

MAINE STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

Strengthening Maine Communities through Outdoor Recreation

2025-2035



A SHARED VISION FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MAINE

The Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands (BPL) under the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's (DACF)'s mission is to protect and manage the natural and cultural resources under our care to offer a wide range of recreational and educational opportunities and provide environmental and economic benefits for present and future generations. Over 700,000 acres are managed by the BPL. Conservation easements and leases bring the total land area managed to over 2 million acres. These lands are managed for a variety of resource values including recreation, cultural and historic preservation, wildlife and timber. By highlighting the unique attributes of its coastline, mountains, waterways, and forests, Maine positions itself as a leader in outdoor recreation.

While BPL leads the SCORP process, it's partnership with other state agencies, municipalities, federal agencies, businesses, tribal communities, private landowners, and keystone organizations is essential to designing an effective Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). SCORP has the potential to enhance the quality of life for residents and attracts visitors who wish to experience the unparalleled beauty and adventure that defines Maine's great outdoors. Ensuring ALL Mainers have the access and ability to engage in outdoor recreation is a shared vision for the state. Setting priorities that promote Health & Wellness, Maine's Outdoor Economy, Stewardship, Accessibility, Public Access to Recreation, and Sustainability will ensure Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) projects meet local, regional and statewide goals. Through this collaboration and a shared vision, we can ensure outdoor recreation remains a cornerstone of Maine's natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.



LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR

(In Progress)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maine’s 2025–2035 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) establishes a strategic, data-driven framework to guide the sustainable development, management, and accessibility of outdoor recreation across the state. Developed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands in collaboration with diverse partners and informed by extensive public engagement, the plan reflects a shared vision to enhance quality of life, strengthen communities, and protect Maine’s natural and cultural resources.

Outdoor recreation is central to Maine’s identity and economy. The state’s forests, waterways, coastline, and trail systems support public health, community vitality, and a thriving outdoor recreation economy that generates billions in economic activity annually. SCORP recognizes these assets as essential infrastructure and outlines coordinated strategies to ensure they remain accessible, resilient, and well-managed for future generations.

The plan is grounded in six core priority themes identified through engagement with more than 2,300 residents, stakeholders, and recreation providers:

- **Health & Wellness** – Expanding access to outdoor recreation as a critical component of physical, mental, and social well-being.
- **Maine’s Outdoor Economy** – Supporting sustainable economic growth, workforce development, and innovation within the outdoor recreation sector.
- **Stewardship** – Promoting responsible use, conservation, and long-term care of natural and recreational resources through partnerships and shared responsibility.
- **Accessibility** – Ensuring inclusive, equitable access to outdoor spaces for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- **Public Access** – Sustaining Maine’s unique tradition of access to private lands through education, collaboration, and respect for landowners.
- **Sustainability** – Advancing climate-resilient planning, infrastructure, and management practices to address environmental challenges and protect resources.

SCORP emphasizes the importance of collaboration across state agencies, municipalities, tribal communities, private landowners, nonprofit organizations, and the public. With approximately 94% of Maine’s forestland privately owned, maintaining strong landowner relationships and promoting responsible recreation are essential to preserving access.

The plan also highlights emerging challenges, including climate change impacts, increasing recreational demand, infrastructure needs, and evolving user expectations. In response, SCORP promotes adaptive management, investment in resilient infrastructure, and the development of centralized, accessible recreation information systems to better serve users and decision-makers.

Aligned with other statewide initiatives, including economic development, conservation, and climate action plans. SCORP serves as a unifying framework to guide investment, policy, and partnership. It

also fulfills the National Park Service’s federal requirements for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), positioning Maine to continue leveraging critical funding for recreation projects statewide.

Through coordinated implementation of its goals and strategies, Maine’s SCORP advances a balanced approach that integrates recreation, conservation, and economic vitality. The plan ensures that outdoor recreation remains a defining feature of Maine’s heritage while supporting healthy communities, resilient landscapes, and sustainable growth for the next decade and beyond.

Together, these priorities form a unified vision for Maine’s future: to ensure safe, sustainable, and inclusive outdoor recreation for residents and visitors while protecting the natural and cultural resources that define the state’s character. Through coordinated investment, stewardship, and community partnership, Maine will continue to lead in balancing recreation, conservation, and economic vitality preserving its outdoor legacy for generations to come.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2025-2035 Maine Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is a collaborative effort administered by Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL). This plan was developed with the assistance of a diverse group of outdoor recreation stakeholders. Maine BPL would like to thank the contributors who provided their time, expertise and support to the successful development of this document.

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COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

Listed below are abbreviations used throughout the Maine SCORP

ASLO	Alternative State Liaison Officer (LWCF)
AMC	Appalachian Trail Club
AT	Appalachian Trail
ATC	Appalachian Trail Conservancy
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
BEA	Bureau of Economic Analysis
BwH	Beginning with Habitat
BSPA	Baxter State Park Authority
AWW	Allagash Wilderness Waterway
BPL	Bureau of Parks & Lands
CENEMBA	Central Maine New England Mountain Bike Association
DACF	Department of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry
DECD	Department of Economic & Community Development
GAOA	Great American Outdoors Act
LMF	Land for Maine's Future
LWCF	Land & Water Conservation Fund
MATC	Maine Appalachian Trail Club
MCHT	Maine Coast Heritage Trust
MDIFW	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
MFS	Maine Forest Service
MITA	Maine Island Trail Association
MNAP	Maine Natural Areas Program
MOOR	Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation
MOES	Maine Outdoor Economy Summit
MOB	Maine Outdoor Brands
MSA	Maine Snowmobile Association
MTB	Mountain Bike
MTP	Maine Trails Program
NEMBA	New England Mountain Bike Association
NEOC	New England Outdoor Center
NMW	North Maine Woods
NPS	National Park Service
NWPCP	National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan
ORV	Off Road Vehicle
Roadmap	Maine's 10-Year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap
RTP	Recreational Trails Program
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SLO	State Liaison Officer (LWCF)
THOR	Tourism, Hospitality, and Outdoor Recreation (University of Maine)
USFS	United States Forest Service

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

What is a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan?

Under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, and in close partnership with key stakeholders, Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) leads the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). To remain eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) assistance, Maine must submit an updated SCORP to the National Park Service (NPS) for approval every ten years.

SCORPs are required to document the supply of and demand for outdoor recreation across the state and to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation. Understanding both existing conditions and unmet needs helps guide the development of priorities and strategies that support a long-term vision for outdoor recreation priorities in Maine.

In updating Maine's SCORP, BPL and the SCORP Steering Committee actively engaged partners and the public to ensure diverse representation and perspectives were considered in establishing statewide outdoor recreation priorities. Public input, along with guidance from key statewide outdoor recreation stakeholders, helps ensure the plan aligns with the efforts and priorities of municipal, state, and federal agencies, as well as organizations, businesses, and landowners.

This plan addresses how Maine can protect and enhance outdoor recreation assets that promote health and wellness, support Maine's outdoor economy, encourage stewardship, improve accessibility and public access, and advance long-term sustainability for residents and visitors alike. The SCORP outlines strategies aligned with Maine's 10-year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap and other statewide plans to ensure outdoor recreation opportunities remain resilient and adaptable amid increasing use and demand on natural resources.

Until 2001, Maine law required the Bureau of Parks and Lands to periodically report to the Governor on the supply of and demand for outdoor recreation facilities and how those needs might be met (12 MRSA §1817), a requirement fulfilled through submission of the SCORP. In 2001, the Legislature amended the statute to require the BPL Director to submit a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to the legislative committee overseeing state parks and public lands every five years. The amendment further clarified that a plan meeting federal SCORP standards satisfies the state requirement, formally establishing the SCORP's role within state government.

What is the Land and Water Conservation Fund?

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964 (LWCF) was established to assist federal, state, and local governments in the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation facilities. Administered at the federal level by the National Park Service and at the state level by the Bureau of Parks and Lands in the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, LWCF grants can provide up to 50% of the allowable costs for approved acquisition or development projects for public outdoor recreation. Since its inception in 1965, the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program has funded more than 46,000 projects in every county in the country. The BPL's Community Grants

Program reports from 1966 through 2024 that just over \$55 million of LWCF money has been used for non-federal projects in Maine (2025).

On August 4, 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) was signed into law, authorizing \$900 million annually in permanent funding for LWCF. Prior to the passage of GAOA, funding for LWCF relied on annual congressional appropriations. At no cost to taxpayers, the LWCF supports increased public access to and protection for federal public lands and waters — including national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and recreation areas and provides matching grants to state governments for the acquisition and development of public parks and other outdoor recreation sites. Agencies also partner with landowners to support voluntary conservation activities on private lands. (Department of the Interior, n.d.)

Who Can Apply for Land & Water Conservation Funds?

Applicants eligible for LWCF Funding are the State of Maine, counties, municipalities, school districts, and tribal nations. Applicants should highlight how projects align with statewide priorities outlined in this document in their application materials.

Organizations seeking funding can find more information here:

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/land_water_conservation_fund.html

Maine's Policies for Use of Its LWCF Apportionment

This plan acts as a resource for outdoor recreation providers and organizations. All 50 states' SCORPs are recognized by local, state, and federal agencies as the primary guiding documents for outdoor recreation. The goals and recommendations should guide future planning efforts, help with grant applications, serve as the basis for coordinated action and collaboration, and be a unifying vision of outdoor recreation for the state. Specifically, applications for LWCF state-side grants should use language from this document when applying for funding.

LWCF Grant Applicants

While this SCORP compiles a broad range of information on outdoor recreation in Maine, it is not intended to provide site or project level guidance, nor does it attempt to address every outdoor recreation issue. Instead, the SCORP identifies overarching recreation patterns, participant motivations, and barriers to participation, and offers strategies to inform future action. Successful LWCF grant will highlight how individual projects align with SCORP priorities outlined in Chapter 3. Maine's LWCF Open Project Selection Process is included in Appendix B and provides a detailed overview of the process of selecting grantees over four phases: Screening, Evaluation, Recommendation, and Final Review.

Outdoor Recreation Planners

The Maine SCORP can serve as a practical planning tool for communities, organizations, and recreation providers across Maine that manage recreation. SCORP outlines statewide trends, priorities, and needs related to outdoor recreation information that can be directly incorporated into local or regional strategic plans. By aligning their goals with SCORP's themes and data, planners can:

- Identify priorities that reflect statewide demand and emerging recreation needs.
- Strengthen grant applications by demonstrating alignment with SCORP objectives.
- Support decision-making with data on access, stewardship, sustainability, well-being, and economic impact.
- Build partnerships by using SCORP as a common framework among land managers, municipalities, nonprofits, and outdoor recreation providers.
- Track progress over time using SCORP indicators to measure local outcomes against statewide goals.

Statewide Outdoor Recreation Planning Resources

Maine’s SCORP provides recreation planners with a framework grounded in public input and data to guide investment, policy, and project development in a way that aligns with Maine’s broader outdoor recreation vision. Maine SCORP serves as a reference document describing recreation needs, trends, and opportunities to address gaps within Maine’s outdoor recreation system; however, it is not the sole source of information on outdoor recreation in the state, recreation planners and grant applicants should incorporate and reference other statewide planning documents in addition to SCORP. Collaborative planning at local and regional scales, along with coordinated implementation of policies and programs by governments, businesses, community organizations, and nonprofit recreation and conservation partners, will remain essential to achieving the priorities outlined in this SCORP.

Projects that meet both recreational, habitat, and conservation objectives outlined in the following statewide plans could lead to stronger projects and proposals. Additionally, projects meeting a nexus of objectives may be eligible for additional funding sources, provide opportunities for co-benefits and serve a broader need of the state.

Here is a list of additional documents to consider when planning outdoor recreation projects throughout the state.

