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For information, contact:
Janet Reingold
Reingold@reingold.com
T: 207.633.9895

They're Baaaack! Goats Return to Cuckolds Island

"Toting a Goat in a boat
Is not easy – they don't like to float
They are willing to go if you hold them just so
But would rather stay home and eat oats

Unloading a Goat from a boat
Is easy – they don't like to float
On Cuckolds Island they roam – it's their summer home
And it's so much more fun that the boat!"

*Marge Kilkelly
Dragonfly Cove Farm
5 McCobb Road
Dresden, ME 04342
207-737-8737 fax 207-737-2280
www.dragonflycovefarm.com*

Goldie and Daisy, two Savannah Boer goats are now happily settling into their summer cottage on the Western Cuckolds Island. They were hired by the Cuckolds Council to do their summer jobs — welcoming visitors to the island, and cleaning up the island in a carbon emission-free way. They trim the vegetation, and you will be pleased to know — they particularly love to eat poison ivy!

Goldie and Daisy are on loan from Marge Kilkelly and Joe Murray of Dragonfly Cove Farm of Dresden, Maine (www.DragonFlyCoveFarm.com). This is the second year that

Marge and Joe have sent their kids to summer camp on the Western Cuckolds. Gerry Gamage, Joe Murray, and Nancy Harriman escorted the goats from Newagen Harbor to the Western Cuckolds.

“As soon as they were on the island, Daisy and Goldie began exploring their new habitat,” said Nancy Harriman. “They were curious, and eager to discover every view and every nook and crannie. When we were ready to leave, they followed us right to the seaweed to say goodbye.”

Putting goats on islands is an old marine tradition. Squareriggers used to leave goats on islands to which they sailed so when they returned, they would have milk, cheese, and meat to feed the crew.

These goats summer in style. They stay in a charming shingled goat cottage, which has a painted recycled red tin roof on the front and traditional roof rocks on the backside. And, best of all, there's a hand-sculpted tin goat on the roof ridge, crafted and donated by Dana Moses in her Tin Fish Art Studio in Damariscotta (danamosestinfishart.com).

The Western Cuckolds is approximately 4+ acres, and consists of rocky shores, great stone ledges, and wild vegetation including 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.

The Western Cuckolds is on the Maine Island Trail, a 375-mile long waterway that extends from the Isle of Shoals east to Machias Bay. The Association's 2011 Guide lists the Cuckolds on page 118, telling visitors what they need to know about coming ashore in kayaks, canoes, or other small portable watercraft:

Location: 43° 46' 46" N 69° 39' 06"

NOAA Chart(s): 13293, 13288

Approximate Acreage: 4

Camping Capacity: 6 people

Considerations: Please camp only on the Western Cuckolds (without the Light Station).

Located near the entrance to Boothbay Harbor, the Cuckolds consist of two rocky islets rising about 15 feet above high water. The approach is challenging from the south and west sides due to extensive reefs and shoals. The best approach is from the north via the gut that splits the two islands.

The eastern island has been home to a fog signal station since 1892 and is closed to visitors during 2011 and 2012, while construction is underway. A local volunteer group known as the Cuckolds Fog Signal and Light Station Council is

restoring the light station, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. See www.CuckoldsLight.org for more information or to volunteer to help bring back this unique icon of maritime history.

Rustic overnight campsites and fireplaces are available on the western island (without the light station). Landing can be difficult due to surges and swells, but the best access is from the northeastern side at low and mid-tide when the waters are calm. A family of goats from Dragonfly Cove Farm in Dresden summer on the island, trimming island vegetation in an eco-friendly way. A whimsical goat shelter provides relief from the elements—for the goats—as they do not like getting wet! The goats are friendly and adorable, but please refrain from feeding them. We have goat caretakers who ensure they have sufficient water, hay, and grain, in addition to the abundant and delicious native vegetation.

More work is planned to bring life back to the Cuckolds. On the Western Cuckolds, volunteers planted a few spruce trees where soil permitted, and installed signs that welcome visitors to the Western Cuckolds and remind them that low-impact stewardship will preserve this island for future generations.

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Photos:

P7140008; P7140011; P7140013; P7140014

Possible Captions:

Nancy Harriman and Goldie the Goat, setting out for the Western Cuckolds

Goldie and Daisy embark in Gerry Gamage's 13 foot skiff heading for their summer jobs on the Cuckolds

Kevin: If you like to list Photo Credits, these were all taken by Janet Reingold. But we don't need the credits unless it's your protocol.

Also, these photos are posted on dragonfly cove farm facebook with pictures.