Maine Island Coalition  
August 11, 2017  
School Sustainability

**MIC Representatives:**
Roger Berle, Cliff Island  
Donna Wiegle, Swan’s Island  
Cheryl Crowley, Cliff Island  
Kendra Chubbuck, Isle au Haut  
Bev Roxby, Frenchboro  
Mark Greene, Long Island  
Eva Murray, Matinicus  
Timmi Sellers, Peaks Island  
Jay Corson, Chebeague

**Legislative Representatives**
Chris Rector, Office of Senator King  
Kelly Cotiaux, Office of Senator Collins  
Dave Miramant, Maine State Senator  
Mick Devon, Maine House of Representatives (submitted update via email)

**Guests**
Amy Marks, Principal, North Haven  
Rita MacWilliam, Teacher, Isle au Haut  
Jan Keiper, Teacher, Frenchboro (Virtual)  
Renee Bourgione-Serio, Principal, Peaks and Cliff  
Ellen Mahoney, Community Coordinator, Peaks  
Katie Carlson, Aging and Disability Resource Manager, Spectrum Generations  
Brook Jansen, Spectrum Generations

**Island Institute Staff**
Rob Snyder, President  
Heather Deese, Executive Vice President  
Kate Tagai, Community Development Director  
Andy Theriault, Community Development Associate  
Yvonne Thomas, Education Director  
Tess Beem, Education Associate  
Stephanie MacLagan, Economic Development Manager  
Jack Sullivan, Media Associate  
Ben Algeo, Energy Associate  
Hannah Burrows, Development Associate- Membership
Introductions and MIC business

Treasures Report
Roger reviewed dues- Half payment of $100 of Diamond Cove Association still outstanding.
Report approved

Minutes from last MIC meeting accepted

Island Institute Updates

Ben Algeo, Energy Program: Introduced Spark! Grant opportunity for small community energy project with educational component, deadline Oct & Dec 1st every year.

Heather Deese, Research Program: Waypoints upcoming will be focused on making a living on the coast. Connecting economies and demographics in the 105 coastal communities. Accepting questions or ideas currently and will present research at the November MIC meeting.

Stephanie MacLagan, Economic Development Program: Contact the Economic Development team if your community is not addressing broadband but is interested. Isle au Haut & Swan’s Island will be meeting in September to share knowledge on infrastructure and strategies for internet improvements. Launchpad program has had great successes this year as well; please let businesses and entrepreneurs know that we have these free resources to assist folks with starting or growing businesses. The Broadband conference will be late March 2018 in Belfast.

Yvonne Thomas, Education Program: Teachers’ Conference October 5th-6th. The information has gone to all the schools. Please reach out to Yvonne if there are questions.

Kate Tagai, Community Development Program: 7 new fellows will be joining 2 returning fellows. The new cohort starts work in September.

Rob Snyder, President: Shared observations while visiting the coast, he’s noticed the relationships between year-round residents and seasonal residents, e.g., Cranberry Isles. He shared the considerations that residents of the Cranberries are making to include the seasonal residents who are also part of the community. Communication
across these groups can be challenging, and it is something that communities are aware of and are working hard to address.

**Legislative Updates**

- Kelly Cotiaux & Chris Rector: Congressional recess is still really busy with events…
  Donna: Thanks to these offices for their work to oppose repeal of AHA Peaks reps, and Cheryl also applauded their work/representation
- Roger read statement from Rep. Mick Devon: carryover bills affecting coastal areas/uses, including one to deal with marine debris
- Eva shared efforts to start Maine Products Stewardship Council to find appropriate ways to dispose products beyond existing programs on paint, electronics, etc., e.g., marine debris.
  - Rob will share contacts at TNC on this topic with Eva
- Dave Miramant: Telehealth bill passed. Another bill to deal with vehicle inspections—still working on making it less onerous/costly on islands. Only 15 states require state vehicle inspections. Fees for the ferry are still being discussed; DOT has held meetings.
  Mark: Concerned with the cost of shipping emergency vehicles off island to get inspections for insurance purposes. Sounds like you’re going in the right direction. The insurance companies drive how you have to do inspections.
  Donna: Swan’s had gotten an inspector to come from the mainland to inspect vehicles on the island.
  Cheryl: Which telehealth bills passed, more information please?
- Heather/Stephenie: In **Maine**, [LD 949](https://状态.legis.state.me.us/bic/legislation/lawstatus.cfm?LegNum=949) and [LD 1485](https://状态.legis.state.me.us/bic/legislation/lawstatus.cfm?LegNum=1485) were proposed to refine coverage requirements for private payers and Medicaid, respectively, but both bills were vetoed by Governor Paul Lepage. The veto of LD 1485 was overridden, but the veto of LD 949 was not.