[Forest Opportunity Roadmap / Maine \(FOR/Maine\) \(2018\)](#)

[Maine Wildlife Action Plan \(2015\)](#)

[Maine Climate Council Climate Action Plan \(2025\)](#)

[Maine Outdoor Recreation Roadmap \(2025\)](#)

[Maine Wetland Development Plan \(2023-2028\)](#)

[Office of Tourism Destination Management Plan \(2024\)](#)

[Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan \(2024\)](#)

CHAPTER 2. MAINE’S SCORP PLANNING PROCESS

Planning Overview

Maine’s 2025-2035 SCORP was developed through an intentional planning process which included establishing a diverse steering committee, and conducting public input through: surveys, focus groups, interviews, open comment periods, and event presentations. BPL’s research was supplemented with data shared from Maine’s 10-year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap, the University of Maine, and other statewide/national outdoor recreation studies. This information provided a framework for setting priority themes, goals and objectives. Additional materials within the previous SCORP were updated to capture new trends, challenges and opportunities. The planning process included input from over 2,300 Maine residents and embodied a collaboration of statewide stakeholders.

Planning Timeline

Due to staff vacancies in BPL the 2025-2035 SCORP Planning Process was delayed. An extension was requested and granted in 2024 and then again in 2025. The second extension request aligned with the announcement from the National Park Service that states now had the option to pivot Maine SCORP to a 10-year submission period and allowed for the consideration of longer-term objectives.

2024 July	Extension request submitted and approved
2024 September	Bureau of Parks & Lands SCORP lead staff hired
2024 November	Steering committee formed
2024 December	SCORP planning began
2025 March	Public Input: Outdoor Recreation Providers (Supply) Survey Open
2025 April	NPS announces option to move to 10-year planning period
2025 April	Second extension request submitted to NPS and approved
2025 May	Public Input: User (Demand) Survey Open
2025 May- Sept	Public Input: Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews
2025 Oct	Public Input: MRPA Fall Workshop Presentation
2025 November	Priority themes identified, and goals & strategies drafted
2025 December	Steering Committee theme-based workgroups convene
2026 January	Public Input: Maine Outdoor Economy Summit presentation
2026 April	Public Input: SCORP draft published to BPL website – Open Public Comment Period
2026 May	Submit draft to editors and graphic designers
2026 June	Submit final document to NPS for review
2026 September	Publish 2025-2035 SCORP

Steering Committee

A steering committee was assembled to provide guidance, insight, and strategic direction throughout the development of the plan. The committee included representatives from partner agencies as well as a diverse set of non-governmental organizations with expertise in outdoor recreation. Members participated in a series of monthly meetings focused on identifying outdoor recreation priorities, interpreting public input, and (through smaller work groups) refining statewide priorities, goals and strategies. The expertise and input from the committee ensured that the planning process reflected

a broad range of perspectives and recreation needs.

Public Input and Engagement

One of the key requirements of the statewide planning process is ample opportunity for public participation. To achieve this requirement, the Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands and a 16-person steering committee partnered with agencies, universities, professional associations and stakeholders to understand what the people of Maine want outdoor recreation theme priorities to be for the next 5 to 10 years.

Public Input

- 70 Focus Groups & Interviews*
- 16 Counties Represented
- 212 Responses to the Outdoor Recreation Provider Survey
- 2162 Responses to the Outdoor Recreation User Survey
- 5 Statewide Public Presentations
- Online Public Comment Period (1-month)
- Draft SCORP Presented to Open Public Forum Online

**Including data from the 10-Year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap planning process.*

The SCORP public input process captured a broad and representative understanding of outdoor recreation needs, preferences, and challenges across Maine. These efforts were intentionally structured to reach diverse communities, recreation interests, and stakeholder groups. Input gathered during this period informed data analysis, the identification of priority themes, and the development of goals and strategies.

Additional rounds of public review include presentations at the 2025 Maine Recreation and Parks Association Conference, 2025 Maine Association of Recreation and Parks Fall Workshop, and 2026 Maine Outdoor Economy Summit, 2025 Presentation to Council of Governments professional group, and an online public session. A draft of the 2025-2030 Maine SCORP was published on the Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands website during a public open feedback period, allowing the public to respond to proposed priorities. This multi-layered approach ensured that the final plan reflects meaningful, inclusive, and data-driven public participation and opportunities to course correct based on public feedback.

Key Partnerships

Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation

Created in September 2018, Maine's Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR) was the 9th such office established and staffed in the nation. Under the Department of Economic & Community Development it aims to leverage Maine's assets and outdoor recreation heritage to grow the outdoor recreation economy and build Maine's outdoor recreation brand as part of a coordinated effort with partners from the public and private sectors (DECD, 2026). Specifically, the office aims to:

- Help develop strategies to create outdoor recreation employment, to enhance business growth and to coordinate with state economic development leaders to integrate the outdoor recreation industry into their efforts.

- Establish relationships between diverse industries that depend upon the state’s natural resources to ensure recreation interests and perspectives are included in policy decisions related to land management and land use planning activities, including access, stewardship and conservation.
- Promote the health benefits of outdoor recreation by encouraging active lifestyles through collaboration with healthcare industry leaders and local communities.
- Serve as a central point of contact for the outdoor recreation industry in Maine, monitoring emerging trends and issues.
- Facilitate coordination with Maine Office of Tourism, Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, and Department of Transportation in promoting outdoor recreation opportunities. Coordinate market research on the impact of outdoor recreation to the state, including participation and consumer spending figures.



Photo Credit: Jo Sorrell, Maine Outdoor Economy Summit 2026, MOOR & MOB, Courtesy of Maine Outdoor Brands

Maine Outdoor Brands

In 2017, a group of Maine outdoor product companies came together to establish Maine Outdoor Brands (MOB), a non-profit alliance whose goal is to help drive the success of its member brands. Maine Outdoor Brands members include outdoor product makers, experience providers, retailers and organizations. All of whom play a role in driving Maine’s \$3 billion + outdoor recreation economy. They provide resources related to marketing, networking, resource sharing and education in partnership with the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOB, 2026).

Maine Trails Coalition

The Maine Trails Coalition (MTC) is a grassroots organization formed in 2019 to be a statewide voice for trail users, supporters, and advocates. With trails serving as a major component of the health of

citizens and the outdoor recreation economy in Maine, we believe an inclusive statewide group dedicated to advancing trails will benefit communities and the people who live, work, visit, and play across the state.

MTC catalyzes the collective impact of diverse representatives from governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, philanthropic foundations, health organizations, community groups, businesses, trail users, and advocates who collaborate to bring voice to Maine trails. It is a central hub for these diverse interests, MTC is a resource for trail supporters seeking to bring trails to their communities, advocate for trails within the government, and improve the public's connection to and support for trails around the state.

MTC was instrumental force advocacy work related to the passing of the Maine Trails Bond initiative which passed in November of 2024 bringing 30 million dollars to trail projects over the next four years (MTC, n.d.).

10-Year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap Team

The 2025-2030 Maine SCORP was in development parallel to a statewide effort to develop an outdoor recreation economy roadmap. Maine's 10-Year Outdoor Recreation Roadmap was published in January of 2025 and serves as a guide to growing and diversifying Maine's outdoor recreation economy over the next ten years. It identifies trends, challenges, and opportunities facing the outdoor recreation economy and outlines a comprehensive suite of strategies to enable the continued success of this vital sector. The roadmap is a collaborative effort with core team members from the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, Maine Outdoor Brands, The University of Maine, Maine Marine Trades Association, Maine Technological Institute and the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land in addition to a steering committee of 24 stakeholders from education, industry, land trusts, organization and agencies. Public input for Maine's 10-Year Outdoor Recreation Roadmap included 60 interviews, 8 facilitated focus groups, and 7 road show meetings. Engaging over 450 Maine residents, 200 leaders, representatives from 31 towns and 16 counties.

Maine's 10-Year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap project, thus enabling stakeholder information the opportunity to inform both SCORP and Maine's 10-Year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap (Trailblazer Roadmap, n.d.).

Goals identified under this project are to:

- 1) Elevate Maine's outdoor recreation industry into a critical and thriving pillar of the state's economy
- 2) Increase and sustainably manage outdoor recreation
- 3) Establish outdoor recreation as a tool for building vibrant, economically diverse and resilient communities
- 4) Establish Maine as a premier state for outdoor recreation businesses, education, training and career opportunities

The Maine Outdoor Recreation Roadmap project is guided by driving economic factors, SCORP priorities are primarily driven by the factors related to outdoor recreation supply and demand for outdoor recreation throughout the state related to LWCF opportunities. Not all 4 roadmap goals were adopted as SCORP priorities and those that may have identified different implementation strategies. Significant public input from the development of Maine's 10-Year Outdoor Recreation Roadmap (Roadmap) was considered and utilized in the development of the 2025 Maine SCORP. A note of

appreciation is extended to the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, Maine Outdoor Brands, and the members of the Roadmap Core Team for collaboration on these two parallel projects aimed at promoting outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine. Note BPL staff served on the Core Team for the Maine Outdoor Recreation Roadmap and Roadmap Core members also served on the Steering Committee for the 2025-2035 Maine SCORP allowing for a seamless alignment of nuanced projects.

Survey Study Overview

BPL sought broad statewide input through two open public surveys: a Recreation Provider Survey, which assessed the supply of outdoor recreation resources, and a Recreation User Survey, which examined statewide recreational demand. Both surveys were widely distributed to stakeholder groups through multiple email listservs and social media channels. Key partners that helped promote the surveys included the Maine Office of Tourism (Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation), the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, the Maine Land Trust Alliance, the Bureau of Parks & Lands, the Maine Recreation and Parks Association, Off-Road Vehicle networks, ATV and snowmobile clubs, and numerous other recreation organizations. The Recreation Provider Survey generated 212 responses, while the Recreation User Survey received 2,162 responses, offering a robust foundation of data to inform the SCORP planning process. Both surveys were completed by invested users, and are a representation of user groups, not the general public. Further information is available in the Survey Report found in [Appendix D](#).

Interviews & Focus Groups

BPL, Steering Committee Members, and students from University of Maine’s Fall 2025 Recreation Site Planning & Management Class conducted 10 interviews/focus group sessions. SCORP planners incorporated data from the 60 interviews conducted by the Outdoor Recreation Roadmap Core Team when identifying common priority themes.

Bangor City Forest	Kennebec Valley Council of Governments
Bangor Land Trust	SCORP Steering Committee
BPL Off Road Vehicle Program	Main Street Skowhegan
Caribou Bog Trails	Maine Council of Governments
Council of Governments – Planners	Maine Recreation and Parks Association
Friends of Acadia	MDIFW, Public Relations Staff
Hirundo Land Trust	New England Mountain Bike Association (Maine Chapters)
International Visitors	Queerly ME
Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument	Registered Maine Guides

Participants were asked the following questions.

- What themes or trends are you noticing in Maine-based Outdoor Recreation?
- What outdoor recreation opportunities do you foresee in the next 5 to 10 years in Maine?
- What challenges do you foresee in the next 5 to 10 years that may impact outdoor recreation in Maine?
- What resources are needed to make Maine a premier state for outdoor recreation?
- What do you recommend should be the top priorities for a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan?

Open Public Comment Period

The Draft SCORP Plan was made available for public review and comment online on a dedicated page on the Bureau’s website. This availability was promoted via social media and press releases and open in April 2026. Feedback and input were solicited through a formal process allowing the public to utilize a Microsoft Form. Feedback was then reviewed by the Steering Committee and implemented as appropriate.

Additional Research & Reports

This report relies on a multitude of information sources. Government data including but not limited to Census data, media reports, governmental and non-governmental academic research, and reports from government and non-government sources all contributed to filling out a more complete perspective on the status of and issues associated with outdoor recreation in Maine. For a comprehensive list of resources, see the Bibliography section.

