

2024 Block Island International Exchange Visitor Guide



Welcome to Block Island!

Thank you for choosing Block Island for your international exchange visitor adventure. We hope you have an enjoyable time, make new friends, and learn more about yourself and others during your experience.

Your safety and well-being are important to us, and we want your cultural experience to exceed your expectations! Please enjoy your time here and while traveling in the United States.

If you can't find what you're looking for in this guide, please contact your sponsor and/or your host employer.

Block Island Department of Human Services
bidhs@newshorehamri.gov, (401)466-3207

Block Island Information

Incorporated in 1672 as the only town on the island of Block Island, New Shoreham has the distinction of being the smallest town in the smallest state in the United States. The municipality encompasses the entire geographic area of Block Island, an island of just under 10 square miles/26 square kilometers located approximately 12 miles/19 kilometers south of mainland Rhode Island across Block Island Sound.

It's been described by The Nature Conservancy as "one of the last 12 great places in the Western Hemisphere". It's a beautiful island with unspoiled beaches, 200-foot/61-meter cliffs, freshwater ponds, over 30 miles/48 kilometers of Greenway Trails, and lush rolling hills under a quilt of wildflowers.

For "Everything BI" (by the Block Island Chamber of Commerce), visit <https://theblockislandapp.com/>

Social Security Cards

Check with your host employer, sponsor, or job description for details on how to apply for your Social Security card.

You are strongly encouraged to start your Social Security Number application online (<https://secure.ssa.gov/ossnap/public/landingOSsnap>) and you must visit your local Social Security office or card center to finish the process. The Social Security office prefers that host employers make appointments ahead of time as it's very difficult to arrive at the office and get an appointment.

Find out which documents are required for your original card request here:

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5doc.htm> Acceptable documents **MUST** be original or copies certified by the issuing agency. Your documents must be unexpired and must show your name and date of birth or age.

Social Security Office

30 Quaker Lane, Warwick, Rhode Island, 02886

Phone (866)964-2038

National Phone (800)772-1213

*The Block Island Chamber of Commerce coordinates busing from the Ferry Terminal in Point Judith, Rhode Island, to the closest Social Security office twice a year (once in late May/early June and once in late June). Ask your host employer for the specific dates/times of busing.

*Remember, you are only permitted to work for your approved host employer and need to get written approval from your sponsor before starting a second job.

Housing

Housing is inspected and licensed by the Town of New Shoreham. Be certain that you are renting from a landlord who has a license, and your housing has been inspected.

Housing Tips:

- Check your job description and with your host employer and sponsor to see if housing is offered through your placement.
- Carefully read the terms of the housing agreements. After signing and paying your deposit, you are expected to honor your commitment to the agreement for the full term of the lease.
- Follow the housing rules, which may include a 'no visitors allowed' rule. Failure to do so can put you in violation of building and fire codes.
- If your rent is not automatically deducted, pay your rent on time and get a receipt.
- Do not cause any damage to the apartment, grounds, furnishings, etc.
- Do not move out without informing your rental manager.
- If you are having an issue with housing, please try to resolve the issue with your rental manager/host employer. If you cannot come to an agreement, contact your sponsor.
- Know your fire number or name of building/housing complex.

Transportation

*Block Island does **NOT** have public transportation or ridesharing services.

On-island Taxis

Ace Taxi Phone: (401)585-6750	McAloon's Taxi Service Phone: (401)741-1410	Sue's Taxi Phone: (401)742-0436
Block Island Taxi Phone: (401)466-2562	McGovern's Cab (401)862-6087	Swell Taxi Phone: (401)466-5496
C.C. Cab Phone: (401)536-0026	Monica's Taxi Phone: (401)742-0000	Tip Top Taxi Phone: (401)477-3426
Clark's Cab Phone: (401)466-5839	Oceanside Taxi Phone: (401)443-7800	Zack's Hack Phone: (401)741-3688
Fred's Taxi Phone: (401)209-0354	Peter Pan Taxi Service Phone: (401)742-1457	
Green Diamond Taxi Phone: (401)742-0031	Rondo's Taxi Phone: (401)466-5550	

*Taxi basic charge is \$11 (1 person) plus additional fees for more passengers, distance & dirt roads.

