





Suggested Trails - Prudence Island offers 13.5 miles of hiking along blazed trails and restricted-vehicle access roads. These trails pass through a variety of habitat types and showcase a diverse array of natural, historical, and ecological stewardship features that are unique to Prudence Island. Many trails parallel the shore of Narragansett Bay, making Prudence Island one of the best places in Rhode Island to experience long, undeveloped stretches of the Bay's coastline. The hikes listed below are just a sample of the many hiking possibilities that exist on Prudence Island.

Easy

Sunset Trail. This 1.0 mile (round-trip) out-and-back hike starts at the trailhead on the south side of Chase Way. Scenic views of the West Passage of Narragansett Bay are common along most of the route.

Pine Hill. This scenic 1.1 mile loop hike in the Reserve's Pine Hill area passes through upland grasslands and includes a natural overlook with dramatic views of Narragansett Bay. Proceed south from

the locked green gate for 0.11 miles and take the first right. Continue 0.28 miles, turn left and continue for another 0.26 miles. Turn left again at road's end and continue for 0.12 miles and then either turn left to return to the gate or continue straight for another 0.12 miles to reach Jenny Marsh and long stretches of isolated beach.

Bay Avenue. This 1.4 mile (round-trip) out-and-back begins at the old Stone Wharf on the west side of Prudence Island. The trail initially passes a few 19th century homes before continuing south along an abandoned road with nice views of the West Passage of Narragansett Bay.

Moderate

South End Interpretive Trail. This 1.9-mile self-guided interpretive trail includes 14 stops with information on the cultural and natural history of the South End of Prudence Island. It starts and ends at the T-wharf and continues in a loop on a mix of paved and dirt roads that pass through a wide-variety of interesting habitat types and old Navy bunkers. Interpretive guides can be obtained for free from the Reserve's Education Shed at the T-wharf or from the Lab and Learning Center to the north. **Baker Farm Loop.** This 2.7 mile figure-eight hike showcases the historic Baker Farm and the extensive interior forests of Prudence Island. The hike suggested here begins at the Heritage-Army Camp trailhead on Broadway. Follow this trail north for 0.42 miles to Baker Farm and continue straight for another 0.40 miles to the intersection with the Division Wall Trail. Turn right and continue for 0.31 miles and then turn right again to follow the Diamond Trail for 0.42 miles to return to Baker Farm. Return to the beginning by following the Schoolhouse Trail for 0.63 miles and turning left on Broadway.

Providence Point Trail. This 4.0-mile (roundtrip) out-and-back hike begins at the locked green gate to the Reserve's North End Unit and introduces visitors to the seldom-visited north end of Prudence Island. Highlights include Coggeshall Marsh, the historic North End Farm, and Providence Point (the extreme northern tip of Prudence Island with views to Providence). Four spur trails (ranging from 0.2-0.4 miles each) provide additional access to Potter Cove and Coggeshall Cove with views across to Patience Island. *Warning:* In summer months this area is often swarming with mosquitoes, horse flies, ticks and other biting insects.

New Trails in 2017

To celebrate the 2015 acquisition of the 93 acre Eugene Chase Farm, the Trail Gang has been hard at work establishing new trails that provide numerous opportunities for varying your scenic hikes as you loop through and link up with existing trails. **Deer Chase Run.** This 0.9 mile trail begins on Sunset Hill Road and terminates on the Blind Allen Trail. It takes you (east to west) through the Mill Creek watershed and crosses a beautiful stand of pitch pine in a portion of the old desert before dropping down through mixed hardwood forest. From the junction with the Blind Allen Trail turn left to return via the Sunset Trail to the Division or Ballard Trails or right to Pulpit Rock and follow the road to return via the Old Desert Trail.

Old Desert Trail. A moderate 0.4 mile hike uphill begins in mixed hardwood forest and links up with Deer Chase Run and the Indian Springs trail near the edge of the old desert. Past land use resulted in a near total depletion of topsoil in this area which is recovering as a pine barrens community. As you pass through, take note the unusual mix of vegetation that comprises this rare habitat.

Indian Springs Trail. This 0.5 mile trail begins just beyond Indian Springs, traveling over two streams in the Mill Creek basin and continuing uphill through mixed hardwood and pitch pine forest to link with Deer Chase Run and the Old Desert Trail.

Points of Interest - Prudence Island is rich in history, both cultural and natural. The island has changed dramatically over the last few centuries and been witness to everything from tenant farming to British soldiers during the Revolutionary War to a thriving resort community. Below are a few of the highlights to look for as you explore the island, which we hope will enrich your visit.

NBNERR Lab & Learning Center - The NBNERR headquarters are a great place to familiarize yourself with the island, including the Reserve's ongoing research and stewardship projects. Our lab and learning center offers opportunities to learn about island wildlife with educational displays and hands-on activities. During the summer months, the Estuary Education Shed (located at the base of the T-wharf) is open to visitors. Inside you will find a touch tank and several aquariums, stocked with critters from the Bay, as well as fun activities for the kids. As you explore the island, you are likely to see signs of our restoration projects, which include the removal of invasive species (European larch, phragmites, autumn olive), controlled burning of pine barrens habitat and maintaining areas as coastal grasslands.

Farnham Farm - Farnham Farm was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006, recognized for its significance as the last working farm on Prudence Island when it ceased operating in the 1950's. Farming first began here in the mid-1600's and continued until the British burned the area during the Revolutionary War; farming resumed again in the early 1800's. The Farnham family worked this land from the 1860's until the 1950's, operating a dairy farm as well as growing corn, fruits and vegetables. Today, the Farnham Farm land is owned by the Prudence Conservancy and is operated by the Farnham Farm Trustees. Community members take great care to maintain garden plots, a blueberry patch and a small vineyard. The beautiful gingko tree growing in front of the farmhouse was planted in the 1880's, brought over as a seedling from a ship's captain as a gift to Sarah Farnham.