Alignment with State, Regional and Local Plans

The 2025–2035 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides a unifying framework for outdoor recreation in Maine. It is designed to complement and reinforce existing statewide plans and initiatives rather than operate as a standalone document. Through its six core themes—Health & Wellness, Maine’s Outdoor Economy, Stewardship, Accessibility, Public Access, and Sustainability—SCORP reflects shared priorities across multiple sectors, creating a coordinated vision for Maine’s environmental, economic, and community future.

SCORP emphasizes collaboration, cross-sector partnerships, and integrated planning. Progress in outdoor recreation, conservation, and economic development depends on coordinated action. The plan encourages alignment of recreation projects with complementary statewide goals, recognizing that multi-priority projects generate broader benefits, leverage funding, and strengthen outcomes.

The plans listed below were cross-referenced with the 2025-2035 Maine SCORP. A summary of overlapping priorities and goals follow.

[Forest Opportunity Roadmap / Maine \(FOR/Maine\)](#) (2018)

[Maine Wildlife Action Plan](#) (2015-2025)

[Maine Climate Council Climate Action Plan](#) (2025)

[Maine Outdoor Recreation Roadmap](#) (2025)

[Maine Wetland Development Plan](#) (2023-2028)

[Office of Tourism Destination Management Plan](#) (2024)

[Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan](#) (2024)

Alignment with Economic and Workforce Development Plans

SCORP supports the goals outlined in the Forest Opportunity Roadmap / Maine (FOR/Maine) (2018) and the Maine Outdoor Recreation Roadmap (2025) by emphasizing the role of outdoor recreation in driving rural vitality and statewide prosperity. Maine’s natural resources—including working forests, waterways, and public lands—are identified as critical assets for job creation, innovation, and community resilience.

The plan links recreation infrastructure investment with economic outcomes such as tourism growth, small business development, and workforce opportunities in guiding, hospitality, and outdoor manufacturing. Integrating economic development with sustainable resource use aligns with the shared understanding across these plans that long-term prosperity requires balancing access, conservation, and industry growth.

SCORP's development process itself demonstrates alignment with statewide economic strategies by incorporating data, partnerships, and leadership from the Outdoor Recreation Roadmap, ensuring consistent priorities and reducing duplication of effort.

Alignment with Conservation and Natural Resource Plans

SCORP's Stewardship and Sustainability themes align with the Maine Wildlife Action Plan (2015-2025), the Maine Wetland Development Plan (2023–2028), and the Maine Climate Council Climate Action Plan (2025). These plans share a commitment to protecting ecological integrity, maintaining biodiversity, and promoting climate resilience.

SCORP reinforces these priorities through sustainable recreation management, habitat protection, and the integration of climate-resilient infrastructure. The plan recognizes the need to balance increasing recreational demand with conservation objectives and emphasizes stewardship as a shared responsibility among agencies, landowners, nonprofits, and users.

Emerging challenges such as storm impacts, erosion, and shifting seasonal patterns are addressed through adaptive management and durable design, consistent with statewide climate resilience strategies. SCORP encourages projects that achieve co-benefits for recreation and conservation, including wetland protection, wildlife habitat preservation, and water quality improvements.

Alignment with Tourism and Destination Management Plans

SCORP aligns with the Office of Tourism Destination Management Plan (2024) and the Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan (2024) through its focus on sustainable tourism, visitor experience, and community-based economic development.

Outdoor recreation is recognized as a major driver of tourism. SCORP emphasizes connecting recreation assets with local businesses, cultural sites, and community amenities. Improved access to information, coordinated messaging, and enhanced infrastructure support a seamless and meaningful visitor experience, in line with statewide destination management objectives.

The plan also supports cultural inclusion and respect for Indigenous heritage. SCORP supports the stewardship of cultural resources and advances a more inclusive and representative outdoor recreation system, reflecting priorities of the Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan.

Alignment Through Partnerships and Implementation

SCORP identifies municipalities, regional organizations, nonprofit land trusts, Tribal Nations, private landowners, and state agencies as essential partners in achieving shared goals. This approach mirrors collaborative strategies in Maine's economic, conservation, and tourism plans, reinforcing statewide commitment to coordinated action.

Given the significant portion of recreation occurring on private lands, SCORP emphasizes maintaining landowner relationships and voluntary access traditions, aligning with forestry, conservation, and rural development priorities.

The plan also promotes funding alignment and cross-plan coordination, encouraging projects that advance multiple objectives. Programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund are highlighted as tools to support integrated outcomes. This ensures investments are strategic, efficient, and mutually reinforcing across sectors.

A Unified Statewide Vision

Across statewide plans, a consistent vision emerges: Maine's natural resources are protected, communities are healthy and vibrant, and economic opportunities are sustained through responsible use of the outdoors. SCORP serves as a central framework connecting recreation planning with conservation, economic development, climate resilience, and cultural preservation. By aligning priorities, integrating data, and fostering partnerships, SCORP translates this shared vision into actionable strategies that benefit residents, visitors, and the environment.



Photo Courtesy of Belfast Area NEMBA

CHAPTER 3: MAINE'S PRIORITY THEMES, GOALS & STRATEGIES

Maine's Priority Themes

1. Health & Wellness
2. Maine's Outdoor Economy
3. Stewardship
4. Accessibility
5. Public Access
6. Sustainability

Summary of Priority Themes and Development Process

The six SCORP themes: Health & Wellness, Maine's Outdoor Economy, Stewardship, Accessibility, Public Access, and Sustainability represent the most consistent priorities, needs, and opportunities identified across Maine's outdoor recreation system. These themes reflect shared values expressed by residents, visitors, communities, landowners, recreation providers, and partner organizations statewide.

The themes were established through a comprehensive and collaborative planning process that integrated multiple sources of data and public input. This included two statewide surveys, five public engagement events held across diverse regions of Maine, targeted focus groups and stakeholder interviews, and ongoing guidance from a multidisciplinary SCORP Steering Committee. Input was further informed by cross-walking findings with existing statewide plans and data, including Maine's 10-year Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap and other related policy and planning efforts.

Together, these engagement and analysis methods ensured the themes are grounded in both quantitative and qualitative data, reflect diverse perspectives, and align with broader state priorities. The resulting themes provide a unifying framework to guide future investment, project prioritization, and collaborative action to strengthen Maine's outdoor recreation system for residents and visitors alike.

THEME 1. HEALTH & WELLNESS

Outdoor recreation is a cornerstone of health, wellness, and quality of life in Maine. Access to safe, close-to-home recreation opportunities support physical activity, reduce chronic health risks, foster mental well-being, and strengthen community connections. Time spent outdoors is strongly associated with lower stress, improved mood, and greater life satisfaction; benefits that extend across all ages and communities.

In a state where communities range from dense urban centers to rural and remote towns, outdoor spaces serve as essential community health infrastructure. Parks, trails, and waterfronts provide places for exercise, social gathering, and restorative experiences that enhance individual and community resilience. Strategic investments in these spaces also support local economies, attract residents, and contribute to vibrant, livable communities.

Promoting health through outdoor recreation aligns with statewide initiatives to build resilient, equitable communities. Ensuring that recreation opportunities are accessible, inclusive, and culturally relevant, removes barriers and ensures that all residents and visitors can benefit. The CDC notes that people with safe access to parks and recreation facilities tend to be more physically active, which improves both physical and mental health. Safe, equitable access encourages walking, biking, and other activities that reduce risk factors for chronic diseases (CDC, 2025).

Integrating outdoor recreation into public health programs, schools, and community planning encourages active lifestyles and addresses public health challenges such as sedentary behavior, social isolation, and mental health stressors. Investments in infrastructure and programming create opportunities for intergenerational activities, cultural events, and community building.

National Recreation and Park Association research shows that 92% of U.S. adults report mental health boosts after spending time in local parks, including improved mood and energy (NRPA, 2024).

By promoting outdoor recreation as a public health and community resource, Maine strengthens the well-being of residents, enhances social cohesion, and supports the long-term vitality of its communities.

THEME 2. MAINE'S OUTDOOR ECONOMY

Maine's outdoor recreation economy is a cornerstone of the state's identity, quality of life, and economic vitality. From its rugged coastline and working waterfronts to expansive forests, lakes, and trail systems, outdoor recreation fuels industries including tourism, hospitality, guiding and outfitting services, retail, manufacturing, transportation, and conservation. Outdoor recreation generates \$3.9 billion in economic activity and supports tens of thousands of jobs across both rural and urban communities.

Local communities form the foundation of this economy, maintaining trails, launch sites, and parks that serve residents and visitors while providing essential services such as lodging, restaurants, and transportation. Strategic investments in recreation infrastructure stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, fostering new business models in guiding, gear manufacturing, eco-tourism, and recreation technology. These opportunities diversify Maine's economy and help communities remain resilient in the face of changing industries and environmental conditions.

The Maine Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap (2025) provides a strategic framework for growing the sector through coordinated investment, innovation, and workforce development. It outlines actionable strategies to strengthen rural economies, increase access to outdoor spaces, support sustainable tourism, and position Maine as a national leader in outdoor recreation and conservation. SCORP aligns with the roadmap, ensuring that recreation investments promote both economic growth and sustainable use of natural resources.

Equitable access to recreation, strategic infrastructure investment, and improved information accessibility help ensure Maine's outdoor assets are well-maintained and welcoming to all. Enhancing connectivity between recreation sites and local amenities encourages visitors to spend more time and money in nearby towns, supporting small businesses and strengthening local tax bases.

Promoting sustainable tourism and stewardship is equally critical. SCORP emphasizes collaboration among state agencies, landowners, businesses, and communities to balance increased use with conservation, protecting natural resources while supporting economic opportunity. By linking recreation infrastructure, community engagement, and business development with conservation values, Maine can attract visitors, foster local economic growth, and advance innovative outdoor recreation solutions.

Maine's outdoor recreation economy is a vital driver of community vitality, workforce development, and economic resilience, ensuring that investments in infrastructure, programming, and partnerships generate long-term benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

THEME 3. STEWARDSHIP

Maine’s outdoor recreation system is built on its abundant natural resources, cultural heritage, and strong community engagement. From its forests, rivers, and lakes to its rugged coastline and extensive trail networks, these landscapes support hiking, paddling, skiing, hunting, fishing, watching wildlife, and countless other activities that contribute to the state’s identity and economy. Preserving these spaces amid growing recreational demand requires intentional action centered on sustainability and stewardship, a core priority of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Stewardship in Maine is a shared responsibility involving state agencies, municipalities, tribal governments, land trusts, nonprofits, private landowners, and recreation users. Conservation organizations play an essential role in maintaining public access, protecting sensitive habitats, and managing natural resources responsibly. Volunteerism is also a cornerstone of this stewardship ethic: thousands of Mainers contribute their time to trail maintenance, habitat restoration, litter clean-ups, and public education, helping sustain outdoor spaces for all.

Effective stewardship protects ecological integrity, ensures public safety, and supports high-quality recreation experiences. Integrating stewardship principles into planning, infrastructure design, and daily management helps balance increased use with conservation needs. Partnerships and coordinated management approaches enhance the ability to respond to challenges such as changing weather patterns, habitat degradation, and infrastructure maintenance.

Public education and engagement are key. By promoting Leave No Trace ethics and Tread Lightly, offering training and volunteer opportunities, and supporting stewardship programs, Maine builds a culture of shared responsibility. Strengthening partnerships with landowners, land trusts, and stewardship organizations amplifies impact and ensures coordinated care of trails, parks, waterways, and conserved lands. The Maine Forest Service utilizes best practices and extensive outreach to help prevent the spread of invasive species by purchasing firewood locally.

