Vinalhaven Land Trust

Founded in 1986, Vinalhaven Land Trust (VLT) offers over 15 miles of well-maintained trails on our preserves. In 2011, we celebrated our 25th anniversary by gaining accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance; only the fourth land trust in Maine to be so recognized. In addition to our role as stewards of these properties we also offer educational programs and guided walks throughout the year. For more information, visit our kiosk to find maps, schedules of events, and detailed preserve brochures. It’s located in Skoog Park, just 2/10 of a mile west of the ferry terminal along Sands Road. Feel free to enjoy our picnic table overlooking Sands Cove where you can relax with your lunch.

VLT’s work relies on the generosity of our members. For more information on how to support our work, please contact us.

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Vinalhaven Land Trust promotes the conservation and appreciation of our island’s significant plant and wildlife habitat, our water resources, and scenic or traditionally valued spaces in order to preserve the character of the community for generations to come.

Fish Hook Preserve and Round Pond Trail

History

In 2006, Vinalhaven Land Trust gratefully accepted Charles Sullivan’s donation of a parcel of land on the northwest side of the Carrying Place Bridge. Subsequently, VLT purchased two adjacent lots, including the aptly named “Fish Hook” peninsula. Together, these three properties comprise roughly fifteen acres and preserve half a mile of shoreline, characterized by bold granite ledges and forested hillsides that descend dramatically to the mud flats and salt marshes of the Mill River.

This preserve forms a nice bookend to an existing one directly across the road: the 13-acre Carrying Place Bridge Preserve, which is owned by Maine Coast Heritage Trust and is further protected by an easement held by VLT.

In 2013, VLT received a conservation easement on yet another nearby parcel of land, a 46-acre site just west of the Carrying Place Bridge Preserve, which allowed us to establish a hiking trail from Vinal Cove to Round Pond. This trail was completed in the summer of 2013, and visitors may now enjoy more than a mile of hiking through mature spruce forests and over bare granite ledges.

Natural Resources

All of these mid-island properties are characterized by mature forests; the trail to Fish Hook passes by one of the largest eastern hemlocks on the island, and just a few yards east of the Round Pond trail you might catch a glimpse of a magnificent red spruce fully three feet in diameter, or another one nearly its equal that appears almost suspended on the side of a vertical ledge. In the clearings left by former timber harvests, large colonies of hay-scented fern color the forest floor bright green all summer, and blazing gold in September.

Features

Round Pond Trail: Excellent opportunities to see warblers and other forest songbirds, dramatic granite outcrops with pitch pine forests; in all, two loops totaling 1.2 miles of trail, almost all shaded.

Fish Hook Preserve: Short, shady trail through mixed forest to a mature grove of red pines atop Fish Hook, a steep-sided peninsula that juts into the Mill River. A great place to see eagles, ospreys, loons, kingfishers, and assorted wading birds; also offering excellent views of mussel beds and clam flats, tidal waterfall, and midsummer sunsets.

Carrying Place Bridge Preserve: This is a popular access point for kayakers wishing to tour Mill River or Winter Harbor. A short trail through mixed woods brings hikers to the shore of Winter Harbor, while hikers with mobility issues may prefer the even shorter trail across the road, where a fifty-yard hard-surfaced trail brings you to a bench overlooking Mill River.
Size: VLT Fish Hook Preserve 15 acres; MCHT Carrying Place Bridge Preserve 13 acres; Round Pond Trail crosses a 46-acre forested parcel.

 Trails: 
Round Pond trail (with loops) 1.2 miles, moderate difficulty;
Fish Hook trail, 0.6 miles round trip, moderate difficulty;
ADA-accessible trail at Mill River, about 100 yd. round trip, easy;
Carrying Place Bridge trail to Winter Harbor shore, 0.3 miles round trip, easy

Features: 
Kayak access, shaded trails, varied terrain, tidal flats, sunset views

Be Aware: 
Foot traffic only
Stay on marked trails

Directions: From ferry, go left on Sands Rd. for .4 miles, then right on Old Harbor Rd. for .3 miles, then bearing slightly left onto North Haven Rd. for 2.5 miles, at which point you reach the junction of North Haven Road and Calderwood’s Neck Road.

For Round Pond Trail, bear left at this intersection and park in gravel pullout 0.2 miles on the right; 
For Fish Hook Preserve, bear right at intersection and park in gravel lot 0.6 miles on left; 
For Carrying Place Bridge Preserve, go an additional 0.2 miles and park in gravel lot on right.