**Focus Topic: School Sustainability**

Guest Speaker: **Yvonne Thomas, Education Director, Island Institute**

Yvonne introduced herself as an educator on the islands of Maine. Sustainability and school structures, Yvonne will look at each of the thirteen individual schools from the Island Institute perspective including one unique, high value thing about each and some statistics. (Great Diamond and Islesford don’t have schools for the 2017/2018 school year, but they have students. Islesford and Great
Cranberry rotate hosting the school on a 2-year alternating schedule.) (Power Point Presentation)

Total Enrollment in 2016/2017: 467 students

- Overall governance structures: 2 schools are part of City of Portland (MSU), 3 are alternative organizational structure (AOS), 8 are single school districts (MSU or MSAD/RSU). Structure varies in who and where the principle operates and how the school board is related to the school/teachers.
  Roger: Address 2 year-round islands that do not have schools.
  Tess: Cranberry Isles is considered 2 year-round islands but one school that switches between 2 campus locations on Great and Little Cranberry Islands, rotating every 2 years.
  Yvonne: Great Diamond does not have school. Recently young families have moved there, and next year a kindergartener will be sent over to Long Island. Also, considered part of the Portland School District.
  Bev: Do these islands have pre-schools?
  Yvonne: Yes, some of them do, and some schools also take in 3-year-olds to try and increase involvement/enrollment.

- Reforms: Elementary & Secondary Education Act is most recent, and Proficiency-based learning/diplomas. For many of these reforms in small island schools’ implementation can be very challenging.

Casco Bay
The schools are K-5: Chebeague goes to Yarmouth, others go to Portland. Transitions from island schools to mainland schools is a great focus for islands, to help address any challenges and ensure it’s a smooth transition for kids. Roger asked Peaks principal what the enrollment trends are throughout the Portland schools: They are declining like schools are nationwide, but it’s more acute/dramatic on the islands.
  Bev: Struggle for kids transition in MDI area. Are there networks for figuring out how to work through these challenges?
  Yvonne: Varied opinions and opportunities around online education.
  Amy: Magnet program on North Haven will/does have a residential component.
  Donna: How many students in these schools?
  Yvonne shared enrollment numbers that are from DOE and we recognize that they are not always accurate. The numbers can change very dramatically over time.

- Cliff is unique in being such a small school in such a large school district.
• Peaks is embracing project-based learning, e.g., kelp growing project. This type of learning is very time consuming but rewarding.
• Long worked with an island fellow 2 years ago to establish a kelp project which was so successful it cross pollinated to Peaks.
• Chebeague has an amazing lunch program with a value for quality, healthy food, and a strong sense of community, including a brick oven pizza. School lunches is another challenge for many island schools.
  Heather: The fellow 5 years ago or so wrote the grant to fund the pizza oven. Few weeks ago, she was back to be involved with the kids making pizzas for a community lunch.

