

Nan Cumming
Richmond
LD 976

Five years ago I moved from Portland to Richmond and discovered the many joys of living in a small town. Access to the beautiful Kennebec River and Swan Island—a truly unique natural resource--was an important draw to this area.

Our first two years in Richmond we enjoyed Swan Island often, introducing the area to friends, attending naturalist programming, and exploring on our own. It was as simple as boarding the ferry downtown. Every time we boarded we joined tourists and locals alike— families heading to the campground, day tripping cyclists, and seniors going for a gentle walk in nature. Swan Island was a destination for everyone who enjoyed the outdoors, drawing visitors to local Richmond businesses. The island was equally accessible to young children and to the elderly, and no one needed their own kayak, canoe, or power boat to get there.

As you know, that all changed when the ferry shut down. The island is now available only to those people wealthy enough to own a power boat, experienced enough to navigate tides and moor at the dock, or able bodied enough to paddle. Today, this precious natural resource sits tauntingly across from Richmond's downtown, reminding 90% of us that we are not "enough" of any of those things.

I sincerely encourage the committee to support the restoration of public transportation to Swan Island.