosystems and about the pet guidelines in all outreach materials. Focus efforts on owners of cruising boats and local traditional users. (See Visitor Education, p. 31.)
- Train volunteer stewards and caretakers to pick up dog feces when necessary. (See Site Maintenance, p. 33.)
- Consider a pilot project whereby island stewards provide waste bags and leashes (all from recycled products) to island visitors who come unprepared.

## **B. MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS**

### **1. Partnerships & Collaboration**

A model based on voluntary compliance to recreational use guidelines must involve island stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process. If those who care about Maine's islands participate in shaping the future of the public properties on the Trail, they are more likely to adhere to recommendations in the field or support them from local coastal communities. During the life of this plan, the public will be involved in island management decisions to ensure compliance and to build support.

#### Program Priorities

- Continue to host at least one island stakeholder meeting annually to solicit public input and guidance on island management.
- Continue to work with local coastal communities to increase participation.
- Continue to build and strengthen partnerships with key user groups, such as the Maine Association of Sea Kayaking Guides and Instructors (MASKGI), the Maine Schooners Association, camps, outdoor schools, scouts, and others.
- Continue to set up working groups of island stakeholder representatives to tackle new strategies or challenges laid out in the plan (e.g. working group to explore the concept of a registration system).

### **2. Visitor Education**

Despite extensive education efforts as of 2003, not all public island users are receiving necessary information about low impact techniques, island stewardship, and voluntary guidelines before they get to the islands. This is mainly due to the fact that there is no central access point or registration system by which to disseminate literature. This plan directs island managers to

increase education efforts so that as many current and potential users of the public islands learn about responsible, low impact use prior to visiting the Trail. In addition, increased on-site education will ensure that all users of Maine's public islands have the knowledge needed to become low impact visitors.

### Program Priorities

- Continue partnership with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.
- Continue to enrich existing and develop new education and outreach materials.
- Continue to distribute educational information about low impact use of the Trail through the following venues; expand these efforts where appropriate:
  1. Leave No Trace workshops
  2. Island stakeholder meetings
  3. Slideshows and presentations
  4. Coastal boating and conservation events
  5. Spring mailing (with brochures) to group users, point-of-purchase retail and rental shops, marinas/boat yards, yacht clubs, and coastal conservation organizations (add coastal visitor centers, chambers of commerce, and harbormasters)
  6. *Your Islands and Parks on the Coast* brochure distribution by request (through the Bureau)
  7. MITA publications and web site (add more detailed Leave No Trace information)
- Continue with existing on-island initiatives:
  1. Train field stewards to inform users about low impact practices.
  2. Stock *Fragile Islands* brochures in the logbook containers. (See Appendix D:2.)
  3. Post educational signs on the public Trail islands. (See Appendix D:3.)
  4. Utilize island logbooks as an inter-user communication and education tool. (See Appendix B:8.)

- Set up a Visitor Education Task Force to establish a long-term plan for the education of users to the public Trail islands, including strategies and programs on the mainland and the islands.
- Consider new programs:
  1. Targeted education about safe campfires, fire prevention, and fire control through the Maine Forest Service at the point of permit request.
  2. Partnership with Registered Maine Sea Kayak Guides, who are recognized and respected as knowledgeable outdoor leaders, to help in the field.
  3. School programs in Maine’s coastal communities to reach the future generation of island users.
  4. Focused education of coastal cruisers through presentations at yacht clubs.
  5. Additional Caretaker Programs as a means to increase outreach efforts on the Trail.
  6. Outreach to users through registration or permit systems (if implemented).
  7. Outreach to users at launch ramps through signs or brochure distribution focused on how to be a steward of the Maine coast (not just specific to islands).

### **3. Site Maintenance**

Maintaining the designated use areas, island signs, and logbooks, and addressing negative human impacts requires substantial time and effort during the boating season. Through the implementation of the following strategies, the recreational use areas on the islands—access points, footpaths, campsites, fire rings, and privies—will be better cared for by the island visitors and will be more efficiently maintained by volunteers and island caretakers. Increased education about low impact island visitation will reduce the incidents of negative human impacts, thus decreasing the amount of time that stewards have to attend to adverse conditions, thus increasing the opportunity to check more sites on the Trail.

## Program Priorities

- Continue to provide proactive stewardship for designated public use areas on the islands between May and October through volunteers and staff:
  1. Maintain access mechanisms such as erosion steps.
  2. Maintain paths from access points to campsites and walking trails where they exist.
  3. Maintain primitive campsites, including sites that have been modified with boundary logs or platforms.

*For 1-3, remove obstructions such as overgrown limbs or blow downs using the least intrusive method—hand trimming preferred over chainsaw.*
  4. Maintain safe condition and structure of existing fire pits to Maine Forest Service specifications.
  5. Maintain sanitary conditions of provided privies. Clean privies and treat with enzyme once a month throughout the season.
- Continue to maintain island signs and logbooks. Post new signs and logbooks in the spring, monitor in the summer, and retrieve logbooks in the fall.
- Continue to provide reactive stewardship when negative human impacts occur.
  1. Stewards take immediate action in the case of litter (removed), rock art (dismantled), renegade fire pits (dismantled), and human waste and dog excrement (removed).
  2. Staff and stewards take planned action in the case of unattended personal property (state presence required for removal), defacing of historic property (state presence required for action), soil compaction, erosion, depletion of the wood source, loss of vegetation, campfire impacts, and wildlife disturbance.
- Create an Operations Manual that specifies a ladder of site management techniques, options, and practices in line with the objectives stated in this plan.

#### **4. Environmental & Social Monitoring**

Monitoring island conditions and social impacts is necessary to provide relevant information for ongoing recreational use management decisions. Between 2004 and 2014, monitoring programs will be expanded or new programs will be put into place to observe and assess social and environmental conditions. Based on monitoring data, carrying capacities will be assessed and maintained within a level of acceptable change.

##### Program Priorities

- Continue with existing monitoring programs to collect anecdotal and quantitative data during the island use season. (See Appendix C.)
  1. Environmental monitoring: soil compaction, erosion, depletion of the wood source, loss of vegetation, campfire impacts, wildlife disturbance, and forest health.
  2. Social monitoring: litter, rock art, renegade fire pits, human waste and dog excrement, unattended personal property, defacing of historic property.
- Set up a Monitoring Task Force to develop a long term monitoring plan for the public islands. Identify the social and environmental indicators for visitor experience and use area conditions; define standards for the level of acceptable change; determine field research methods to monitor conditions and experiences against established standards; enhance existing monitoring programs and data collection techniques to align with new monitoring goals. (See Social/Ecological Carrying Capacity, p. 15.)
- Partner with appropriate state agencies to protect resources on the public islands. Integrate cooperative efforts with new monitoring programs.
  1. Maine Natural Areas Program. Initiate plant surveys on select public islands to enhance or establish baseline data. Conduct inventories on newly acquired or transferred public islands before opening them to Trail use. Address the issue of invasive species on certain public islands.

2. Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC). Complete surveying on islands with significant archeological sites: *Little Chebeague, Jewell, Fort, and Apple Islands*. Conduct survey on new public island acquisitions, including *Stevens, Bangs and Elm Islands*. Archeological sites on these islands will be monitored and reports will be shared with MHPC for comment (appropriate staff from the MHPC or other state agencies will address adverse impacts).
  3. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. (See Wildlife, p. 23.)
  4. Maine Forest Service. Conduct forest health inventory to assess impacts from the natural environment, insects, and disease. Consider developing a forest-health monitoring program using trained volunteers.
- Continue with island logbooks; consider asking specific questions about social and environmental change to solicit visitor input.

## **PART IV**

### **OTHER CONCERNS**

## **A. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

### **1. Roles of the Managing Partners**

#### Management Issue

As of 2003, the demands for managing increasing access to the public Trail islands have outpaced available funding and staff resources at both the BPL and MITA, and will continue to do so if the goals identified in this plan are to be met successfully. It is anticipated that the total cost of implementing this plan will exceed \$5,000,000.

#### Background Information

MITA and the BPL have been working together since the Trail's inception in 1988. MITA receives an annual stipend from the state for stewarding, monitoring, and managing access to the public Trail islands. The Bureau's financial contribution in 2003 represented approximately one quarter of the total cost of MITA's work on the public islands, with the remainder funded through private donations.

#### Desired Outcome

The long term environmental health and recreational availability of the public Trail islands will be ensured through effective stewardship, management, and funding.

#### Recommended Actions

- Continue to review, on an annual basis, the contract agreement between MITA and the BPL for stewardship services, including caretaker programs.
- Identify funding sources for implementation of strategies outlined in this plan.

- Build a coalition of support for public island management and consider partnering with appropriate organizations to help create a new entity to fund and manage these state-owned islands.

## **2. Enforcement**

### Management Issue

While compliance with regulations and voluntary guidelines by island visitors has been successful overall, vandalism and disruptive behavior does occur on occasion. In addition, since the Trail's inception in 1988, fire permit regulations and trip leader/guide licensing have not been adhered to successfully.

### Background Information

As of 2003, the management presence on the islands has been limited to volunteers and caretakers who have no responsibility in enforcement. Education is the first choice in securing compliance with guidelines or regulations. When individuals fail to respond and the breach is significant, formal action is appropriate.

The Bureau has conducted law enforcement training for certain field staff. However, these individuals have no authority to make arrests. Other agencies having jurisdiction along the coast have limited resources to address related issues on the Bureau-managed islands on a regular basis. The U.S. Coast Guard and the Maine Marine Patrol have offered to assist on *Jewell Island* either through exercise of their authority to enforce laws on the water in the anchorage, or by transporting police officers from the Portland Police Department.

### Desired Outcome

Adequate law enforcement will be provided to protect the safety and recreational experience of island visitors as well as the natural and cultural resources of the islands.

### Recommended Actions

- If patterns of depreciative behavior increase, expand education efforts by volunteers, Registered Maine Guides, or through additional caretakers.
- Improve coordination with other enforcement agencies; identify law enforcement agency with jurisdiction/availability to respond to each island.
- Establish plan for enforcement of fire permits, trip leader/guide licenses, and potential reservations/camping permits in the future.
- Keep detailed “incident reports” of all known violations.