Stewardship and maintenance of outdoor recreation facilities require proper planning when designing or building new infrastructure. Outdoor recreation managers need to consider not only immediate need for a new resource, but the investment needed to maintain the resource in the future.

Through strong stewardship practices, Maine can protect its natural and cultural assets, ensure the long-term sustainability of recreation opportunities, and foster a deep sense of shared ownership and care among residents, visitors, and partners.

THEME 4. ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility and inclusivity of public spaces is a central priority for Maine’s outdoor recreation system. This concept encompasses inclusive recreation opportunities, equitable access to urban and rural outdoor areas, connectivity between communities, and access to conserved lands statewide. Improving accessibility begins with identifying and addressing barriers (physical, economic, social, and cultural) to create spaces that are welcoming and usable for all.

Maine’s status as the state with the oldest population in the nation underscores the need for recreation infrastructure that accommodates older adults and individuals with mobility or other challenges (World Population Review, 2026). Prioritizing universal design and accessible amenities ensures outdoor spaces are inclusive for people of all ages and abilities. Upgrades to trailheads, boat launches, restrooms, parking areas, and access routes enhance physical accessibility, while multilingual signage, improved wayfinding, and clear mapping help residents and visitors from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel informed and welcome.

Accessibility also requires ensuring that recreation opportunities are available close to home and reachable through safe, convenient transportation. Integrating ADA compliance, universal design, and accessibility considerations at every stage of planning and management is critical to achieving this goal.

Collaboration with disability advocacy groups, municipalities, and recreation providers guides inclusive planning and ensures investments reflect community needs. Clear, accessible digital and physical information builds confidence and encourages participation, fostering equitable use of outdoor spaces.

By prioritizing accessibility, Maine will create outdoor areas that support health, wellness, and social connection, ensuring that every resident and visitor can safely and fully enjoy the state’s natural and recreational assets.

THEME 5. PUBLIC ACCESS

Maine’s outdoor recreation system is uniquely dependent on access to privately owned lands. Approximately 94% of the state’s forestland is privately owned, with more than 10 million largely working forests and farms, voluntarily made available for public use. This long-standing tradition of shared access supports iconic outdoor activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, boating, and walking, and is a cornerstone of Maine’s outdoor heritage and economy (MDIFW Outdoor Partners, 2026).

Access to private land is a privilege, not a legal right. Responsible use and stewardship are essential to maintaining this tradition. Landowners, like all property owners, expect respect for their land, and recreation users play a key role in sustaining these opportunities through responsible behavior, compliance with laws, and respect for property boundaries. Preserving access requires ongoing collaboration with both new and long-time landowners, as well as sustained public education efforts. Increasing awareness of property rights, responsible recreation practices, Maine’s landowners should familiarize themselves with its liability protections.

Maine’s approach to securing and sustaining access is rooted in partnerships and underpinned by the state’s landowner liability laws, which broadly speaking may limit liability for landowners who allow free public recreational use of their property (Maine Legislature, 2026). These protections are fundamental to maintaining voluntary access across millions of acres. Working with landowners, municipalities, recreation organizations, and land trusts, the state supports voluntary access agreements, easements, leases, and other mechanisms that create clear, reliable recreational opportunities while protecting natural resources.

Centralized and transparent access information, clear signage, and adaptive management practices help reduce conflicts and promote safe, legal, and sustainable use. Stewardship partnerships and effective communication channels foster trust, ensuring that both landowners and recreation users benefit from well-managed access systems and that Maine’s tradition of shared access remain viable for future generations.

THEME 6. SUSTAINABILITY

Maine’s outdoor recreation system depends on healthy landscapes, resilient infrastructure, and thoughtful management to ensure opportunities remain accessible for future generations. As changing weather patterns bring increased precipitation, flooding, erosion, and shifting seasonal conditions, sustainability and climate adaptation have become essential components of outdoor recreation planning and management. Extreme weather events are already impacting roads, trails, launch sites, campgrounds, and other recreation assets, threatening both public access and ecological integrity.

Sustainability ensures that recreational use does not compromise the ecological, cultural, or social value of Maine’s natural areas. The state faces unique challenges, including sensitive ecosystems, extensive private land ownership, and varied infrastructure in remote and coastal areas. Climate change adds additional pressures such as storm intensity, erosion, flooding, and changing wildlife habitats making proactive planning and resilient design more critical than ever.

Maine is prioritizing climate-adaptive design and maintenance across its trail and recreation infrastructure. This includes using durable, low-impact construction methods; elevating or rerouting vulnerable trail segments; enhancing drainage systems; and protecting sensitive ecosystems such as wetlands and riparian zones. Nature-based solutions and green infrastructure approaches help reduce environmental degradation while maintaining safe and accessible recreation opportunities.

Adaptive management is a key strategy to monitor environmental conditions, visitor use, and infrastructure performance to inform timely upgrades and maintenance. Collaboration among state agencies, municipalities, land trusts, and volunteer programs ensures shared responsibility and coordinated responses to changing conditions.

Sustainable recreation also contributes to community and economic benefits. Responsible infrastructure design and visitor education help reduce resource impacts while connecting recreation with local businesses and cultural amenities. By integrating sustainability and climate adaptation into every stage of recreation planning, development, and management, Maine protects its natural resources, enhances visitors’ experiences, and ensures its outdoor recreation system remains resilient, equitable, and ecologically sound for generations to come (Trailblazer Roadmap, 2025).

In the *Maine Won’t Wait: A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action*, The Maine Climate Council shares alarming impacts to the future of recreation in Maine (Maine Climate Council, 2026). Some of these facts include:

- Maine has already experienced eight inches of sea level rise (SLR). Expectations for future SLR in Maine are 1.5 more feet by 2050 and four more feet by 2100. SLR will affect Maine’s entire coast and tidal rivers, causing erosion in coastal beaches, dunes, salt marshes and bluffs; coastal groundwater contamination; and loss of 40 - 75% of dry beach area.
- Warmer, shorter winters from climate change are contributing to increased tick-borne illnesses, such as Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Powassan encephalitis virus,

particularly in the Midcoast region. Tick abundance, activity and the dangerous, costly and often deadly diseases they cause are expected to increase with warming temperatures.

- Ocean warming, acidification, and sea level rise are already affecting ecosystems and coastal areas and will continue to accelerate as the climate warms. Commercial and noncommercial species like Maine lobster are shifting northward to follow their preferred environmental conditions, while species from the south and non-native, harmful species such as green crabs and invasive seaweed increase. Future emissions will determine how warm the Gulf of Maine becomes by 2100.
- Some natural and recreational services enjoyed at coastal beaches and sand dunes will disappear as sea level rises and erodes beaches and damages sand-dune systems. Visitors spent \$1.7 billion at Maine beaches in 2018. Dry beach area will decrease by 43% with just 1.6 feet of sea level rise, resulting in 1.1 million fewer visitors in this region and a \$136 million loss in annual tourism spending.

SCORP 2025-2035 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

THEME 1. HEALTH & WELLNESS

GOAL 1.1 INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Strategy 1.1.1 Expand close-to-home public recreation opportunities such as parks, trails, playgrounds, and waterfront access, particularly in underserved and rural communities.

Strategy 1.1.2 Prioritize universal design and ADA and ABA-accessible facilities to ensure people of all ages and abilities can enjoy outdoor recreation.

Strategy 1.1.3 Support community-led municipal and regional comprehensive planning and engagement to align recreation amenities with local needs and interests through working with regional Council of Governments, city planners, parks departments and stakeholders.

Strategy 1.1.4 Strengthen public transit connections including sidewalks, bike routes, and transit to promote physical activity and improve access to recreation sites without reliance on personal vehicles.

Strategy 1.1.5 Use federal, state and private funding strategically to reduce barriers to access, particularly for low-income, rural, and historically underserved populations.

GOAL 1.2 PROMOTE OUTDOOR RECREATION AS A KEY STRATEGY FOR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SOCIAL HEALTH

Strategy 1.2.1 Encourage every Maine municipality to support a professional park & recreation agency, and public outdoor recreation facilities, that combined, help to make the benefits of increased levels of physical activity (mental, social, physical health) accessible to everyone in the community.

Strategy 1.2.2 Increase awareness for close-to-home, work, school, or public outdoor recreation opportunities that encourage social connection and opportunities for increased level of physical activity meeting needs of populations. Facilities close to home, work, school parks and public outdoor rec facilities.

Strategy 1.2.3 Integrate health equity goals into outdoor recreation planning, ensuring benefits reach Maine residents across demographics and regions.

**GOAL 1.3 STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY VITALITY THROUGH RECREATION-DRIVEN
PLACEMAKING AND RESILIENCE**

Strategy 1.3.1 Invest in parks and outdoor recreation public facilities infrastructure that supports vibrant downtowns, community identity, and year-round economic activity.

Strategy 1.3.2 Encourage partnerships between professional parks and recreation groups with local governments, land trusts, and community groups to co-steward recreation assets.

Strategy 1.3.3 Incorporate sustainable solutions such as green spaces, trails, and water access into community resilience and climate adaptation planning.

Strategy 1.3.4 Support cultural and community events that connect public parks & open spaces with local heritage, arts, and traditions.

Strategy 1.3.5 Increase access to and development of parks, outdoor recreation and public facilities as a tool to attract and retain residents, strengthen community pride, and enhance overall quality of life while honoring the cultural heritage or areas.

THEME 2. MAINE'S OUTDOOR ECONOMY GOALS & STRATEGIES

GOAL 2.1 INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Strategy 2.1.1 Expand investment in outdoor recreation infrastructure of conservation areas, trails, water access, campgrounds, and parks to support both local use and tourism.

Strategy 2.1.2 Leverage state, federal, and private funding to maintain and modernize existing recreation assets, ensuring long-term economic return.

Strategy 2.1.3 Prioritize infrastructure improvements in areas with high recreation potential to stimulate local economies, especially in rural communities.

Strategy 2.1.4 Encourage nature-based tourism and small business development connected to outdoor recreation, such as guides, outfitters, restaurants, and local lodging.

Strategy 2.1.5 Integrate sustainable design and climate adaptation into all outdoor recreation investments to reduce long-term maintenance costs and enhance resilience.

GOAL 2.2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE OUTDOOR RECREATION SECTOR

Strategy 2.2.1 Support workforce training and certification programs in trail building, guiding, outdoor education, recreation planning, and sustainable tourism.

Strategy 2.2.2 Strengthen partnerships between the outdoor industry, educational institutions, and state agencies to align training with economic opportunities.

Strategy 2.2.3 Encourage entrepreneurship and small business innovation within outdoor recreation and related service industries.

Strategy 2.2.4 Promote the outdoor sector as a key employer in Maine's economy, emphasizing livable wages and career pathways.

Strategy 2.2.5 Expand access to business development resources and technical assistance for recreation-based enterprises, particularly in underserved communities.

GOAL 2.3 PROMOTE OUTDOOR RECREATION AS A DRIVER OF COMMUNITY VITALITY AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Strategy 2.3.1 Support recreation development that aligns with community values, enhances quality of life, and attracts residents and visitors alike.

Strategy 2.3.2 Strengthen connections between recreation destinations and nearby downtowns, local businesses, cultural assets, and tourism services.

Strategy 2.3.3 Use outdoor recreation as a catalyst for rural revitalization, supporting year-round economic activity and sustainable tourism.

Strategy 2.3.4 Develop marketing and branding strategies that highlight Maine’s outdoor assets while promoting responsible and sustainable visitation.

Strategy 2.3.5 Incorporate outdoor recreation planning into broader state and local economic development strategies to ensure coordinated and lasting benefits.

GOAL 2.4 ENHANCE AWARENESS AND USE OF MAINE’S OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Strategy 2.4.1 Promote the centralized information platform through marketing campaigns, social media, and partnerships with tourism and community organizations.

