

Grand Manan Trails. Annual Newsletter #15
October 2007

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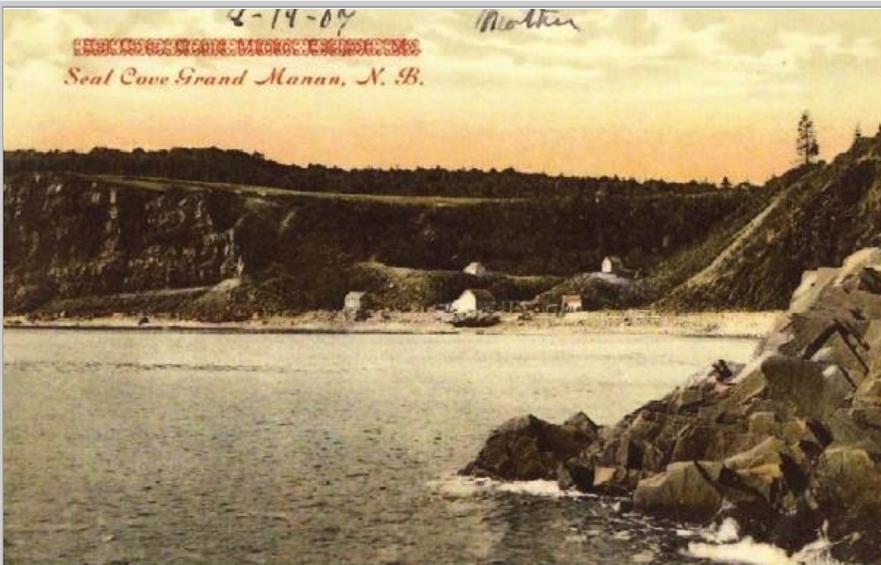
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From Carol Guptill's collection of old Grand Manan postcards. This one dates from the early 1900s and was originally captioned Grand Manan, Maine". This was crossed out for Seal Cove, Grand Manan. It is, of course, Eel Brook Beach. The small buildings were used by the Passamaquoddy Indians when they came here to fish.

NOTE: According to J.A. Lorimer, 1876, "History of Islands and Islets in the Bay of Fundy, Charlotte County From Earliest Settlement to the Present Time:

Including Sketches of Shipwrecks and Other Events of Exciting Interest", the buildings were part of a farm with pastures and sheep, and a sawmill. Eel Brook gets its name from the American eels that migrate into the brook and Eel Lake. Adult eels live in freshwater but migrate to salt water to spawn. According to Lorimer, the natives "set eel traps at the mouth, and catch sometimes in one night a half barrel or more of large fat eels as they make from the brook to the bay."

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TRAILS UPDATE - Bob Stone

This has been a busy season on the trails. In fact, if the sales of the Trails Guide are any indication, this has been the busiest summer in years for hikers. Because of the closing of the Business Centre, we took

over not only producing the material for the booklet, but also the printing, promotion, and distribution of it. We began with an initial run of 300 books and have since had 200 more printed. They have been sold at the two museums, local stores, and at some of the lodges; virtually all locations have exceeded their initial orders. The additional good news for us is that the proceeds from the books return to the Trails Committee, for future trails' maintenance. Jessie and Anne cleared the trails in June, with their usual competence. The main problem from the previous year was not being able to cross the beaver enhanced "brook" at Money Cove. We were able to find a spot just west of the beaver dam, where it was shallow enough that strategically placed rocks allowed hikers to cross. This has proven to have been effective. Unfortunately, because of clear-cut logging from last winter, we were forced to remove the "blue" inland trail from Tatton's Corners to Money Cove from the active trails. It was impossible to follow the markers. Clear-cutting may become more and more of a problem. The inland trail from King Street in Seal Cove to Sloop Cove and Big Pond has been marked by rather unsightly brightly coloured markings, nothing to do with our trail markings. Hopefully, this has not caused confusion for hikers. Inland trails are very difficult for us to maintain, because of the heavy ATV traffic and use. I hope that you have been able to enjoy the beauty of the trails this year. It is a privilege for our trails volunteers to maintain them for the enjoyment of all.

