

Boston Harbor Islands

A National Park Area
Massachusetts

Boston Harbor Islands Partnership



Islands generate memories. Isolated worlds, they focus our senses on the moment, the hour, the day. The city's bustle is replaced by the rustle of sea breezes, squadrons of shorebirds circling and diving, tiny crabs scampering across tidal pools, whiffs of salt air, whitecaps slapping against rocky ledges, and the exhilaration of open space. Island memories are endless. A relaxing day on one or more Boston Harbor Islands will not be forgotten.

The 30 islands in the national park area not only spark fresh memories but

remind us of our American heritage. Artifacts tell us that people were here long ago. When European settlers arrived in Massachusetts Bay in the 1600s, Native American tribes were still using the islands to enjoy the sea's bounty, but colonization soon ended their seasonal use.

Tragically, several islands became internment camps for American Indians during the King Philip's War of 1675–1678 when the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered the suspension of the civil liberties of all Indians in the colony.

The islands were the sites of early European settlements, international maritime ventures, Revolutionary War skirmishes, coastal lifesaving and Civil War forts, recruit depots, and prison compounds. The island stories continued on to the Industrial Revolution, summer resorts, commercial fishing, immigration, World Wars I and II, public health, and social welfare.

The islands are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an Archaeological District because of their important remains from prehistoric use.

The drumlin, characterized by its unique shape and created by glacial deposits, offers an enduring harbor legacy. Photograph by Alex MacLean, Landslides.

Also, there are three National Historic Landmarks: Boston Light, the country's oldest continually used lighthouse site (1716) on Little Brewster Island; Fort Warren, a Union coastal fort used as a training camp and Confederate prison on George's Island; and Long Wharf, the oldest continuously operated wharf in the nation.

The roots of this national park area go back to proposals in the late 1800s by landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Charles Eliot to expand maritime recreation. The Metropolitan

Park Commission's 1890s vision to incorporate the islands into the Metropolitan Park System was realized when the Boston Harbor Islands State Park was created in the 1970s. This stewardship continues as a part of the new national park area.

The origins of many of the islands go way back—to glaciers. When the glaciers melted about 16 thousand years ago, they left deposits of rock, gravel, and soil. The ocean level rose and covered many of the deposits (called drumlins) and partially concealed others to form

the islands we see today. The 30 islands range in size from 214 acres to less than one acre of bare-rock outcroppings. The furthestmost island, The Graves, is about 10 miles from Boston.

The Boston Harbor Islands' stories, like the waves, are never-ending. New stories are unfolding as the harbor waters become cleaner and as the park's many partners work together to develop recreational and educational opportunities. As a park, the islands promise to evoke welcome memories for generations to come.

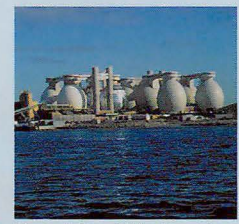
Visiting the Islands

Boston Harbor Islands offer countless opportunities for visitors to tour historical sites, observe wildlife, participate in recreational activities ranging from hiking and bird watching on the islands, to boating and fishing, or perhaps just to picnic and enjoy a day of quiet contemplation in the sun.



View to inner harbor

Currently six islands are open seasonally to the public free of charge and have State Park staff or volunteers to welcome visitors. World's End, which is no longer an island, can be reached by car; an entrance fee is charged.

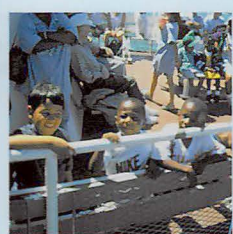


Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

Two islands can be visited by special arrangement. Deer Island invites visitors to tour

the wastewater treatment facility that has made the recovery of Boston Harbor possible and to enjoy its 60 acres of open space. Call 617-539-4248. Little Brewster is managed by the Coast Guard; for group or special tours, call 617-223-3053 or 781-740-4290. Thompson Island, managed by the Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center, provides education programs for children and adults.

