

8 ISLANDS

There are about 50 islands and 10 exposed ledges that fall within the municipal boundaries of St. George, extending from the St. George River on the west side of the peninsula around to the bottom of the Mussel Ridge Channel. Most of the islands are accessed by private watercraft over privately owned wharves and docks. The exception to this would be the Town dock/float facilities at Port Clyde and Tenants Harbor. Development of the islands has increased steadily over the last ten years – substantially increasing the tax value to the Town of St. George. Because of their remoteness and seasonal character, most of the islands require caretaking and maintenance which in turn provides employment opportunities.

8.1 Land Use

Land use on the islands is varied. A summary by the Comprehensive Plan Committee identified ten different categories of use:

Seasonal use (30 islands)
Year-round use (3)
Development by more than one landowner or more than one structure (12)
Farming/agriculture
Utilities from the mainland (8)
Regular camping use (6)
Hurricane Island Outward Bound School (1)
Restricted use, The Nature Conservancy (4), High Island (1)
Islands joined to the mainland by a causeway (4)
(Mouse, Rackliff, Clark and Spruce Head Islands)

The listing below indicates specific features of each of the Town's islands. In addition to these islands, there are numerous full and half-tide ledges that have significant bird, duck and seal populations.

Access from Port Clyde:

- **Raspberry Island:** one seasonal dwelling, telephone and water service from the mainland
- **Blubber Island:** one seasonal dwelling, electrical power from Hupper Island
- **Hupper Island:** Four year-round dwellings; 26 seasonal dwellings; power and telephone service from the mainland
- **The Little Caldwell's:** two islands, each one with a seasonal dwelling
- **Big Caldwell Island:** two seasonal houses, barn, 2 sheds
- **Teel Island:** 6 seasonal dwellings, two dwellings that could be year-round; heliport; power

- **Bar Island:** seasonal use only; shed
- **Stone Island:** seasonal camp dwelling (old fishing camp)
- **Ram Island:** seasonal camp and multiple buildings
- **Eagle Island:** (off Port Clyde, undeveloped)
- **McGee Island:** three seasonal dwellings; one year-round dwelling; one large out-building and three small outbuildings; timber growth
- **Thompson Island:** one seasonal dwelling; new barn; agriculture (sheep)
- **Davis Island:** two seasonal dwellings; one main year-round house; greenhouse; barn; two sheds; power; two wharfs
- **Allen Island:** two year-round dwellings; three seasonal dwellings; outbuildings; barn; agriculture (sheep); power
- **Benner Island:** two seasonal dwellings; outbuildings
- **Tom's Island:** undeveloped
- **Barter Island:** undeveloped
- **Little Burnt Island:** undeveloped
- **Burnt Island:** two seasonal dwellings plus outbuildings; camping for Hurricane Island Outward Bound School
- **Thompson Islands (three islands):** large home structure with outbuildings
- **The Brothers (three islands):** Nature Conservancy bird rookery
- **Hay Ledge Island:** Nature Conservancy
- **Gunning Rocks Islands (two islands):** undeveloped
- **Hart Island:** undeveloped
- **Shag Islands (two islands):** undeveloped

Access from Mosquito Harbor:

- **Mosquito Island:** two year-round dwellings; double barn with apartment; extensive outbuildings.
- **Grandfather's Island:** one seasonal dwelling

Access from Georges River:

- **Ten Pound Island:** undeveloped

Access from Tenants Harbor:

- **Southern Island:** two year-round dwellings; extensive outbuildings. Wharf; abandoned Coast Guard Light Station; lighthouse and fog bell towers; power
- **Northern Island:** one seasonal dwelling; water and power from the mainland
- **High Island:** camping
- **Spectacles Island:** one seasonal dwelling (old fishing camp)
- **Seavey Ledges:** undeveloped wildlife refuge
- **Two Bush Islands:** (two islands) undeveloped; automated lighthouse tower
- **Mouse Island:** connected to mainland by a causeway
- **Tommy's Island:** uninhabited

Access from Wheeler's Bay:

- **Ram Island:** one dwelling structure; several outbuildings
- **Eagle Island:** two seasonal dwellings
- **Calf Island:** two seasonal dwellings
- **Elwell Island:** camping; three lot subdivision (two lots sold); one year round dwelling
- **Hen Island:** camping
- **Whitehead Island:** three seasonal dwellings; two outbuildings; unmanned Coast Guard Light Station; automated lighthouse tower; unused Coast Guard Life Saving Station; boys camp
- **Slims Island:** undeveloped
- **Norton Island:** undeveloped

8.2 Island Natural Resources

The islands and ledges provide important habitat for marine wildlife, including invertebrates, seabirds and seals. The Maine Natural Heritage program and the Critical Areas Program identify several islands as nesting areas for significant seabird species such as Eiders, the Common Tern and the Laughing Gull. The Brothers and Hay Ledge, owned by the Nature Conservancy, protect these habitats. The Natural Resources chapter includes a table relating such wildlife habitat to specific islands.

The soils of St. George's Islands are primarily Lyman-rock outcrop-Tunbridge complex, between 3 and 15% grade (LrB and LrC) and rated as having medium (LrB) and low (LrC) potential for development. On the Developmental Constraints map, the LrC soils are mapped with other low/very low rated soils as constraints. Like the mainland. Over half the island's soils are mapped as a constraint. Unlike the mainland, there appears to be something of a pattern of where these soils are located; often the center of the island does not have constraining soils. This may be related to slopes that tend to be steeper along the shore of the commonly dome-shaped islands.

Some of the islands do have the Tunbridge-Lyman fine sandy loam, 3-8% slopes (TrB) which is rated high potential for development. Pockets are found on Caldwell, Hupper, Allen, Burnt, Mosquito, Northern, Clark and Elwell Islands and two small islands that are entirely TrB soils: Hart Island and one of the islands in Davis Straight.

Hupper Island has two Maine Geologic Survey (MGS) mapped wetlands (88 and 89). While these are not classified by soil type by the MGS, the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) has classified the vegetation of both as "PF01E" (Palustrine Forested, broad-leaved deciduous, seasonally saturated). The two wetlands are mapped on both the Water Resources and the Developmental Constraints maps. The NWI indicated wetlands

on the other islands, but none have been mapped by the MGS. There are no aquifers associated with the islands.

The vegetation in general on the islands is of the red spruce-balsam fir association characteristic of the Penobscot Bay region. The old growth yellow birch stand on Allen Island has been registered as a Critical Area.

8.3 Island Recreational Opportunities

Bordering the scenic recreational region of Penobscot Bay, the St. George coastal waters and islands are heavily used by boaters of all types. Visitors come for day trips as well as more extended excursions. Cruising sail or powerboats needing provisions find ice, water, gas, and groceries at the Port Clyde General Store, and the Tenants Harbor General Store, and have several choices available for restaurant meals.

The Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) has worked to develop a water trail connected by a series of campsites on private and public islands. The Trail, used primarily by sea kayakers, welcomes all small boaters who are members of MITA. The organization has negotiated agreements with private island owners for limited use of campsites, promising confidentiality by making that information only available for MITA members. Only two such private island campsites are available to members in St. George and there are no publicly owned islands. MITA members are encouraged to camp at mainland campgrounds to relieve crowding on the islands.