ALONG THE TRAILS WITH MACHETE - Jessie, Anne and Pinky James

We look forward to our spring return to Grand Manan and our trail adventures. Jessie, Pinky, our faithful little dog from the Island of Nevis who takes great delight in a job that includes her, and I head out to clean up the harsh weather windfalls as soon as conditions permit. We begin with the shorter trails - Net Point, Hole-In-The-Wall, Flocks of Sheep - before tackling the western cliff-side routes.

Covering all the trails with machete, clippers, chainsaw, markers, paint and a rather large lunch in our backpack, takes us approximately 60 hours.

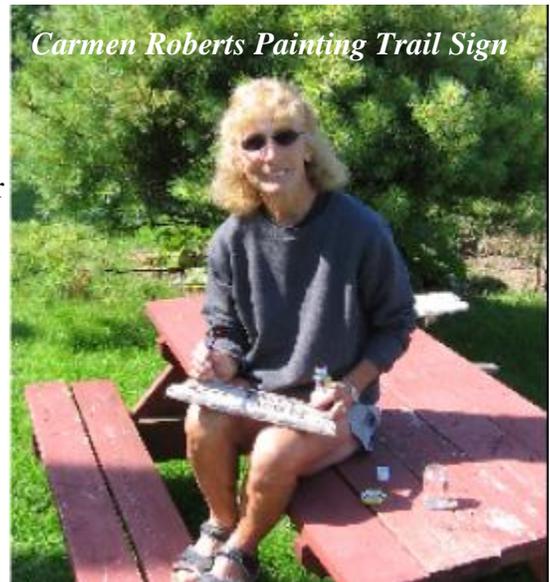
Each year we try to alternate direction to give us a fresh approach to each trail.

We feel very privileged to be a part of the Grand Manan Trails Association and hope we may continue our jobs, as long as we are able.

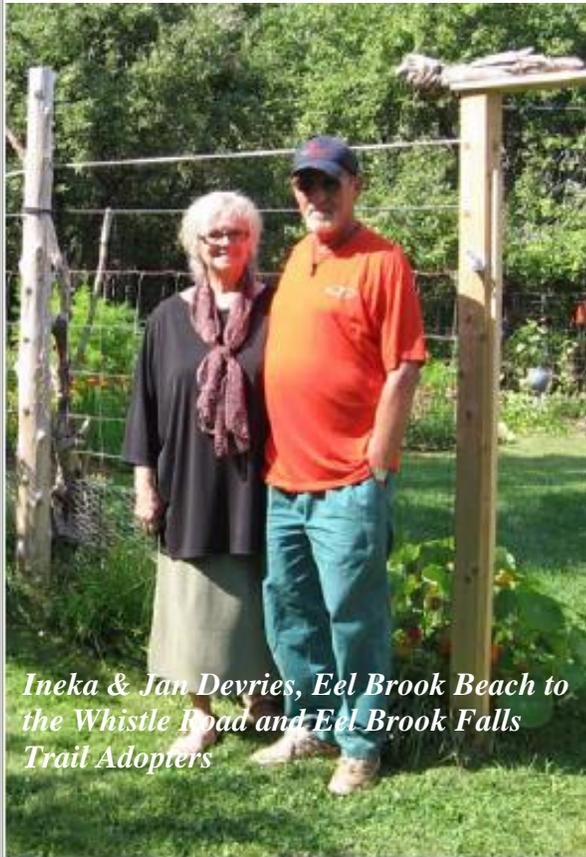
ASHBURTON HEAD TRAIL - Jane and Laird Sloan

All is well on the Ashburton Head Trail. After Anne and Jessie's initial coverage all that remained to do was keep the trail free of blackberry vines. These diabolical growths seem to grow to prodigious size alongside the trail and have predatory thorns to catch the unwary hiker. We have managed to cut them back.