Passenger ferries operate seasonally from Long Wharf on the Boston waterfront to George's Island and from Hewitt's Cove in Hingham to George's;



All aboard: George's Island ferry

daily service is available from June to October. Weekend ferries run from Lynn Heritage State Park in Lynn to George's. A fare is charged for all ferries. Call 617-227-4321 for schedules and routes. From George's, free water taxis take visitors to Gallop's, Peddock's, Lovell's, Bumpkin, and Grape.



Long Wharf, Boston waterfront



Where spirits soar—a day at the beach

Park Partners

Unlike most national park areas, this park is administered by a partnership of national, state, and local representatives appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to develop and implement a comprehensive park management plan.

Partnership members are: National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, Metropolitan District Commission, Massachusetts Port Authority,

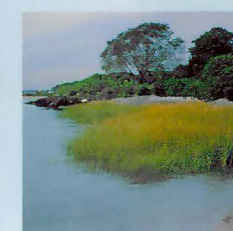
City of Boston, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center, The Trustees of Reservations, Island Alliance, and Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council, established by the park's legislation, consists of 28 members representing municipalities, educational and cultural institutions, environmental organizations, business and commercial interests, Native Americans, Boston Harbor advocates, and community groups.



Slips for private boats are available first-come, first-served, on George's. At other islands with docks, private boats may unload passengers and anchor offshore.

Accessibility: The islands are not fully accessible for disabled visitors, but special arrangements can be made. For details, call 617-223-8666.



Grape Island salt marsh



Island ferry and boat landing

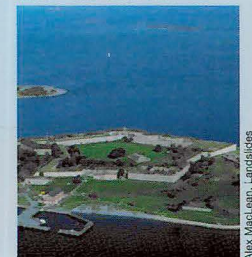
Park regulations: Visitors must comply with all posted regulations and obey park rangers. The park is open from 9AM to sunset. Pets, alcoholic beverages, weapons, fireworks, and disorderly conduct are prohibited. Permits for day-use are required for groups of 25 or more.

Camping is available by permit only on Grape, Bumpkin, Peddock's, and Lovell's Islands. For free camping permits, call 617-727-7676.

Helpful hints: Allow at least one-half day to visit George's Island and a full day if you'd like to visit more islands. Fresh water and food are only available on George's—please bring your own just to be sure. The weather is changeable, so bring a jacket, a hat to shade the sun, and sun block. Check for wood ticks after your visit.

Additional information: Visit the information kiosk on Long Wharf,

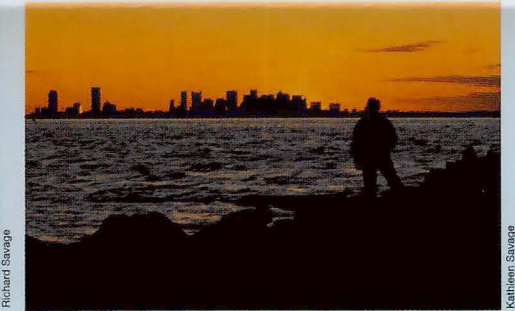
call 617-223-8666, or write Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, 408 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 228, Boston, MA 02110-3350. Web site: www.nps.gov/boha. For visitor information about Massachusetts, call 800-447-6277; about Boston call 888-733-2678.



George's Island: alive with history



Celebrating summer on Gallop's Island



Solitude and sunset over Boston Harbor

Looking Ahead

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership envisions a future where every child in the Boston area has enjoyed the pleasures of swimming in the clear waters of Boston Harbor, has rambled the shores and beaches and explored the forts of at least a few of its 30 islands. The islands are a living laboratory of coastal processes and a teaching tool for future generations to learn how to care for the world in ways that are sustainable over time. This vision is guiding the management of

Boston Harbor Islands as the Partnership determines the services and facilities to be provided in the national park area.

Photo left: Boston Light, on Little Brewster Island, the nation's oldest staffed lighthouse, strikes a commanding presence in the harbor.



BOSTON
HARBOR
ISLANDS