## **3. Fire Control**

### Management Issue

The mature forests on many of the public Trail islands contain numerous dead and downed trees from weather and disease resulting in a significant amount of fuel buildup. Campfires are difficult to regulate and control especially since the islands are remote. High and changeable winds increase the likelihood of an island wildfire spreading quickly through low vegetation and forested areas.

### Background Information

Firefighting on a Bureau-managed island is the responsibility of the municipality in which the island is located. The Maine Forest Service will accept reports of wildfire, notify the appropriate town officials, and assist when possible.

### Desired Outcome

Wildfires on the public islands will be prevented and controlled.

### Recommended Actions

- Reevaluate and update fire policy annually (See Campfires, p. 25.)
- Continue coordination with the Maine Forest Service in the issuance of fire permits and their enforcement on the islands.
- Educate island visitors about fire prevention and about the process for summoning firefighting personnel. (See Visitor Education, p. 31.)
- Manage fire use and fire use sites on individual islands. (See Site Maintenance, p. 33.)

## **4. Insect/Disease Control & Nuisance Species**

### Management Issue

Brown tail moths, ticks, raccoons, spruce budworm, and invasive plant species such as burdock and Asiatic bittersweet cause ecological and human use concerns.

### Background Information

Brown tail moths are prevalent in the Casco Bay region. In addition to invading and damaging the health of live trees, the hairs of the brown tail moths may cause extreme respiratory problems and rashes in humans. Tick prevalence ranges from minimal occurrences to infestation, from Casco Bay up into Muscongus Bay. However, as of 2003, there have been no reports of Lyme disease from ticks found on the public Trail islands.

The spruce budworm, the spruce beetle, and several other insects and diseases are aggressively altering the mature forests on many of the islands along the coast. By effectively weakening the trees, these pests make them more susceptible to blow down during storms. Invasive and native plants found on the islands cause a range of social and environmental

problems from poison ivy and burdock annoying island visitors during their stays to bittersweet enveloping stands of trees.

### Desired Outcome

Troublesome insects, animals, and plant species will be controlled to reduce visitor health risks and to prevent environmental degradation, especially as it relates to forest health.

### Recommended Actions

- Continue to educate island users about the presence of ticks and brown tail moths as well as the risks associated with exposure. (See Visitor Education, p. 31.)
- Work with state wildlife biologists and foresters to monitor and address invasive plants and pests on the public Trail islands; take action when resources are available.

## **5. Leases**

At the Trail's inception in 1988, a 20-year lease was granted to a family for use of Little Jewell Island in Casco Bay. The lease expires in 2007, and may not be renewed according to the legislative resolve that authorized it. Beginning in 2005, the Bureau will assess the suitability of Little Jewell for recreational or administrative use.

## **B. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES & CONCERNS**

### **1. Promotion of the Resource and Boating**

#### Management Issue

Promotion of coastal island recreation in Maine by local and state tourism agencies, boating retailers and outfitters, national outdoor magazines, and others has added to the interest in Maine's islands. As of 2003, the demand exceeds the current supply of public island opportunities and the capacity for managing that use.

#### Background Information

When coastal island recreation is advertised as a general concept, the perception of the potential visitor is that many or all of the thousands of properties are available for recreation. Even though the Bureau-managed islands make up a very small percentage of the number and area of islands along the coast of Maine, they comprise a large portion of the lands where public recreational access is assured. Thus, these properties receive the majority of use resulting from general promotion. Coordination between island managers and tourism information providers has not always been effective in the past.

While these state-owned islands are *for the public*, increasing numbers of visitors pose a threat to the experience that is being managed for, namely a high quality coastal island recreational experience that conserves the outstanding natural and cultural island resources.

#### Desired Outcome

Public information about the state-owned Trail properties will be consistent with the availability of the resource, the condition of the islands, user management capability, and the coastal island recreation opportunities.

### Recommended Actions

- Create a unified message about the availability of low impact, public island access opportunities on the coast of Maine (island managers).
- Determine and strengthen appropriate communication channels among the island managers, the entities promoting the Maine's coastal islands, and the public.
- Provide appropriate, consistent, and accurate information to media outlets.

## **2. Impacts from Nearby Waters**

### Management Issue

The establishment of structures such as moorings or operations such as aquaculture in the waters surrounding the public islands may adversely affect access to and availability of the islands for a coastal recreational experience.

### Background Information

Recreational use along the Maine Island Trail has coexisted with the working waterfront and other enterprises that have a longstanding tradition on the coast of Maine. Intensive development, such as commercial or private moorings or aquaculture operations, is a growing and traditional use of Maine's waters.

However, moorings facilitate access that may lead to overuse of adjacent public islands. A crowded anchorage may have visual and audible effects on the experience of island visitors. Aquaculture operations, particularly finfish pens, often use a large number of structures that extend above the water's surface, thus heightening their visual impact. Noise and lights from mechanical feeding operations can also adversely impact the coastal island experience.

### Desired Outcome

The negative impacts of permanent structures and facilities in nearby waters will be mitigated where possible to protect the coastal island recreational experience.

### Recommended Actions

- Analyze potential impacts of proposed developments on island recreation and provide that analysis to regulatory agencies—the Department of Marine Resources, the Army Corps of Engineers, and local harbormasters.
- Collaborate with all stakeholders to protect the coastal island recreational experience.
- Strengthen working relationships with coastal communities.
- Work with regulatory agencies to develop standards that address recreational impacts in their permitting procedures.

## **3. Mainland Launch Sites**

### Management Issue

Launch sites close to public islands increase access and may create a problem of overuse on the islands. Limited mainland access may help to protect the Trail's remote character, but also may unnecessarily hamper recreational users and cause them to patronize private launch ramps. Managing mainland access locations and numbers of access points can affect Trail use and the character of the experience. Coordinating with managers of these access points and providing information to launchers can help educate visitors before reaching the islands.

### Background Information

Mainland public access points serve local residents, commercial fishermen, and a variety of recreational users. In most instances, visitors to the public islands represent only a fraction of

the population at a given launch. However, some island visitors tie up an inappropriate amount of time and space at these locations, frustrating other ramp users. This may create ill will.

Because of the large number of mainland access points along the length of the Maine Island Trail and the wide variety of users at each of these launch sites, it is not practical to manage visitor numbers or to direct specific education efforts at these locations.

#### Desired Outcome

Access by island goers from mainland launch ramps does not unreasonably interfere with other coastal activities and complements the coastal island recreational experience.

#### Recommended Actions

- Continue to educate island visitors about launch site ethics and customs.
- Monitor the development of boat access sites and review potential impacts.
- Provide analysis of the impacts for consideration by regulatory agencies.
- Consider increasing mainland access points in critical locations through partnerships or purchase.

## **PART V**

# **CONCLUSION**

## **SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

### Recreational Use Issues & Actions

#### **Public Access Along the Maine Island Trail**

- Continue to evaluate the need for and location of new public use sites.
- Inventory existing Bureau-managed lands for public use opportunities.
- Acquire new sites through partnerships and purchase.
- Continue to diversify the Trail to include additional mainland campgrounds and properties to ease the pressure on the fragile island ecosystems.

#### **Social/Ecological Carrying Capacity**

- Continue to implement and refine voluntary guidelines (such as length of stay, camping capacities, and single party designations) as the preferred strategy, with strong education efforts and on-site monitoring.
- Adopt new guideline for group size (10 persons maximum) beginning in 2004.
- Consider the possibility of transitioning from voluntary guidelines to regulation.
- Hold reservation/allocation/permit system as last resort. Set up an Allocation Task Force to plan for such a system and related enforcement needs.
- Involve the public in the decision-making process at each step of the way and prioritize timely education when guidelines change.

#### **Recreational Development on Individual Islands**

- Develop and apply analysis technique to identify use opportunities on each public island.
- Continue to designate use areas open for recreation on all public islands.
- Employ site hardening techniques where necessary for resource protection, for providing recreational opportunity where none exists, and for protecting the social experience.
- Create an Operations Manual that specifies site management techniques and practices.

#### **Fair Use Allocation**

- Continue with voluntary guidelines (such as sharing ethics principles and small group sites) as the preferred strategy, with strong education efforts and on-site monitoring.
- Consider implementing new strategies: group use sites; day use areas; web-based voluntary registration system or use log submission.
- Hold reservation/allocation/permit system as last resort. Set up an Allocation Task Force to plan for such a system and related enforcement needs.
- Involve the public in the decision-making process at each step of the way and prioritize timely education when guidelines change.

## **Recreational Use Impacts**

- Continue with education, site maintenance, monitoring, closures, and annual assessment programs to manage all human use impacts.
- Develop a hierarchy of management actions to be taken if negative impacts to an island or the public islands overall are unacceptably high.

### ***Wildlife***

- Work with agencies that protect significant wildlife habitat on the coast to map sensitive locations proximate to the Maine Island Trail corridor.
- Continue to prioritize education about wildlife sensitivities and train stewards to identify signs of wildlife.
- Work with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to monitor wildlife concerns and to close islands, or parts of islands, if significant wildlife sensitive to disturbance is present.

### ***Campfires***

- Review the BPL island campfire policy annually; update as needed.
- Continue to prioritize education about the risks of fires, guidelines and permit requirements, and the need to always carry a cook stove.
- Continue to monitor and manage fire use sites.
- Explore partnership with the Maine Marine Patrol and the Maine Forest Service to increase permit enforcement presence on the islands.

### ***Human Waste***

- Continue with human waste carry-off guidelines, except where privies exist.
- Continue to prioritize education through waste disposal resource lists and training.
- Construct privies as a last resort.

### ***Pets***

- Review the BPL pet policy annually; update as needed.
- Continue to prioritize education about the impacts of pets on island ecosystems.
- Continue to encourage island visitors to leave pets at home or, if pets are brought ashore, to have them leashed at all times and to pick up after them.