Miscast: Muscongus Bay and Penobscot Bay
Monhegan & Matinicus are K-8, and Islesboro North Haven & Vinalhaven are K-12. There are lots of cases of families that will move from one island to another that has a high school when a child reaches grade 9, but are looking to maintain the quality of life on an island.
  Heather: Islesboro and North Haven are the only two high schools in the state with 100% graduation rate.
  Eva: We hear a lot that small schools, with just a few students or one in each grade is bad—like homeschooling or something or that it costs too much—but I think sharing the high graduation rates of smaller schools is what we need to message—small is good! No one can slip through the cracks.
• Monhegan has one of the best websites and handbooks, keeping it up to date and used as marketing to attract students to the island.
• Matinicus had no students for one year in 2014, but the town decided to keep the school open in the hope that students would be attracted back to the island; this is what happened a year later, so they were able to quickly hire a teacher.
  Eva: It also happened in 2000, and it is always a discussion about doing things the least expensive way, but it’s really important to sustain these schools as part of the identity of the community and to save in the costs of having to restart a school that was officially closed. Closing a school would likely mean closed forever in any small town. The town couldn’t afford to meet the regulations when starting from scratch. There would have to be 5-10 years of no students before it makes sense to officially close the school.
  Bev: There’s always a movement to consider sending kids off-island or homeschooling, just to save the town money.
Mark: Where would Long and Cliff Islands be today if the City was successful in closing the schools when they wanted to? Kudos to islanders who work hard to keep their schools open.

Rita: Where do students from Matinicus and Monhegan go for high school.

Eva: for Matinicus it is every family for themselves; the state tells the town how much the tuition is that has to paid to the receiving school district. This gets complicated when one parent lives on the mainland but not in the desired/target school district. Sometimes the family moves to the mainland. The student’s usually feel ready to go to the mainland for school; and the separation anxiety is often far worse for the mother than for the child. We should provide support/resources to not just the kids but to the parents. There are soft skills that kids need to learn in order to have a smooth transition at just age 14.

Bev: Frenchboro students go to MDI.

Amy/Eva: Monhegan is similar with no affiliation to another school district.

- Vinalhaven staff is so resilient. Despite recent leadership turnovers they have stepped up to keep the school moving forward.
- North Haven has developed a magnet program to help deal with declining enrollment.

Amy: We’re the smallest of the K-12 schools on the islands. When there’s a dramatic change in enrollment, we feel the urgency of protecting the high school grades. High school enrollment has ranged from 15-20 in size in recent years. Facing just 9-10 in SY17, as a bubble of smaller enrollment moves through, so we started talking about strategies. We went out to the community to seek host families for exchange students. We usually have one foreign student, but more host families stepped up for this year. We held focus groups to learn what we could about becoming a magnet, and quickly realized we had to provide a residential component due to number/timing of ferries. Were able to get community buy in quickly because the project was kept cost-neutral through an anonymous donor. First year goal is 3-5 magnet students. The draw is the experiential learning projects that can be developed, tailored for the students’ interests and individualized learning. We are also able to provide work studies, and field experience classes. Only the second magnet program in the state with a residential component. Students will travel to North Haven on Monday morning, stay in a dorm with other magnet students and then travel back to the mainland on Friday afternoon.
- Islesboro recent innovation is a personalized learning plan for students in high school, based on their interests and goals. Teachers will present on this at the Teachers’ Conference in October. 1/3 of students are magnet students.
  
  Dave: The individualized attention that students get is really the catalyst that launches these students into success.

Downeast schools are all K-8:
- Isle au Haut has a connection with another island school, Frenchboro. Partnered with Seacoast Mission to travel between the islands, based on the interest and needs of the students involved.
- Cranberry Isles, Frenchboro, and Swan’s are part of MDI school district. We mentioned the uniqueness of Cranberry Isles.
- Frenchboro has an interesting relationship with the mainland schools. Jan shared some of the collaborations between the schools and also the YMCA. This collaboration means that Frenchboro students know some of their mainland classmates when they enter high school.

  Small schools really are a special place…
  
  Bev: This is Jan’s last year, and we’ve had close moments of worrying about not getting/attracting teachers to islands.
  
  Jan: the irregular boat schedule really affects our ability to grow/sustain island schools and communities.

- Swan’s Island has an impressive response to new leadership and renewed/increased participation with Island Institute programming.

Graduation rates and class sizes, see slides.

Closing with a poem, One Room School by Philip Conkling about Crie Haven.

Roger: Tell us about the Teaching and Learning Collaborative of outer islands.
  