Current taxi map & rates can be found here: <https://www.newshorehamri.gov/QuickLinks.aspx?CID=41>

On-island Ferries

Old Harbor: Block Island Express (New London, Connecticut and Orient Point, New York) https://www.goblockisland.com/ Block Island Ferry (Point Judith, Rhode Island and Newport, Rhode Island) https://www.blockislandferry.com/
New Harbor: Viking Ferry (Montauk, New York) https://vikingfleet.com/ferry-service/

On and Off-island **Airports**

Rhode Island: Block Island State Airport (New Shoreham) https://flyblockislandairport.com/ Westerly State Airport (Westerly) https://flywesterlyairport.com/ T.F. Green International Airport (Providence) https://flyri.com/
Connecticut: Bradley International Airport (Hartford) https://bradleyairport.com/ Tweed New Haven Airport (New Haven) https://flytweed.com/
Massachusetts: Boston Logan International Airport (Boston) https://www.massport.com/logan-airport

Off-island **Trains**

Amtrak https://www.amtrak.com/home
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) (Wickford Junction, Rhode Island to Boston, Massachusetts) https://www.mbtta.com/
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) (New Haven, Connecticut to New York City, New York/Montauk, New York to New York City, New York https://new.mta.info/

Off-island **Busses**

Flix Bus (Providence, Rhode Island) https://www.flixbus.com/bus/providence-ri
Greyhound Bus (Providence, Rhode Island) https://www.greyhound.com/bus/providence-ri/providence
Peter Pan Bus (Providence, Rhode Island) https://peterpanbus.com/providence-terminal/
Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) (Route 69, Point Judith, Rhode Island) https://www.ripta.com/

Off-island **Rideshare**

Lyft https://www.lyft.com/rider
Uber https://www.uber.com/

Safety Information

Dial 911 for all emergencies. An emergency is when immediate police, fire or rescue assistance is necessary. Do exactly what the 911 operator tells you to do. Give the operator all necessary information, including your location (e.g., fire number of the building you are in).

Medical ID allows first responders access to your medical information (e.g., medical conditions, allergies, prescriptions) and emergency contacts from your cell phone's lock screen. Consider setting up Medical ID through the Health app on iPhones or download the Medical ID app for Androids.

New Shoreham Police Department

10 Beach Avenue, (401)466-3220

ONSOLVE CodeRED is a high-speed mass notification system allowing town officials to send emergency alerts by phone, email, and/or text to citizens within the areas of impact. Examples include evacuation notices, bio-terrorism alerts, boil water notices, and missing child reports. Registered citizens may also opt to receive general non-emergency notifications. Text BLOCKISLAND to 99411 and follow the prompts or visit <https://www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-codered-emergency-alerts/>

Town ordinances prohibit:

- Closed and open containers of alcoholic beverages on all public beaches
- Drinking alcoholic beverages on beaches, streets, docks
- Consumption of cannabis in public spaces
- Underage consumption of alcohol and/or cannabis (must be 21+ years old)
- Driving on beaches without valid CRMC permit (no driving on beaches 9a-6p, May 15-October 15)
- Camping, except by special permission
- Sleeping overnight in vehicles or on beaches
- Operating motorcycles between midnight and 6a
- Beach fires without permit (see below)
- Dumping refuse on roads or in harbors
- Shell fishing without a license
- Charcoal fires on boats at docks
- Disturbing the peace
- Unleashed dogs
- Littering
- Mopeds on dirt roads (except for privately owned mopeds)

Beach Fire Permits are required and are available, at no cost, at the Police Station. The general conditions of the Beach Fire Permit are:

- Photo ID
- Pallets are not permitted as fuel.
- All beach fires must be completely extinguished by midnight.
- All litter and refuse must be removed from the site.
- Beach fires are prohibited between the hours of 12a and 8a.
- Beach fires are prohibited within 25 feet of the dunes.

Dunes - Block Island's delicate ecosystem serves as an offshore refuge for a variety of plants and animals. This community has made an outstanding commitment to conservation, including the protection of our dunes.

Observe the following **dos and don'ts**:

- Do enjoy the beach but stay close to the water and clear of nesting birds, dunes, and beach vegetation.
- Do walk on designated trails or roadways.
- Do keep pets on a leash or indoors for they can harm wildlife and transport ticks.
- Do enjoy the peace and quiet; allow other people and wildlife the same courtesy.
- Do reduce congestion by walking, biking, or taking a taxi.
- Don't litter. Carry out your trash.
- Don't camp.
- Don't have a beach fire without a permit.
- Don't use dune fencing as fuel for your fires.
- Don't drive on the beach without a permit. And once you have your permit, please obey all regulations.

