

Grindstone Island Preserves and Nature Trail

Where the Cultural and the Natural Come Together

Grindstone Island is the fourth largest island in the Thousand Islands region. TILT protects approximately 50% of the Island, including preserves and conservation easements.

Thousand Islands Land Trust's "Signature Preserves"

Learn more online at TILandTrust.org

Key

- TILT Preserve
- Conservation Easement (Private)
- State Park
- Public Dock

Map Labels: Canoe Pt., Picnic Pt., Lower Schoolhouse, Upper Schoolhouse, Old Cheese Factory, Upper Town Landing, St. Lawrence River, United Methodist Church, Dodge Memorial Hall.

The Grindstone Island Nature Trail

What is a Conservation Easement?

A voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified organization, such as a land trust that restricts specific activities on the land to protect its conservation values. Ownership status of the property does not change. Conservation easements are private property. Please be respectful of residents' privacy when visiting Grindstone Island.

Heineman Family Nature Preserve - Songbird Forest

The Songbird Forest is a breeding ground for Neotropical migratory songbirds like the Cerulean Warbler, Yellow Warbler and Common Yellow Throat. These birds winter in Central America and return to North America for the summer season. They need an undisturbed, leafy canopy where predators are less likely to live and where they can forage for tiny insects.

A Human Landscape Legacy

Throughout recent history, the Island's landscape has been dominated by human activity. Native Americans occupied Grindstone Island long before European explorers discovered its resources. Settlers found that easy access to the island made harvesting its forests and quarrying its rocks attractive.

Beech / Maple Forest	Forest communities that once covered the island have been fragmented by human activities.	Old Fields	Land cleared for cultivation or grazing, these early successional habitats formed soon after human management ceased.
Pitch Pine / Rocky Summit	This picturesque plant community is rare in the Thousand Islands region and sensitive to human disturbance.	Wetlands	In contrast to the uplands, Grindstone contains some of the largest, most productive wetlands in the region.

Mid River Farm

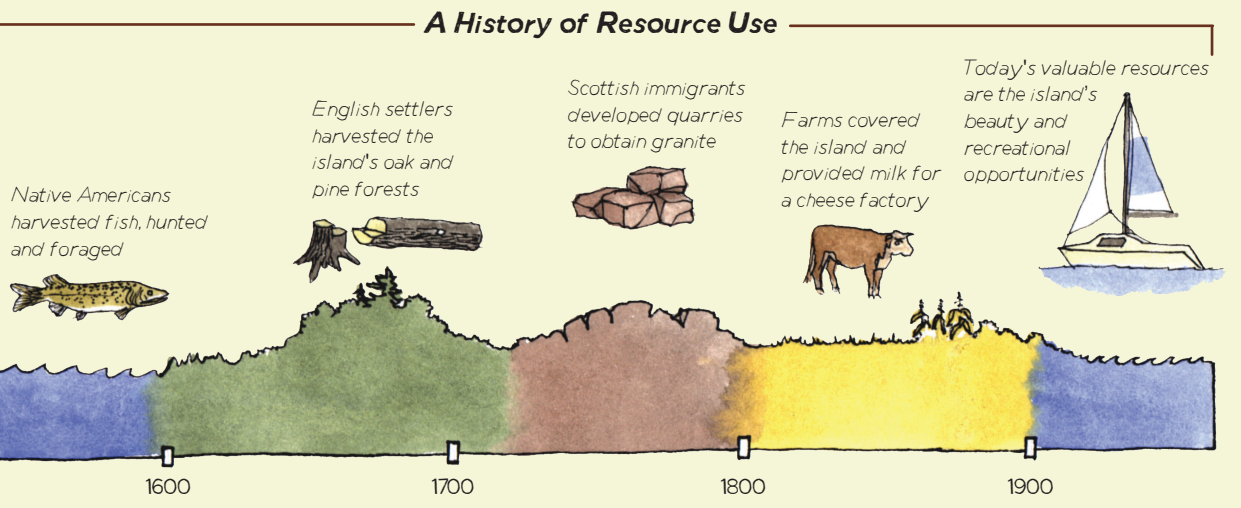
Besides providing nesting habitat for grassland birds, Mid River Farm also yields pasture and hay for agricultural use. Mid River Farm was one of TILT's first protected properties. Its owner at the time, Josephine Murray, was one of the Land Trust's founders.

Lindley Pt.

Lindley Point was donated to TILT by island resident Tim Thacher specifically to protect the area from the threat of development.

Potters Beach

One of the only naturally occurring sandy beaches in the Thousand Islands, Potters Beach has been a favorite summertime spot for generations. TILT purchased the beach in 1995 in order to ensure it remains open to the public.



Broad-winged Hawk

Access to Grindstone

While there is no public ferry service to the island, TILT hosts various "treks" on Grindstone throughout the year - biking, kayaking, kids' activities, our famous mule tour and more! See the full schedule on the TILT website: TILandTrust.org.