  Tess: There is a TLC Advisory Group is made up of former teachers, parents, and community supporters. This spring we implemented a survey evaluation of the program following its 7th year. Captured biggest challenges and what stuck over the years: No matter how enduring the TLC is, there needs to be a lot of outreach/announcements, even in the summer, to keep it going strong.

  Summer months involve a lot of writing, postings about the work in the schools, and gearing up for a teacher retreat before the school year starts. A curriculum map is developed among the schools’ teachers. Last year’s field trip was 4 days on MDI.

  Bev: In the face of losing federal funding, has Island Institute thought about using TLC as fundraising opportunity by expanding the program to parents and other community members?
  
  Tess: There was a parent group, but last year we really focused on the work of the advisory group, but that parent group has the potential to grow. There is a
balance between doing too many things and doing things well. It is important to remember the parents in the success of schools.

Yvonne: We are trying to do more with parents through our other programming.

Heather: The Island Institute has the fellow program that is funded forever with endowed funds, but we don’t have other programs like that…the organization in general builds local capacity so that programs can be self-sufficient, so we’re still figuring out what is the business model of the TLC.

Jan: As an island teacher, I just want to say I don’t know how an island teacher lives without TLC. Having this support and collaboration is so essential when you’re isolated.

Roger: Is there a formal relationship among the Island Institute, Seacoast Mission, and TLC?

Yvonne: We work closely with them, but it’s informal.

Cheryl: Middle school retreat was for acquainting students with the transition required, which has been so great to watch.

Tess: We’ll be looking to engage parents in that next year…

Yvonne: Question for you all as we break for lunch—If there is someone in your community who’s interested in meeting 1 or 2 times a year using the MIC model to discuss challenges or salient topics, and share resources specific to schools—an idea to think about whether it would be beneficial and if there’s a person you think would be interested in that.

Roger: Thanks to Yvonne and opened up floor to anyone else from the schools who are interested in sharing anything else.

Rita: I’ve been on Isle au Haut a little over a year, I think these programs are so key to getting connected to the kids among the islands.

**Guest Speaker: Katie Carlson, ADRC Manager, Spectrum Generations**

Spectrum Generations provides resources to those who are trying to age in-home. We work with a whole host of other agencies and organizations to help assist those who are disabled or aging in-place. E.g., worked with a woman on Vinalhaven, putting together one-on-one Medicare counseling hours on-island. Spectrum does home visits with families so they don’t have to travel to the mainland. They are looking to connect organizations and resources to the right people on island.

- We’re looking for a point of contact on each island to share resources and opportunities that come up. E.g., L.L. Bean offered funding for transportation
fuel, and we worked with the point of contact on Vinalhaven to make sure residents can access opportunities like this.

Donna: Who are these resources for?
Katie: Anyone, e.g., figuring out how to find the right plans for each individual.

Donna: When is open enrollment?
Katie: October 12 through December 1

Cheryl: Anyone to help with DNRs?
Katie: We do; we’re getting the rest of our staff Gunderson trained, so we can reduce the cost to about $20/person. We can bring this training to the islands.

Island Updates

Isle au Haut—Kendra: School annual pie auction was well attended, raising $6,100! To celebrate the 160th of the church Mabel Ellis and myself created the first history/cookbook for the church where all proceeds will refurbish the church steeple. The cookbook has recipes with family histories and pictures celebrating the love of Island life and the future of the community. The cookbook went on sale July 4th at the church’s Strawberry Shortcake Festival with 100 being sold there. We printed 300 cookbooks and only have 40 left. We have to decide if we want to print more. On Tuesday, August 15, Mabel and I have been asked to read along with Jeff Burke, Kathie Fiveash, Rachel Harris, and Linda Greenlaw whom have all published books this year. It is an island wide authors’ celebration with readings and signed copies of our books that will be for sale. The minister was installed this week. He will be a year-round minister, but he doesn’t live on the island. He travels out bi-weekly to visit Islanders. It was the first installation in over 40 years. We lit the chandelier which took about 30 minutes and Douglas Cornman from the Sunbeam did the sermon. This 160th celebration included a 1960’s dance, and a timeline of island events, church events and world events from 1857 to 2017. Everyone on the Island is asked to add their personal events to the timeline. This huge timeline is at the town hall for everyone to view and write on.
Roger: shared story of when he bid on a pie, and got permission to mail a check later! So, typical of how islands work.
Kendra: I committed to getting a pie this year, and I ended up going home with 3 pies!