Block Island takes **recycling** seriously! Please recycle the following items:

- Tin, aluminum, and scrap metal
- Glass, bottles, and jars
- Plastic bottles and jugs
- Milk cartons and drink boxes
- Mixed paper
- Thick/corrugated cardboard
- Newsprint
- Corrugated cardboard

Vehicle Safety - Exercise extreme caution when driving on Block Island roads. The speed limit on Block Island is 25 miles per hour... or less! Please heed ALL stop signs.

Pedestrian & Bike Safety

Walk left (facing traffic), ride right (with traffic), and wear high visibility and/or reflective gear at night.

Take care when cycling the roads of Block Island. Ride with the traffic, obey traffic signs and adhere to all rules of the road. Keep on the right side of the road and ride single-file whenever possible. For nighttime riding, a light is required for the front of the bike and a reflector should be attached to the rear.

Bicycles are not permitted on the Greenway Trails. And bicycles are required by state law to stop at stop signs. Helmets are required for all bicyclists under 15 years of age.

Roller Blades, Scooters, Skateboards

State law requires helmets on skateboarders, roller skaters, in line skaters and scooter riders ages 15 and younger. Due to heavy congestion and safety concerns, rollerblading, skateboarding, and scootering are not permitted in the downtown area, or on Ocean Avenue. Skateboarders are encouraged to use the skateboard facility at Ball-O'Brien Park, where helmets are required. Scooters with helper motors (gas or electric) are NOT allowed on the roads by RI state law. Persistent violators will have their equipment confiscated.

Moped Safety

All operators must have a valid driver's license. Operation of mopeds may only occur between 9a and 8p. Mopeds are NOT permitted on any of the island's unpaved roads. All moped operators and passengers must wear a helmet and eye protection. Passengers must be seated behind the operator. The moped's horn is a piece of equipment designed for emergency use and should only be used for this purpose. Mopeds are motor vehicles and are subject to all privileges and sanctions regarding rules of the road, and the general laws of the State of Rhode Island.

Water Safety

There's water everywhere you look in New Shoreham but not all of it is safe for swimming or recreation. Make sure you know what you're getting into before you test the waters.

- Read all the signs, warnings, and rules before entering the water.
- Don't swim in Cow Cove/North Light area. No swimming here, dangerous rip current.
- Swimmers exercise caution at Vaill Beach, rough surf.
- Do not swim during a storm.
- Know your limitations. Use floating devices or life jackets if needed.
- Never swim alone.

Document Safety

- It is illegal for anyone to keep your documents (e.g., passport).
- Make copies of your passport and keep your documents and copies safe.
- Keep a second set of copies safe in your home country as a backup.

Safety Tips

- If you like it, lock it! Lock up your bike, passport, and valuables.
- Store your cash in a secure place (a bank is the safest place). Consider direct deposit if your employer offers it. Be wary of scams (e.g., downloading cash onto gift cards and fake calls from the Internal Revenue Service or Social Security). Bring concerns to the police.
- The drinking age is 21 years old. Do NOT drink or buy alcohol for people underage. No open intoxicants in public or vehicles.
- Be aware that harassment and assault laws in the US are very strict.
- Carry your insurance information and photo ID with you.
- Don't walk alone – use the buddy system!
- Shoplifting is a serious offense.
- Disorderly conduct is prohibited which includes fighting, nudity in public, urinating in public, etc.

Deer ticks and Lyme disease

The biggest threat from tick bites on Block Island is Lyme disease, which is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The bacteria are transmitted to humans by the black-legged deer tick. To learn more about prevention and treatment, visit

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/Lyme/.



Poison Ivy and Other Poisonous Plants

Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac

To identify, look at their appearance:



Poison ivy has three leaflets on each leaf and grows as a bush or vine.



Poison oak has three leaflets on each leaf, with rounded tips, and grows like a shrub or vine.



Poison sumac leaves have clusters of seven to 13 leaflets arranged in pairs and grows as a tree.

