

North End Farm - According to an archeological survey done in 1981, there is evidence that this site was continuously occupied from the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century until the early twentieth century. Structural remains suggest that at least eight buildings stood on this site, including a house, barn, and outbuildings.

In addition to scattered cultural remains, the island's current vegetative cover also reflects its past agricultural land use. Forests are much younger and contain fewer species than those of pre-colonial times and the impact of introduced non-native invasive species is particularly evident in this area.



Baker Farm - This site has a rich history dating back to the 17th century when tenant farms were common throughout the island. With the arrival of the British soldiers during the Revolutionary War, most residents fled and structures were burned to the ground. Tenant farming returned in the 1780's and endured until the latter part of the 19th century. Charles Potter took up residence at Baker Farm after the Civil War and maintained the farm for approximately thirty years. As the farming era came to an end, the popularity of Prudence Island as a summer resort was growing. With this came the construction of the Prudence Inn in 1894, which served as a boarding house, and remained in operation until the late 1920's. The Baker Farm site was selected to house a foot-and-mouth disease laboratory in 1950; public outcry, among other things, halted these plans and this property (together with the Heritage Unit to the west) was the first to be preserved on the island.

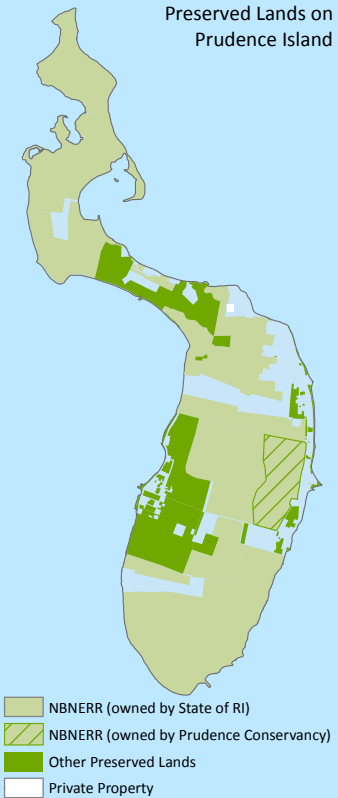


A series of geocaches are located on Reserve properties. Look them up on geocaching.com and go take a hike!



Properties managed by NBNERR are generally open to the public. Restrictions of specific activities may, however, be necessary in sensitive areas or habitats. We ask that you please practice applicable Leave No Trace outdoor principles to assist us in protecting the properties in our care. Available: <http://lnt.org/learn/7-principles>

Note: Principles related to camping and outdoor fires do not apply as these activities are not allowed. For a complete list of RI Management Area rules and regulations, visit: www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/fishwild/parkmgmt.pdf



Approximately 85% of Prudence Island is protected from development. Properties are protected through direct ownership by a land conservation agency as well as through conservation easements.

Stone Wharf - The Stone Wharf was significant in shaping Prudence Island's recent history. It made possible the establishment of the first summer resort community and its associated support industries at a time when existing farms were challenged to remain in operation and the resident population was dwindling. A decrease in farming was a state-wide phenomenon during the late-1800s as the land became less productive and direct competition from the agricultural expansion of the Midwestern states made that way of life unsustainable. Steamboats known to have provided regular ferry service to and from Prudence Park from 1875 through 1918 included the 'Day Star', 'City of Newport' and the 'Bay Queen'.



Prudence Island Naval Base - In 1942, the south end became the site of a U.S. Navy ammunition depot. The Navy installation was reduced to caretaker status in 1946, re-opened during the Korean War, and remained an active storage ammunition facility until the early 1970s. The Navy property was transferred to the State of Rhode Island in 1980 as part of the Federal Lands to Parks program and was, for a period of years, maintained as part of the State's Bay Islands Park system. Today it is a component of the Research Reserve and serves as its' primary headquarters.

Past land use history in this area has resulted in the variety of habitats and management challenges present today. In addition to aging infrastructure, many habitats are dependent upon continued disturbance to persist. Habitat management activities include mowing, selective- and clear-cutting, and the application of prescribed fire.

Legend

- Primary Road*
- Secondary Road
- Restricted Vehicle Access Road
- Interpretive Trail
- Unblazed Trail
- Blazed Trail [Sets of unique blazing designate individual trails, see map for trail names and symbols]
- Public Parking
- Public Restroom
- Elevation (in feet): High : 200, Low : 0
- Public Boatramp
- Picnic Area
- NBNERR Properties
- 10 ft Elevation Contour

Notes:

- Trail segment distances provided in miles.
- Only live docking is permitted at Town and State docks.
- Vehicle access to the South End is restricted during the hunting season (and hikers are required to wear orange).
- *Primary roads are mixed surface (paved and unpaved) roads and this designation simply indicates routes which are more frequently traveled.

The T-Wharf and adjacent beach offers an excellent RI Blueways destination. The nearest mainland boat launch is at Weaver Cove in Portsmouth.





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.

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

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.

Suggested Trails -

Prudence Island offers 15.4 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. A picnic area is located near the southern end of this trail as well as at Chase Way.

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

Ballard/Division Wall Loop. This loop passes through a variety of habitat types, providing interest across all seasons. This 1.7 mile loop is accessible from either the parking area at the intersection of Heritage-Army Camp and Division Wall trails near the island's center or at the intersection of the Division Wall and Sunset trails on Bay Avenue along the western shore (add 0.1 mile). The western and eastern end of the Ballard trail is clearly marked where it intersects the Division Wall trail so this loop can be readily traversed in any direction. For a greater challenge, hikers can add the Diamond to Division Wall loop (add 0.8 miles), the Division Wall to Diamond to Heritage-Army Camp loop (add 1.1 miles), or the full outer loop of Diamond to Heritage-Army Camp (add 1.3 miles).

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

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.

South End Interpretive Panels

The south end of the Reserve encompasses several hundred acres with a variety of habitats and is the perfect place for a leisurely walk. As you explore, you will come across a series of interpretive panels highlighting the habitat, wildlife, and/or management efforts relevant to that area. There are several options for where to walk, depending on desired length and whether you prefer to stay along the shoreline or change it up with views of the forested wetlands. Bird life, in particular, is abundant in this area at all times of the year.

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.

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.



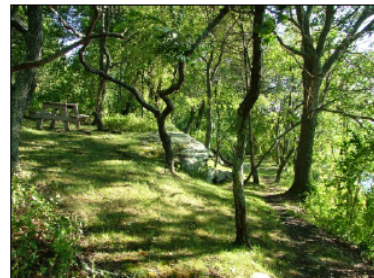
Farnham Farm

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.



Prudence Island Schoolhouse



Sunset Trail