## **Recreation Management Programs**

### **Partnerships & Collaboration**

- Continue to host at least one public meeting each year to solicit input and participation in the on-going management planning process from the island stakeholder community.
- Continue to set up working groups of island stakeholder representatives as needed to tackle new management recommendations.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with island users and coastal conservation groups.

- Prioritize working with local coastal communities to increase participation in the island management process.

### **Visitor Education**

- Continue partnership with Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.
- Continue to enrich existing education programs to reach the expanding boating public with low impact island use information.
- Prioritize training coastal Maine Guides and trip leaders in low impact island ethics.
- Set up a Visitor Education Task Force to develop a long-term plan for public education.
- Consider caretaker programs in other regions of the Trail.
- Consider new education programs focused on key user groups.

### **Site Maintenance**

- Continue to provide proactive stewardship for designated public use areas on the islands between May and October.
- Continue to maintain island signs and logbooks.
- Continue to provide reactive stewardship when negative human impacts occur.
- Create an Operations Manual that specifies site management techniques and practices.

### **Environmental & Social Monitoring**

- Continue with existing monitoring programs to collect anecdotal and quantitative data during the island use season in the short term.
- Set up a Monitoring Task Force to develop a long term monitoring plan to track environmental and social changes against established indicators and standards.
- Partner with Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Maine Forest Service to survey new islands and monitor significant resources on existing islands.
- Enhance volunteer monitoring programs and data collection techniques to align with new monitoring initiatives.
- Continue with island logbooks.

### Administrative Issues

#### **Roles of Managing Partners**

- Continue to review and renew the annual contract between MITA and the BPL, identify funding sources, and consider the creation of a new management coalition to oversee the public Trail islands.

## **Enforcement**

- If patterns of depreciative behavior increase, expand education and monitoring efforts through volunteers and caretakers.

## **Fire Control**

- Continue to review the BPL fire policy annually.
- Continue coordination with the Maine Forest Service in the issuance of fire permits, education, and enforcement.
- Continue to prioritize education about the risks of fires, fire prevention, and about how to summon firefighting personnel if needed.
- Continue to manage fire use and fire use sites on individual islands.

## **Insects/Disease Control & Nuisance Species**

- Continue to educate the public about the presence of pests.
- Work with state wildlife biologists and foresters to address resource health concerns.

## **Leases**

- Assess the suitability of Little Jewell for recreational or administrative use in 2005.

## External Influences & Concerns

### **Promotion of the Resource and Boating**

- Continue to strengthen communication channels between the island managers and the entities promoting Maine's coastal islands.
- Create a unified message and strategy for distribution to appropriate media outlets.

### **Impacts from Nearby Waters**

- Analyze impacts of proposed developments on island recreation and provide results to regulatory agencies to assist in their permitting processes.
- Advocate for or against issues as appropriate.

### **Mainland Launch Sites**

- Monitor the development of boat access sites and review potential impacts with regulatory agencies as appropriate.
- Consider increasing mainland access points in critical locations through partnerships or purchase.

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# **PART VI: APPENDIX EXHIBITS**

## Appendix A: Acknowledgements

1. Planning Advisory Committee Members
2. Administrative Support
3. Grant & Foundation Support

## Appendix B: Trail & Island Information

1. Map of the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail
2. Public Trail Islands by Acre
3. Coastal Island Recreational Experience Spectrum
4. Island Use Guidelines, 2004
5. Island Carrying Capacity Guidelines, 2004
6. Visitor Logbook Data: Amounts and Types of Use, 2002
7. Visitor Logbook Data: Camping & Day Use, 2002
8. Sample Logbook Page: Steves Island, 2003

## Appendix C: Field Stewardship Programs

## Appendix D: Visitor Education

1. Leave No Trace on Maine's Islands
2. *Fragile Islands* brochure
3. Sample Island Signs: Steves Island, 2003

## Appendix E: Island Compendium

1. Map of the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail
2. Regional Maps of the Public Islands on the Maine Island Trail
3. Island Information Pages

**Appendix A**

**Acknowledgements**

## **Planning Advisory Committee Members**

Brad Allen, *Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife*  
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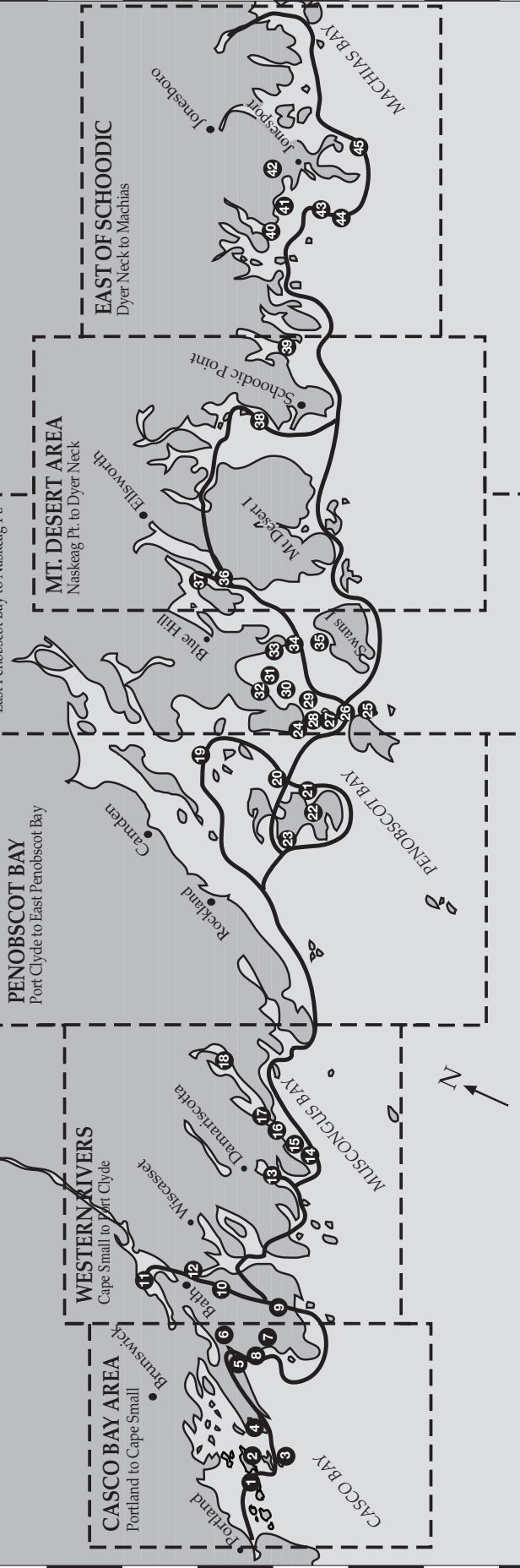
## **Administrative Support**

Leanne Dech • Jim Dugan • Jan Holder

## **Appendix B**

### **Trail & Island Information**

# PUBLIC TRAIL ISLANDS



- 1. Little Chebeague
- 2. Crow-Casco
- 3. Jewell
- 4. Bar-Casco
- 5. Strawberry Creek
- 6. Indian Point
- 7. Basin
- 8. Little Snow

- 9. Perkins
- 10. Goat
- 11. Bird
- 12. Erratic
- 13. Fort
- 14. Little Marsh
- 15. Thief
- 16. Crow-Muscongus
- 17. Strawberry
- 18. Havener Ledge

- 19. East Barred
- 20. Little Thorofare
- 21. Little Hen
- 22. Hay
- 23. Ram

- 24. Weir
- 25. Doliver
- 26. Wheat
- 27. Harbor
- 28. Steves
- 29. Hells Half Acre
- 30. Little Sheep
- 31. Potato
- 32. Apple
- 33. Little Hog
- 34. Sellers

- 35. Hen
- 36. John
- 37. The Hub
- 38. Little Crow
- 39. Dry
- 40. Mink
- 41. Daniels
- 42. Indian River
- 43. Stevens
- 44. The Sands
- 45. Little Water

The island numbers on this map match the numbers at the top right corner of each island page in Appendix E.

## Public Trail Islands by Acre

### Grouping and Comparing Islands by Size

<u>Tiny (&lt;1/2 Acre)</u>	<u>Very Small (1/2-1 Acre)</u>	<u>Small (1-2 Acres)</u>
The Sands	Apple	Doliver
Dry	Mink	Strawberry
Indian River	Potato	East Barred
Little Crow	Weir	Steves
Little Water	Daniels	Basin
John	Little Sheep	Little Snow
Little Hog	Sellers	Strawberry Creek
The Hub	Havener Ledge	Hen
Erratic	Ram-Pen Bay	Wheat
Bar-Casco	Bird	Hells Half Acre
Indian Point	Goat	Crow-Casco
Little Thorofare		Crow-Muscongus
Little Marsh		

*TINY: These islands are so small that recreational use dominates and management options include either day use or a maximum of 4 persons for camping (with a single party designation in many cases).*

*VERY SMALL: Recreational use still dominates and these islands generally have one camping area. Most are single party islands with a capacity of 4-8 persons (with a single party designation in many cases).*

*SMALL: Recreational use still dominates and these islands generally have several camping areas. The capacity range on these islands is 4-12 persons.*

<u>Medium (2-10 Acres)</u>	<u>Large (10-50 Acres)</u>	<u>Very Large (50-250 Acres)</u>
Little Hen (4 acres)	Perkins (15 acres)	Little Chebeague (100 acres)
Hay (5 acres)	Stevens (30 acres)	Jewell (221 acres)
Harbor (7 acres)	Fort (40 acres)	
Thief (9 acres)		

*MEDIUM: These islands are large enough that recreational use becomes secondary to the islands' overall character. The capacity range on these islands is 8-18 persons, and there are several camping areas.*

*LARGE: As the islands grow in size, the recreational use area becomes proportionally smaller. These islands have potential for development for recreational use. The capacity range is 12-16 persons, and there are several camping areas. Perkins and Fort were settled at one time.*

*VERY LARGE: The large nature of these islands gives them a distinct character separate from the recreational use. These islands have potential for development for recreational use. There are no island capacity limits (just the group size maximum of 10 persons), and there are many camping areas. Both Little Chebeague and Jewell were settled at one time.*

## Coastal Island Recreational Experience Spectrum

The Coastal Island Recreational Experience (CIRE) Spectrum describes the range of experience that can be found on the public Trail islands. In the summer of 2003 the islands were sequentially visited and ranked on the basis of nine factors.