 Cleveland Clinic

The poison ivy plant is common on Block Island, so it is important to learn what it looks like. Contact with poison ivy may lead to a red, blistery, itchy rash. It is caused by an allergic reaction to urushiol, the chemical in poison ivy that triggers the rash. To learn more about prevention and treatment, visit <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/outsmarting-poison-ivy-and-other-poisonous-plants>

Sunburn

Don't forget sunscreen. Summers on Block Island can be filled with sunshine. According to the American Cancer Society, everyone is at risk for skin cancer, so protection from the sun's harmful UV rays is important. To learn more about prevention and treatment, visit <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/sun-and-uv.html>

Motion Sickness

Rocking ferry boats and bumpy airplane rides can lead to motion sickness. Motion sickness occurs when the inner ear, the eyes, and other areas of the body detect motion, send unexpected or conflicting messages to the brain. This leads to a conflict between the senses, and results in motion sickness. To learn more about prevention and treatment, visit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/motion-sickness>

Services & Contact Information

Medical Care

Block Island Medical Center: Family Primary Care, Wellness Visits, & Urgent Care Needs

6 Payne Road

(401)466-2974

After hours urgent care (401)466-3220

Dial 911 for emergency services

Behavioral Health

On-island Services: Kerri Spier Gaffett Therapy for individuals, couples, & families www.kgaffett.com (401)752-9504	Off-island Services: Gateway Healthcare https://www.lifespan.org/locations/gateway-healthcare (401)729-8701
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24/7 Support

BH Link Hotline 401-414-LINK (5465) is a one-stop, statewide 24/7 call-in center that connects people to appropriate care and resources, when they or someone they care about is experiencing a behavioral healthcare crisis.

988 is the dialing code for the suicide and crisis lifeline in Rhode Island. 988 offers 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors. People can call or text 988 for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. 988 helps with:

- Thoughts of suicide
- Mental health crisis
- Substance use crisis
- Any other emotional distress

United Way 211 can connect you with housing, food, healthcare and much more.

- 211 is a free, confidential service.
- Your call is answered by a trained professional.
- One call connects you with the appropriate resources you need in your community.
- It is efficient, fast and easy to use.
- No more wrong numbers or wasted time trying to find the right resource.
- It is always there for you—24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- Translation services are available in many languages.

Prescriptions

Block Island does **NOT** have a pharmacy. Medications are delivered via airplane from Westerly Airport to Block Island Airport through McQuade's Marketplace (Westerly) www.mcquadesrx.com (401)596-0277

Off-island Hospitals

Rhode Island Hospital (Providence, RI) <https://www.lifespan.org/locations/rhode-island-hospital>
(401)444-3500

South County Hospital (Wakefield, RI) <https://www.southcountyhealth.org/> (401)782-8000

Westerly Hospital (Westerly, RI) <https://www.westerlyhospital.org/> (401)596-6000

Banking

Washington Trust Bank

123 Ocean Avenue

(401)466-7710

Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) can be found in the following locations:

Block Island Chamber of Commerce (Interstate Navigation/Ferry Lot)	Chapel Sweets	National Hotel	Old Island Pub	Tigerfish
Ben & Jerry's (Seaside Market)	Club Soda	New Harbor Boat Basin/Oar	Poor People's Pub	Washington Trust
Block Island Grocery	Ernie's	Odd Fellows Cafe	Red Bird Liquor Store	Wave
Champlin's Marina & Resort	Fred Benson Town Beach	Old Harbor Take-out	Spring House Hotel	Yellow Kittens

Taxes

Your sponsor will provide you with important tax information in December. Before you leave the island, make sure your host employer has your social security number, home address, and email address.

Groceries

<i>On-island</i>	<i>Off-island (RIPTA Route 69 Narragansett/Galilee)</i>	<i>Online (Delivers to Block Island)</i>
New Harbor Boat Basin – The Market West Side Road (401)466-5189	Shaw's (Wakefield Mall) 160 Old Tower Hill Road Wakefield (401)792-9888	www.amazon.com
Bodega 33 Ocean Avenue	Stop & Shop (Salt Pond Plaza) 66 Point Judith Road, Narragansett (401)783-9614	www.belmontmarket.com
Block Island Grocery 242 Ocean Avenue (401)466-2949		www.instacart.com
Block Island Depot 101 Ocean Avenue		www.walmart.com
Seaside Market 244 Water Street (401)466-5876		

Haircuts (On and off-island)

Great Clips (Salt Pond Plaza) 91 Point Judith Road, Narragansett (401)284-0244 https://salons.greatclips.com/us/ri/narragansett/91-point-judith-rd
Koru Eco Spa 30 Water Street, Block Island (401)378-1871 https://www.koruecospa.com/
Salt Hair Shop 442 Dodge Street, Block Island (401)632-8323 https://salthairshop.com/contact-1/
Supercuts (Wakefield Mall) 160 Old Tower Hill Road, Wakefield (401)788-8252 https://www.supercuts.com/locations/nearme/haircut/RI/Wakefield/Wakefield-Mall/83044

