

Blue Hill: Land trusts poised to buy, conserve island

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Jed's Island at the head of Morgan Bay in East Blue Hill has been a popular spot for visitors for years. The Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Blue Hill Heritage Trust have arranged to purchase the island which will ensure that it remains undeveloped and open to the public. (Photo by Douglas McMullen of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust)



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BLUE HILL, Maine - Two land trusts have arranged to purchase Jed's Island, a 13-acre island located off the shores of East Blue Hill in Morgan Bay.

The Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Blue Hill Heritage Trust have been working together since January to raise the funds to complete a purchase of the island from its East Blue Hill owners.

An attractive owner financing arrangement is providing the trusts time to raise the funds. As a result, the island, which has been an off-the-beaten-track destination for residents and visitors, will remain in its natural state and open to the public.

"We are really glad to be working with these caring owners to keep Jed's the way it is and available for people to continue gently enjoying it," Ciona Ulbrich, project manager at Maine Coast Heritage Trust, said in a prepared release. "Many people have mentioned to me how much they care about Jed's. Now we will be relying on those who care about the island to help fund its protection."

Named after early settler Jedediah Darling of East Blue Hill, Jed's Island has two small beaches, is covered mostly with mixed woods, and has its own attached sandbar and islet. The Marine Environmental Research Institute monitors the water quality in Morgan Bay and seal pupping activity on the ledges off Jed's shores.

The owners of Jed's Island have given permission for people to use the island, and the two land

trusts have been interested in finding a way to keep the island undeveloped and open to the public.

Recent news stories of island conservation projects inspired the owners to think about their island and its importance to the people and wildlife around it. As a result, they decided to negotiate with the land trusts to find a way to preserve the island.

"An integral part of long-term environmental health and sustainability is having each individual step up and take responsibility for leaving the world a better place," said Marian Long, one of the owners. "Helping to make Jed's Island become a land trust preserve constitutes such an action and it is personally very gratifying."

Maine Coast Heritage Trust will own and manage the island, and keep it open to the public. Blue Hill Heritage Trust will hold a conservation easement that will ensure that the island remains undeveloped and natural and will monitor the island's condition and use.

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