Strategy 2.4.2 Provide clear mapping and navigation tools to help users plan trips safely, including route planning, estimated travel times, and public transportation options.

Strategy 2.4.3 Highlight close-to-home recreation opportunities to reduce travel barriers and encourage frequent use by local residents.

Strategy 2.4.4 Include educational content about responsible recreation, Look Out for ME, Leave No Trace principles, Tread Lightly, and climate-resilient use of natural resources. Incorporate statewide messaging regarding utilizing local firewood to minimize the spread of endangered species.

Strategy 2.4.5 Promote the utilization of Registered Maine Guides and other statewide educational resources for new to outdoor recreation in Maine.

THEME 3. STEWARDSHIP

GOAL 3.1 STRENGTHEN STEWARDSHIP OF MAINE'S NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Strategy 3.1.1 Support and expand conservation partnerships with land trusts, municipalities, tribal governments, and state agencies to protect, maintain and enhance areas of high-value natural and cultural resources.

Strategy 3.1.2 Expand volunteer trail and site stewardship programs in partnership with local nonprofits, land trusts, outdoor recreation groups, schools, and youth organizations.

Strategy 3.1.3 Establish consistent visitor use monitoring and management systems to measure visitation pressures, impacts and resource resilience.

Strategy 3.1.4 Incorporate stewardship standards into recreation planning, permitting, and funding decisions to ensure long-term resource protection and estimate commensurate funding needs.

Strategy 3.1.5 Support restoration projects in sensitive areas, such as wetlands, shorelines, and high-traffic trails, to enhance ecosystem health.

Strategy 3.1.6 Explore additional funding opportunities that support stewardship and ensure that funding is sustainable for the long term and commensurate to documented need.

GOAL 3.2 Build a culture of shared responsibility through partnerships & statewide strategic planning

Strategy 3.2.1 Invest in staff training, support, and other capacity to expand stewardship programs for volunteers, trails, waterways, and recreation sites.

Strategy 3.2.2 Promote existing statewide stewardship campaigns to encourage responsible recreation practices and resource protection.

Strategy 3.2.3 Recognize that stewardship will come from paid professionals with volunteer contributions towards aspects of stewardship that can be performed by volunteers.

Strategy 3.2.4 Provide resources, training and tools for partner organizations to plan and support consistent and effective best management practices statewide.

Strategy 3.2.5 Create opportunities for stewardship activities at parks, lands and trails that appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds.

GOAL 3.3 INTEGRATE STEWARDSHIP INTO RECREATION PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND USER EXPERIENCE

Strategy 3.3.1 Prioritize recreation investments that include long-term stewardship funding, staffing, and maintenance plans.

Strategy 3.3.2 Strengthen community engagement in stewardship activities, especially in high-use or sensitive resource areas.

Strategy 3.3.3 Develop and utilize a Statewide Trails Plan to assess trail supply, demand and priorities across land managing organizations, agencies, and municipalities.

Strategy 3.3.4 Focus on rehabilitation, upgrades, and revisions to existing sites to meet current and future recreation needs.

Strategy 3.3.5 Use good planning to create new recreation infrastructure. Prioritizing trails that provide multiple use opportunities.

Strategy 3.3.6 Foster cross-sector partnerships among recreation agencies, managers, tourism entities, and conservation organizations to align messaging and amplify stewardship initiatives.

GOAL 3.4 FOSTER DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING FOR RECREATION ACCESS

Strategy 3.4.1 Collect and centralize data on visitor use, trail conditions, accessibility, and demand to inform infrastructure and resource management decisions.

Strategy 3.4.2 Integrate feedback mechanisms allowing users, landowners, and community partners to report conditions, hazards, or access issues.

Strategy 3.4.3 Support planning for climate adaptation, emergency response, and seasonal maintenance using centralized information tools.

Strategy 3.4.4 Align state, regional, and municipal recreation planning with the centralized platform to ensure coordinated access and investment decisions.

Strategy 3.4.5 Evaluate platform performance and user engagement regularly to improve accessibility, accuracy, and relevance of the information provided.

THEME 4. ACCESSIBILITY

GOAL 4.1 ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACES ACROSS MAINE

- Strategy 4.1.1** Identify and prioritize building meaningful relationships and resourcing underserved communities.
- Strategy 4.1.2** Incorporate professionals and businesses such as Maine Adaptive, Maine Association of New Americans, and Queerly ME to continue fostering partnerships for increased access and inclusive spaces/programming.
- Strategy 4.1.3** Pilot programming and gather user data for close to home recreational opportunities in urban, rural, and tribal communities to reduce barriers to participation.
- Strategy 4.1.4** Create and facilitate transportation resources, safe pedestrian and bike connections, and transit links to facilitate access to public lands.
- Strategy 4.1.5** Resource, create and implement community targeted outreach campaigns to inform diverse populations of available recreation resources and programs.
- Strategy 4.1.6** Track access and use patterns to identify gaps and adjust planning and funding priorities for maximum equity impact, and build relationships based on the data.
- Strategy 4.1.7** Seek and retain professional input to analyze adaptive and access spaces/programs to analyze data and public feedback.
- Strategy 4.1.8** Provide more economically accessible experiences for families, including facilities like Gear Libraries and ski for free programming.

GOAL 4.2 PROMOTE UNIVERSAL AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN IN PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES

- Strategy 4.2.1** Create a usable accessibility standard for all new and renovated recreation facilities that ensures best practices for universal design.
- Strategy 4.2.2** Provide resources and training to ensure accommodation of a wide range of abilities, ages, and mobility levels, including trails, restrooms, parking, and waterfront access.
- Strategy 4.2.3** Create guidance for sensory-friendly and adaptive features into public spaces to serve individuals with cognitive, sensory, or developmental differences.
- Strategy 4.2.4** Train recreation staff and volunteers on inclusive programming and accessibility awareness.
- Strategy 4.2.5** Contract with disability advocacy organizations and community groups to review and improve accessibility plans regularly.

GOAL 4.3 INTEGRATE ACCESSIBILITY INTO PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC SPACES

Strategy 4.3.1 Incorporate accessibility considerations into all recreation master plans, site assessments, and infrastructure projects.

Strategy 4.3.2 Regularly assess and maintain existing infrastructure to ensure continued accessibility and safety.

Strategy 4.3.3 Implement data-driven planning based on user data to prioritize improvements that remove barriers and expand participation in outdoor recreation.

Strategy 4.3.4 Based on capacity, make best efforts to ensure digital and informational resources—such as maps, guides, and signage—are accessible to all users, including those with visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments.

Strategy 4.3.5 Foster meaningful community engagement and participation in accessibility planning to ensure public spaces meet the needs of individuals of all ages, experiences, socio and economic backgrounds to represent all aspects of Maine’s diverse populations.

GOAL 4.4 IMPROVE ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE AND CENTRALIZED OUTDOOR RECREATION INFORMATION

Strategy 4.4.1 Develop, maintain, and keep updated a centralized, user-friendly digital platform that provides statewide recreation information, including trails, parks, waterways, and facilities.

Strategy 4.4.2 Ensure information includes accessibility features, difficulty ratings, amenities, seasonal conditions, and safety guidance. See and use standards set forth by Outdoor Access Solutions.

Strategy 4.4.3 Integrate information about private land access and permissions, public easements, and conservation agreements to expand recreational opportunities responsibly.

Strategy 4.4.4 Provide multi-platform access including mobile, desktop, and printable resources to serve users in areas with limited internet or cell service.

Strategy 4.4.5 Regularly update the platform with accurate data on trail conditions, closures, and environmental considerations such as wildlife protection or climate impacts.

THEME 5. PUBLIC ACCESS TO RECREATION

GOAL 5.1 PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE AND ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS

Strategy 5.1.1 Continue to develop education programs about property rights, access agreements, and ethical recreation practices to ensure respectful use of private lands. Recommend recreationalists obtain proper permissions and follow posted regulations.

Strategy 5.1.2 Develop clear guidance and signage for trails and recreation areas that cross private lands, including permitted uses and seasonal restrictions.

Strategy 5.1.3 Collaborate with landowners to establish or expand formal access agreements, easements, and recreation leases.

Strategy 5.1.4 Highlight Leave No Trace principles, Tread Lightly and Look Out for ME stewardship responsibilities in all outreach materials related to private land access.

GOAL 5.2 STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN LANDOWNERS AND RECREATION STAKEHOLDERS

Strategy 5.2.1 Support landowner incentives for providing public access, including liability protections, tax benefits, and recognition programs.

Strategy 5.2.2 Engage local municipalities, land trusts, and outdoor recreation groups in coordinating private land access initiatives.

Strategy 5.2.3 Facilitate workshops, forums, and training for landowners and recreation managers on legal access, stewardship, and visitor management.

Strategy 5.2.4 Encourage collaborative stewardship programs that involve landowners, volunteers, and recreation users in maintaining access and protecting resources.

GOAL 5.3 ENSURE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND SAFETY OF PRIVATE LAND ACCESS

Strategy 5.3.1 Create a program to monitor and evaluate use patterns on private lands to prevent overuse, environmental degradation, and conflicts with landowner interests.

Strategy 5.3.2 Implement adaptive management strategies to respond to changing conditions, seasonal closures, or new legal requirements.

Strategy 5.3.3 Provide users with centralized, up-to-date information on private land access, including maps, access points, and rules.

Strategy 5.3.4 Support conflict resolution mechanisms between landowners and recreation users to maintain trust and safe access.

Strategy 5.3.5 Provide information and resources on grants, funding opportunities, and benefits to private landowners who provide public access and recreation.

THEME 6. SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL 6.1 STRENGTHEN THE LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP AND RESILIENCE OF MAINE'S OUTDOOR RECREATION LANDS AND WATERS

Strategy 6.1.1 Embed sustainable stewardship principles into the design, construction, and maintenance of recreation infrastructure to reduce environmental impacts.

Strategy 6.1.2 Integrate climate-adaptive design and maintenance standards into outdoor recreation infrastructure (e.g., trails, launch sites, campgrounds) to withstand increased precipitation, flooding, erosion, and extreme weather events.

Strategy 6.1.3 Prioritize the protection and restoration of critical natural resources—such as wetlands, forests, and riparian buffers—that provide ecosystem services supporting recreation and community resilience.

Strategy 6.1.4 Implement adaptive management strategies that use data on visitor use, environmental conditions, and climate impacts to guide decision-making.

Strategy 6.1.5 Expand recreational opportunities that align with changing weather patterns, and longer shoulder seasons.

GOAL 6.2 BUILD A CLIMATE-RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM FOR MAINE

Strategy 6.2.1 Incorporate climate projections, hazard data, and resilience best practices into the planning, siting, and design of outdoor recreation facilities and trails. Emphasis will be placed on minimizing flood risk, erosion, and damage from extreme weather; protecting water resources and habitats; and ensuring long-term functionality of recreation investments.

Strategy 6.2.2 Conserve, restore, and manage natural landscapes such as forests, wetlands, shorelines, and riparian areas that provide climate resilience and support outdoor recreation. These natural systems reduce flood impacts, improve water quality, protect wildlife habitat, and sustain nature-based recreation opportunities, consistent with conservation and public access goals.

Strategy 6.2.3 Support sustainable recreation practices on working forests, farms, and other privately owned lands that are critical to Maine's recreation system. Strategies include education, technical assistance, partnerships, and incentives that help landowners manage recreational use while adapting to climate impacts and maintaining voluntary public access.

Strategy 6.2.4 Encourage recreation practices, infrastructure, and management approaches that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. This includes promoting low-impact recreation, reduced emission motorized vehicle use, sustainable materials and maintenance practices, and education that foster responsible recreation behavior.