Hardware

Island Hardware & Supply
102 Ocean Avenue
[\(401\)466-5831](tel:(401)466-5831)

Island Events

Explore what's happening on Block Island. Enjoy the Farmer's Markets, Holiday celebrations (Memorial Day, 4th of July, Victory Day, and Labor Day), Block Island Historical Society, North and Southeast Lighthouses, Painted Rock, Summer Sports Leagues and more!
Block Island Chamber of Commerce www.blockislandchamber.com

Block Island Bulletin Board (BIBB) (bibulletin@googlegroups.com) is a free, email-based communication system available to both full-time and seasonal residents. It's a great place to ask for help & give help, find free/low-cost items & donate/sell items, and learn about what's happening around town. To join, send an email to bibulletin+subscribe@googlegroups.com (include full name & island address in subject line of email).

Houses of Worship

St. Andrew Church (Roman Catholic) Chapel Street (401)466-5519
St. Ann's By-the-sea (Episcopal) Spring Street (401)466-2911
Harbor Baptist Church Fountain Square (401)466-5940
Friends Meeting (Quaker) At members' homes (401)466-2552
Sons & Daughters of Ruth (Jewish) St. Andrew's Parish Center Spring Street (401)466-2861
Christian Science Services At members' homes (401)466-9982

Library

Island Free Library
9 Dodge Street
www.islandfreelibrary.org

Newspaper

Block Island Times www.blockislandtimes.com
Providence Journal www.providencejournal.com
Boston Globe www.bostonglobe.com
New York Times www.nytimes.com

Post Office

32T Water Street
[\(401\)466-7733](tel:(401)466-7733)

*Block Island does not have traditional home/business delivery of mail. However, there is a full-service post office in town. Overnight mail is not guaranteed on the island, but Priority Mail does work well. New mail is usually available in the late afternoon after it arrives and is sorted.

*Both the United Postal Services (U.P.S.) and Federal Express deliver to Point Judith Monday through Friday. Please use your island address, NOT the ferry terminal address, for packages. Lambs Package Service (401)466-5390 delivers these packages once they arrive on Block Island.

History

Thousands of years ago, a glacier left rolling hills and ponds behind, forming what is now known as Block Island.

The Narragansett Indians were the first inhabitants of Block Island as evidenced by remains that date back thousands of years. Their name for the island was “Manisses” which translates to “Island of the Little God.”

In 1614, Adrian Block, a Dutch explorer sailed to the island and gave it his name. He called it Block Island and it was in 1661 that the Island was settled.

From 1775-1783, during the Revolutionary War, the Block Islanders kept a lookout on Beacon Hill by lighting fires to warn that an enemy was in sight. In the 1800s, an observatory was built as a tourist attraction on Beacon Hill, the Island’s highest point. Beacon Hill stands 211 feet/64 meters above sea level; however, the observatory is now a private home.

In 1829, the federal government built the Island’s first lighthouse on Sandy Point. Four lighthouses have since been built at this location. The present lighthouse, the Northlight, was built in 1867 and is open to the public for tours.

In 1854, the Spring House Hotel was built. It is the oldest hotel on the Island and is still open to the public. Nicholas Ball built the Oceanview Hotel, the largest hotel on Block Island, in 1872. He made his fortune in the California Gold Rush of the 1840’s. President Ulysses S. Grant stayed at the Oceanview Hotel and held a special session with the U.S. Supreme Court so its members would not have to interrupt their vacations by returning to Washington. The Oceanview Hotel burned to the ground in 1966.

The federal government began building the breakwater in Old Harbor in 1870. It was completed in 1873, mostly by islanders.

In 1873, the Southeast Light was built on the cliffs 150 feet above sea level. It cost \$75,000. In 1993, the Southeast Light was moved back 200 feet to escape the eroding bluffs. At the time it was the largest building to be moved in one piece.

In 1896, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union erected the statue of Rebecca, which stands in the center of town. Rebecca of the Well, as noted in Book of Genesis, is carrying water for people and animals.

The Block Island State Airport was open and ready for use in 1950. Before this time, airplanes landed in the Sheep Meadow and in Minister’s Lot on Corn Neck Road.

