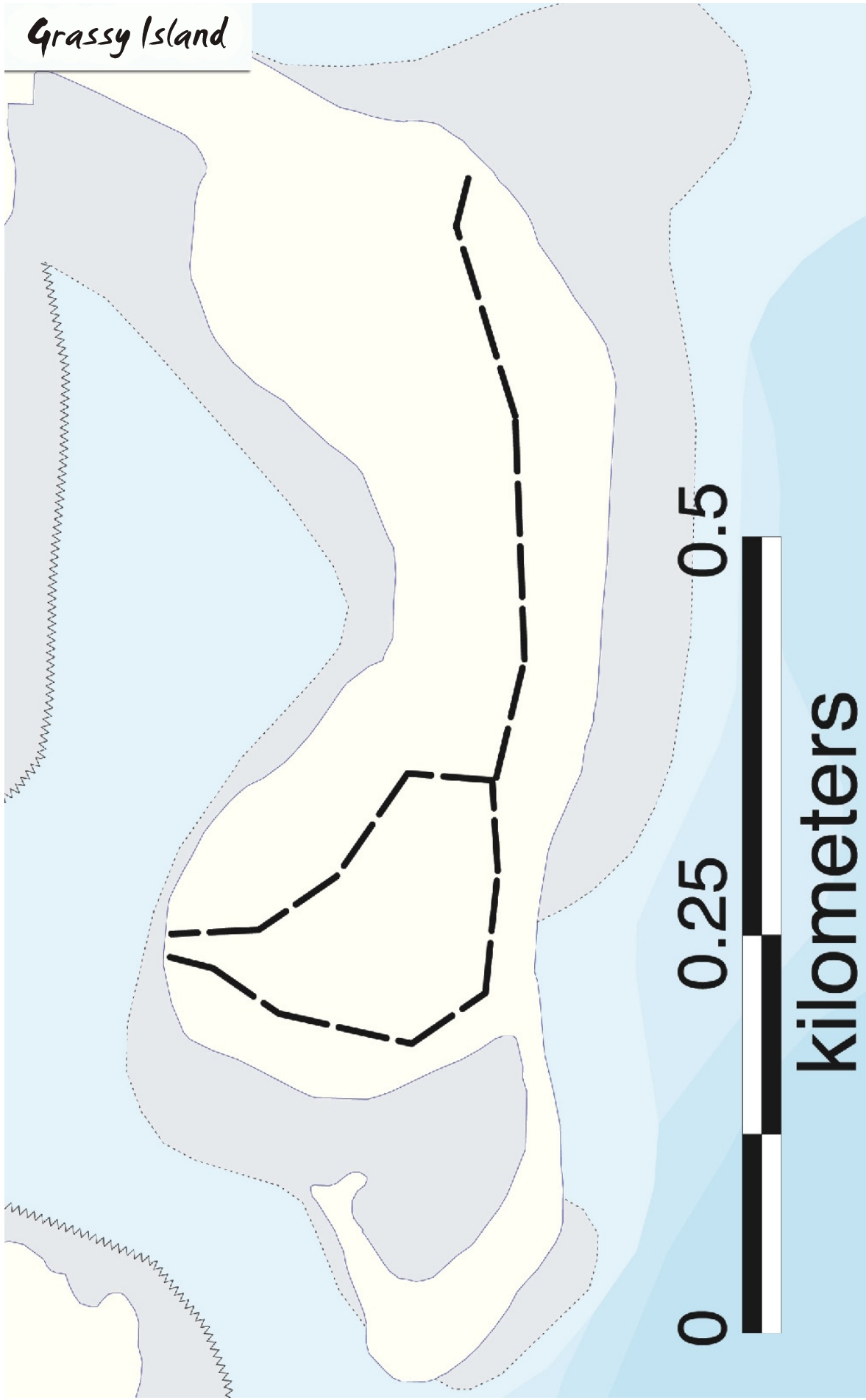


*Grassy Island*



# Grassy Island

**Length:** 1 km loop

**Time:** 2 hrs

**Type:** grassy path

**Facilities:** all at Visitor Reception

Centre, pit privies on Grassy Island

**Closest Amenities:** town of Canso

**Rating:** 2



**Access Information:** Following Route 16 east along the Chedabucto Bay to Canso, turn right onto Union Street. You will find the Visitor Reception Centre along the waterfront. Grassy Island lies 0.5 km off Canso. *Open Jun 1 to Sep 15, 10:00am-6:00pm*

**Special Features:** At the Interpretive Centre, visitors will see photographic and video displays, models, and 18th century artifacts. Grassy Island National Historic site offers a self-guided tour along an interpretive trail to eight designated sites, where you will gain a feel for the military and commercial life once vibrant in this area.

**Description:** Grassy Island, recently named for its appearance, was previously included with the other islands under the name Canso, prior to that name being transferred to the mainland. The Europeans who arrived in Canso in the early 16th century, were greeted by the Mi'kmaq with whom they quickly became friends and partners, working and trading with each other. The French and the English would arrive yearly in the spring, catching and processing cod to sell in Europe, bringing in as much as 8 million fish per season. Temporary living quarters were made using a ship's sail and filled in on the sides by fir branches. The rocky beaches along Grassy Island were perfect for drying the fish, while the abundance of trees provided material for drying racks known as "flakes".

Over the period of the next 100 years, many of the Frenchmen married Mi'kmaq women raising their families in Acadia. Conflicts between Britain and France had caused this area to suffer multiple invasions as the land changed hands. In 1720, Major Lawrence Armstrong and two companies of men from Annapolis Royal built the first fort, Fort Philipp, on the western spit. Overlooking this, Fort William Augustus is built the following year. These permanent quarters become the seed for the growth of a commercial and military town on the Island. In 1744, following the declaration of war between Britain and France, an attack from Louisbourg left the fortress at Grassy Island burned to the ground. A sense of peace encompassed as its hayfields became grazing land for its main residents of cattle during the next 200 summers. In 1978 Park Canada developed the Island as a National Historic Site.

