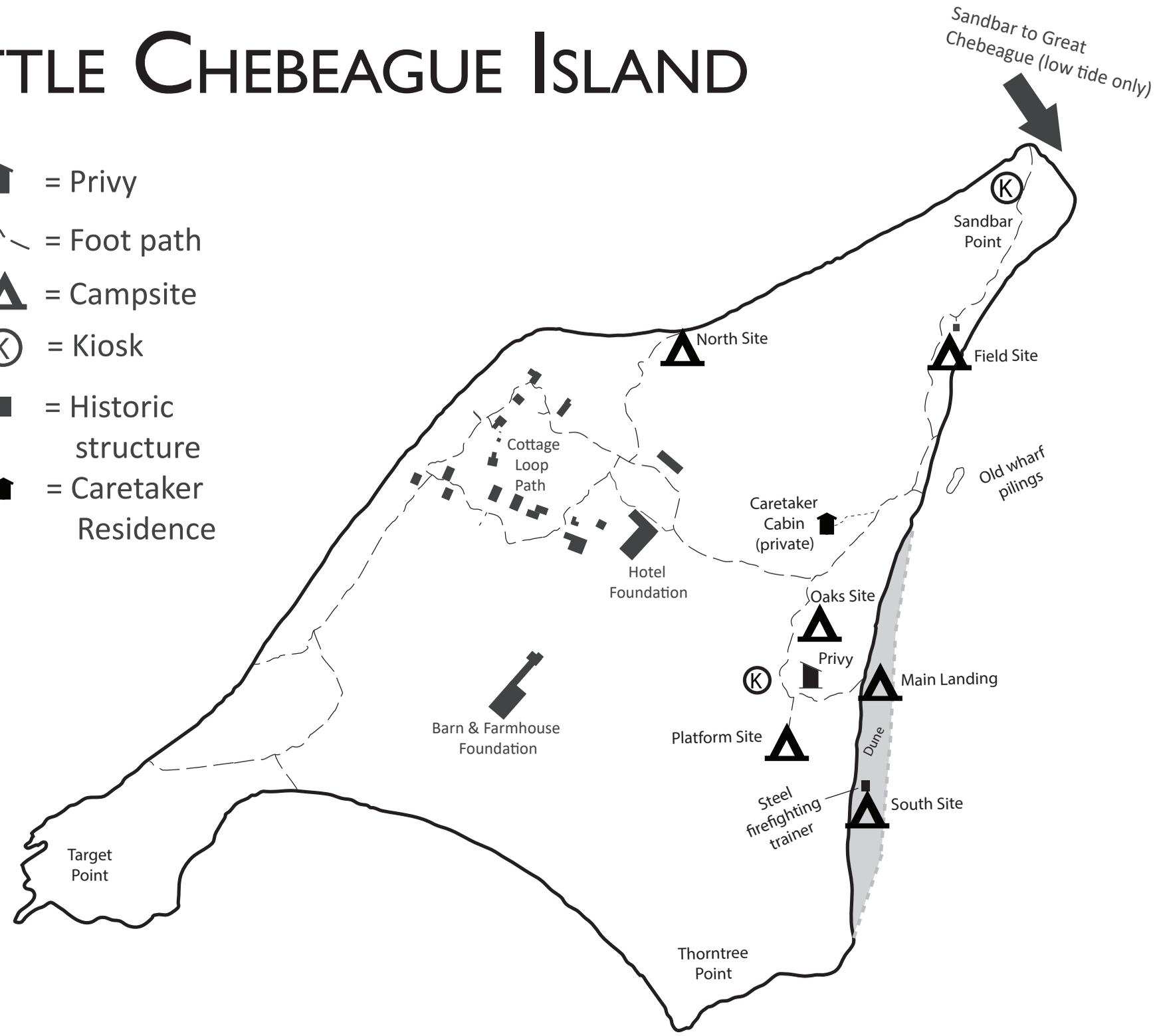


LITTLE CHEBEAGUE ISLAND

-  = Privy
-  = Foot path
-  = Campsite
-  = Kiosk
-  = Historic structure
-  = Caretaker Residence



THINGS TO DO

Approximately 1.5 miles of short trails crisscross Little Chebeague providing exploration opportunities and access to the many shores and beaches that the island has to offer. As you walk Little Chebeague take special care to protect yourself from ticks and be aware that poison ivy, browntail moths, and red ants exist on the island. Please refrain from trampling the fragile dune grass or vegetation.