Grindstone Island Preserves and Nature Trail Brochure
© 2023 Thousand Islands Land Trust

Front cover photo of a restored pothole on the Rusho Farm Preserve & back cover photo of Potters Beach by Ellen Stagg

All Illustrations by Robert McNamara of The Art of Wilderness



Directions to the Preserve: These Preserves are accessed by private watercraft only. Potters Beach is accessible from the water and North Shore Rd. The Nature Trail can be accessed from Canoe Point and Picnic Point State Parks.



PO Box 238 Clayton, NY 13624 P: 315.686.5347
info@TILandTrust.org TILandTrust.org



Grindstone Island Preserves and Nature Trail

The Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT)

TRAIL GUIDE

GRINDSTONE ISLAND PRESERVES

1000 ISLANDS LAND TRUST
Live. Learn. Conserve.

The Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) is...
Working to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations!

The Grindstone Island Nature Trail winds its way from Canoe Point to Picnic Point through land owned by TILT and owned by the State of New York. It is jointly managed by TILT and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Thousand Islands Region.



Birding Along the Trail
Birds abound throughout the adjacent Heineman Family Nature Preserve - Songbird Forest. Watch for the bright flash of a Yellow Warbler flying by and singing **sweet, sweet, sweet, sweeter-than-sweet** and listen for the Common Yellow Throat calling **witchity, witchity, witchity** from the trees. Gray Catbirds hide while sounding their cat-like **mew** while an annoyed Common Crow yells persistently, **caw, caw, caw**. You might even be surprised by a Ruffed Grouse rising explosively from the ground.



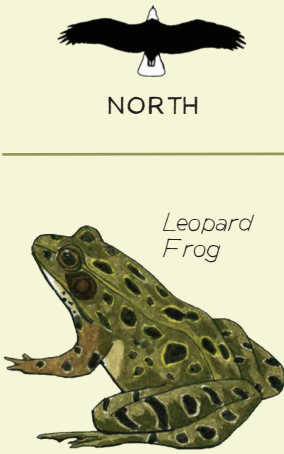
All Illustrations by Robert McNamara of The Art of Wilderness

Immigrant Trees
Walnut Trees: This section of the trail passes through a grove of walnut trees presumably planted by early settlers to Grindstone Island. In many parts of the United States, old growth black walnuts have been harvested and not replaced.

Pin Oaks: Native Americans are believed to have brought Pin Oak seedlings to the Island several hundred years ago - usually this species is only found as far north as the Hudson River Valley. A member of the red oak family, pin oaks will not grow in areas of high elevation or on slopes. They are usually found in damp lowlands and near rivers, streams or lakes.

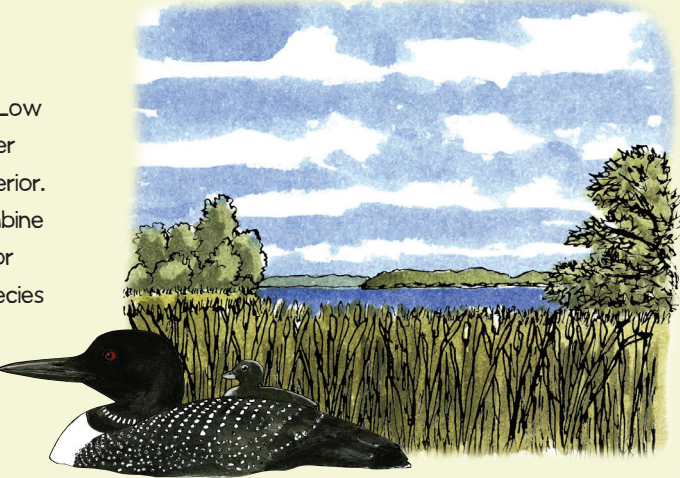
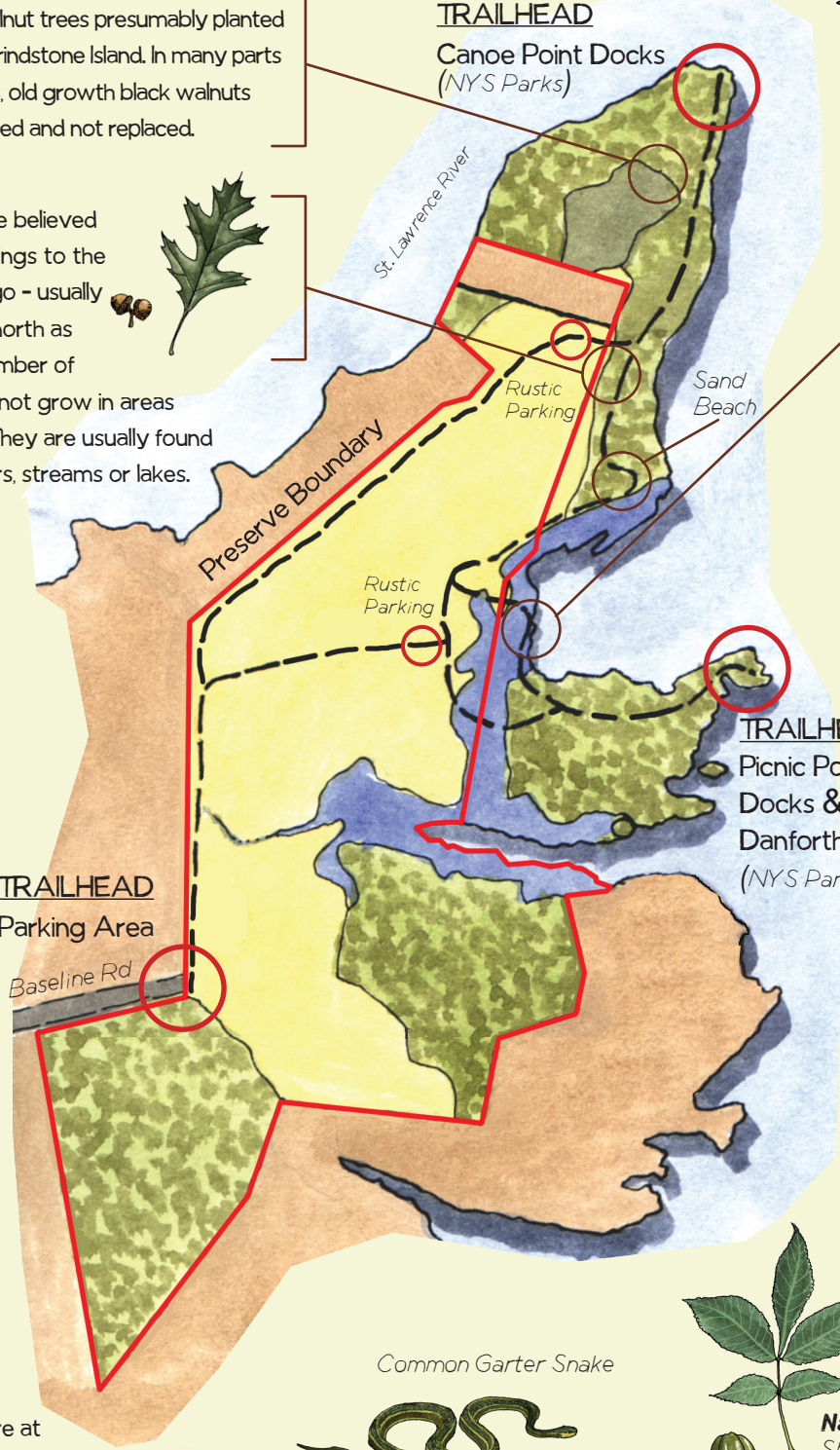
Plant Communities