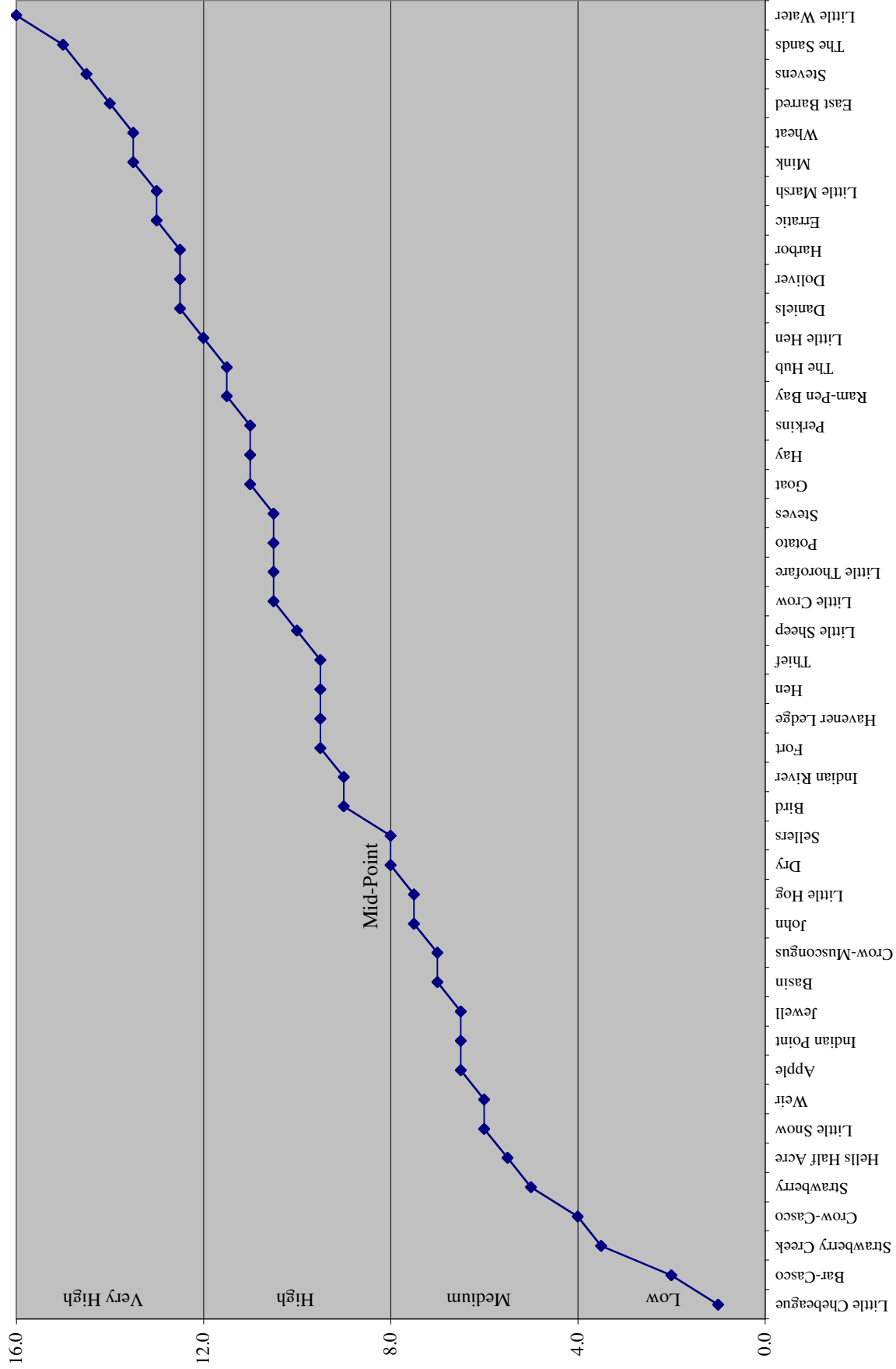
### Factors used to determine CIRE on 45 public Trail islands:

1. Scenic quality of the island itself
2. Scenic quality of the surrounding area
3. Site character (natural, compacted, hardened)
4. Fragility of the island
5. Regional factors (proximity to commercial/residential activity)
6. Island's ability to impart a sense of solitude
7. Island's ability to impact adventure, exploration, and discovery
8. Boating skills required
9. Leave No Trace skills required

The islands with the highest ranking offer the greatest potential for a high quality coastal recreational experience. In general a high classification signifies a combination of: more natural, more scenic, more fragile and or remote, requiring more skill in boating and leave no trace, and a greater potential for a sense of discovery and adventure.

The chart on the following page shows the spectrum for the 45 islands. In summary, more than half of the islands (28) are grouped in the high to very high range, and only four islands are in the low range. Please note that this is a somewhat subjective framework.

# Coastal Island Recreational Experience Spectrum



# Coastal Island Recreational Experience

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## Island Use Guidelines, 2004

*Since 1999, MITA and the BPL have been proactively working with island stakeholders to develop recreational use guidelines for the public Trail islands that protect responsible access and the natural environments. Between 1999 and 2003, the island use guidelines have been updated after public and advisory input. The following text has been excerpted from the Maine Island Trail 2004 Stewardship Handbook & Guidebook; its audience is island users.*

### **VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES**

**Limit your stay.** All public Trail sites are open for day use; the majority of these islands accommodate overnight camping. If you camp, we recommend that you limit your visit to *two nights or less*. If you are a day visitor, please focus your activity to durable surfaces like ledges and beaches which can sustain impact; whenever possible, leave camping areas open and available for overnight visitors.

**Keep group size to a minimum.** In general, we recommend traveling the Trail in parties of 6 persons or fewer to lessen impact on easily-compressed island soils, and to allow for multiple groups of visitors. When planning an overnight trip on public Trail islands, please make sure that your group size is less than the total island capacity so that others can share the space with you. *The maximum group size on the Trail is 10 persons.* ('Single-party islands' are an exception—see below). If your group is larger than 10 persons, consider visiting Warren Island State Park or stay at coastal campgrounds or shoreside lodgings.

**Respect island capacities.** In response to increased use pressures on the coast, we've developed voluntary capacities to help protect natural island environments and to ensure high-quality experiences for visitors. All public Trail islands with overnight camping (except Jewell, Little Chebeague, and Warren) have overall island capacity limits (See Appendix B:5).

**Honor single-party designations.** On certain very small islands, the space available for overnight stays is so limited that we've created the designation of 'single-party island'. These islands are considered full to capacity once a single party is camping there, even if the recommended camping capacity has not been reached. Single-party islands are noted in the capacity table (See Appendix B:5).

### **HELPFUL TIPS**

**Plan alternatives ahead of time.** Charting alternatives before you leave home will help you stay within the capacity and single party limits. The good news is that in most sections of the Trail, there are plenty of nearby options: public or private islands, mainland campgrounds, and local B&B's. Make sure you have the appropriate access permission to private properties, either through the Maine Island Trail Association or the island owners themselves.

**Scout out the situation.** When you arrive at a public island, locate the sign and double-check the camping capacity and low-impact guidelines. Here are some scenarios you might encounter and some suggestions for making the best of the situation:

For single party islands:

- If the island is empty and your group size is equal to or less than island capacity, you're in luck—set up camp.
- If you find tents set up and/or other campers present, determine if it's safe for you to proceed to a nearby alternative island. If it's not safe, make the best of it and squeeze into the existing campsite with the other campers, or bivouac on smooth granite, sand, or gravel—above the tide line, of course!

For islands that accommodate multiple groups:

- If the island is empty and your group size is less than island capacity, set up camp in a designated site that is appropriate to your group size.
- If you find tents set up but no one “home,” determine if your group will fit, based on the available space in the established camping areas.
- If tents are set up and other overnight campers are present, count heads to see if your group will exceed the capacity. If both groups fit and you wish to camp for the night, let the other campers know that you'd like to share the island with them.
- If the island is full, the weather's good, it's early in the day, and there's a nearby alternative, we recommend that you proceed to that site.
- If the island is full, weather's bad, and there's no time before dark or no nearby alternative, share the existing campsite, or bivouac on smooth granite, sand, or gravel.

If the number of people exceeds capacity, make the best of the situation without environmental damage to the island, and without risk at sea to any persons involved. ***In all cases, your safety is paramount. Respect other campers and protect the island's natural environment, but above all, be safe.***

## **ORGANIZED GROUPS**

Organized groups using the public Trail islands are asked to set group size at a level that will allow other groups or individuals to share the island. Again, the maximum group size on the Trail is 10 persons. Please note that all group leaders are required to hold a guide license or camp trip leader permit from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (call 207-287-8000) for more information.

