

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the benefit of being a skipper?

Most skippers agree that the best perk is getting to explore the Trail in someone else's fully-fueled boat!

What kind of trash do Monitor Skippers remove?

We clean almost all trash that has washed up or has been left behind by visitors. We typically DO NOT remove derelict fishing gear such as buoys and lobster traps, or wood and other natural materials.

Are Monitor Skippers the island police?

No. MITA encourages a neighborly approach when interacting with visitors. Privacy, solitude, and a wilderness experience are why most folks visit the islands. We do our best to be unobtrusive, casual, and friendly. Our primary role is to encourage low impact use and ensure that visitors are aware of the island owners wishes without being confrontational.

How flexible is the monitor skipper calendar?

Before the monitoring season begins, MITA staff coordinate with skippers to ensure scheduling needs are built into the calendar. Advance planning is necessary because boats are a shared resources between skippers and staff.

Are monitor runs cancelled due to inclement weather or fog?

Two consecutive days are allotted for runs allowing skippers to choose the best day for weather and personal schedule. If neither work, skippers are encouraged to find a substitute or the office can try to reschedule

Are friends or family allowed to join me on monitoring runs?

Yes, skippers are encouraged to have crew members aboard. Usually up to 3 people can join on a run. It's a great way to share the Trail and Monitor Skipper Program.

Am I allowed to use a MITA skiff for purposes other than a monitor run or project scheduled by MITA?

No. Because the skiffs and the gear they contain are shared resources used by different skippers and staff, we can't allow the boats for personal use.

Do I get to be part of an amazing community of boaters, join the ranks of the best volunteers in Maine and help care for beautiful, wild islands?

Yes!

**TO APPLY,
CONTACT 207-761-8225 OR
STEWARDS@MITA.ORG**

MAINE ISLAND TRAIL ASSOCIATION

MONITOR SKIPPER APPRENTICE PROGRAM

"Being a skipper is a wonderful way to spend time on the water and care for some of the most beautiful places on the coast."

- MITA Skipper



MAINE ISLAND TRAIL ASSOCIATION

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WHAT IS A MONITOR SKIPPER?

Monitor Skippers are experienced boaters trained to use MITA workboats for stewardship activities on the islands of the Maine Island Trail. Skippers may serve as boat drivers for scheduled monitoring runs, cleanups, volunteer service days or other island work projects.



Photo: Jim Dugan

During the boating season, Monitor Skippers visit Trail islands on a regular basis to gather information and perform stewardship services.

THE GOALS OF THE MONITOR SKIPPER PROGRAM:

- 1. Steward** islands on the Trail by removing trash, dismantling unauthorized fire rings, checking signs and logbooks, and helping with work projects as they arise
- 2. Educate** island visitors by providing information about stewardship and Leave No Trace guidelines
- 3. Report** on recreational use including island and campsite conditions

Monitor Skippers are MITA's ambassadors of stewardship and Leave No Trace practices on the islands. Information gathered during monitoring runs plays an integral part in informing island management decisions.

STEPS TO BECOME A SKIPPER

1

Attend a welcome orientation and the annual spring skipper meeting

2

Join veteran skippers on monitoring runs to learn routes and approaches, boat nuances, skiff handling and other skills

3

Identify and develop any skills that need further improvement through practice runs (see below)

4

Participate in a checkout ride demonstrating sufficient boating skills and run familiarity

5

Become a Monitor Skipper and captain a MITA boat during monitoring runs, cleanups and work projects

Note: The time from apprentice to skipper varies from one person to the next and depends in part on boating experience and how frequently apprentices are able to get out on monitor runs.

THE APPRENTICE PROGRAM

To become a Monitor Skipper, volunteers go through an apprenticeship period, after which they join the ranks of a dedicated community of boaters whose time and passion for the MITA mission help preserve Maine's wild islands.

APPRENTICE SKIPPERS SHOULD:

- Have prior small powerboat handling experience
- Own or have access to a GPS, VHF radio, and tow vehicle with Class II or III hitch (1400+ lbs)
- Be able to volunteer two days or more per month from May to September
- Follow the *Steps to Become a Monitor Skipper*



MITA PROVIDES:

- A meaningful and fun volunteer experience
- MITA skiffs to visit beautiful islands while performing stewardship
- Clear communication about monitoring runs, cleanups and projects
- Reimbursement for mileage, fuel costs, and replacement supplies purchased for the skiffs
- Ample opportunity for program feedback including a pre-season meeting and post-season debrief
- An annual party where you are a guest of honor!



THE FLEET

Comprised of several 18' Lund SSV workboats, the MITA fleet allows skippers, volunteers, and staff to make over 1000 stewardship visits annually to over 130 different Trail sites.



Photo: Jim Dugan

MITA has skiffs staged at strategic locations along the coast. Each boat and its gear are a shared resource utilized throughout the boating season.

With the Trail divided into 12 monitor runs, MITA volunteers provide a stewardship presence to a large portion of the 375-mile Maine Island Trail.



MONITOR SKIPPER SKILLS

- Pre-trip planning (tides, weather, gear)
- Trailing, launching & hauling
- Safe boat handling & good seamanship
 - Observe "Rules of the Road"
 - Awareness of engine, prop & fuel use
 - Monitor weather & sea conditions
 - Shallow approach technique & gentle landings / launches
 - Proper bow & stern anchoring
 - Navigation by chart & compass
 - Good judgment & decision making
- Able to share MITA stewardship philosophy
- Positive interactions with Trail users
- Familiarity with Trail islands in region