Strategy 6.2.5 Strengthen coordination among state agencies, municipalities, tribal governments, nonprofits, land trusts, researchers, and recreation organizations to share data, tools, and best practices related to climate adaptation and changing conditions to best sustain recreation opportunities over time.

**GOAL 6.3 PROMOTE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE-READY
OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Strategy 6.3.1 Ensure outdoor recreation investments prioritize resilient, inclusive, and sustainable infrastructure that can adapt to changing environmental conditions.

Strategy 6.3.2 Support community-led planning to identify and address vulnerabilities of recreation assets to climate impacts, particularly in rural and coastal communities.

Strategy 6.3.3 Encourage sustainable transportation and access solutions that reduce environmental impacts (e.g., transit-to-trails, EV charging, bike/pedestrian connections).

Strategy 6.3.4 Increase access to close-to-home recreation opportunities to reduce pressure on fragile natural areas while improving community health and wellness.

Strategy 6.3.5 Align state and local recreation planning with conservation, hazard mitigation, and climate adaptation plans to create a unified approach to sustainable recreation.

CHAPTER 4. MAINE'S OUTDOOR RECREATION SUPPLY

Maine Outdoor Recreation Resources Overview

Conserved Lands

- Conserved Lands: 4,455,187 Acres
- Federal Lands: 305,215 Acres
- State Lands: 1,376,995 Acres
- BPL Lands: 715,099 Acres
- Local Community Lands: 45,916 Acres
- Land Trusts: 2,685,000 Acres
- Other Conserved Lands: 42,061 Acres
- Private Lands with Public Access: 10 million+ Acres

Trails

- Hiking Trails: 2,376 Trails
- Appalachian Trail Miles: 281 miles
- Hiking Trails on Land Trust property: 768 miles
- Alpine and Nordic ski trails: 666 (Alpine trails), 1,064 miles (Nordic)
- ATV & Snowmobile trails: 5,414 miles (ATV)/12,423 miles (snowmobile)
- MTB trails: 3,645 miles
- Mountains over 4,000': 14

Water Resources

- Maine Island Trails: 375-mile water trail that connects 227 sites and 228 shoreside resources
- Rivers: 31,800 miles
- Lakes and Ponds: 5,600
- Coastline: 4,100 miles
- Boat Ramps with Public Access Points: 400

RECREATION PROVIDER SURVEY SUMMARY

The 2025 Maine Outdoor Recreation Providers Survey gathered responses from 212 organizations across all sixteen counties, representing a wide range of recreation providers including municipalities, nonprofit organizations, clubs, and land managers. Organizations reported serving diverse populations and indicated that outdoor recreation participation has generally increased over the past five years, with roughly three-quarters of respondents reporting growth in overall use. This trend reflects the continued importance of outdoor recreation for communities, tourism, and local economies across Maine.

Providers identified trails as the highest priority for investment over the next five to ten years, particularly trails for hiking, walking, and running as well as motorized trail systems such as ATV and snowmobile routes. Water-based recreation access and areas for hunting and fishing were also identified as important investments. In addition to facility development, providers emphasized the importance of protecting wildlife habitat, maintaining existing parks and recreation areas, and improving management of visitor use to address increasing demand and potential resource impacts.

Organizations also reported several challenges affecting their ability to provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Maintaining access to private lands was identified as the most significant concern, followed by funding limitations, workforce challenges, and increasing demand for facilities and programs. Providers also noted concerns related to climate change impacts, connecting youth and more diverse populations to outdoor recreation, and meeting the needs of an aging population. Despite these challenges, providers expressed strong support for maintaining Maine’s reputation as a premier outdoor recreation destination while balancing conservation, access, and sustainable management of recreation resources.

Top Respondents

39 %	Nonprofit Organizations
13%	Land Trusts
8.5%	Municipalities
8.5%	Commercial Businesses
7.5%	State Agencies
7.5%	Hiking or Trail Groups
16%	Other

All 16 Maine Counties were represented in responses with top respondents from Cumberland County, Oxford, Penobscot Counties.

How Many Visitors Recreation Providers’ Served Annually?

30%	Less than 1,000
28%	1,000-4,999
20%	5,000-24,999
22%	25,000 or more

Investment Priorities for Respondents

Highest Priority for Investing over the next 5 to 10 years

Hiking/Walking/Running Trails
Motorize Trails
Community Trails
Access to Water
Areas for Hunting/Fishing
Inclusive, Universally Accessible Facilities

Additional Open Ended Comments Responses that occurred with frequency included:

Climate Resilient Infrastructure
Accessibility and Community Connected Trail Systems
Multiple Use Trail Systems
Land Conservation/Wildlife Habitat
Community Forests
Scenic Byways Investments
Farm to School Programs
Snowmobile Trails/Connectivity

Priorities for Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Efforts Across Maine

Highest Priorities

Maintaining Existing Parks and Recreation Areas
Protecting Wildlife and Fish Habitats
Acquiring and Protecting Open Spaces (undeveloped land)
Making Maine a Premier Destination for Outdoor Recreation Base Tourism
Enhancing Visitor Use Management to Protect areas from overuse
Restoring damaged Rivers and Streams
Building Walking paths to connect communities

Concern for Issues and Challenges with Respondents' Organizations

Highest Level of Concern

Maintaining Public Access to Private Lands
Hiring and Sustaining a Workforce
General Funding Challenges
Impacts to Recreation from Changing Weather Patterns
Connecting Youth to Outdoor Recreation
Funding and stewardship of existing resources.

MAINE'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The land now known as Maine has been home to Wabanaki peoples — the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations — since time immemorial. Today, members of these four tribal nations, collectively known as the Wabanaki, or “People of the Dawnland,” live throughout the state and continue to maintain deep cultural, historical, and ecological connections to these lands and waters (NPS, 2026; Friends of Acadia, 2026).

Maine's landscape is defined by striking ecological diversity temperate and boreal forests, freshwater and saltwater ecosystems, and upland, wetland, and alpine systems. The state contains an estimated 17.5 million acres of forest. Interspersed within are more than 5,600 lakes and ponds, over 31,800 miles of rivers and streams, roughly 5 million acres of wetlands, about 4,100 miles of coastline, and more than 4,600 coastal islands and ledges. This rich natural variety forms the foundation of Maine's outdoor recreation identity (LandCAN, 2026; DACF/MNAP, n.d.).

Maine encompasses approximately 20.4 million acres in total, according to the state's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Its roughly 5,000-mile coastline includes sandy beaches, rocky headlands, and over 3,000 islands. In northern and western Maine, the Longfellow Range of the Appalachian Mountains includes more than 100 peaks above 3,000 feet and all of Maine's “4,000-footers.” Inland waters cover nearly 1,450 square miles, and include about 5,800 lakes and ponds, plus nearly 32,000 miles of rivers and streams. Maine also has about 5 million acres of wetlands, ranging from small vernal pools to expansive coastal salt marshes.

Approximately 90% of Maine's land area is forested. Most of Maine's forests are privately owned. Public and private forestlands together form the largest contiguous block of undeveloped forest east of the Mississippi River, including about 10.5 million acres of “unorganized territory” (i.e., land without local municipal government). These unorganized lands are primarily managed for timber but generally remain open to public recreation. Privately owned forests in southern and coastal Maine also play key roles in recreation, ecological health, and cultural connection (USFS, 2018).

Maine experiences four distinct seasons, which strongly influence its outdoor traditions. Winters are cold (with average annual snowfall ranging from 50–70 inches along the coast to 60–110 inches inland), summers can reach into the 80s on the coast and 90s inland, and fall brings cool, pleasant weather and vibrant foliage.

Maine is among the most rural states in the nation, with over 60% of residents living in rural areas. Small towns, historic village greens, fishing villages, and former mill towns define their cultural landscape and contribute to a strong sense of place (Maine DEP, 2024).

A growing mosaic of landownership and conservation tools including public easements on private land is expanding conservation and recreational access. While some lands are conserved primarily for ecological reasons, most publicly accessible conserved lands also offer significant recreational benefits.



Photo Credit: Jamie Malcolm-Brown, AMC Medawisla Lodge and Cabins, Courtesy of AMC.

OUTDOOR HERITAGE RECREATION

Outdoor heritage recreation, such as hunting, fishing, and trapping, remain foundational to Maine’s outdoor recreation identity and continue to play an important role in the state’s culture, economy, and land stewardship traditions. These activities connect generations of residents and visitors to Maine’s natural resources while supporting rural economies, conservation funding, and wildlife management efforts. As participation patterns evolve alongside demographic and societal changes, outdoor heritage recreation continues to represent both a longstanding tradition and an adaptable component of Maine’s broader outdoor recreation system.

Hunting

Hunting is one of Maine’s oldest outdoor recreational activities. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife was created in the 1880s to regulate hunting activities for Maine’s big game animals. Hunters in Maine have access to over 10 million acres of private land, and roughly 1 million acres of public land to pursue hunting. Moose, whitetail deer, and black bears are the primary big game species that are hunted in Maine. Other popular quarry species include turkeys, upland birds such as rough-legged grouse, and snowshoe hare. Fall is the most popular time for hunting in Maine with seasons for most species taking place during this time. Hiring a registered Maine Guide is a popular way for novice hunters to have a successful hunting experience.

Fishing

Maine’s abundant water resources provide amazing opportunities to fish for a variety of species. The 4,100 miles of coastline provide endless opportunities to surf fish for striped bass starting in late spring and lasting through the summer months. Many of the ports along the coastline are home to charter fishing boats that can be hired out to take people fishing for bluefish, groundfish, and tuna.

The inland waters of the state provide year-round fishing opportunities. Fishing for warm water species such as large and small mouth bass is popular in Maine’s southern counties while pursuing cold water fish species like brook trout and landlock salmon are more popular in the northern

counties. Fly fishing and trolling are effective methods for landing fish during the spring, summer and fall, and setting traps on Maine's frozen lakes in the winter is a popular activity.

The Maine department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife stocks over 1 million fish a year in the state's waters to ensure successful experiences for both residents and visitors. However, some water bodies support wild fish populations that do not require stocking. Five hundred seventy-five lakes and ponds in Maine are considered heritage fish waters and contain wild populations of brook trout (MDIFW/Fisheries, n.d.).

Trapping

There are sixteen animal species in Maine that are commonly trapped during the different trapping seasons regulated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The trapping season for animals such as foxes, coyote, fisher, mink and martens take place each year for a few weeks in late fall. The trapping season for Beavers runs from late October into April of the following year. Trappers trap for a variety of reasons ranging from the recreational pursuit of furs to species management issues that help deal with human and animal conflicts.

The Maine Trappers Association was established in 1947 as a way for trappers to organize and support their common goals. They have helped improve the trapping landscape by developing more humane traps and supporting mandatory trapper training prior to obtaining a trapper's license. These efforts along with those of MIF&W have helped trapping gain a favorable view in the eyes of Maine residents. In a recent survey 75% residents approve of trapping in Maine (MDIFW, 2020; Maine Trappers, n.d.).

Foraging

Foraging is a popular outdoor activity in Maine with year-round opportunities. Fiddleheads and dandelion greens start popping up in the spring and are followed in the summer and fall with a large variety of forageable items. Chantrell, Chicken of the Woods and Black Trumpets are a few of the popular wild mushroom varieties that start growing in the summer and continue to grow into the fall. The summer months are also a great time to search for several types of berries including blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and elderberries. Chaga is a type of mushroom that grows primarily on birch trees, is harvested for its medicinal properties and can be harvested year-round.

As with most recreational activities in Maine, getting landowner permission is recommended before engaging in foraging activities on private land. Foraging is allowed on Maine Public Land but is not allowed at state parks. For those new to foraging, many classes are available that can help someone learn more about it.

