

Frequently Asked Questions about the Goose Rocks “Be A Keeper” Experience

Is Goose Rocks rented out like a hotel or “Bed & Breakfast?”

No. Goose Rocks is owned by the 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, Beacon Preservation, Inc. whose mission is to restore and preserve Goose Rocks to a “habitable lighthouse keeper’s quarters and museum” for visitors to enjoy. Goose Rocks is an *offshore* lighthouse completely surrounded by water, so –depending on time of year-- access can be extremely treacherous and must be carefully controlled to ensure the safety of visitors and protection of the immediate environment.

Because we cannot safely or feasibly operate this lighthouse as a museum open to the general public, and because the structure is so expensive to upkeep and maintain, we need to maximize our ability to preserve lighthouses while still allowing careful and limited access for true lighthouse enthusiasts.

Visitors do not rent Goose Rocks and Beacon Preservation, Inc. is not in the accommodations business. Rather, we allow our supporters to enjoy the experience of visiting Goose Rocks as our guests as “Keepers” and stewards of Goose Rocks, and our trusted Keepers (especially returning guests) can enjoy Goose Rocks at their leisure after initial orientation by a member of our Board.

Because there are so few opportunities to visit and stay in an operating lighthouse, interest in the Goose Rocks “keepers’ experience” is high. The exact dates and length of a visit are determined by the generosity of your donation in set by the market demand for visits at different times of the year. Please see our minimum donations schedule for details on exclusive visits between May and October.

How many people can stay at Goose Rocks during our visit?

Goose Rocks has sanitary facilities and “keepers’ quarters” that most comfortably accommodate up to six people (in its two bedrooms and one bunkroom: see description of Goose Rocks), although a maximum of eight people can be allowed with prior permission. Under no circumstances will more overnight guests be permitted due to the constraints of our Incinolet sanitation system and the limited ability to evacuate visitors in case of an emergency.

What if I can’t afford your **minimum donation but I am really passionate about lighthouses and want to stay at Goose Rocks?**

First, remember that Goose Rocks offers several free “Lighthouse Day” Open House events each summer. Check our website often for exact dates, as they are often determined on short notice depending on weather conditions. If you do not have a boat or kayak to come to Goose Rocks on Lighthouse Day, check with Foy Brown at the J.O.

Brown Boatyard (just next to North Haven's ferry terminal) for boat transportation to and from Goose Rocks.

Second, everyone has the possibility of winning a peak-weekend summer stay at Goose Rocks through our ongoing **RAFFLE TICKET contest**. We sell only 500 tickets for each peak-weekend stay (\$25 each ticket or five for \$100), so that every lighthouse enthusiast who contributes \$25 to Beacon Preservation can instantly be eligible (by making your contribution via the purchase of a raffle ticket) for a stay at Goose Rocks. These are legitimate raffles and winners are posted on our website, with 100% of proceeds going toward the restoration and upkeep of Goose Rocks.

Finally, feel free to contact us if you have last-minute plans to be in the mid-coast Maine area. If we have an open date(s) or sudden reservation cancellation and can accommodate you, we will happily work with you to find some reasonable donation amount that will cover our out-of-pocket expenses for accommodating your visit while allowing you to have the Goose Rocks Keeper's Experience of which you've always dreamed.

What if I don't want an overnight Keeper's Experience at Goose Rocks. Is there any way I can still **visit this lighthouse**?

Yes. Three days each summer Goose Rocks can be toured by the general public during a "**Lighthouse Day**" open house. There is no charge; it is our way of thanking our community and making sure that all able-bodied lighthouse aficionados have an opportunity to visit the inside of an offshore lighthouse. Check the homepage of this website often for notices of the next scheduled Lighthouse Day.

Please keep in mind that supporters of Beacon Preservation who donate and then avail themselves of a stay at Goose Rocks are not buying accommodation: we don't believe you can put any price on the unique Goose Rocks experience. Instead, our ability to let lighthouse supporters visit Goose Rocks encourages generous donations that help us acquire and restore other historic lighthouses—but our intention is never to exclude anyone.

Offering "Keepers Experiences" at Goose Rocks based on a minimum donation is simply a reasonable way of raising the much-needed funds for lighthouse preservation, and these funds allow us to offer our free "Lighthouse Day" open houses to the general public. Since most lighthouses can never be made habitable or opened to the public, we can use the Goose Rocks Keeper's Experience to leverage contributions to maintain Goose Rocks and other lighthouses that are endangered, or procure those which might otherwise become privately owned and *never* accessible to the public. Our mission includes carefully controlled access for the public to appropriate lighthouses regardless of ability to donate, so we welcome all visitors during an open house event .