The new signs placed by the Stones seem to have done the trick since we found no evidence that any of the hikers have made an unscheduled trip to the bottom of the cliffs.



Carmen Roberts Painting Trail Sign



Ineka & Jan Devries, Eel Brook Beach to the Whistle Road and Eel Brook Falls Trail Adopters

One or more of our intrepid Island hunters has managed to riddle the sign indicating the gift of Jim Monroe in honour of his son with bullet holes but all else is well.

We did notice that some of the hikers are starting up the trail from the Whistle lighthouse rather than the preferred starting point near Eel Brook. We suspect that most of these are just taking a brief hike after picnicking at the lighthouse and the trail doesn't need any additional marking to accommodate them.

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WHALE COVE TO EEL BROOK BEACH - Adele Peacock

My first hike took place in early June, when I went from Eel Brook to the Falls at Eel Brook. The trail wasn't in too bad condition - just a couple of fallen trees. One on the Cronk Bench, which, luckily, hadn't done any damage, and the other at Eel Brook Falls.

In early June, Carmen Roberts and I went to tackle the dangerous zone at the falls and, at the same time,

removed the fallen tree. We managed to create a barrier along the trail which made the path appear wider and safer. Let's hope that it survives the winter.

Janice Naves and I spent a very hot afternoon in mid July "snipping & Clipping" our way, leaving behind less of those dreaded brambles.

The remainder of the summer was spent making sure that those brambles were kept under control and taking time to admire the gorgeous views from this trail.

*Fallen arches prevented John from assisting Adele.

*Copious amounts of herring prevented Allison from assisting Janice.

MY HIKING STICK - Linda Duchin

Every year as I begin hiking my first Grand Manan trail (usually to Bradford Cove) I'm on the look-out for the perfect hiking stick. Not any old stick will do, I'm looking for the perfect stick—the one that will become an extension of my body as I climb over rocks, pull myself up hills, test the mud depth, and try to maintain balance going down steep paths. Walking the beautiful island trails gives me so much spiritual, psychological and physical pleasure that by the time my meagre two-week vacation is done, my hiking stick has become an old friend. We've shared deeply meaningful experiences together and it's made my journey more satisfying.

Finding the stick is part of the process. No store-bought walking stick for me. Mine is Grand Manan grown. I never know when it's going to make its appearance. In what wonderful part of which trail? Why this stick, in this place? It's as if it's been waiting there just for me — the perfect width, the perfect weight. Often I crack the branch across my leg and then, the perfect



length (some say shoulder height is best). After I've peeled the bark away and as I walk, the oil from my hand makes the top of the branch smooth to the touch. This year I found my stick covered in peeling bark and lichen and left it that way. Yes, I love my walking stick. I usually prefer to hike alone so that I'm not distracted from what becomes almost a walking meditation. Some years the stick that I select will have such an interesting shape and feel so good in my hand as I walk that I will leave it at a friend's house to be picked up the following year along with my rubber boots. Using it again on my first hike is like being reunited with an object that has stored up within it the memories of all the trails it has passed through. One year when I met my old stick again, it had sprouted a perfect tiny green leaf. Usually a good stick will only last through that second vacation and breaks some-where along the way. I feel a momentary sadness then and return the stick to the ground back into the wild from which it came.

I was telling my friend Marie who is French about bonding with my hiking stick, and she told me about the very special (and expensive) makila walking sticks from the Basque county the ultimate symbol of the Basque spirit. For the shepherd, his stick not only bears him in his walk but protects him from wolves and snakes, and helps him conduct his herd. From experience, he knows how to choose from a tree or hedge, the branch with the best twists, curves and turns. The chosen branch is marked on the tree in Spring and then in Autumn, cut, heated, debarked, coated with lime and rubbed with grease to have a knotty and polished look. These sticks are then elaborately carved and represent a true labor of love albeit one that sells for hundreds of dollars. Many walking stick workshops have been in the same family for seven generations. Traditionally, a weapon is inserted in the stick as a reminder of the Basque people's historical need to defend themselves.

