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Conservancy obtains 22 more acres on Prudence

Date

May 05, 2005

PRUDENCE ISLAND -- The Prudence Island Conservancy has added 22 acres of land to its holdings, some of it on the island's west side and the rest on the east side hillside overlooking the ferry landing.

A closing ceremony last Thursday at the Providence office of Armstrong, Gibbons and Gnys marked the culmination of seven years of effort involving the Conservancy and the group Preserve Rhode Island. Formerly the Heritage Foundation, Preserve Rhode Island once owned large tracts of Prudence Island land and these were the last of the conservation group's open space properties on the island.

About 17.5 acres of the land is located off Pier Road, just up from the Homestead Ferry Dock and extends south toward Broadway.

"It consists of a number of little lots woven among house lots," said the Conservancy's Robert Marshall. "It really creates a nice protected swath of land from the ferry pier to Broadway." It's mostly woods and bull briars now, but a path could someday be blazed to allow people to walk from the ferry to Broadway and possibly on to the south end, all on preserved property.

The other 4.5 acres sits on the island's west side off the south side of Broadway at the historic Stone Dock. The land provides excellent westerly views and holds productive blueberry bushes that people are welcome to pick from.

The land, on which there are no buildings, was once part of the Champlin estate (George Champlin) before being deeded to Preserve Rhode Island in 1980.

The 22-acres was turned over to the Conservancy for free other than legal costs. It was a complex and time-consuming project though due to title complications, the number of

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abutters involved with so many small lots and other factors. The Conservancy credits Shawen Williams, who sits as a volunteer board member with both the Conservancy and Preserve Rhode Island, with keeping the effort moving forward.

The two groups have worked together before. In 1993, Preserve Rhode Island transferred the 166-acre Baker Farm to the Conservancy. Simultaneously Preserve Rhode Island transferred an adjoining 292-acre parcel known as the Heritage Unit to the state Department of Environmental Management so that both parcels could be provided stewardship by an organization with more presence on the Island and be included in the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

With this 22-acre addition to the **Prudence Conservancy's** collection combined with the land already held by DEM, just over 70 percent of the land on Prudence Island is now protected from development.

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