Is Goose Rocks available for **Private Events**?

Absolutely. Goose Rocks is also available for private events such as

- Weddings
- Birthday, Anniversary, Graduation Parties
- Family Reunions
- Art Shows or Photo Exhibits
- Fashion Photo Shoots
- Charity Auctions or Fundraiser Event
- Executive Forums or Training Seminars
- Writers' or Artists Workshops/Sanctuary

What is the **Guest Capacity** for a private event?

Assuming nice weather allows use of the 8'-wide covered catwalk on the main entrance level of the lighthouse, Goose Rocks can easily accommodate parties of up to 40 standing and "mingling" people. For seated dining events, 24 outdoor seated guests (four guests at 6 individual tables) can be accommodated on the main covered deck. For indoor dinner parties, no more than 12 seated dinner guests are recommended (ideally one large banquet table in the sitting room; additional smaller tables accommodating 2 to 6 additional guests could be set up on other floors if needed).

The stacked room "tower" design of this lighthouse promotes socialization among guests who can wander between floors and enjoy the three separate outside balcony-catwalk decks, which makes Goose Rocks a particularly appealing venue for party mingling.

What sort of **Event Coordination** and Amenities do you offer?

Keep in mind that we are not professional event planners, but we do know the people and businesses on the islands of North Haven and Vinalhaven who can make your event a success. With reasonable advanced notice, we can provide transportation, catering, photographers, a justice of the peace or minister, musicians, stylists, conference tables and chairs, media presentation equipment, recreational or sporting equipment, etc. Call us to see how we can make your event unique by hosting it at Goose Rocks.

Because of the extreme challenge of logistics and safe transportation of equipment and people to and from the lighthouse, **special events require a minimum donation of \$2,500 per day**, in addition to any separate "keeper's experience" overnight arrangements. There is an additional \$50 per-guest fee required for round-trip transportation between North Haven and the lighthouse, and other services and amenities priced accordingly.

What about **handicap accessibility** and medical emergencies?

Access to Goose Rocks includes real risks, and a *safe and enjoyable* visit is always dependent on guests' physical and mental ability to climb a vertical ladder (from a boat) to the catwalk for initial access. Even with spotters and handlers on the boat and ladder landing, there is always a risk of losing balance or slipping. **Strong and hardy guests are welcome at Goose Rocks in consonance with our dedication to protecting visitor health and safety at all times.** Unfortunately, the threat of liability balanced against the genuine physical demands of alighting Goose Rocks precludes us from allowing access to children under 18 or adults with physical challenges, behavioral issues (disregard for safety or rules), or inappropriate health or mental conditions.

Remember that Beacon Preservation's vice president, Dr. Ted Northrop, is a board-certified internal medicine physician and North Haven's former on-island doctor. He is often available to orient "keepers" to the lighthouse, and during the summer is often on-island during keepers' overnight stays or special events. If Dr. Northrop is not available, North Haven's Medical Services Board manages a competent team of EMTs and first-responders and offers the physician services of an island-resident retired surgeon, Dr. Bach, who oversees the North Haven Clinic. Genuine medical emergencies can be handled by calling 911 should the need arise, and routine medical care can be handled at the North Haven Clinic.

If you're planning an event and concerned about guests' ability to alight the lighthouse, remember that it is your responsibility to prescreen your own event guests to ensure they can climb the ladder. Your event guests are YOUR responsibility. **Goose Rocks is NOT an appropriate venue for physically-challenged guests who cannot walk, climb stairs, or climb ladders, nor for those with heart conditions, vertigo, anxiety disorders, history of seizure or stroke, etc.**

Before I make a donation, can I see if the **dates that I want to visit Goose Rocks** are available?

Sure. Email us at info@beaconpreservation.org to enquire about specific dates. We will normally get back to you within 24 hours. Alternatively, call Beacon Preservation at 203-736-9300 x 398 (October through May) or 207-867-4747 (June through September) to discuss your travel plans. We'll work with you in any way possible to accommodate your visit, but priority for dates is always given to those supporters whose donation has already been received.

Are **children and pets** allowed at Goose Rocks?

