

The Maine Island Institute project is a collaboration among three organizations

1. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, (DEQ), Jon Allan, Director of the Office of the Great Lakes and at least two of his senior staff.

2. The Beaver Island Association a non-profit dedicated to improving the Beaver Island economy and protecting our unique environment. It has 230 active members. Recent initiatives include Invasive species control, particularly Phragmites; creation of the Beaver Island Birding Trail; fire safety, keeping our beaches clean, road improvements, supporting and enhancing Emergency Services, supporting the Beaver Island Community School, property tax awareness, and a new initiative to create an island waterways trail. The Board of directors consists of 14 individuals, half of whom are year-round residents.

Bob Anderson, Treasurer -	juniperdunes@aol.com
Andy Kohls	Angela.Kohls@tds.net
Pam Grassmick -	mcgrass@ameritech.net
Peter Igoe, President-	randpigoe@comcast.net
Jim Jones -	jimijones@aol.com
Beth Leuck -	bleuck@centenary.edu
Ken McDonald, Vice President. -	kj.mcdonald@comcast.net
Taffy Raphael, Secretary -	teraphael@gmail.com
Craig Schrottenboer -	cschrottenboer beaverisland2@gmail.com
Bob Tidmore -	btidmore@tds.net
Keith Brothers	Keithbrothers01@gmail.com
Mark Engelsman	BIHappypaddle@gmail.com
Patrick McGinnity	Island.Library@gmail.com
Kevin Boyle	Kevin.Boyle@LW.com

The Maine Island Institute a non-profit organization founded in 1983 with a goal of ensuring balanced use and a healthy future for the islands and waters of the Gulf of Maine. It has a staff of 41 full time and 4 part time employees, and 10 Island Fellows who live and work in communities. [The Institute's priorities are developed in collaboration with island residents and its 22-member Board of Trustees.](#) It has a membership of 4,500.

Its mission is to work to sustain Maine's island and remote coastal communities and to exchange ideas and experiences to further the sustainability of communities there and elsewhere. Maine has 15 year-round un-bridged island communities, with approximately 5,000 year-round residents, and another 144 working waterfront communities reliant on fisheries, with a coastal population of 100,000. While these communities continue to struggle with extreme challenges in creating sustainable livelihoods and community institutions, we have seen evidence of improvement and local success. The Institute is dedicated to sharing lessons learned from our partnerships with island and remote coastal communities in Maine and elsewhere.

Its staff is currently engaged in environmental protection, island energy efficiency and cost reductions, parental support and distance learning in local schools, documenting and creating school curriculum regarding island agricultural history, health awareness in substance abuse, aging in place, fitness and nutrition, building a directory of resources for island professionals, building a website to increase awareness and transparency in town government in collaboration with the Town Selectmen, working with the local Fire & Rescue Department to create resource maps for hydrants and other emergency locations, helping to streamline administrative operations, and to develop a community safety awareness program.

Maine/Michigan Islands Sustainability Project.

This project will establish a collaboration network of the Beaver Island community in Michigan and one or more of the unbridged island communities in Maine. The objective is to identify actions to improve island prosperity including: education, health care, tourism, transportation, communication, the economy and the environment. Project members will explore the potential to collaborate with other Great Lakes and Maine island communities. There is potential for mutual support in addressing isolated island community problems. Project initiation contains three components: an open house community meeting on Beaver Island and two “knowledge exchange trips” between islands. It is the goal of the project to serve as a springboard for long-term, broader collaboration. The Maine Island Institute and the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes will provide programmatic, technical, and logistical support. The Project will be funded by the three collaborating organizations, and in-kind donations by a number of private individuals and businesses. The initial stages of the project are:

- A Community Open House, Beaver Island Community Center, Tuesday, September 22nd, 3-6:00 p.m. **Your attendance is important and everyone in the community is welcome.**
- The Beaver Island Program team will visit an island (or islands) in Maine, to be determined by the interests and issues identified during the Community Center Open House. The trip dates are November 9-13, 2015. Beaver Island Trip Nominees:

Possible nominee from St. James Township Board: Jim Wojan
Possible nominee from Peaine Township Board: Ernie Martin
Patrick McGinity (Director, Beaver Island Library, BIA board representative)
Pam Grassmick (BIA board and project organizer)
Bill McDonough (Business Owner)

- The Maine Island Project Team will visit Beaver Island from September 21-24, 2015 in conjunction with the Open House at the Community Center.

Future activities and initiatives will be dependent upon the results of the Open House and the reciprocal visits.
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