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Western Cuckolds Cleaned Up for Kayakers' Visits!

Spirited volunteers turned out on July 17th to clean up the Western Cuckolds Island, preparing it for kayakers' visits, camping, picnicking, and recreation. About 20 members of the Cuckolds Volunteer Corps, together with the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) island clean-up crew and workboats, removed broken, battered lobster pots, buoys, lines, and other debris. Following instructions from Marine Patrol, the MITA team piled the traps aboard their boats and transported usable ones to the McKown Point Dock, for lobstermen to claim.

The Corps cleared three campsites and picnic sites, cutting brush, clearing vegetation, whacking weeds, and sawing and placing driftwood log seating around the campfire areas. Piles of driftwood nest nearby so that picnickers and campers can collect firewood.

The Cuckolds Corps also built and installed a Goat Shelter, making the island ready for a family of goats that will be loaned each summer by Marge Kilkelly of Dragonfly Cove Farm of Dresden (www.DragonflyCoveFarm.com). This resurrects an old mariner tradition – Squareriggers used to leave goats on islands they passed so that when they came back, they would have milk and meat to feed the crew. When completed, the goat shelter will be painted and shingled and have a recycled red tin roof, donated by Dana Moses' Tin Fish Studio in Damariscotta.

More work is planned to bring life back to the Cuckolds. Volunteers will plant some spruce trees where soil permits, treat some patches of poison ivy, and permanently install the signs that welcome visitors to the Western Cuckolds and remind them that low-impact stewardship will preserve this island for future generations. The signs will be installed at the places best suited to kayakers coming ashore.

The Western Cuckolds is approximately 4+ acres, and consists of rocky shores, great granite stone ledges, and wild vegetation including wild morning glories, seaside goldenrod, wild asters, and other beautiful wildflowers. The best approach for kayakers is on the Northeast shore, where the adventurous can land and haul their kayaks and secure them above the high water mark. This is a rugged adventure destination, where the surges and swells can sometimes make it a challenge to come ashore. But, as we say in Maine, pick your tides, and pick your weather.

On clean-up day, conditions were picture perfect. Passing kayakers came ashore to pitch in. Sailboats drifted by in the cool breezes. We welcome more volunteers to the

Cuckolds Corps, the toughest job you'll ever love. Contact Ed Green (Email: edwinjgreen@gmail.com, Phone: 207.633.3075) to sign up. For more information on the Cuckolds rescue, please visit www.CuckoldsLight.org.

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Photos Enclosed

Photo 1: Cuckolds Corps Volunteers clear debris from the Western Cuckolds.

Photo 2: Ed Green clears and constructs one of three campsites on the island.

Photo 3: Welcome signs, ready for installation on the Western Cuckolds.

Photo 4: Goat shelter, under construction