## Island Carrying Capacity Guidelines, 2004

	Camping Capacity	# Camping Areas	Single Party	Small Group Site
<b>CASCO BAY</b>				
Little Chebeague	none	3		
Crow-Casco	10	2		
Jewell	none	10		
Bar-Casco	*	N/A		
Strawberry Creek	6	3		
Indian Point	*	N/A		
Basin	8	1		
Little Snow	10	3		x
<b>WESTERN RIVERS</b>				
Perkins	12	2		x
Goat	4	1	x	
Bird	4	1	x	
Erratic	4	1	x	
Fort	16	3		x
<b>MUSCONGUS BAY</b>				
Little Marsh	2	1	x	
Thief	14	2		x
Crow-Muscongus	12	2		
Strawberry	10	1	x	
Havener Ledge	2	1	x	
<b>PENOBSCOT BAY</b>				
East Barred	7	1	x	
Little Thorofare	2	1	x	
Little Hen	8	2		
Hay	8	1	x	
Ram-Pen Bay	4	1		x
<b>DEER ISLE</b>				
Weir	5	1	x	
Doliver	4	1	x	
Wheat	10	2		x
Harbor	18	3		x
Steves	10	3		x
Hells Half Acre	14	2		
Little Sheep	4	1	x	
Potato	6	1	x	
Apple	4	1	x	
Little Hog	4	1	x	
Sellers	8	2	x	
<b>MOUNT DESERT</b>				
Hen	12	3		x
John	2	1	x	
The Hub	2	1	x	
Little Crow	2	1	x	
<b>EAST OF SCHOODIC</b>				
Dry	8	1		
Mink	4	1	x	
Daniels	8	1	x	
Indian River	2	1	x	
Stevens	16	2		x
The Sands	4	1	x	
Little Water	2	1	x	

\*day use only

**Visitor Logbook Data: Amounts and Types of Use, 2002\***

	JULY-AUG			VISIT TYPE		BOAT TYPE			GROUP TYPE							ORIGIN								
	total entries	total people	people/entry	% day use	% overnight	% unknown	% Sail	% Paddle/Row	% Motor	% Unknown	% Outfitter	% School	% Camp	% Club	% Scouts	% Friends	% Family	% Other	% Unknown	% Maine	% Out-of-State	% ME & OOS	% Unknown	
<b>CASCO BAY</b>																								
Little Chebeague	92	404	4.4	61	39	0	11	17	38	34	0	0	8	2	4	27	51	3	4	16	15	1	23	
Crow-Casco	36	195	5.4	45	55	0	7	54	36	3	9	0	0	0	36	27	25	2	2	11	47	2	41	
Jewell	160	779	4.9	59	39	2	23	5	67	4	1	0	2	1	20	36	38	2	1	19	28	14	39	
Strawberry Creek	1	6	6.0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	100	
Basin	55	188	3.4	71	29	0	40	34	26	0	0	0	3	14	0	31	44	7	2	14	23	4	60	
Little Snow	66	204	3.1	65	35	0	18	43	36	3	2	0	0	0	0	31	59	1	6	10	21	15	54	
<b>WESTERN RIVERS</b>																								
Perkins	4	22	5.5	36	64	0	0	64	36	0	0	0	41	0	0	14	45	0	0	41	23	0	36	
Goat	9	19	2.1	79	21	0	0	58	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	47	11	0	0	21	0	79	
Erratic	2	4	2.0	50	50	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	50	50	0	0	
<b>MUSCONGUS BAY</b>																								
Little Marsh	3	7	2.3	71	29	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	71	29	0	0	71	29	0	0	
Thief	51	265	5.2	41	59	0	3	83	13	2	13	0	35	4	0	25	18	5	0	7	39	11	43	
Strawberry	12	51	4.3	71	29	0	0	96	4	0	20	0	35	0	0	33	12	0	0	8	20	10	63	
<b>PENOBSCOT BAY</b>																								
Little Thorofare	5	11	2.2	9	91	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	36	9	0	27	36	18	18	
Little Hen	16	43	2.7	37	58	5	12	81	2	5	23	26	0	0	0	16	16	9	9	19	49	5	28	
Hay BPL	7	19	2.7	63	37	0	47	21	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	26	0	32	11	63	0	26	
Ram	13	34	2.6	38	62	0	15	76	9	0	38	12	0	0	0	29	18	0	3	44	15	6	35	
<b>DEER ISLE</b>																								
Weir	6	13	2.2	54	46	0	0	85	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	54	46	0	0	0	38	15	46	
Wheat	12	49	4.1	0	96	4	0	80	20	0	20	18	0	0	0	12	39	0	10	20	45	8	27	
Harbor	50	192	3.8	30	70	0	28	60	12	0	13	3	20	0	0	24	38	2	0	18	31	9	43	
Steves	43	177	4.1	19	69	11	1	98	1	0	34	14	8	0	0	11	24	6	3	9	27	46	18	
Hell's Half Acre	54	262	4.9	49	51	0	38	60	2	0	11	7	18	0	0	27	19	15	4	23	18	2	57	
Little Sheep	25	68	2.7	88	12	0	0	94	6	0	1	0	0	0	3	41	51	0	3	7	54	6	32	
Potato	17	73	4.3	62	38	0	14	84	3	0	15	0	21	0	0	33	26	3	3	33	10	0	58	
Apple	5	15	3.0	93	0	7	0	93	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	67	0	13	0	7	0	93	
Little Hog	25	77	3.1	78	18	4	3	65	30	3	0	0	0	4	0	43	45	0	8	16	12	17	56	
Sellers	33	149	4.5	51	49	0	0	75	25	0	36	0	11	3	0	15	32	3	0	17	23	12	48	

\*Information for two months of one year (July-August, 2002) to be used for general comparison only.

**Visitor Logbook Data: Amounts and Types of Use, 2002\***

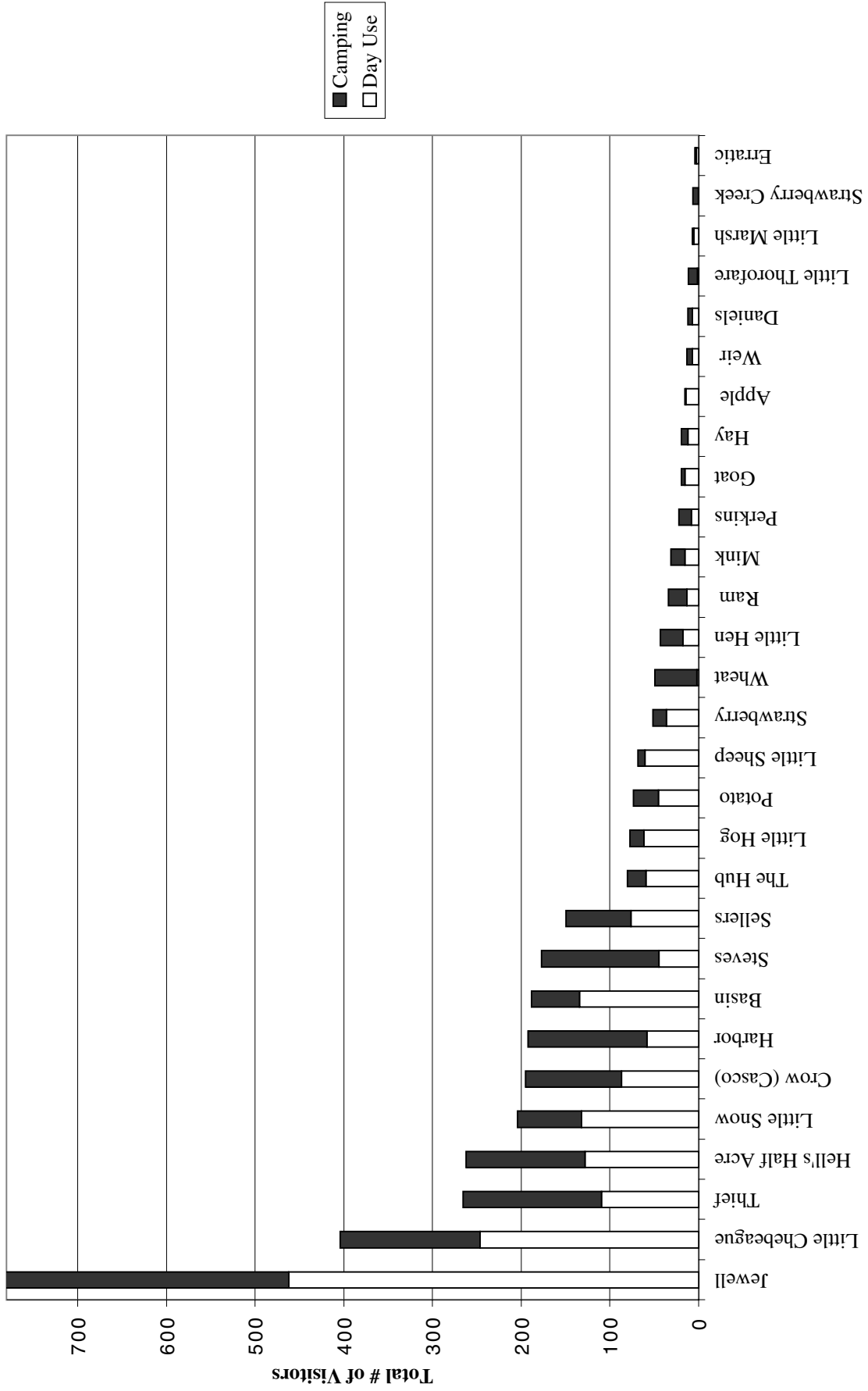
	JULY-AUG		VISIT TYPE		BOAT TYPE			GROUP TYPE							ORIGIN									
	total entries	total people	people/entry	% day use	% overnight	% unknown	% Sail	% Paddle/Row	% Motor	% Unknown	% Outfitter	% School	% Camp	% Club	% Scouts	% Friends	% Family	% Other	% Unknown	% Maine	% Out-of-State	% ME & OOS	% Unknown	
<b>MOUNT DESERT</b>																								
The Hub	32	80	2.5	74	24	3	0	90	8	3	9	0	0	0	0	39	29	21	3	25	35	0	40	
<b>EAST OF SCHOODIC</b>																								
Mink	10	31	3.1	48	48	3	0	84	16	0	0	0	29	0	0	6	42	23	0	23	10	0	68	
Daniels	6	12	2.0	58	42	0	0	83	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	58	8	0	17	50	17	17	
<b>TOTALS</b>	850	3449	4.06	51.8	46.9	1.32	8.89	71.8	16.8	2.44	8.48	2.76	7.99	0.97	2.17	30.6	39	4.45	3.58	19.1	28.9	7.43	43	

No data available for Indian Point, Bird, Fort, Crow-Muscongus, East Barred, Doliver, Hen, Folly, John, Little Crow, Dry, Indian River, Stevens, The Sands, Little Water.