My humble (in this company) walking sticks may have had a less glorious birth but they have been loved nonetheless. They have made my way safer and easier on beautiful hikes to Hay Point, Indian Beach and so many other glorious Grand Manan trail destinations. They have given me balance.

Linda Duchin is a nature-starved New Yorker living in the heart of Manhattan who has been coming to Grand Manan every summer for 23 years. She first found out about the island in a book called "Secluded Islands of the Atlantic Coast" and continues to be amazed by the beauty accessible from the hiking trails. [top](#)

THE TRAILS MEETING

There was a trails meeting on September 12th, 2007 at the Museum; about twenty people were present. Bob Stone felt that there were more hikers visiting the Island this year, if the sale of the Trails booklet is any indication. So far it has brought in \$1270, with more to come. From the sale of each booklet \$2 goes toward trail maintenance. Donations brought in \$1550, up from last year and sale of the pins \$455. Our bank balance, as of September 7th this year is \$2026.13. On the same date last year it was \$1595.70. Expenses still to come are \$800 for 1000 booklet covers, and the printing of the newsletter which may cost \$300 or more. It is still undecided whether to get this newsletter printed professionally on the mainland, or whether Bob can do it more cheaply on his computer. The annual Trails dinner will be at Laura's on Tuesday, October 9th—price \$25. The question arose about whether we should join the official NB Trails Association. Bob pointed out that a great deal of work would have to be done to make our trails conform to their strict rules: widening, fencing, etc. and that most people probably prefer them as they are. No one is looking after the White Head Trail and adopters are needed for some of the others.

TRAILS COMMITTEE

Bob and Judy Stone, Frances Hodge, Cecilia Bowden, Jessie James and Anne Mitchell, Pete and Carmen Roberts

PUSHING THE STROLLER FROM THE WHISTLE - Joanne Ingalls



On September 3rd, 2007, Mike, Zoe, Olivia, Rudy (our dog) and I went to maintain our trail from the Whistle to Indian Beach.

As we were getting out of the Jeep, Olivia did something to her knee and was having difficulty walking, but it didn't matter too much as we were taking our stroller.

So with loppers in hand we started off. The blackberry bushes were filled with berries and we ate the whole afternoon. The trail really only needed to be trimmed at the beginning and Mike used the loppers handily.

About halfway, the trail got quite rocky and we were having trouble pushing the stroller so we left it at the side of the trail and Olivia stood up in the backpack on Mike's back.

He and I took turns carrying her. We finally made it to the end of the trail and went down to the beach.

That was my first time on this trail and I really appreciate the opportunity to maintain it.

Joanne, Zoe and Olivia Ingalls and Fredonna Dean, Whistle to Indian Beach Trail Adopters [top](#)

CHANGES IN GRAND MANAN'S BIRDS IN THE LAST FEW DECADES By ROGER

BURROWS

Roger Burrows is semi-retired and living by the St. John River in the North End of Saint John when he is not helping Liz Crompton and Jim Leslie run spring and fall Elderhostel programs at the Marathon Inn. Since his 1970 emigration from his native England, Roger has worked as a Parks Canada naturalist and interpretive planner, avifaunal consultant and Elderhostel leader in Atlantic Canada and as an onboard naturalist on Alaska cruise-ships. He has also found the time to author and co-author nine bird books for Atlantic Canada and further afield in North America, as well as paint his favourite owls and other birds. A tenth book, an illustrated birding site guide for New Brunswick, is in the process of publication this fall and more may well follow if Roger can continue to enjoy boundless energy. His only regret is that he does not have wings to follow birds wherever they fly.