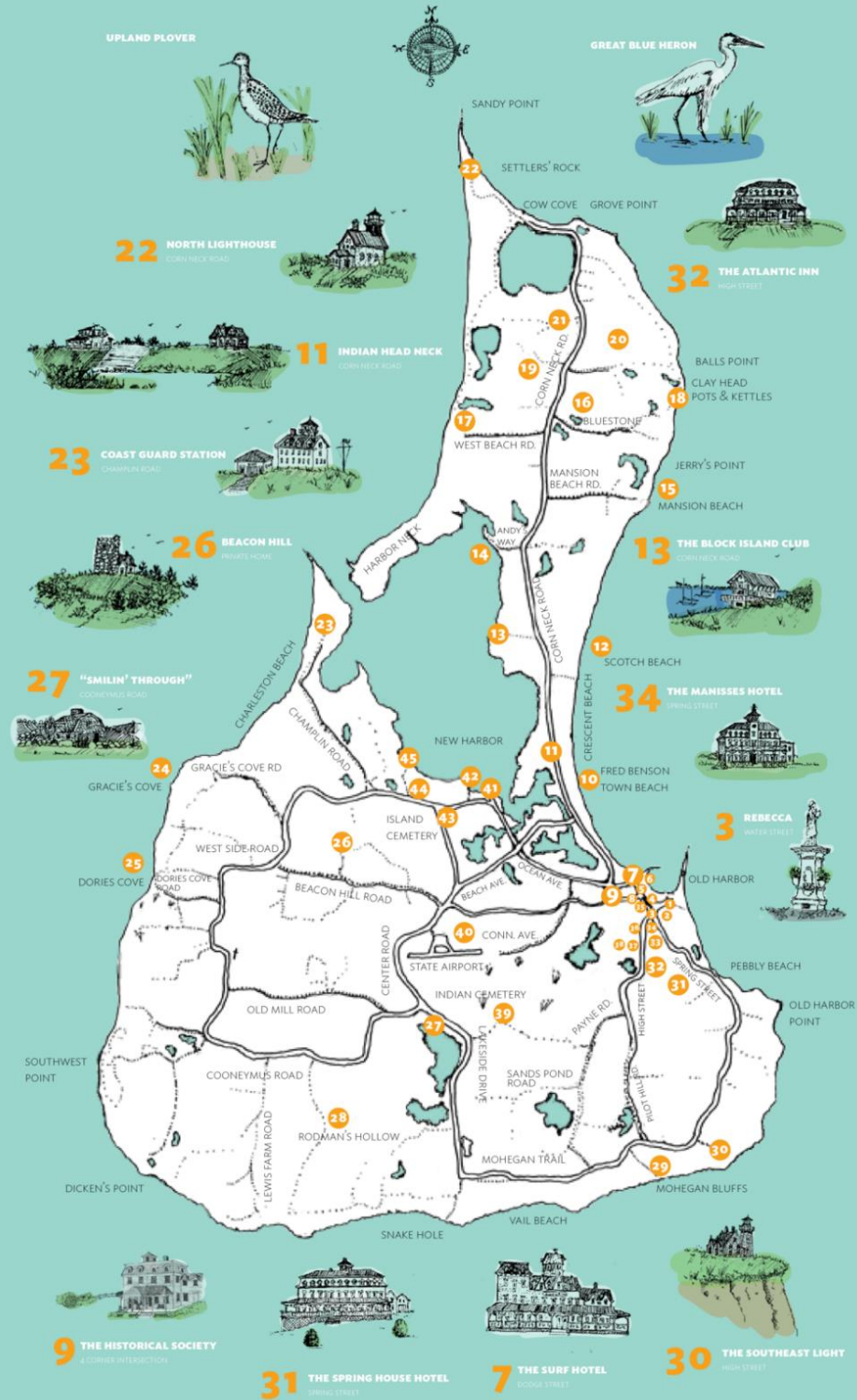
In 1971, the Block Island Conservancy was formed to preserve open space. Rodman’s Hollow, a depression left by the glaciers, was one of the first sites to be preserved. Today nearly half of the island is preserved open space.

Block Island is home to America’s first offshore wind farm. The five offshore wind turbines that comprise the Block Island Wind Farm generate enough clean, renewable energy to power the entire island and offset thousands of tons of CO2 per year. This historic project has laid a strong foundation for America’s clean energy future.

To learn more about the history of Block Island, visit <https://www.blockislandhistorical.org/>

BLOCK ISLAND MAP

Town of New Shoreham



Published with permission from Jessie Edwards Gallery.