\*Information for two months of one year (July-August, 2002) to be used for general comparison only.

# Visitor Logbook Data: Camping & Day Use

July-August, 2002



Sample Logbook Page: Steves Island, 2003

Date 29 Jul 2003  
 Number of people in your group 4  
 Type of boat (circle)  sail  paddle/row  motor  
 Type of group  
 outfitter  school  camp  club  scouts  
 friends  family  other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of visit  
 day use  camping (2 nights)  
 Comments/musings/suggestions  
 Paddled over from Hells Half Acres this morning to claim a campsite. There were 8 already, so we made 12. Set up camp and then paddled over to Merchant Island. Saw a seal and a minke whale (!) on the way. Paddled around Merchant back to Harbor Island to eat lunch. Paddled back over here and around George's Head Island. When we got back, Naomi got in trouble for not drinking ~~her~~ water because it "tasted yucky".  
 ----- please continue on back...  
 (optional) name & address  
 Naomi, Mike, Tim & Chris (Maine Sport)

The logbooks are designed to encourage all visitors to informally register and comment on their experience. They provide valuable management information without having an official registration system.

## **Appendix C**

### **Field Stewardship Programs**

## MITA Field Stewardship Programs

*Between 1988 and 2003, MITA developed six stewardship programs—the Adopt-an-Island Program, Annual Trail Trip, Cleanup Program, Monitor Skipper Program, and Caretaker Program—to help take care of the Trail islands. The goals of the five programs are threefold: to educate visitors on site, to steward the properties, and to collect social and environmental data.*

The ***Adopt-an-Island Program*** was launched in 1988 in an effort to instill an active stewardship ethic in island visitors, and it is an active program as of 2003. Adopters are paired with islands of their choosing, and they visit the properties in their own boats, on their own time, throughout the boating season. During their island visits, Adopters clean up trash, talk to other island visitors about low impact techniques, and record observations about island conditions. In 2003, there were 70 Adopters looking after 35 public Trail properties; over the course of the summer season, these volunteers made 140 stewardship visits to these public islands.

The first ***Annual Trail Trip*** took place in 1991 and throughout the years, this staff and volunteer initiative has provided an important understanding of how overall Trail conditions change from year to year. Traditionally completed over the course of three weeks in May, the goal of this trip has been to document conditions in the use areas on the islands at the same time each year. In 2003, the timing of the Trail Trip was changed to August so that staff and volunteers could both assess impacts towards the end of the use season and talk to users on site; 43 public islands were visited during this trip.

The ***Cleanup Program*** began in 1991 and is an active program as of 2003. Led by MITA staff and volunteer skippers, crews of volunteers head out to the islands at the beginning and end of the boating season to check island conditions, pick up trash, post or retrieve island signs and logbooks, and carry out necessary projects. In 2003, there were nine cleanup events in both the spring and in the fall, involving more than 60 volunteers and making 75 visits to public islands.

The ***Monitor Skipper Program*** was launched in 1993 to help ensure that the Trail properties were looked after on a weekly basis, and it continues as one of MITA's primary stewardship initiatives. Provided with MITA workboats, trained volunteer skippers make regional island sweeps to monitor island conditions, educate users, and provide on-site maintenance. In 2003, there were 23 Monitor Skippers and nine Apprentice Skippers in training. Together, they made 205 visits to public islands between late June and early September.

In response to specific recreational use management needs in busy Casco Bay and in particular on Jewell Island, the ***Casco Bay Caretaker Program*** was launched in 2001. This program was the first to have paid staff in the field on regular assignment. The responsibilities of the Caretaker include monitoring island use on Jewell, Little Chebeague, and Crow Islands in Casco Bay. With over 5,000 visitors landing on Jewell's shores between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the Caretakers focus their time on educating users about low impact ethics and collecting social and environmental data on Jewell.

**Appendix D**

**Visitor Education**

## **Guide to Low-Impact Ethics Leave No Trace on Maine's Islands**

*Since the Trail's inception in 1988, MITA has been educating island users about low impact techniques. Providing as much stewardship information to individuals and groups before they leave the mainland has been a critical strategy to minimizing environmental and social impacts. In 2000, MITA partnered with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. The following Leave No Trace guidelines include the seven LNT principles as they relate specifically to coastal Maine islands. This text has been excerpted from the Maine Island Trail 2003 Stewardship Handbook & Guidebook; its audience is island users.*

### **PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**

*Visiting Maine's islands in an environmentally responsible way requires forethought and planning. This first principle is integral to your success with all the other guidelines.*

**Carry guides and charts with you & know what to expect.** Always be sure you have NOAA charts with you on your trip. The *Maine Island Trail Stewardship Handbook & Guidebook* will help you locate islands and campsites, check on island capacities, and learn about island and mainland camping options.

**Keep group size to a minimum.** We recommend that groups traveling the Trail limit their size to six people or fewer and never exceed ten. Most of the public islands have camping capacities; remember to check the island's capacity before leaving home.

**Select appropriate equipment.** Freestanding tents give you the flexibility to camp on the most impact-resistant sites available, such as granite or sand. Lightweight cookstoves allow you to cook without a fire. Select earth-toned clothes and equipment when possible; brightly colored tents, packs and clothing stand out on the islands and contribute to a crowded feeling. Colored kayaks are an exception because the colors serve as a safety feature on the water.

**Plan meals carefully.** Repackage your food from boxes, glass containers, or plastic bags before you go. Unwrap snack foods at home and bag them in bulk. In addition to saving weight and space, this will reduce the amount of potential litter you bring onto the islands. Plan to cook only as much as you need to minimize waste.

**Consider mainland sites as an option.** Choosing to spend the night at shoreside campgrounds or bed and breakfasts helps reduce the amount of impact on islands and supports local communities.

### **TRAVEL & CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES**

*Soil is the most fragile living thing on the islands, an intricate living system upon which the health of the island depends. Island soil is an organic mat of decaying parts of plants called humus. When this mat is compacted from overuse, the soil literally dies; that is, the air that gives*

*life to the billions of tiny organisms found in the soil is squeezed out. Without these organisms, wind and water slowly erode away the lifeless dirt. Even a small loss of soil can impair the productivity of island ecosystems. You can help minimize your impact on fragile soils by adhering to the following standards.*

**Walk on sand or stone beaches, rock ledges, resilient grassy areas and established trails.**

Island vegetation often has shallow roots and is easily damaged. Please do not scramble over dirt banks or shrubby ledges, and avoid trampling mosses and lichens, which can take decades to recover. We also recommend that you refrain from bushwhacking through dense forests, and that you avoid walking in wet, boggy areas. In an area without a trail, groups should fan out so a new trail is not formed.

**Arrive early in the day and use existing campsites.** An early arrival ensures that you'll have the time and energy to set up a low-impact camp. If all the campsites on your destination island are full, use the extra daylight to move on and find a good overnight alternative. If it's not safe to move on, squeeze into an existing site or bivouac on smooth granite, sand or gravel. *Help stop campsite sprawl: do not expand established sites or clear new sites.* Avoid using sites that show only slight levels of use, and instead, choose sites that are well-established. Remember that the best campsites are found, not made.

**Do not cut or clear vegetation, trees or limbs – dead or alive – for any purpose.** Island vegetation is intrinsic to healthy soil, holding it in place and preventing erosion, as well as providing coverage and nesting places for birds and other wildlife.

**Avoid damaging trees and plants when setting up camp.** When needing to tie tent lines or a tarp to trees, place padding between the string and the tree to protect the bark. Avoid breaking and bending tree limbs in the process of setting up camp. Use an inexpensive pad or plastic sheet rather than boughs for sleeping pads or shelters. Do not hammer nails into trees or disfigure them in any way.

**Limit your stay to two nights.** This will allow others to use the site, reduce the impact of longer stays, and may give the ground cover time to recover between uses.

**Before you leave, naturalize the site.** When breaking camp, replace any rocks or sticks that may have been moved. Recover any scuffed up areas with natural materials, and brush out footprints or matted grass with a stick. Leave your site clean to increase the likelihood that other visitors will use it. A site littered with trash and garbage encourages people to spread to other, more pristine areas.

## **DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY**

*This section deals with three kinds of waste: human waste—both urine and feces; trash, the non-food waste typically from packaging; and garbage, the leftover food scraps from cooking. Follow “pack it in, pack it out” at all times.*

## **Human Waste**

*Solid human waste has been a problem on many of the Trail islands with moderate to heavy traffic. Exposed waste is a biohazard. Digging catholes is not appropriate on islands due to the shallow, easily eroded soils.*

**Carry off all solid human waste and dispose of it safely on the mainland.** It is illegal to discharge human waste into U.S. waters. Options for waste disposal on the mainland include toilets, RV campground waste facilities, sewage treatment plants or marine pump-out stations. Waste facilities are not set up to receive plastic bags (unless it is a *Wag Bag*), so be prepared to pour out the contents of your container into the appropriate receptacle. Treat toilet paper and feminine hygiene products as trash and carry them off the islands. *Do not leave toilet paper on an island; it is not as biodegradable as you might think!*

**Choose a location with a privy or toilet.** For those who are not equipped or don't want to be bothered with carry-off methods, we suggest you plan to visit one of the few islands on the Trail with a privy or toilet (Little Chebeague, Jewell, Eagle, Beal, Fort, or Warren Islands). A number of shoreside parks also offer privies or restrooms.

**Urinate on rocky or sandy areas away from camp or below the high tide line.** Although urine has an aesthetic impact, research indicates that urine has minimal direct effect on vegetation or soils, and poses little threat to human health.

## **Trash and Garbage**

*It is a simple commitment to pack out all that you pack in, and to encourage others to do the same. In addition, you can make a difference by packing an extra trash bag for carrying out litter that others have left behind.*

**Reduce trash at the source.** When preparing for your trip, repackage food into reusable bags or containers. This lessens the chance that you'll inadvertently leave litter behind.

