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Dear Friends,

My name is Gary Carter and I am teacher at the Richmond Middle School. Swan Island (known years ago as "Swango Island" due to the habitat it provided for American Bald Eagles) has forever had an attachment and connection to the community of Richmond. Once housing a full time Game Warden and providing access and enjoyment for all of Maine's residents, this beautiful "gem" has suffered from years of neglect which discouraged those of us who love its beauty.

During the nineties, the Richmond School Department partnered with many to initiate exploration, restoration and nature/history studies of multiple kinds. Buildings were researched, biographies written, former residents studied, habitat and ecosystems explored. A whole generation of Richmond students, as well as many from other schools, were transported regularly to explore and enjoy.

Over the past decade visitation and use of the island has dwindled for many reasons. Whatever the sum of those reasons, the time to restore access to this island is long overdue for all. The Richmond School Department (Specifically our Middle School) was recognized for its efforts and the programs we established for learning during our affiliation with the "Swan Island Project." I am supremely confident that we would welcome the opportunity to begin to return to the island and rekindle the vast learning activities it provides. I believe other schools would follow and a whole new generation of young people would have the benefit of exploring this beautiful "natural classroom."

This is just one facet of what restoring access to the island would provide. The whole state and our friends who visit from other locales, would be able to explore and enjoy all the island has to offer. Its history is rich. Providing housing for many who worked in the ice industry. Hosting visitation by many who traveled the "underground railroad" on their way to the Arnold Trail and continuing on to Canada to secure their freedom. Providing material and cover for Fort Richmond, which sat on the intersection of the river north and south. It is a part of our American history...in so many ways. It is time for Swan Island to be part of our American future...connecting generations with what was and what can be. Please consider funding the restoration of public transportation to this incredible gift that we all can return to enjoying.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary V. Carter
Richmond School Department