Outdoor heritage recreation is a critical component of Maine's outdoor recreation inventory, representing a significant share of recreational activity occurring across both public and private lands. From expansive public reserves and working forests to privately owned lands enrolled in access programs, these activities rely on a diverse and interconnected landscape that supports access, habitat, and sustainable use. As part of the state's recreation supply, hunting, fishing, and trapping contribute to year-round use of natural resources, reinforce Maine's outdoor heritage, and support ongoing conservation efforts through license revenues and partnerships. Ensuring

continued access, recruitment of new participants, and stewardship of land and wildlife resources will be essential to maintaining the vitality of these traditional activities within Maine’s evolving outdoor recreation system.

RECREATION SITES AND INFRASTRUCTURES

Federal Lands

Most federal recreation lands in Maine are administered by three agencies: the U.S. Department of the Interior’s National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service (USFS). In addition, some federal military and veterans’ agencies manage lands that are open for public recreation. Maine’s principal federal recreation areas include Acadia National Park, Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. NPS lands total 122,832 acres held in fee, plus 12,416 acres under conservation easement, and about 32,000 acres surrounding the Appalachian Trail are managed by NPS. The Maine portion of the White Mountain National Forest is reported as 49,980 acres, while National Wildlife Refuges now cover approximately 74,808 acres in the state (DACF SCORP, 2020; Congressional Research Service, 2022).

In 2016, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument was designated with 87,500 acres donated for KWW. In 2024 Tekakapimək Contact Station was completed to welcome visitors to the site. Tekakapimək is a Penobscot language word for “as far as one can see” (NPS. n.d.).



Photo Credit: James Florio. Courtesy of Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters

All Wabanaki Cultural Knowledge and Intellectual Property shared within this project is owned by the Wabanaki Nations. Courtesy of Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters.



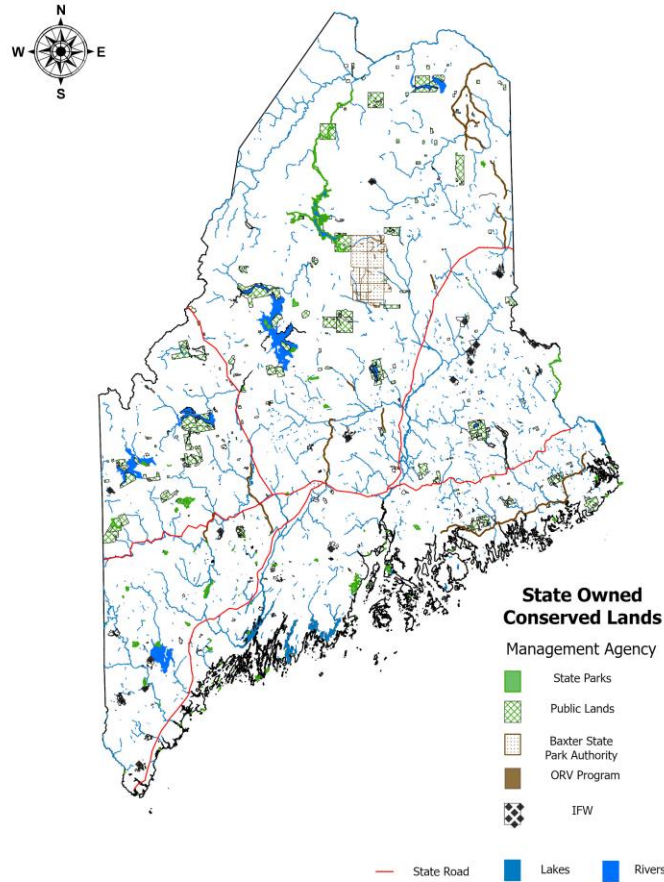
Photo Credit: Nolan Altvater, Passamaquoddy.

All Wabanaki Cultural Knowledge and Intellectual Property shared within this project is owned by the Wabanaki Nations. Courtesy of Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters.

State Lands

The Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands (BPL) manages 644,645 acres of Public Reserved and Non-Reserved Lands in fee ownership, according to its 2024 annual report, along with 85,602 acres of Parks, Historic Sites, and Boat Access Sites. The Bureau also holds 602,423 acres of public access easements donated by three large private landowners. BPL's stewardship includes 1,095 acres of coastal islands and 2.3 million acres of submerged lands (DACF Parks Annual Report, 2024).

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (MDIFW) manages approximately 123,667 acres of State-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), which support a variety of habitats and traditional recreational uses such as hunting, fishing, and trapping.



State Owned Conserved Lands

Management Agency	Acres
State Parks	85,602*
Public Lands	636,379
Baxter State Park Authority	209,644 **
ORV Program	4,682
MDIFW	123,667**
Total	1,045,056

*State Parks data includes AWW (24K acres), Park parcel at Bigelow Preserve (8.5K acres) and boat access sites (580 acres) as reported in BPL’s annual report.

** BSPA & MDIFW data from State GIS records.

Baxter State Park

Baxter State Park comprises 209,644 acres and is unique from other state parks as it is governed by the Baxter State Park Authority (the Maine Attorney General, the Director of the Maine Forest Service, and the MDIFW Commissioner), according to the deeds of trust established by Governor Percival Baxter. About 156,874 acres (75%) of the park are managed as a wildlife sanctuary, while approximately 52,628 acres (25%) are open to hunting and trapping (moose hunting is prohibited). In addition, 29,537 acres in the northwest portion of the park are designated as the Scientific Forest Management Area, intended to demonstrate sustainable forestry under Baxter's trust. It is notable for being home to Mount Katahdin and the start (or end) of the Appalachian Trail (DACF Annual Report, 2024, Baxter State Park Authority, n.d.).

Private Lands

Private landownership defines much of Maine's landscape and plays a central role in outdoor recreation. According to Maine's Outdoor Partners Program, roughly 94 percent of Maine's forest land is privately owned, and landowners voluntarily open more than 10 million acres of working farms and forests for public use. Private Lands provide the largest share of Maine's outdoor recreation area acreage (MDIFW Outdoor Partners, 2025).

The tradition of access is not guaranteed. Development pressure, liability issues, and access concerns have led some owners to restrict or close access. Preserving this legacy will require sustained outreach, incentives, and technical support for landowners who voluntarily allow public recreation. Private lands are essential to Maine's outdoor recreation economy. An economic analysis from the University of Maine (for the 2023–24 season) estimated the snowmobiling industry's contribution at about \$582 million, reflecting variability due to snow conditions (UMaine News, 2025).

Maine's snowmobile trail system is extensive, around 14,000 miles statewide, with most of that system on private lands. (DACF Snowmobile Program, n.d.).

According to the Maine Snowmobile Program and Maine Snowmobile Association, about 95 % of snowmobile trails are located on private property with permission from landowners (MSA, n.d.).

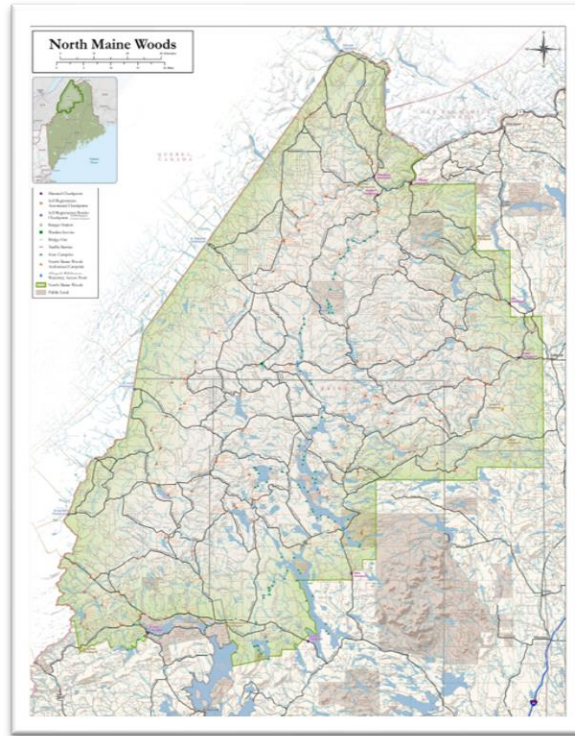
The North Maine Woods

A leading example of coordinated private recreation management is the North Maine Woods (NMW) system. NMW Inc. is self-funded through user fees and does not receive any other financial support. NMW Inc. was established by private landowners who make up their board of Directors which now includes the DACF Commissioner along with the DIFW Commissioner.

It manages public access to over 3.5 million acres of working forest. The system operates staffed access gates, charging day use and camping fees to support operations. There are nearly 350 campsites in the region. NMW receives more than 100,000 people visit the NMW annually (NMW, n.d.).

The NMW model demonstrates how private landowners, recreationists, and public agencies can collaborate to sustain large-scale access while supporting active forest management. It underscores

the importance of responsible recreation, visitor education, and homeowner stewardship to maintain a balance between recreation, conservation, and working forest economies (NMW, n.d.).



Courtesy of NMW

“Recreational access management systems, such as the North Maine Woods, also serve as proven models for coordinating and regulating public use on private lands. By providing structured access, user education, and on-the-ground management, these systems help reduce conflict, support landowners’ objectives, and ensure that recreation occurs in a controlled and sustainable manner. Their continued operation and potential replication in other high-use regions represent important components of Maine’s overall access strategy.” - *State of Maine LD 1308 report, 2026*

Not-for-Profit Conservation Lands

Land trusts and private conservation organizations have had a major role in both conserving Maine’s unique natural areas as well as providing outdoor recreation opportunities. Like municipalities, not-for-profit land conservation organizations are key stewards providing close-to-home opportunities. According to the 2024 Maine Land Trust Network Census Report “In total, Maine land trusts own or hold easements on 2,936,365 acres, which are made up of 1,794 owned parcels and 2,087 held in easement. (MLTN, 2024)”.

Across the state there are more than 80 land trusts working locally and regionally to protect critical wildlife habitat, scenic places, and traditional working landscapes like forests and farms. Together these trusts have conserved nearly 3 million acres, nearly 15 % of Maine’s land base and provide more than 3,400 miles of public trails and hundreds of water access points for hiking, fishing, boating,

snowmobiling, and other outdoor activities (MCHT, 2025). Many of these lands serve as vital connectors between public holdings, extending recreational corridors, protecting wildlife habitat, and supporting watershed health.

What sets Maine’s land trust community apart is how it blends conservation with public access and recreational opportunities. Because Maine has relatively little publicly owned land compared with other Northeastern states, land trusts fill a vital role in keeping open space available for the public while supporting traditional uses like hunting, fishing, and trapping. Many conserved parcels remain open year-round at no cost to visitors, and collectively these lands include thousands of miles of trails, dozens of beaches and swimming areas, and numerous boat launches. These conserved landscapes also help maintain rural economies by protecting working forests and farms that produce timber and food, and support local jobs (MCHT, n.d.). Beyond recreation and access, land trusts are key to habitat protection and ecological connectivity. Their work protects contiguous forests and wetlands that sustain breeding and migratory corridors for wildlife and help sequester carbon, contributing to climate resilience.

Appalachian Mountain Club

Non-Profit organizations such as the Appalachian Mountain Club play a distinctive role in Maine’s conservation and recreation landscape. Through its Maine Woods Initiative, AMC has permanently conserved over 127,000 acres of forest and wildlands, creating an extensive network of more than 130 miles of free trails for hiking, biking, skiing, paddling, and other outdoor pursuits. AMC’s work integrates sustainable forestry, wildlife habitat protection, and outdoor education with community partnerships, and includes iconic destinations like remote wilderness lodges and the [Maine Woods International Dark Sky Park](#), the first dark sky designation in New England. This blend of conservation, recreation, and stewardship complements the broader land trust community by safeguarding large landscapes while fostering deep connections between people and wild places.