**Set up your cooking and cleaning area in the intertidal zone.** Always be sure your camp kitchen is below the high tide line except, of course, at high tide. Soap is unnecessary for most dish washing jobs, and pollutes the water. Hot water, sand (as an abrasive), and a little elbow grease can tackle most cleaning chores. Remove all food bits from the water before disposing of it (a small strainer is useful for this), and pack these particles out with food and trash. Non-soapy waste water can be poured into the ocean.

**Leave no garbage at your campsite.** It's a fallacy to think that if it's organic, it can be left behind. Pick up all food scraps—orange peels, apple cores, etc.—from around the kitchen area and pack them out. If you have leftovers from a meal, either save them to eat later or put them in a plastic bag to pack out. If it didn't come from the ocean, it shouldn't go into ocean; if it didn't come from the island, it shouldn't be left on the island.

**Make a last sweep of beaches and campsites.** Small pieces of trash often fall out of pockets, and tiny pieces of plastic wreak havoc with marine mammals' digestive systems.

**Avoid burdening coastal and island community trash facilities.** Anticipate paying a fee at marinas or other local establishments for trash removal, or dispose of your trash at home. Where possible, try to avoid loading up coastal and island community trash facilities. These are usually limited—especially on islands, where all trash has to be hauled to the mainland.

## **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**

*People come to wild islands to enjoy them in their natural state. Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants and other objects of interest as you find them.*

**Minimize campsite alterations.** Leave your campsite in its natural state. Do not construct lean-tos, tables, chairs, etc., out of island materials. If you like creature comforts, carry a lightweight camp chair or plan your overnight stays at a mainland campground site. Leave state-sanctioned fire rings intact for others to use (on Jewell, Little Snow, Thief, Fort, and Warren Islands.)

**Leave flowers and plants as you found them.** One island visitor picking flowers, leaves, or plants may seem harmless, but the cumulative effect of many visitors doing so can do damage. Enjoy flowers or plants while you're there, and take them home with you in photographs, drawings or memories.

**Preserve archaeological sites.** Ancient stone walls, cellar holes, shell heaps, and other markers of past civilizations can provide important archeological information when excavated properly. Disturbing such sites in any way, especially searching for arrowheads or pottery bits, is illegal.

## **MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS**

*For many people, camping out just isn't the same without a gathering around the campfire. But when you stop to consider the risks and the potential environmental impact, it becomes clear that the light and warmth of a campfire come at a significant cost. If you choose to have a fire, we've outlined what you need to know to minimize its impact.*

**Fires on islands have a high risk of spreading due to changeable winds, interconnected root systems, organic soils, and the lack of services to extinguish them.** Collection of downed wood robs thin island soil of a vital source of replenishment. We recommend a cookstove below the high tide line; MITA recommends no fires altogether.

**Don't rely on a campfire for cooking or for warmth.** Even if you have located a site where fires are permitted and obtained a fire permit, there may be times when building a fire is not an option (e.g., a fire ban has been posted for the area, a stiff breeze is blowing, or there is no available driftwood). Plan to bring plenty of flashlights and lanterns for light, a proper cookstove for cooking in all cases, and extra warm clothing for cool days and nights.

**If you build a fire, follow these LNT methods to minimize your impact.**

- **Select a Leave No Trace fire site.** The best places to build a small campfire on an island are: below the high tide line on the sand, in a fire pan, or in an established fire ring

sanctioned by the state (on Jewell, Little Snow, Thief, Fort, and Warren Islands). Fire pans are metal trays with sides high enough to contain wood and ashes ( a metal trash can lid works well). You can also build a pit or a mound fire on the beach, but be sure to scatter the sand and ashes in the intertidal area when you're through. Always build your fire away from anything that may scar—especially granite. And never build a fire on organic island soil, as it can spread undetected underground. By setting up the cooking area in the intertidal zone, you effectively minimize foot traffic into the fragile island interior and reduce the risk of a runaway fire.

- **Use only driftwood gathered from the high tide line or bring your own wood.** Dead and downed wood from the island interior is important for soil replenishment and nesting bird habitat. Bring your own charcoal or wood from home, or gather driftwood from the high tide line.
- **Make your fires small and safe.** If you build a fire, do so with a conscious commitment to do it in a way that will leave no lasting impact on the environment.
- **Use extreme caution!** Have a bucket of water nearby at all times.
- **Fully extinguish fires and clean up the fire site.** Allow fires to burn down to ash or very small coals, as this helps minimize the impact of the fire. Remove any litter, and if there is any unused wood, scatter it below the high tide line.

**Be prepared to call for help.** If you have a fire emergency (and a mobile phone!), call toll free 888-900-FIRE. This number reaches the Southern Region Headquarters of the Forest Service until 6 p.m. and the State Police after 6 p.m. Or, summon the Coast Guard on your VHF radio.

## **RESPECT WILDLIFE**

*Visitors to the Trail islands have an extraordinary opportunity to view wildlife in its natural habitat. You can help protect creatures and improve your chances of seeing them by minimizing your presence at all times. Both seals and seabirds frequent the Maine coast and are subject to disturbance by humans. The key to this principle is to behave in a way that will not affect the animal's behavior. If an animal's behavior is altered, this is a sign that it's been disturbed.*

**Please leave all pets at home.** Pets and wildlife do not mix. In seconds, an exuberant dog can wipe out a bird's production for an entire year. In addition, pets can disturb vegetation, leave waste deposits, and negatively impact the wilderness experience of other visitors.

**Reduce food odors and waste when cooking and preparing meals.** To avoid animals being attracted to your food, store it tightly in your boats overnight. Keep a tidy camp kitchen to prevent animals from becoming unnaturally dependent on humans and to reduce the chance of them becoming frequent visitors to established campsites.

## **Birds on the Coast**

**Stay clear of islands posted with a seabird nesting sign.** A great many islands along the coast provide protected nesting habitats for a variety of marine birds. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and state law, it is illegal to disturb all migratory birds and their nests.

**Change course if you see nesting seabirds on an island.** Most seabird nesting islands owned by the State of Maine are not part of the Trail and/or are closed to access during the nesting season, mid-March to mid-August. However, birds sometimes nest on islands not posted as seabird nesting islands, including those within the Trail system. Birds circling over an island or flushing out from a shoreline bank may be an indication of nesting areas. The most vulnerable time period for many species is mid-March to mid-August, but even after mid-August it is possible to encounter late nesting adults or young birds who have not yet learned to fly. Human disturbance can lead to nest abandonment and leave eggs and chicks vulnerable to predators. Ground nesting birds often select treeless islands and ledges, while ospreys and eagles nest high in trees. Please stay at least 100 yards from likely bird-nesting islands.

**Keep an eye out for ground nesting birds.** If you go ashore and see a nest, you're already too close. Remain quiet as you move slowly and deliberately back to your boats; be careful where you step. Do not startle birds with pointing or hand gestures.

**Give a wide berth to rafting eiders.** If you come upon a raft of brown birds, small and large, they are likely to be eider females and recently hatched chicks. Disturbing them can cause the young to flee and become vulnerable to predation. In powerboats, give wide berth and watch your wake; in self-propelled boats, steer clear.

**Ospreys frequently nest above campsites or other popular areas.** While the osprey population is healthy at present, we still recommend you avoid disturbing them during their critical nesting periods from mid-March until mid-August. An osprey may nest multiple times during the season and will show warning signs by circling overhead and crying out. If you detect a nesting osprey, it's best to move to another designated campsite away from the nest, or another island altogether. If you are unable to move to a different location, please minimize your activity near the nest to avoid disturbing them.

**Give us a call if you suspect an eagle nesting on a Trail island.** Bald eagles are making a strong comeback on the Maine coast. These magnificent birds do not tolerate humans well and are in the air as soon as they detect a person inside their "space," a distance as much as 1,000 feet from their nest. They are federally protected from disturbance within 500 feet of the nest. Always maintain your distance from perching eagles. Occasionally, a MITA island may become a nesting or fishing site for an eagle. When this happens, the island may be taken off the Trail.

## **Seals**

**Avoid disturbing seals.** Seals are common along much of the coast of Maine, and anyone cruising in a small boat is almost certain to pass near a seal or two in the course of a day's travel. While it might be tempting to see how close you can get, seals can be physically stressed by interactions with humans and are best viewed from a distance.

**Give wide berth to hauled out seals.** Stay far enough away from ledges so that seals do not raise their heads and chests in the air or plunge back into the water. This is particularly important during pup season, from mid-May to mid-June. Disturbance can cause seals to flee; if a pup is

abandoned or separated from its mother for too long, it becomes vulnerable to starvation or predation.

**If you find a stranded pup, keep an eye on it from a distance.** If you see a seal pup or adult that appears to be abandoned or in distress, call the closest marine animal stranding organization. From Kittery to Rockland, call the Marine Animal Lifeline's 24-hour Rescue Hotline pager at 851-6625 (no need to dial the area code in Maine). From Rockland to the Canadian border, call Allied Whale, College of the Atlantic, at (207) 288-5644.

## **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS**

*When you cruise the Maine Island Trail in July and August, you are part of a melting pot of traditional users and new boating enthusiasts, people arriving by cruising boat or paddling in by kayak, people from nearby shores and from away.*

**Be considerate of those that live and work in the area.** When you are at a launch site, please do your packing and preparation away from the busy site, and minimize your time on the ramp. Give way to local fisherman, both at the launch sites and on the water, and do your best to support local industries and businesses.

**Select a campsite that is appropriate to your needs.** Choose a campsite that's big enough for your party, and save the larger campsites for larger groups. Please do your best to keep your party together in one site.

**Set realistic expectations and share the space.** Expect to find other people on the island you have chosen for the night. To allow others to use a campsite, set up camp on the day you plan to camp (not in advance), and break camp in the morning. If you've settled onto an island & another party lands before sundown with the desire to camp there too, do your best to accommodate them.