Frenchboro—Bev: Waterfront work ongoing, and it will be a little challenging for the lobster festival. I don’t know the latest ferry meeting, but it is on the mind of a lot of people. Town meeting was held on June 24. The comprehensive plan was passed
unanimously. Zain, our Island Fellow, put such a great amount of work in that; we have him to thank in part! There is a student teacher who will be out next year working with Jan. It is Jan’s last year so the school committee is starting to plan a search for a new teacher.

Kate: I was out on Frenchboro last week, and there was 50 people on the day boat! No event, no birding trip or planned group, it was just people who are hearing about Frenchboro for the day.

Bev: very true, Maine Coast Heritage Trust also does a lot of birding trips.

*Chebeague*—Jay: 10-year anniversary of being a town. There were two new babies born this year. A new teacher with 3 kids moved from Yarmouth; able to do so because father can telecommute! Feels like there are more and more young families. Getting lots of summer questions about the challenges of increased population; it’s part of a summer cycle, by August the energy goes from positive to wondering when people will leave. There was lots of music this summer on island including contra dancing, classical music and jazz. The paper streets are going to be fully resolved very soon. September 17th is the deadline to let the state know which roads the town is interested in and after a long process the town is ready to make their recommendations. The board of selectmen put a $1.5 million bond on the warrant for adding new classrooms and a new roof on the school.

Roger: What are the new young families doing?

Jay: One is a ferry captain and had owned a farm; wife selling scallops and a few other things. There are some people developing some farming on the island.

Timmi: Are you vacating the paper streets?

Jay: Yes; to resolve any thoughts that the town would ever start to take that land as ways to have shore access, etc.

*Peaks*—Timmi: The public library is moving into the school’s resource room while renovations are done to the library space. The school is launching a K-5 unit in collaboration with Chebeague school. They will be comparing current and historical farming initiatives between the two islands. The PIC is lobbying Portland for public restrooms, and will be implementing a quasi-permanent solution with seasonal porta potties located down front. City is also putting in porta potties at the ball field, and they will pump them out. Peak’s is also getting a dog park. The PIC is still working on a solution to parking on the mainland. The affordable housing group is working with Home Start on the island to address affordable housing, putting together recommendations for the City Council, e.g., code changes that would allow a few more year-round units every year. The golf cart ordinance got passed. It has brought more attention about safety on golf cards. It will cost about $25 per cart for the
updated safety features under the new ordinance. Children will no longer be allowed to sit on laps and golf cart operators must have a driver’s license. There are two businesses that rent golf carts hourly to visitors and they are updating their entire fleet.

Bev: Are you limiting the number or ages of those on the carts?
Timmi: You must have a driver’s license to operate a cart, which is new. No one can ride on anyone else’s lap. People are getting cited for having babies on laps.
Bev: What about ATV’s?
Timmi: this only addresses golf carts.

The PIC is also still working on addressing our paper streets, which I think will be solved in the next couple years. CBIA has developed a new poster on island etiquette that will be posted at the island terminal and on the ferry. Still working on getting them to post a large version in the mainland terminal.

_Cliff—Cheryl_: Celebrating the 40th year. Athletics nonprofit had an Olympic family fun day with 3 nights of activities, including fireworks. Sustainable Cliff Island is very close on a number of projects, including fuel depot. The temporary clinic has seen 15 patients during hours and 20 outside normal hours. This is a temporary solution until the health facility can break ground, they are waiting on permitting issues to be resolved. Broadband collaboration with Chebeague and Long Island is going well. Axiom is doing the engineering for the islands, with an initial report at the end of August and then a final report at end of October. It was exciting to share the update with the larger community that they will be going from 3.5 mbps to 100. The fire department is getting training through Portland. There is also a new ambulance, one of 3 new ones in the bay. The others went to Great Diamond and Peaks. A person from Cliff was able to take the EMT course on Chebeague. The trainers came to the island. It is an example of great collaboration with Chebeague and Long Island. One student graduated, and one moving off; so there is one student and possibly another, plus 1-2 preschoolers for the 2017 school year. They are getting a new playground this year, with assistance from the City, another collaboration with Casco Bay islands.