- Shrublands
- Shallow Emergent Marsh
- Hardwood Forest



Vernal Pools
Called "vernal" because they are at their peak in Spring and usually dry up in Summer, these pools are usually devoid of fish allowing for safe development for amphibians and insects. Species that rely on vernal pools for all or part of their lifecycle include Spotted Salamanders, Fairy Shrimp, Spring Peepers, Dragonflies, Damselflies, Common Garter snakes, Painted Turtles and Leopard Frogs.

Ups & Downs of Island Life
Long ago, ancient rock formations were carved by glaciers to form this irregularly sculpted landscape. Low lands along the shore are saturated by seasonal river level changes, springs and runoff from the island interior. These factors, along with human modifications, combine to create the Island's plant communities. Three major habitats that include both native and introduced species are present: Marshland, Shrublands and Forest.



Wooden Bridge and Loon Nesting Platform
A wooden bridge traverses the shallow emergent marsh, complete with benches for viewing native wildlife. Have a seat, you may spot a Least or American Bittern, Kingfisher, Mink, Muskrat, Otter, Beaver or Short-tailed Stoat. A floating platform placed in the open water of the marsh provides nesting for Common Loons. Human development along the shoreline has eliminated many areas that were once loon nesting sites. The platform also offers safety from raccoons and other predators who destroy the nests.

Competition in the Wild: Natives vs. Invasives
Plants along the trail are engaged in a battle for dominance. Human activity is commonly the reason for the introduction of invasive and non-native species, which then has a trickle- down effect on the entire ecosystem. For example, the lower water levels created when the St. Lawrence Seaway was built allowed fast-growing, non-native cattails to move in. This now crowded habitat forces Northern Pike to spawn in deeper waters affecting the entire wetlands food web.

Native & Non-Native:

Native: Red Oak

Native: Meadowsweet

Native: Shagbark Hickory

Native: Mayapple

Invasive: Garlic Mustard

Invasive: Honeysuckle

Native & Non-Native: Cattails



Preserve Rules: Preserve open sunrise to sunset • Stay on trail • No motorized vehicles
No camping, dumping, fires, or collecting flora & fauna • Keep pets on a leash • No trapping • Hunting by permit only
The roads on Grindstone are public but smaller trails may be private. Please respect the privacy of the island residents.



TILandTrust.org
info@TILandTrust.org
PO Box 238 Clayton, NY 13624 P: 315.686.5345

The Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization created in 1985 to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations!

TILT is supported by donations from people who care about the Thousand Islands region of the St. Lawrence River. Our conservation work is only possible through the generosity of our supporters.

Donations of land, conservation easements, and financial resources to TILT are tax deductible under provisions of the Internal Revenue code. To find out more about donating land, creating a conservation easement, or including TILT in your will, please call us at 315-686-5345.

