

Policy for the use of Monhegan Associates' trails

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The intent of this policy is to follow the Monhegan Associates' Bylaws, the governing document for all Monhegan Associates activities. After this policy is adopted by the Trustees it will supersede all prior policies or statements specifically related to the use of Monhegan Associates' trails.

Objective

Monhegan Associates' goal is to preserve the natural state and natural wild beauty of Monhegan's wildlands, limiting human intervention as much as possible. In certain emergencies it may be necessary to depart from this goal in order to safeguard human life, or to safeguard from fire, the island as a whole.

Scope

This policy covers all trails that traverse Monhegan Associate, Inc. (MAI) property.

This policy is meant to work in conjunction with MAI policies that govern other aspects of land oversight such as trail signage, herbicide and pesticide use, trail bridging, erosion control, etc.

Policy

Definitions

MAI - Monhegan Associates, Incorporated

Wildlands - those areas of Monhegan, Manana, and other nearby islands owned by Monhegan Associates and not currently leased to another entity.

Trails - footpaths crossing the wildlands (almost all of these paths were in existence before the founding of Monhegan Associates in 1954).

Fire Trails - trails designated by the Monhegan Associates' trustees for the use of an emergency vehicle or vehicles that have been authorized by fire and safety officers of Monhegan Plantation to rescue someone suffering a health emergency or, in the case of fire, to transport fire-fighting equipment.

Implementation

The policy of Monhegan Associates is to allow only foot traffic along its trails. The trustees grant one exception: permission given solely to fire and safety officers of Monhegan Plantation to authorize use of a vehicle or vehicles on designated "fire trails" - to rescue someone suffering a health emergency or, in the case of fire, to transport fire-fighting equipment.

Appendix

Internal References

These internal references are among the Monhegan Associates' documents that have been consulted when writing this policy:

Certificate of Organization, Monhegan Associates Bylaws:

<http://monheganassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/bylaws2008-complete.pdf>

External References

These external references were among the documents that were considered when writing this policy:

“What is Wilderness?”

<http://www.azwild.org/whywild/>

“Why Protect Wilderness?”

<https://www.wilderness.org/articles/article/why-protect-wilderness>

“Scientists urge ban on roads in intact wilderness areas”

<https://news.mongabay.com/2014/03/scientists-urge-ban-on-roads-in-intact-wilderness-areas/>

“Get off and walk – wilderness is for wildlife”

<http://www.azwild.org/whywild/>

The following reference is provided as an example of practices that would be entirely out of keeping with Monhegan Associates’ goal of preserving the natural state and natural wild beauty of Monhegan’s wildlands.

Historical References

To our knowledge there have been no roads on Monhegan Island in the area beyond the village now owned by Monhegan Associates and known as the wildlands.*

The two accounts below offer a partial picture of Monhegan roads and paths as seen by travelers in the 1880’s.

From *The Pine Tree Coast*, Samuel Adams Drake, 1891, pp. 212 - 213:

“... one thoroughfare goes as far as the lighthouse and no farther. As there are neither horses nor carriages on the island, it cannot with entire propriety be called a road; and it plainly will never be a street. It suffices however for all the wants of the islanders. To make a circuit of the island afoot, one must follow sheep paths till he finds that there is no need for a guide.”

From *Gleanings from the Sea*, Joseph W. Smith, 1887; quoted in *An Eye for the Coast* by Earl Shettleworth and W. H. Bunting, p. 171:

“The little dwellings are dropped anywhere, only suiting the convenience of being near the harbor and the lines of rocks on which are spread the drying fish, while the larger and woody portion beyond the lighthouse is unsettled. One stony, grassy lane twists about among the buildings, sometimes sending off a footpath toward the straggling cots out among the hillocks.”

* The single exception, of brief duration, was a road to a cottage on Burnthead. Theodore Edison purchased the property, had the house demolished, and gave the land to Monhegan Associates. The road was returned to its former use as a path.

Rationale

It is the goal of Monhegan Associates whenever possible to avoid human intervention and to limit the use of human-made features in the wildlands except where absolutely necessary.

When formed in 1954, Monhegan Associates continued an informal practice of allowing access, on foot, along paths across the island's wildlands. Mindful of the Blackhead fire of 1947 and in consultation with the Monhegan Plantation, the Associates designated trails to Lobster Cove, Burnthead, Whitehead, and Blackhead as “fire trails”. The fire trails were cleared (all the way to Burnthead and Lobster Cove, and about three quarters of the way to Whitehead and Blackhead) to a width sufficient that, in the event of a fire in the woods, a four-wheel-drive truck could carry equipment to fight the fire.