_Matinicus—Mark on behalf of Eva_: They have a new-to-the-island bucket truck from Swan’s Island! We don’t yet have a teacher this year. Islanders are enjoying the library and hotspot! They aren’t experiencing internet issues and are happy with what they have. Offering free CPR trainings to boost emergency preparedness. About 8000 lbs. of waste was packed off island.
Stephenie: They now have access to 50/20 mbps thanks to negotiations with TDS Telecom during their upgrades, and their unique geographic location and layout of density of the community.

_Swan’s—Donna:_ Swan’s Island are now customers of Emera Maine which has resulted in substantial savings despite the surcharge. They are still working out payment structures. Broadband meeting this week welcomed Axiom to talk about trying to address the pockets of poor service. There is a group of lobstermen participating in the Island Institute’s Aquaculture Business Development Program, and they have been very active. They will be growing oysters in the lobster pound. Mill Pond Health Center saw 45 patients in June, so we’re looking to continue adding more coverage at the clinic. There is a new collaboration between the clinic and Husson University where they send a nurse practitioner in training to the island for hands on experience. We had a teacher retire this year, so Crystal, the 3-day week principal will be taking on a teaching role in addition to being the principal. Ticks are an increasing concern/perception, there is an increase in people with Lyme. EMTs are overloaded; we have 5 on the island, but we average 30 calls just this summer compared to 40 for all of last year. I don’t know what this state would do without Life Flight. Every town should be contributing if they aren’t already.

A French restaurant started on Swan’s…it is still a dry island, but a couple of selectmen are starting to talk about selling alcohol. They had a visit from Genesis, the staff person, Mary Terry, was an Island Fellow. She came to talk about affordable housing. What we need is an up to date Comprehensive Plan, which Mary and the Genesis fund emphasized, so now there is a committee forming. If I make it to September checkup, I’ll be 1 year in remission!

_Long—Mark:_ I had predictions for town meeting which happened just after our last MIC meeting, but I was surprised as usual. The big debate was over charging the Historical Society $800/year rent in the new Community Center. There was debate over an initiative to change building setback standards to allow more house on less land. People feel like they don’t have control over development, especially over larger mansions replacing modest cottages, but this is one very limited way to hold this back a bit. The proposal failed. The proposed $100,000 for a new clinic and telemedicine space went through almost unanimously. The Aging in Place committee is very active with this and there are a number of seasonal residents who bring a lot of welcome expertise to this work.

Broadband—good things are happening, thanks to Stephenie and Bri. Axiom has done it preliminary work and will be getting back to Long, Chebeague and Cliff with a proposal. It’s true what Rob was saying about year-round versus seasonal residents; there’s always the kidding that goes on, but I feel like we’re doing so well to just sustain the year-round community that maybe some folks feel left out?—but the
complaints are there. We involve as many seasonal residents as allowed by law on committees and boards.

Fire & Rescue—we have turned a corner and are attracting new folks. with the permanent appointment Chief Tierney. We have 6 certified firefighters who can go into buildings, but many more older and other volunteers who can offer trained support at a scene. There were 2 new EMT’s who went through the Chebeague course. Like Swans Island, we are getting a lot more emergency/health calls over years past. There were 20 calls in July alone. Even with our high-speed rescue boat and seasonal route to Falmouth, we are still supporters of Life Flight as a backup. Planning board is looking at paper streets and to proposing a “Yarmouth type” solution where they are abandoned with the town taking utility easements and allowing easements to property owners.

Roger: November 3rd is the next MIC meeting. The topic is Sea Level Rise
Mark: Ideas for future topics include Island Libraries, Island publications/newsletters, Island Town Office Staff—not selectmen but the staff