Sketch of Castalia Marsh by John Belyea

Because they have wings and can take advantage of or escape any disadvantage caused by changes in climate or habitat and because they are readily observed, birds can indicate faster than almost any other form of life whether even the most imperceptible shifts have taken place. Which makes it even more surprising that the present Canadian government has chosen to cut funding to Environment Canada and its agencies, and thus its bird population monitoring programs, at a time when a rapid analysis of global warming and its effects is required. The monitoring of bird populations is more easily undertaken on archipelagos and islands, especially those that are relatively small and have a wide range of habitats and a small human population. Grand Manan is a prime example of this and even a cursory study of its birdlife indicates that there have been major changes over the last 30 years.

For at least two decades, starting in the mid-1970s, the warming climate encouraged southern species, such as Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Gray Catbird and Northern Cardinal, to establish a foothold on the main island, although they failed to populate the uninhabited outer islands where winter food and shelter were lacking. The rapid increase in winter bird feeders, especially in and around North Head, enabled these semi-hardy species to survive the worst of the weather by finding plentiful alternative food supplies and adequate shelter. Other people-friendly species, such as Eastern Phoebe, swallows, European Starling and Common Grackle, forsook their usual breeding sites to make use of man-made buildings with their better feeding and shelter facilities. Life looked good for a while but times have changed for some, as I will explain later.

Then, starting in the early 2000s, something changed and bird populations began to indicate a declining trend in numbers. The greatest reduction has been among seabirds, especially alcids and terns, where a minor rise in sea temperatures can cause a startling decline in the range and biomass of fish populations and thus a precipitous drop in nesting populations of the birds that prey on them. Double-crested Cormorants have suffered less from these changes, largely because they have begun to rely on a supply of weir-captured herring and other small fish, but other oceanic birds, especially Common and Arctic Terns, have seen their regular food items largely disappear in inshore waters. Coupled with a contemporary increase in the summer populations of predatory Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, these colonial nesters and, to a lesser extent, Atlantic Puffins, have either abandoned nesting strongholds or seen their breeding success drastically reduced. Even Machias Seal Island, previously considered largely immune from nearshore factors, has seen the loss of its nesting terns for the two most recent seasons and a reduced fledging rate among its nesting Razorbills and Atlantic Puffins. Human intolerance may well account for the reduction in the number of summering Black-crowned Night-Herons, although careful monitoring and protection of breeding Leach's Storm-Petrels on Kent Island has certainly aided in their success. The same program may well encourage Manx Shearwaters to nest for the first time, as this European seabird is now seen in ever-increasing numbers close to shore, especially during herring runs off Seal Cove. We may even see the arrival of nesting Northern Fulmars on our columnar basalt cliffs, given this year's surprising summer numbers. Another encouraging sign is the expansion of nesting Black Guillemots to a new breeding colony site on the dark side of Grand Manan.

Long-Billed Dowitcher

On land, there has been a notable reduction in the numbers of woodpeckers, flycatchers, swallows and thrushes. These can be partly explained by the loss of nesting cavities for woodpeckers as dead snags and stumps are removed, the recent series of cold, wet springs with a consequent lack of hatching insects available to early-arriving flycatchers and swallows, and the removal of wintering habitats for South and Central American wintering thrushes. In addition, there are fewer natural and man-made nest sites for many cavity-nesting songbirds as urban-oriented residents remove unwanted Barn Swallow and other nests in spring house-cleaning. It is also apparent that many homeowners no longer regularly stock their bird feeders with seed even in harsh winters. The effect is obvious, fewer birds and less variety. The arrival of alien plants, especially trees, has also contributed to the decline, largely because it takes songbirds



several generations to adapt to changing wild food supplies. How many songbirds have you seen perched in Japanese Knotweed tangles?



