

FEBRUARY 2009 HRH NEWS

2009 SEVEN TO SAVE LIST NAMES ISLAND IN HUDSON RIVER NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT

On February 10th the Preservation League of New York State announced that it has named Magdalen Island to its 2009 *Seven to Save* Endangered Properties list (<http://www.preservenys.org>). Mary Burns, the island's 15-year steward, and Hudson River Heritage president, Dr. Christopher Lindner, archaeologist-in-residence at Bard College, nominated Magdalen Island for this recognition. In the town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, near the east bank of the Hudson River, Magdalen Island is in the middle of the 18-mile length of the National Historic Landmark District. Artifacts indicate human use of the island since 6,000 years ago. For further information about archaeology in the Tivoli Bays area, visit <http://inside.bard.edu/archaeology/articles/thesisBurns.html>.

Magdalen Island merits attention this quadricentennial year because of the Native American artifacts discovered by Vassar archaeologist Dr. Mary Butler in 1939. Many of the artifacts, including a pipe bowl datable to the 1600s, gunflints, ceramics, and nails, point to a Dutch connection. Native American groups used the island's proximity to aquatic food sources on a seasonal basis long before European exploration.

The 8-acre NYSDEC-owned property urgently needs the protection measures advocated through the League's program. Deterrents to looting at the island have proven ineffectual and its rich sites, with their capacity to inform us about the past, have been badly damaged. See the New York Times: "An Island in the Hudson, Plundered in a Search for Indian Artifacts" by Anthony DePalma. For on-line copy: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/12/nyregion/12magdalen.html?_r=1. Burns and Lindner have formulated measures they believe will best address the problem of looting. These preservation measures include passage of stronger laws in the New York State Legislature, the renewal of commitment from state agencies to enforce regulations that protect archaeological resources, and development of educational

materials for schools. Now HRH has the support of the Preservation League of New York State in these efforts.

In the past several years, Hudson River Heritage has extended its goals explicitly to include protection of archaeological resources in and near the Hudson River National Historic Landmark District that stretches from Hyde Park to Germantown. HRH has strengthened its voice in archaeological preservation by testimony at public hearings in Red Hook, Rhinebeck, and Kingston. HRH has included archaeological sites in its educational presentations in Saugerties, Hyde Park, Clermont, and Clinton. In each case, HRH has emphasized the importance of education and advocacy to protect archaeological resources.

In 2007 HRH, with other Kingston and regional advocacy groups, succeeded in a nomination of the Kingston Stockade District when it was named to the *Seven to Save* Endangered Properties list. The City of Kingston cancelled a proposed 12-story building that would have been adjacent to the Senate House, and instead called for appropriate new designs for development of the former parking lot on North Front Street.



Magdalen Island can be seen on the right, along the railroad tracks, west of the Bard College campus and the DEC's Tivoli Bays research reserve (photo by Mary Burns).

We now have the opportunity to affect statewide policy through public communications about archaeological preservation. Burns and Lindner believe that in saving Magdalen Island they will find a solution to the problem of looting at numerous archaeological sites in New York State.