The derelict remains of several summer cottages can be found scattered across the island along with interpretive signage that provide an historical perspective into what life was like on the island in years past. Please use caution if exploring these sites and refrain from climbing on structures and foundations.

The eastern beach provides an excellent anchorage and camping is permitted along the shoreline. There is a group campsite on the grassy berm at the northeast end of the beach. Additional campsites can be found under the oak trees near the south kiosk and at the northwest end of the island. A privy is located along the walking trail from the beach to the island interior.

At low tide, one can traverse the 1/2 mile long sandbar stretching from the island's northeastern point to travel to Great Chebeague Island. Great Chebeague Island is its own town and hosts over 300 year round residents. The island maintains several shops, a hotel, a golf course, and a number of places to eat. Be mindful of tides as the sandbar is only exposed for two hours before and after low tide after which point a strong current bars foot traffic between the two islands.

HISTORY

Little Chebeague is in the homeland of the Wabanaki People. Maine Island Trail Association respectfully acknowledges these People of the Dawn – past, present and future – and their sacred connection to these lands and waters.

POST-COLONIZATION

Little Chebeague was largely farm and pasture from the early 1800s until the mid-1900s with over a dozen families summering here in private cottages. In the late 19th century the island had a resort hotel which hosted parties for hundreds of people. The summer cottage colony lasted until 1943 when the US Navy took over the island as a recreation and training site for the crews of ships anchored in Casco Bay - including ball fields, a boxing ring and a skeet range. Hundreds of sailors at a time enjoyed lobster dinners before sailing off to escort convoys across the Atlantic. The steel structure on the southeast beach was used to train sailors in shipboard firefighting. Abandoned just after WWII, the island was acquired by the state of Maine in 1972 for recreational purposes. The island was unmaintained until a volunteer began reopening trails in the 1990's. For a more details history, please visit one of the two informational kiosks on the island.

ECOLOGY

Although the island is now largely wild, little has been unaffected by human activity. Invasive trees and plants have gained a strong foothold on this island as the land remained overlooked for decades following the Navy occupation. The landscape is now chiefly dominated in many areas by these species, most notably the climbing Asiatic Bittersweet vines. Wildflowers grow abundantly in the open fields and large birch trees form a quiet grove on the crown of the island. Little Chebeague supports animal life including deer, small mammals and reptiles, raptors, gulls, shorebirds, and a varied population of songbirds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As visitors to Little Chebeague, we are guests in an undeveloped coastal setting. We aim to keep Little Chebeague in a “natural” state, and that status will last as long as the island is well cared for by its visitors.

- **Please stay on designated trails and campsites to protect island soils and fragile dune grass.** It doesn't take many footsteps for an area to be permanently damaged.
- **Please use the privy or pack out your waste.** Human waste is an eyesore and health hazard.
- **Carry out litter and garbage, your own and any that you find.** Trash does not belong on natural coastal islands. If you need a trash bag, just ask the caretaker.
- **If you choose to have a campfire, kindle a small, safe one below the high tide line or in a designated fire ring.** Please collect driftwood from the shoreline or dead and downed wood adjacent to the trails. Please make an extra effort to be safe with your fire.
- **Please respect the local wildlife by not disturbing or feeding them.** Take care to secure your food from gulls, raccoons and rodents.
- **Please leave what you find for future generations to enjoy.** The natural and cultural resources on the island are important to the recreational experience.
- **Keep your pets leashed at all times and pick up their waste.** Pets off leash can disturb wildlife and other visitors. If they run off trail they may pick up ticks.
- **Please respect each other on this shared public land.**

MANAGEMENT

Little Chebeague Island is managed in a partnership between the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) and the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA).

Since 1990, dedicated volunteers have worked together to improve the island with past funding from various sources such as the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, the Maine Humanities Council, the Casco Bay Island Development Association (CBIDA) and other generous donors.

Currently, annual island maintenance (e.g. trail and meadow clearing, invasive plant management, island infrastructure, shoreline cleanup) is supported by area volunteers and a seasonal caretaker funded by MITA and BPL. The caretaker serves as an educational resource to promote a sustainable recreational ethic so that visitors can enjoy the island's natural features and its historic artifacts for years to come. We invite you to join in stewardship efforts on the island and volunteer with MITA. Financial support to supplement funding is always welcome.

For more information about the Maine Island Trail Association or to become a member, please contact MITA at:



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A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO LITTLE CHEBEAGUE ISLAND