Double Crested Cormorant

All these factors have combined to reduce our summering bird population on Grand Manan. Surprisingly, even the House Sparrow, ubiquitous throughout mainland New Brunswick, is no longer found on Grand Manan and the House Finch, an aggressive newcomer on the mainland, has rarely ventured into what appears to be an ideal niche, perhaps because Common Grackles and European Starlings have occupied such territories. Why should we be concerned about these shifts in bird

populations? I suggest that any changes are symptomatic of a decline in the quality of Planet Earth and its ability to sustain life as we know it, including our own existence.

What is needed is a thorough examination of bird populations to establish what is happening on Grand Manan and in the Maritime Provinces in general. This is exactly the mandate of the Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas, which is in the second year of its five-year update of the original census carried out in the early 1990s. Unfortunately, Bird Studies Canada, which oversees the program, may well lose its core funding and have to rely entirely on volunteers. I have been undertaking the Atlas on Grand Manan for the last two years, following in the footsteps of Brian Dalzell who provided so much information for the first Atlas and for his "A Checklist of Grand Manan Birds" published in 2004. Hopefully, public pressure and a change of heart will persuade our federal government to change course and restore funding for such programs. Without it the prognosis for Grand Manan's nesting birds is not good, as a lack of solid scientific evidence is often an excuse for non-action.

On a more specific note, the degradation of Castalia Marsh by human waste disposal on the beach and in the water system probably accounts for its diminished importance as a shorebird site. This could easily be corrected by enforcing existing laws and would ensure the return of rarer migrant species, such as Stilt Sandpiper and Long-billed Dowitcher, which used to be a major attraction to visiting birders in the fall. Now only visiting egrets and nesting Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows provide an incentive to stop at the site. Similarly, widespread timber cutting at the south end of the island has severely reduced the habitat available to nesting Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Bicknell's Thrush and crossbill pairs, all of which once figured prominently on the target checklists of visiting birders. The loss of these species reduces the amount of time spent by birders on the archipelago.

What does this mean to the Grand Manan economy? You have only to speak to tourism operators to learn how much these visitors put into the local economy and how important it is to Grand Mananers that they continue to visit. In my own case, I have found steady summer employment on the island catering to them and I am sure many others share this benefit. Grand Manan has been known for its birds since the days of John James Audubon and it would be a shame to see the work of Allan Moses and others becoming just a memory as its bird population declines. Without birds the quality of life would be greatly diminished, both here and in the world in general. Today I read on the Internet about the

calamitous decline in the population of Chinese Crested Terns to a mere 50 nesting pairs, simply because their eggs are considered more nutritious than those of domestic poultry. Have we already reached the point of no return where we plunder nature's wildlife resources as a means of satisfying our own unreasonable desires at the expense of ignoring the needs of our fellow inhabitants? If we continue along this path, we will suffer permanent extinction and Planet Earth will replenish itself at our expense. [top](#)

TRAIL ADOPTERS: 2007



Volunteer “ Trail Adopters” look after specific trails, monitoring work needed and carrying out light maintenance. The commitment of time is not onerous. All tools and materials can be supplied from our inventory and 90% of the work done simply involves a pair of hand clippers to combat intrusive growth. Keeping us informed on current trail conditions is probably the main contribution. Let us know if you would be interested in helping out.

George & Ginny Riseborough, Whale Cove to Hole-In-The-Wall Trail Adopters

Joanne Ingalls & Fredonna Dean
 Maude Hunter
 Virginia & George Riseborough
 Ed & Janice David
 Adele Peacock
 Janice & Allison Naves
 Jakcie Foote
 Ineka & Jan DeVries
 Jane & Laird Sloan
 Marilyn & Peter Cronk

Alex & Dyanne Frame
 Sidney & Barbara Guptill
 Sheldon & Shirley Cook
 Cecilia Bowden
 Peter Hoffman

Signs: Carmen and Pete Roberts
Trails Booklet: edited by Bob Stone
Newsletter: Frances Hodge and Susian Lambert

