

Welcome

The Preserve is open free of charge from dawn to dusk. Please help us protect what you have come to enjoy. Natural areas are delicate. Foot traffic only; no camping, fires, trail bikes, unleashed pets, or motorized vehicles. Carry in, carry out. Please respect boundary signs and enjoy your visit.

Ecology of the Preserve

Higgins Mountain, with an elevation of 259 feet above sea level, is one of the highest points on Georgetown Island.

It offers views from the summit east and south to Monhegan Island, Seguin Island, and the Gulf of Maine.



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Deer, fox and raccoon forage on the land.

The Preserve is predominantly second and third growth woodland. Parts of the mountain have been logged repeatedly,

most recently in the 1950s. Red oak, maple, and birch dominate the lower slopes of the mountain and create a habitat favored by warblers, woodpeckers, and owls. Pitch pine and blueberry grow on the upper slopes. One of the region's finest displays of rare broom crowberry (*Corema conradii*) is found on the summit.



Broom crowberry (*Corema conradii*)

USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. Vol. 2: 479

Higgins Mountain was burned over in the Great Georgetown Fire of 1908 and has experienced smaller fires since then. Recovery from a 2003 fire on the summit is underway and can be observed from the trail.

Geology of the Preserve

The Preserve is located in the geologic domain known as the Avalon Terrane which contains the remnants of volcanic and sedimentary rocks that were caught between North America and parts of

western Europe and north Africa during the Acadian mountain building event ~400-350 million years ago.

The summit is underlain by granite intruded into a prominently layered metamorphic rock that includes amphibolite, granofels, gneiss, and schist, of Ordovician age (~500 – 450 million years ago).

Resistant layers in the metamorphic rock, oriented in a north-south direction and steeply inclined, form ridges and vertical outcroppings.

Land Use History

Georgetown Island was acquired by early European settlers from the Abenaki sagamore Robert Hood in 1650.

The island experienced cyclical settlement and abandonment during the following century of Native American-European conflicts on the Maine coast. Georgetown's villages grew around maritime industries: fishing, boat building, navigating the Kennebec River, and coastal and ocean trade.

Pre-Revolution settlements on Georgetown Island were along the Kennebec and Back Rivers and at Robinhood Cove, west and east of the Preserve.

A 1759 Kennebec Proprietors' map shows the Higgins Mountain area as part of a large tract owned by Mathew McKinney, a cobbler who emigrated from Scotland around 1730.

The property passed through several generations of male McKinneys until, in 1849, it was given to Jane McKinney Higgins "in consideration of kind and faithful services" to her father. Her farmhouse was nearby on the east side of the town road.

For many years, the view from the summit of Higgins Mountain was of fields and pastures in many directions, since much of Georgetown was open farmland. Sheep on the Higgins farm and the adjacent Williams farm may have been pastured on the mountain.

The Higgins Mountain area remained in the Higgins family until 1986 when it was acquired by Warren Todd.

After his death it was donated in 2000 by Billie Todd (Mrs. Warren Todd) to the Land Trust.



Property donor Billie Todd, at the dedication ceremony of Higgins Mountain Preserve in 2000.

Photo: Jack Witham

Special thanks to Jack Swift and Kathy Gravino for their research and contributions to this guide.