Unfortunately, no. Because events promote social activities which often leave adults distracted and children unsupervised, children under 18 years of age cannot be permitted at the lighthouse during special events. Safety is our primary concern at Goose Rocks, and the naturally playful and inquisitive nature of children makes the offshore nature of

Goose Rocks—particularly with its vertical ladder access and three elevated catwalks—inappropriate for children and pets during extended stays. Quite simply, we don't want anyone to ever “fall overboard” while at Goose Rocks, and children and pets are the most likely to suffer such an accident.

Possible liability for potential accidents has caused us to limit visits to those over 18, but we reserve the right to refuse access to anyone we believe might pose an unreasonable risk of potential harm to themselves or others. All visitors are required to sign statements acknowledging informed consent and assuming all risk involved in visiting Goose Rocks, agree to hold Beacon Preservation, Inc. harmless in the event of mishap, and waive liability for Beacon Preservation and its directors in case of accident or injury.

If you have extremely well-behaved children who are already known to us and/or nearing the age of 18, contact us in advance to discuss whether an exception can be made with the provision of additional waivers and special orientation sessions.

How does my “Keeper’s Experience” happen?

Your visit to Goose Rocks will most likely start from the ferry terminal in Rockland, Maine where you take the ferry to North Haven (not Vinalhaven!), ideally on foot with a backpack (or even with your bike, which costs a few dollars more but gives you island transportation once you arrive). Go to http://www.state.me.us/mdot/opt/ferry/215-north_haven.php for ferry schedules and passenger details.

Keep your luggage to an absolute minimum: spare clothing and supplies (including toiletries) are always on hand at Goose Rocks, linens are provided, and with the difficult job of hoisting baggage with a rope up to the deck of the lighthouse from a pitching boat, *less is more!* Remember, at Goose Rocks: be a keeper, not a tourist.

The ferry does carry vehicles to North Haven, but spaces fill up quickly in the summer and priority is given to those with reservations, so it is very unlikely that you will get your car onboard during the busy summer months unless you arrive to the ferry line many hours in advance or purchase a reservation 30 days in advance.

There is really no good reason to bring a car to the island; it is easily seen by bicycle (we sometimes have extras to rent) or we can give you a quick driving tour of the island or take you to the grocery store (about a mile and a half from the North Haven's ferry port) if needed. There is no street parking on North Haven, and the very few parking spaces near the North Haven ferry lot are rarely available and do not allow overnight parking during the summer months.. Without a place to leave your car on North Haven during your visit to Goose Rocks, it is best left at the ferry terminal or Knight's Marina (about \$10 per day for parking) in Rockland. If you do need to bring your car to North Haven, let us know in advance and we'll work with you to arrange private parking during your stay.

When you arrive in North Haven by foot or car, we'll meet you at the ferry port—so be sure to confirm with us in advance which ferry you will be on. If for any reason you can't find us or come on a different ferry, call us at 207-867-4747 (if your cell phone doesn't work, there's a payphone right next to the ticket office) and we'll be right there, as our headquarters is just down Main Street. Feel free to stop in at Waterman's Community Center right next to the ticket office to enjoy a cup of coffee, check out their schedule of events, or pick up literature about the island .

If you arrive on foot and want a brief tour of the island or trip to the grocery store, we'll be happy to drive you. If you have your own car, we'll point you in the right direction or have you follow us. For those who want to skip the island orientation and head straight to the lighthouse, we will depart by boat from the Town Dock (right next to the ferry docking station at the terminal) at a pre-set time, or determine the best time for departure based upon the guests' itinerary and weather conditions. Depending on which boat we take and weather, tide, or current conditions, the trip to Goose Rocks takes about 5-15 minutes from Town Dock. High tide is always best, so we try to plan accordingly.

Once at Goose Rocks, you will stay there for your entire visit unless you have your own boat transportation, arrange in advance for someone to bring you back and forth to the island, or call us for an emergency pick-up.

On the day of your departure, we will coordinate with you on a specific pick-up time, determined by high-tide and ferry schedule. It is important that guests have finished packing and cleaning up by that departure time, with luggage and bagged garbage already waiting on the catwalk and everyone prepared for loading. Because weather can change without notice and tides drop rapidly, guests might need to work quickly and efficiently with staff to load the boat while tidal conditions are ideal. A positive Keeper attitude (particularly in the face of heavy rain, strong winds, or choppy seas) is a must at all times!