GRAND MANAN TRAILS [top](#)

• Net Point Trail	0.8 km
• Swallowtail to Fish Head	1.7 km
• Fish Head to Hole-in-the-Wall	0.3 km
• Whale Cove to Hole-in-the-Wall	1.0 km
• Whale Cove to Ashburton Head	4.2 km
• Ashburton Head from Whistle Road	1.0 km
• Ashburton Head to the Whistle	1.4 km

• Whistle to Indian Beach	2.0 km
• Whistle Road to Eel Lake and Indian Beach	2.7 km
• Indian Beach to Money Cove	2.3 km
• North Head to Money Cove (2 trails)	5.0 km & 4.0 km
• Money Cove to Dark Harbour	4.5 km
• Dark Harbour to Western Head Lookout	1.4 km
• Western Head to Little Dark Harbour	5.0 km
• Little Dark Harbour to Dwellys Cove & Pond	1.75 km
• Dwellys Pond to Big Head	4.0 km
• Big Head to Bradford Cove	4.0 km
• Bradford Cove to Southwest Head	4.0 km
• Deep Cove to Bradford Cove	1.5 km
• Southwest Head to Pats Cove via Flock of Sheep	2.5 km
• Red Point to Anchorage Prov. Park	1.5 km
• Anchorage Park to Ox Head & Ingalls Head	2.0 km
• White Head Island	9.0 km
• Ross Island	7.5 km
• Castalia Marsh	1.0 km

FRIENDS OF GRAND MANAN TRAILS. The following people have given a donation to the Trails between Sept. 1/06 and Sept. 1/07 amounting to \$1,300.00 [top](#)

John & Sue Stephens	Doreen Wallace
Susan & Sam Ballatyne & Ken Bird	Mary Wylie
Jim Hain	Patricia Tripp
Malcolm Bull	Molly Reeves
Mona Ross	Tom Reeved
Judy Stone	Henry Bierdrzycki & Valerie Evans
Linda Duchin	John & Jane Zocchi
Melvin & Sandy Turner	Kay & Basil Small
Carl Cohen	Graser Simmons & Jane Miller
Ian Vertefeuille & Benjamin Abramson	Neal Shepherd

If you wish to be included on the mailing list, or comment on trail conditions, observations (Ex: natural history, cultural, aesthetic, etc.) or suggestions to improve the trails, please write to:

FRIENDS OF GRAND MANAN TRAILS

c/o Bob Stone
51 Red Point Road, Grand Manan, NB E5G 4J1
rstone@nb.sympatico.ca

or

Grand Manan Tourism Association
Box 1310, Grand Manan, NB E5G 4M9
Phone: 506-662-3442 (1-888-525-1655)
gmtouris@nbnet.nb.ca
Web: www.grandmananNB.com



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THE GRAND MANAN TRAILS PIN

The idea that we should identify ourselves with a distinctive logo originated with one of the Island's scout leaders in 1993. When contacted, long time "Friend" O. K. Schenk promptly designed a sew-on crest which was later transformed into a lapel pin. Mr. Schenk's beautiful watercolors are well known to Islanders and are included in some of our Island Museum's displays.

The design depicts "a hard white shape symbolizing the Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) which is common during the summer, and always a source of pleasure". The background colour is a dark forest green and the white flower-center (or berries) a bright red. First offered for sale in 1994 as a crest and now as a pin, they have become our principal fund raising activity. They are sold for \$5.00 each, without profit to the sellers, by a number of GMTA members. They are available at the following places: Island Arts, Marathon Inn, Shorecrest Lodge, Whale Cove Cottages, Grand Manan Museum, Harrington Cove Cottages.

Thanks to all of them.

Note: Laurie Murison prepared the newsletter for the web site version.



*Grand Manan Tourism Association
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Have a Question? E-Mail us at: info@grandmananb.com

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