



Noah Van Allen, age 3, making himself at home on the Maine Island Trail.

Last summer, weekdays were punctuated by sunrise paddles on the Royal River; we spent sunsets at Winslow Park building sandcastles and collecting shells with Noah, our 3-year-old son. The tide clock hanging by the door—a gift from local friends and fellow MITA members—was the organizing force of our free time. Each weekend Peter targeted a new island to circumnavigate, and a new dog-eared page in the MITA Trail Guide to turn into a memory.

We had been bracing for the possibility that Noah wouldn't share our love of water. He might be scared. He might love soccer more. One day last August, shortly after Maine Coast Heritage Trust secured public access to 15 acres of Clapboard Island, Peter was recounting his maiden voyage there, then stopped abruptly.

Noah had boarded the kayak that was sitting on the grass. He had assumed a reclining position, clasped his hands behind his head, and seemed to be happily napping—very much at home on the Maine Island Trail indeed.

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*Jennifer Van Allen joined MITA in February as newsletter editor. Jennifer, Peter, and Noah live in Yarmouth.*

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## Rules of the Road

We share the Maine Island Trail with a diverse group of commercial and recreational boats. Here's a refresher on how to stay safe while you're on the water this summer:

**Size matters.** The best rule of thumb is to always give the larger boat the right of way. As your craft allows, stay in shallower areas near the shoreline whenever possible—outside the deep draft channel.

**Respect those at work.** MITA recommends that recreational boaters always give way to tugs, tows, fishing boats, ferries, and other commercial vessels.

**See and be seen.** Always assume that another vessel cannot see you. Crews on large ships often have difficulty seeing small craft.

**Watch your wake.** When you're operating a motorized vessel, you're responsible for the effects of your wake. Be aware of docks, ferry landings, and smaller craft that may be impacted as you pass. Observe posted speed and no-wake zones. Remember that your wake will travel ahead of you even if you've slowed down.

**Tune in to traffic reports.** Channels 16 and 9 on your VHF radio are the best to monitor, hail other vessels, and communicate with the Coast Guard.

For more information on commercial vessel traffic in busy harbors, tune in to Channel 13, on which large vessels may announce when they're approaching busy harbors or getting underway from berth.

**Avoid tugs and tows.** If you see a tug near a barge or freighter, assume they're connected. Never attempt to pass between them, and stay away. A tug can have little control over the barge it is towing.

**Steer clear of lobster boats.** Lobstermen travel from buoy to buoy, often in tight circles, and while they're focused on bringing up traps, they may not be as attuned to other boats nearby. If crossing paths with a lobster boat is unavoidable, do so from the working side of the boat and pass from behind—never in front—of the bow.

**Keep your distance from ferries.** Ferries can generate strong propeller wash while maneuvering into and away from landings. Give them a wide berth to avoid these currents.

**Avoid head-on collisions.** When meeting another vessel head on, a port-to-port passing is preferred, just like on a roadway.

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*Learn more about navigation from the U.S. Coast Guard at [uscgboating.org](http://uscgboating.org).*

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### MITA Film Fest

*Our 2015 Small Boaters' Film Festival & Silent Auction was a smashing success!*

Attendees had the chance to check out some amazing water-based films from around the country, as well as from right here in Maine. They also bid on a stellar collection of auction items, including vintage sea kayaks, a brand-new paddleboard, an L.L. Bean cruiser bicycle, boat excursions, trips, and island stays. Attendees enjoyed delicious food, good company, and sipped ever-popular Maine Island Trail Ale from Rising Tide Brewing Co. Thanks to all of our donors for supporting the Maine Island Trail Association and making this year's event one to remember, and a very special thanks to our media sponsors, **Maine Magazine** and **98.9 WCLZ**, for helping us get the word out!

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