**Be sensitive to other island visitors.** Look for a landing site some distance away from other visitors or consider another island altogether. If there are other parties on a small island, respect their privacy. Being friendly and outgoing is natural for most coastal adventurers, but others may need a different balance of socialization and solitude. Preserve the peace and quiet of the island; portable radios, tape players, and cellular telephones can detract from the wilderness experience for many people.

**Store gear and boats inconspicuously.** Whenever possible, pull small boats out of sight on durable surfaces and pitch tents inconspicuously in established campsites. When staying for more than one night, take down tarps and clotheslines during the day to reduce visual impact. Keep your party's boat and gear tidy and together near your campsite or lunch spot.

*For more information about low-impact camping techniques, contact the Portland office of the Maine Island Trail at [outreach@mita.org](mailto:outreach@mita.org) or 207-761-8225. You can learn more about Leave No Trace ethics and programs by contacting: Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, P.O. Box 997, Boulder, CO 80306. 800-332-4100. [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org).*



This four-fold brochure is one of the primary visitor education tools for promoting a stewardship ethic on the public islands.



# Steves Island

Welcome to Steves Island, a state-owned property managed by the Maine Island Trail Association for low-impact recreational use. Please do your best to follow these voluntary guidelines so that Steves may be enjoyed by all for generations to come. Many thanks for your help!

**Length of Stay. 2 nights maximum.**

**Island Capacity. 10 overnight campers maximum.**

The condition of the island and the visitor experience will be better protected if use levels are less than the recommended maximums. *Note: Circumstances may occur where it is not safe to follow these guidelines. Please do not place yourself or others at risk on the water, and please do not land on other islands where you do not have permission for access.*

## Leave No Trace on Maine's Fragile Islands

### PLAN AHEAD & PREPARE

Low-impact enjoyment of the islands begins before you leave home. When planning your next coastal trip, please familiarize yourself with the regulations, guidelines, hazards, and use levels of the islands that you plan to visit. Plan carefully for safety, comfort, and alternative destinations. Contact the Maine Island Trail Association for more information.

### TRAVEL & CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

**Walking.** Please travel on sand, stone, resilient grass, and established trails. Avoid dirt banks, boggy areas, and mosses and lichens. Please do not cut new trails.

**Cooking.** Set up your camp kitchen on rugged surfaces below the high tide line.

**Camping.** Tent only in designated sites. Please do not expand sites or clear new ones. If the sites are in use, squeeze into an existing site or bivouac on granite, sand, or gravel.

### DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

**Human Waste.** Please carry off all solid human waste and toilet paper and dispose of it properly on the mainland. Do not bury waste, and please do not leave it in the woods or intertidal zone.

**Trash & Garbage.** Pack out trash and food waste, both your own and any you find.

### MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

**Fire Hazards.** Fires on islands are dangerous due to changeable winds, interconnected root systems, flammable soils, and the lack of services. For these reasons, we recommend no fires.

**Safe Campfires.** If you choose to kindle a fire, you must first obtain a permit from the Maine Forest Service (1-800-750-9777). With permit in hand, build a small, safe fire below the high tide line, burning only driftwood. Do not cut trees or limbs -- dead or alive -- for your fire, and please do not create new fire rings. In the event of a fire emergency, call toll free 1-888-900-FIRE or summon the Coast Guard on your VHF radio.

### RESPECT WILDLIFE

**Nature's Creatures.** Please give wide berth to those who call the Maine coast home -- nesting seabirds, eagles, ospreys, rafting eiders, and seals.

**Pets.** To protect the wildlife on this island, we recommend that you leave pets at home. If you bring a pet ashore, please be sure that it is leashed at all times and pick up its waste.

### LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts, and other objects where you found them.

### BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

**Respect.** Please be considerate of other visitors at all times. Preserve the peace and quiet on the island, and be respectful of those who live and work in the local area.

**Sharing.** Set up camp on the day you plan to camp, not in advance. Choose a campsite that is large enough for your party, but not too large. Keep your party together on one site. On the day you plan to leave, break camp in the morning.

**Many thanks for your cooperation!**

ME Bureau of Parks & Lands  
22 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333



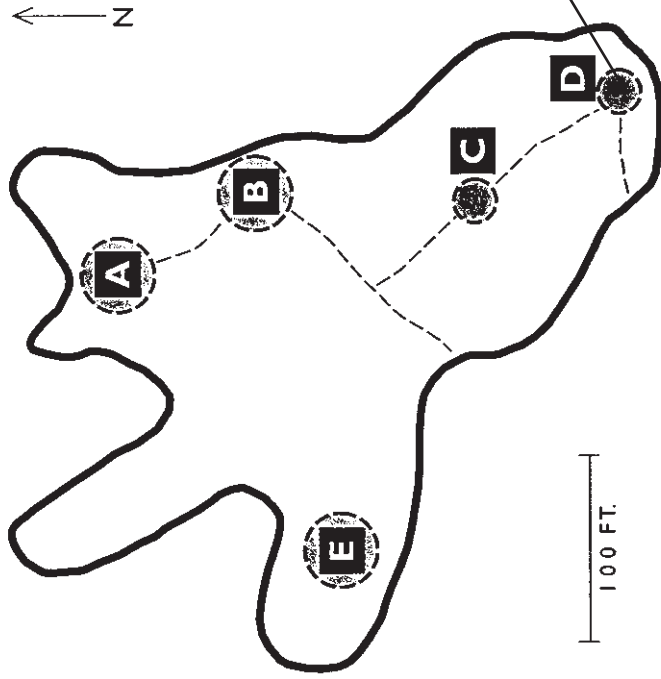
Maine Island Trail Association  
41A Union Wharf  
Portland, ME 04101  
www.mita.org

*The Maine Island Trail Association's goal is to establish a model of thoughtful use and volunteer stewardship for the Maine islands that will assure their conservation in a natural state while providing an exceptional recreational asset that is maintained and cared for by the people who use it.*

Sample of the Leave No Trace educational sign posted on the public islands.

Sample of site map sign.

# Camping on Steves Island



## Voluntary Camping Guidelines

- Island Capacity: 10 campers
- Length of Stay: 2 nights

Help protect fragile island vegetation. **Tent only in designated campsites.** Please do not expand these sites or create new ones.

Site E is intended for a separate, small group.

**SITE**

**A**

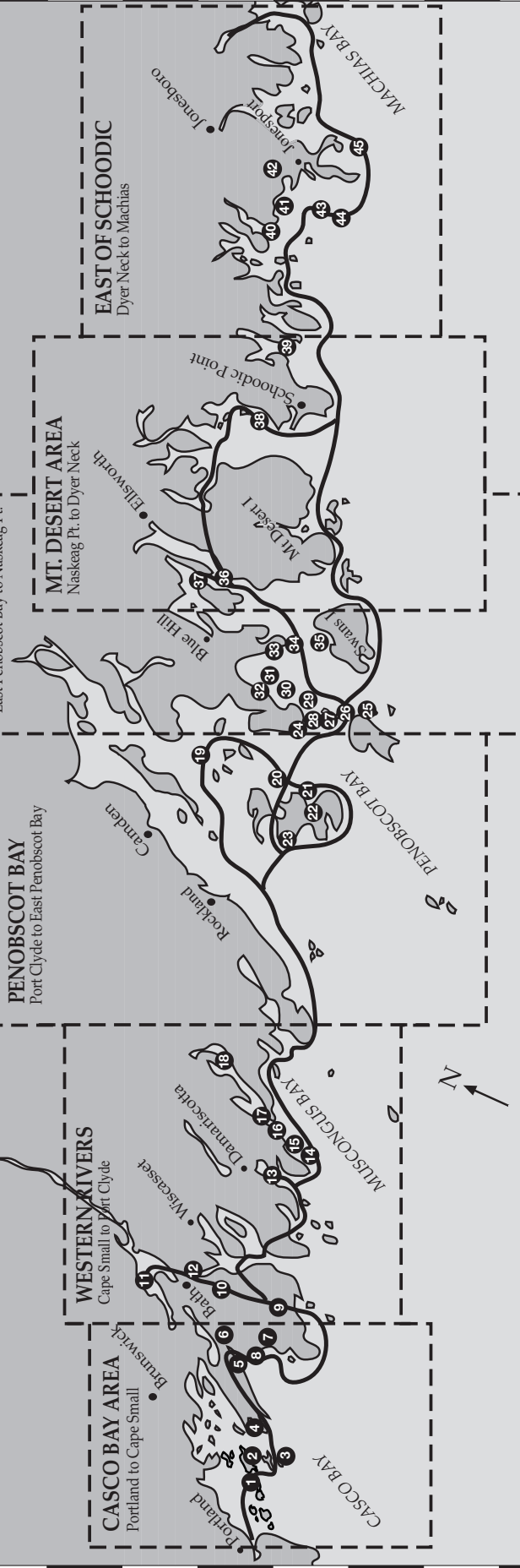
Sample of campsite ID sign.



**Appendix E**

**Island Compendium**

# PUBLIC TRAIL ISLANDS



- 1. Little Chebeague
- 2. Crow-Casco
- 3. Jewell
- 4. Bar-Casco
- 5. Strawberry Creek
- 6. Indian Point
- 7. Basin
- 8. Little Snow

- 9. Perkins
- 10. Goat
- 11. Bird
- 12. Erratic
- 13. Fort
- 14. Little Marsh
- 15. Thief
- 16. Crow-Muscongus
- 17. Strawberry
- 18. Havener Ledge

- 19. East Barred
- 20. Little Thorofare
- 21. Little Hen
- 22. Hay
- 23. Ram

- 24. Weir
- 25. Doliver
- 26. Wheat
- 27. Harbor
- 28. Steves
- 29. Hells Half Acre
- 30. Little Sheep
- 31. Potato
- 32. Apple
- 33. Little Hog
- 34. Sellers

- 35. Hen
- 36. John
- 37. The Hub
- 38. Little Crow
- 39. Dry
- 40. Mink
- 41. Daniels
- 42. Indian River
- 43. Stevens
- 44. The Sands
- 45. Little Water

The island numbers on this map match the numbers at the top right corner of each island page in Appendix E.