What if I arrive on my own boat or bring my own boat in order to get to and from the lighthouse?

We welcome experienced mariners and sailors who wish to use their own boat transportation to get to Goose Rocks. Still, we will arrange to meet you at North Haven Town dock to have you follow us to the lighthouse, or directly in the Fox Island Thorofare (for larger sailboats) at Goose Rocks, where we will show you how to moor your vessel for overnight stays or tie-up to the lighthouse ladder temporarily for unloading. The convenience of bringing your own boat is particularly useful during week-long stays where visitors may want to take day trips back and forth to North Haven, or visit Vinalhaven, Matinicus, Isle a Haut, or the Acadia region to the east of Goose Rocks.

For those who do NOT have their own boat and find themselves getting stir-crazy during a week-long stay, we can arrange day trips to North Haven (where we will pick you up and return you to the lighthouse in our boat for \$50 donation each way) if you need

recreational activities or grocery-shopping, or we'll work with you to find a local boat rental (usually starting at \$500 a week) if you have the skills to operate a boat yourself.

What is there to **do during my stay**?

The point of the Keeper's Experience is to absorb the beauty of the outdoor scenery and soak in the uniquely peaceful experience of being completely surrounded by water and nature. We encourage you to determine your own balance of relaxation and activity and plan accordingly. There are books, playing cards, games, and CDs and DVDs to be for the small flat-screen television with DVD/VCR. For the traditionalists, there is a 120-year old wind-up Edison diamond disc player, with about 30 diamond disks to choose from for a truly historical listening experience.

Because of popular demand and the need to accommodate our educational events and workshops, Wi-Fi and Direct TV service to Goose Rocks is planned for installation in summer 2009. These wireless options, along with the TV/DVD, can be enjoyed by those who welcome modern amenities (and ignored by those who don't) but will not be visible to visitors who wish to maintain a more "purist" approach to their keeper experience.

Mostly, we encourage visitors to spend as much time as possible outside on a deck, enjoying the view from a hammock or Adirondack chair. Bring your own books and reading material, journal or laptop, music or Ipod, camera, binoculars, fishing pole, knitting, whittling, and art supplies. Between the visiting harbor seals, passing schooners, and waving sailors, we're not sure why anyone would prefer internet or television –but we accept the fact that in this modern world, access to modern technology and news can be important to the "relaxation factor" for some visitors.

What about **meals and food** during my Keeper's Experience?

You are responsible for your own food and provisions while visiting Goose Rocks, but rest assured that all the basics are in place. The fully-equipped kitchen includes all dishes, utensils, and cookware. Basic cooking supplies (spices, oils, vinegars, salt and pepper, sugar, coffee, etc) and cleaning supplies are on hand. There is a stock of canned goods (soups, stews, vegetables) and bottled water in case your own supplies run low, but we encourage you to bring all the ingredients for your own freshly-prepared meals with you.

At Goose Rocks, there is a full-sized 3-burner Weber grill (with side burner) for outside cooking, and a 2-oven Aga cooker in the Keep. A small propane refrigerator can be activated to keep produce and milk fresh, but often an old-fashioned cooler (with a few inches of naturally-chilled ocean water in the bottom) is sufficient to keep beverages and other items cold while also conserving energy.

Prior to boarding the ferry, visitors can buy provisions at the Shaw's or Hannaford supermarkets (just 1-2 miles north of the Rockland ferry terminal on Route 1), or purchase goods on North Haven at our small but impressively well-stocked North Haven

Grocery. In July, August, and September, H.J. Blakes café and catering (directly facing the North Haven Ferry terminal) provides excellent prepared dishes such as salads, wraps, burgers, sandwiches, and side dishes as well as locally-grown produce. If you prefer not to cook, call H.J. Blakes in advance and Holly Blake can pack up a range of catering-style or picnic-basket meals for you to take with you to Goose Rocks.

For full restaurant meals on North Haven, in addition to H.J. Blakes visitors can also enjoy the Coal Wharf restaurant at J.O.Brown's boatyard or the dining room at Nebo Lodge. All will happily arrange take-out on request.

Finally, consider preparing a traditional lobster bake at Goose Rocks by ordering your lobster (scallops and oysters as well) from Bubba Gump Lobster Co. on North Haven. Bubba Gump's Randy Brown can supply live lobster or pre-steam your lobsters for you.

Is there housekeeping service?

