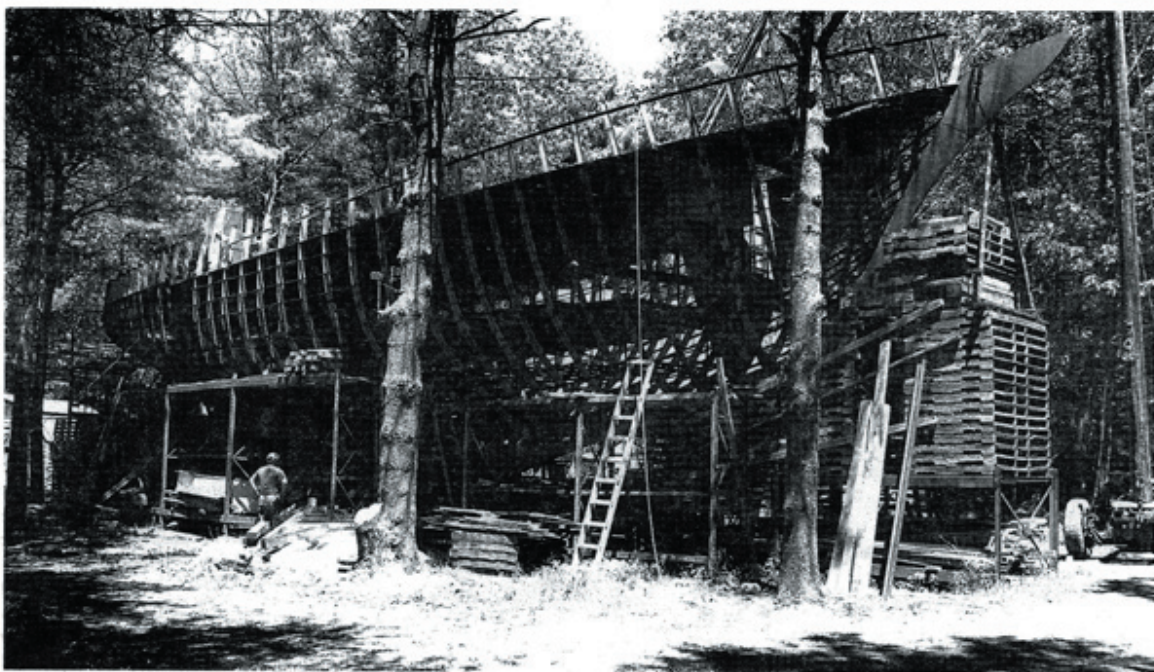




NORTHERN SKY NEWS

Covering the Environment of New England & the Maritimes



White pines have long played a role in Maine shipbuilding. Historically they were used for masts, but here they are bracing the *Island Rover*

Recycled Steel Becomes Sailing Ship *Huge Boat Being Built in the Maine Woods*

By Bill Cutlip

If you've been feeling virtuous because you've been extra diligent to recycle those cat food cans, or because you've been conserving a little energy by turning off the porch light after dinner, consider Harold Arndt. Arndt is building a 113-foot, two-masted topsail schooner, the *Island Rover*, on his wooded Freeport property out of recycled steel and other discarded items.

Arndt is building the boat with the help of the *Island Rover* Foundation in the pasture where he and his family once grazed sheep. There is a natural connection, says Arndt, between raising sheep and carving a world-class sailing vessel out of other people's garbage.

"The mindset of subsistence farming and the desire to protect the environment, and the mindset that I'm promoting with this boat and the message we're trying to put out—it's all one and the same."

That message is "reduce, reuse, recycle," and we're not just talking about cat-food cans here: the *Island Rover's* hull is being cut from "torpedo-grade" scrap acquired from Bath Iron Works. That is, "torpedo-grade," as in, designed to repel torpedoes. Not bad for a backyard project.

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Other significant bits include a galley furnished with cast-off equipment from a Friendly's restaurant; a keel ballasted with elevator weights, expended bullets, fishing sinkers, window weights, a bulldozer track, and a thousand other pieces of random junk; and recycled ship fittings from as far away as Alaska. Some of the bigger tools used in the *Island Rover's* construction have been recycled as well, such



Harold Arndt on the deck of the *Island Rover* (left).

Arndt, who says the ship is his "life's work" relies heavily on volunteer help and cast-off parts (below left & right).

Photos by Winston Pitman



as the 12-ton crane Arndt acquired as scrap from the Chicago waterfront.

When the *Island Rover* is finally launched in 2006, she will be crewed by the people whose sweat, dedication and expertise went into her construction. She will sleep 19, and her sails will be backed up by a pair of biodiesel engines. Arndt plans to add other alternative energy technologies in her functional design, including wind (of course) and solar. Once in the water, she will tour the world to demonstrate the wisdom of recycling, and to provide a secure platform for environmental scientists—some of whom have already booked passage.

"It's a project that the average person wouldn't undertake, because it is so massive and involving," says

Arndt, "and I've come to realize it's really my life. I don't have much of a life beyond working on the boat. I enjoy what I do and I wouldn't change it for the world. But it is a unique lifestyle."

And it's a lifestyle Arndt is willing to share with those who are willing to help.

"We're always interested in volunteers, particularly if they have some particular talent like being able to weld. There are lots of specific projects I'd like to be able to turn over to a specific individual and give them that topic—for instance, writing the cookbook or planning the circumnavigational itinerary. There are a lot of opportunities here for volunteers."

For more information, visit the *Island Rover* Foundation's website, www.islandrover.org.