

Brief review of the relationship of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Swan Island.

Swan Island, in the Kennebec River was identified in early 1600's maps, and sporadic settlement increased in the late 1700s. The Town of Perkins was formed on the island when the inhabitants seceded from Dresden in 1847, and persisted as an independent town until it faded out in 1917 to become an unorganized plantation. The largest population was fewer than 100 persons at any time.

Swan Island was purchased from remaining owners by IF&W, beginning in the 1940s with Federal Aid to Fish and Wildlife Restoration Funds. These purchases continued over about a decade, regardless of the owner's wishes,

Values and early management responsibilities in mind during the early decades of IF&W management include:

1. Wildlife study and management area, with particular reference to nesting birds; protecting the deer herd; and controlling destructive "varmints";
2. "Interpreting" the 19<sup>th</sup> Century abandoned village" by providing stabilization (roofing/foundations) to the most historically valuable structures;
3. Provision of organized visitor services (over-water transport and vehicular tour facilities), and facilities for maintaining personnel on the island in both daytime and overnight, to assist in camping, and to construct shelters and fireplace facilities in the campground area, and, more recently, bathroom facilities at the campground;
4. IF&W has also provided Natural Science teaching to students in years past, and the Richmond High School has partly restored a farmhouse as part of carpentry training, but this valued activity has not continued since about 2004.

During the past decade, only the third responsibility has been emphasized.

Friends of Swan Island (FOSI) was formed in 2002, primarily to provide restoration and maintenance of the six remaining houses, three of which are of considerable historic value.

As events progressed, FOSI has become increasingly involved in maintaining mainland and island floats, providing water and land transport for visitors, escorting tours, enabling work crews from the Sagadahoc county jail, and in being a "presence" on the island during summers. In general, the participation of FOSI in activities on Swan Island (with encouragement of the IF&W manager) has increased, and work provided by IF&W is likely to slacken in the near future.