No. The keeper's experience is exactly that: a means of enjoying a simple existence of peaceful solitude just as the lighthouse keepers did in the past. Guests are expected to respect the lighthouse property and furnishings and keep all areas tidy and clean, washing their own dishes, making their own beds, and dusting or vacuuming as needed. Guests will find the lighthouse clean and orderly when they arrive, and are expected to leave it just as clean and orderly upon departure.

Linens are provided and will be changed and laundered between visits, but extra bedding is stored in each bedroom if guests choose to change their own sheets during their stays.

What about the fog horn?

Goose Rocks is a working aid to navigation, and if fog becomes so dense that there is less than a mile of visibility, a fog horn on the outer catwalk of the lighthouse will be activated to warn mariners away from the ledge if they can't see the beacon through the fog. This is most likely to happen early in the morning in the spring months as the fog rolls in and the sun rises, but it should not activate at night while you're sleeping.

The sound of the horn is pleasant to some, annoying to others; it activates every six seconds until visibility clears beyond one mile, and is much louder outside the lighthouse than if you're hearing it from the inside. We cannot control the fog horn or the conditions that set it off, so we provide foam earplugs and remarkably effective sound-canceling headphones to deaden the sound of the horn. You may feel silly wearing them, but they will give relief from the noise until the fog clears.

For those who cannot abide the sound of the horn, think carefully if a keeper's experience is right for you, as your stay cannot be rescheduled due to fog conditions. We can always try to rescue keepers for a day of island activities if the fog rolls in and the horn activates, but we encourage you to use the headphones and earplugs remember that true lighthouse keepers acclimated to the sound of the lighthouse bell or horn for nearly 200 years, all in an effort to warn mariners and save lives, and we encourage you to do the same.

What happens if the **weather** makes it impossible to get out to Goose Rocks for my scheduled Keeper's Experience?

If we determine that weather and sea conditions on North Haven render the boat transportation to Goose Rocks too risky on the day of your arrival, we will arrange to put you up on the island (at Nebo Lodge, Our Place Inn, or our own Gosling Cottage) for the time that you are 'stranded' on the island. If we have alternative dates within the calendar year available and you wish to absorb the cost of the island accommodation yourself, we will simply transfer your dates to those that are available and mutually convenient. If there is no other possible date available for your stay, we will cover the cost of your unanticipated North Haven accommodation to avoid any inconvenience or hardship to you as our donor-supporter—but *there is never any refund of your "Keeper Experience" donation to Beacon Preservation.*

What about changing my dates or **canceling** my pre-arranged stay?

If you cancel your reservation or fail to show up as scheduled, your Keeper's Experience is forfeited. Should you need to rearrange your scheduled stay dates prior to 30 days from your date of arrival, we will do our best to find new dates for you and reschedule your stay. If, however, you contact us fewer than 30 days prior to your visit or we simply have no alternate dates available, no Keeper's Experience can be offered to you during the calendar year in which you made your donation.

Remember, your tax-deductible donation to Beacon Preservation is exactly that—a voluntary contribution for the upkeep of Goose Rocks. It is not a deposit or "rent" that entitles the donor accommodation in the lighthouse. Though your support may be rewarded with an opportunity for a Keeper's Experience, your stay is a privilege and not a right, and may be revised, delayed, or canceled with reasonable notice as warranted by safety or weather conditions. We will always strive to work with you to provide and maximize your Keeper's Experience, but must emphasize that supporters are our guests, and we are not governed by "innkeeper" laws or liabilities.

If we visit Goose Rocks and there's an **emergency**, what do we do?

Remember, for medical emergencies you always just dial 911 from your cell phone or use Goose Rocks' radio transmitter to call for help. Though cell phone service is not terribly strong on Goose Rocks, Verizon, AT&T, and US Cellular all receive service (and the signal is stronger on the exterior decks of the lighthouse). Because of the serious logistical challenge of getting emergency medical services to Goose Rocks, guests should be absolutely certain that a serious medical emergency exists before calling for help, or they will be held financially responsible for all costs incurred in summoning help for a non-medical "emergency." We know that weather conditions which might make contact to North Haven difficult, so back-up supplies of food, water, batteries, propane, etc. are

always on hand in case weather or sea conditions delay your pick-up and departure from the lighthouse. In case of a storm, keep in mind that the lighthouse is perhaps the safest place to be—it has stood strong for nearly 120 years, and was designed to be the pinnacle of safety for its keepers and a refuge for the mariners it guides.