Prudence Island Schoolhouse - Built in 1896 by Captain Halsey Chase, the Prudence Island School is the last functional one-room schoolhouse in Rhode Island. It was the fourth schoolhouse built on Prudence Island, replacing one that used to stand north of the Baker Farm site. The school was closed from 1981-1989 but has otherwise remained active for over 100 years. They operate under a home-school model with student ages ranging from pre-kindergarten through high school. Only a handful of students attend the school now, but many island residents remember going to school here. An addition to include bathrooms and a kitchen was built in 1954, with another small room added in the 1990's. The bell, originally a fog bell, was donated by George Williams, an island resident at the time and descendent of Roger Williams.

Prudence Park (Stone Wharf) - The wharf at this site dates back to the establishment of a summer resort community, Prudence Park, in 1875. Regular steamship service operated from Providence to Newport until 1918, and the lure of escaping the summer heat of the city brought many people to Prudence Island. It was soon a thriving resort village, complete with inns, a casino, gas streetlights and a bathing pavilion.

From here you can see Hope Island to the west, another island managed by NBNERR; it is a significant nesting site for several species of wading birds, and for this reason is off limits during the spring and summer months.

Division Wall - In the mid 1630's, a large boulder (Division Rock) was used as a survey point to divide the island in half, with Roger Williams owning the northern half and Governor John Winthrop owning the southern half. Approximately fifty years later, Benjamin Browne requested that his land be surveyed so that he could determine the exact boundary location of his property on the south end of the island. The surveyors began a line at Division Rock that ran east until nearly reaching the shore, subsequently dividing the island in half. There is a beautiful well-maintained trail that runs the length of what is now known as Division Wall.



NBNERR Salutes the Prudence Conservancy

The Prudence Conservancy was founded in April of 1987 in response to concerns of unacceptable and unsustainable development on Prudence Island. Working in close partnership with landowners, state and federal agencies, and other parties, Prudence Conservancy has protected and preserved over 900 acres of land on Prudence Island for current and future generations to enjoy. Prudence Conservancy operates as an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with over 180 members all seeking to protect and preserve Prudence Island's open space.

To meet its mission of preserving the unique character and beauty of Prudence Island, the Prudence Conservancy relies upon membership fees, donations, and grants to acquire open space, conduct responsible stewardship, create and maintain the Island's trail network, and support the day to day operations of the organization. Please support the Prudence Conservancy as they continue their important work, now celebrating 30 Years!



NBNERR Lab & Learning Center

The Narragansett Bay Research Reserve was dedicated in 1980 and is one of 29 protected estuaries in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), a partnership program between NOAA and the coastal states. The Reserve is located in the heart of Narragansett Bay on four islands: Prudence, Patience, Hope and Dyer and protects approximately 4500 acres of land and water; the headquarters are located on the south end of Prudence Island. The Reserve's mission is "to preserve, protect and restore coastal and estuarine ecosystems of Narragansett Bay through long-term research, education and training."

General Information

- Prudence Island is accessible via ferry (vehicles and passengers), departing from Bristol (www.prudencebayislandtransport.com). Bikes are a good way to get around the island, but bear in mind many of the roads have deep ruts and are not well paved; bikes with thick, wide tires are ideal and bringing a spare is always a good idea.
- The only public restrooms on the island are located at the NBNERR headquarters (typically open M-F, 9AM-3:30PM) and there is a composting toilet at the south end near the T-Wharf.
- There are no overnight accommodations or restaurants, but there is a small general store at the ferry landing at Homestead.
- Boats are permitted 10 minute live docking at state docks, but aside from that there are no public docking options.
- Ticks are present and in relatively high quantities. It is wise to stay out of any tall grasses and conduct a thorough tick check after your visit.
- In the event of an emergency, dial 911 and note that you are on Prudence Island.



Narragansett Bay
Research Reserve



NBNERR, 55 South Reserve Drive, Prudence Island, RI 02872
(401) 683 6780, www.nbnerr.org

Trail Gang - A brief historical overview by Joe Bains

Shortly after Bob Clachrie retired from his job around 1985 or so, he moved to Prudence Island full time. One of his favorite sayings, actually, more than a saying, but rather a code by which he lived his life, was, "Always leave a place better than you found it." He soon started to apply this code at Prudence, initially picking up trash, both intentional and unintended debris along the road sides. Before long, he attracted a couple of followers, Al Corbett and John Butterworth. Because Mr. Clachrie was a forester, he also started clearing briars and bittersweet from trees on the island and also planting many different types of trees that once were common to this area.



Sunset Trail

This activity grew in size and scope and became a daily activity for these three retirees. Mowers were acquired, and gas-powered trimmers, plus various hand tools. Financial support was sought from individuals and island organizations such as the historical society and Prudence Conservancy. The Conservancy soon adopted this "Trail Gang," which initially was called the "Chain Gang." Making and maintaining trails soon became the gang's primary activity, as Mr. Clachrie was very interested in providing walking paths for islanders to utilize. The first trail that they made was one that led from Narragansett Ave, south of the Fire Station, to the site of the Baker Farm. This Trail was initially named the "Christmas Trail" although the name was changed several times, finally becoming the "Clachrie Trail," after Mr. Clachrie passed away.

Today, the results of Mr. Clachrie's efforts are visible and well-known to islanders, and new generations of "Trail Gang" volunteers have picked up and carried on these efforts for the benefit of current and future islanders.



Farnham Farm

Trail installation and maintenance is accomplished through all-volunteer effort.

Contact the Prudence Conservancy
(www.prudenceconservancy.org) to find out how you can support this work.