Photo Credit: Jamie Walter, International Dark Sky. Courtesy of AMC.

In 2025 The Appalachian Mountain Club has secured funding needed to manage and own nearly 130,000 contiguous acres of forestland in Maine's 100-Mile Wilderness by adding the 29,000-acre Barnard Forest in Piscataquis County adjacent to 100,000 acres that AMC already owns (The Cool Down, 2025).

Together, land trusts and conservation organizations in Maine help ensure that people have both unique close-to-home and remote access to nature, that habitats remain intact for future generations, and that local communities can enjoy and benefit from the state's rich natural heritage through recreation, education, and stewardship.

Municipal Parks and Lands & Community Recreation

Municipal Parks

Municipalities in Maine collectively hold about 45,000 acres of conservation land. It is important to note that this estimate likely excludes municipal properties that fulfill essential recreational functions such as sports fields, playgrounds, and community parks. The value of municipal lands is often defined less by their total acreage and more by their proximity and accessibility to residents. These locally managed open spaces play a crucial role in meeting daily recreation needs, fostering community engagement, and enhancing quality of life.

Public Parks

According to the *2020–2024 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, there are 48 state parks and historic sites in Maine managed by the Bureau of Parks & Lands. In addition, the SCORP uses “RALA data” (from the Rural Active Living Assessment) to document municipal parks, indicating that local governments (towns and cities) own a substantial number of public parks. While the SCORP does not offer a precise statewide total of municipal parks in its summary text, its mapping shows that the number of public parks reaches 137 based on that RALA dataset. Thus, combining state-managed and municipally managed parks, Maine has on the order of at least 130+ public parks. Because “public parks” also includes playgrounds, open space, and smaller community green spaces, the actual number of locally maintained park parcels likely exceeds this number.

Note- BPL recognizes that updated information is needed to measure public parks and in the beginning phases of working with the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation & Maine Recreation and Parks Association to capture this information.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds previous SCORP data lists 313 playgrounds spread across Maine. The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands have playgrounds at 15 of its parks. The LWCF fund has supported the construction of over 70 playground projects, with at least one playground project in every Maine county. Playing Courts, Fields, Skating Rinks, & Skate Parks Communities across Maine rely on developed infrastructure for a variety of sports and activities serving youth, families, and adults. These resources underpin youth sports as well as health and wellness activities serving the full age range comprising a community. There are nearly a thousand playing courts and fields identified, as well as 62 ice skating rinks and 35 skate parks.

Swim Beaches

Swim beaches are a popular outdoor recreation destination in Maine. The Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands manages 48 state parks and historic sites, many of which include swimming areas. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reports that there are more than 29 miles of public access beaches along Maine’s coastline. While state parks contribute a significant portion of these, the total also includes municipal and other publicly accessible sites managed through programs such as Maine Healthy Beaches (DACF State Parks, n.d.; MDEP Healthy Beaches, 2021).

Golf Courses

Golf remains one of Maine’s most established “developed” outdoor recreation activities, though participation trends have shifted since the 2008 *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* reported a 17.4% participation rate in New England. Nationally, golf participation has increased in recent years. According to the National Golf Foundation, total U.S. golf participation (including both on-course and off-course formats) reached record or near-record levels between 2020 and 2023, reflecting renewed interest in the sport following pandemic-era growth (National Golf Foundation, 2023).

In Maine, the most current directory from the Maine State Golf Association (MSGA) reports approximately 120 golf facilities statewide (2024–2025 listings), a modest decline from earlier decades consistent with broader regional consolidation trends (Maine State Golf Association, 2025).

Maine’s golf infrastructure continues to be predominantly privately developed and operated, although facilities fall into several ownership and access categories.

According to the MSGA course directory (2025), Maine’s facilities include a mix of:

- Municipal courses
- Private clubs
- Public daily-fee courses
- Resort courses (associated with destination properties)
- Semi-private facilities

Geographically, golf courses are distributed throughout southern and central Maine, with smaller clusters in coastal and western mountain regions tied to tourism centers. While the total number of facilities has stabilized or slightly declined compared to historic highs, national participation growth since 2020 suggests renewed stability in demand for golf as a developed outdoor recreation activity.

Disc Golf Courses

Disc golf has become one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities in Maine, reflecting the state’s strong culture of community-based, low-cost, and land-conserving recreation.

Maine’s connection to disc golf runs deep. In 1977, Beaver Brook Campground in North Monmouth became one of the first 10 disc golf courses ever built, designed by the inventor of the game and still standing today as the oldest course in New England (New England Flying Disc Association, 2025). Today, the state is home to more than 120 courses spread across parks, campgrounds, ski areas, schools, and forested properties, with half installed since 2019. Maine is among the national leaders in disc golf rounds played per capita, and the Lewiston-Auburn area is recognized nationally for its concentration of highly rated courses, with several ranking among the top 100 in the world (UDisc, 2025; Sabattus Disc Golf, 2025).

The game's minimal equipment needs, modest infrastructure, and appeal to players of all ages and ability levels have made it especially attractive to rural towns and small businesses seeking to expand recreation opportunities without a large investment. Its relatively low environmental footprint, requiring only baskets, tee pads, and minimal clearing, has made it compatible with conservation lands and multi-use recreation areas.

Disc golf is also contributing to Maine's outdoor economy. In 2025 alone, UDisc recorded over 10,000 rounds played at Maine courses by players traveling more than 100 miles away, with visitors arriving from 49 U.S. states, nine Canadian provinces, and 16 countries. These visits generate spending at nearby restaurants, lodging, and local businesses.

Seasonality also plays a role in Maine's disc golf culture. Peak play occurs statewide from late spring through early fall, but many players continue through the shoulder seasons, and some courses remain playable all winter. Ski areas like Sugarloaf integrate disc golf into four-season tourism, with elevation changes creating scenic downhill holes during the summer months (Sugarloaf, 2025). Courses like these attract visitors outside the conventional ski season, providing more value to their communities.

The growth of disc golf in Maine has been closely tied to volunteerism and community stewardship, with local clubs maintaining courses, coordinating litter clean-ups, leading youth outreach, and organizing play. Organizations like JoySwich host community meetups that emphasize beginner participation, while Professional Disc Golf Association-sanctioned events draw regional and national players.

Despite this growth, Maine faces a meaningful gap in public access to disc golf. The national median for courses on public land is 48%; in Maine it is under 10%. Under 40% of Maine's courses are free to play, while globally that number sits closer to 90% (UDisc, 2025). The majority of U.S. states have disc golf courses in their state park systems, but Maine does not yet. The result is that, while Maine has built a world-class disc golf destination, the activity remains less accessible to families, students, and residents without vehicles, particularly in areas like the Midcoast region, where both tourists and locals lack places to play (UDisc, 2025).

Building accessible, free-to-play courses in municipal parks and on public land would bring disc golf in line with Maine's broader commitment to close-to-home recreation. These are courses that can be enjoyed by families and played in under an hour. With destination-quality courses already drawing visitors from around the world, a proven volunteer stewardship model, and measurable contributions to local economies, targeted public investment in accessible courses would build on what already exists and would help connect more residents to the benefits of outdoor recreation close to home.

Pickleball Courts

Pickleball has become one of the fastest-growing sports in the United States, with participation surging in recent years and millions of Americans taking up the game. According to the 2024 USA Pickleball Growth Report, there are tens of thousands of known courts databases now list around

68,000+ courts across the U.S., with thousands added recently as communities and clubs build new facilities to meet demand (USA Pickleball, 2024).

In Maine, the sport has also seen strong growth. According to court-tracking listings, the state currently has about 126 dedicated pickleball courts where people can play. (Pickleballify/Maine, 2025).

This includes both public and private facilities with permanent lines. Populations in cities like Portland and Brunswick are particularly active pickleball hubs. The interest in pickleball in Maine has been high enough that the state has been noted for its community engagement and search interest relative to many other states (The Conway Bulletin, 2025). Pickleball's appeal largely comes from its accessibility and social nature the rules are simple, the courts are smaller than tennis courts, and players of all ages and fitness levels can enjoy it. These factors have helped fuel rapid participation growth and the construction of new courts across Maine and the rest of the country.

Campgrounds

Commercial Campgrounds

Commercial campgrounds in Maine play an important role in meeting camping demand and supporting the tourism economy. The Maine Campground Owners Association reports 180 campgrounds in Maine not including State Park Campgrounds or Federal sites such as Seawall, Blackwoods, and Schoodic Woods campgrounds in Acadia National Park (Maine Campground Owners Association, 2025). Taken as a whole, privately operated campgrounds in Maine provide more developed facilities than public campgrounds such as State Park campgrounds. Amenities such as water/electric/sewer/cable tv hook-ups, pools, recreation halls, laundry, and other amenities are more likely to be found at private sector campgrounds. Cabin/cottage rentals are more prevalent as well.

Land Trusts, Nonprofit Organizations & Conserved Lands Campsites

Nonprofit and land trust camping options are part of a larger mosaic of conserved lands that enhance Maine's outdoors beyond commercial, state and federal parks. Maine's land trusts do more than preserve scenery; they actively provide places where people can camp, providing an opportunity to deepen connection to the landscape. From remote lake island campsites on protected waters to boat-accessible coastal camping on preserves, these opportunities showcase Maine's wilderness character in ways that are often more remote and low impact than typical developed campgrounds. They fill gaps where Maine has relatively low levels of state-owned land, supporting outdoor traditions from hunting and fishing to paddling and primitive camping. Together, land trusts and nonprofits help connect people to Maine's outdoors by providing trail networks, protected landscapes, and a diversity of overnight experiences, from walk-in rustic cabins and tent sites to wilderness lodges that complement public land offerings and deepen access to nature for residents and visitors alike.

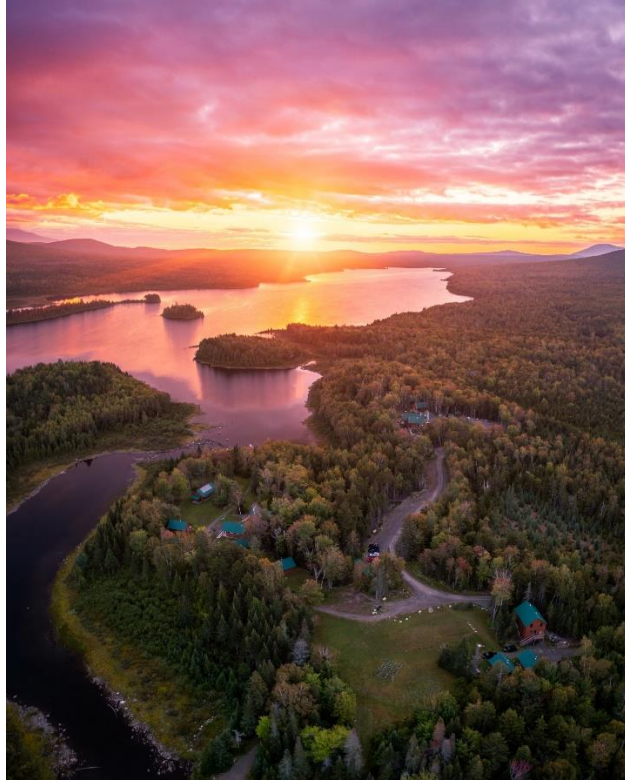


Photo Credit: Jamie Malcom-Brown, Medawisla Lodge. Courtesy of AMC.

Maine State Park Campgrounds

Maine State Park campgrounds are located at 12 state parks, spanning 8 counties. These campgrounds provide traditional camping experiences in natural settings. Most include playgrounds, trails, boat launches, and hot showers, with showers available at 11 of the 12 parks. Limited, reservable group campsites are offered at 10 of the 12 parks, providing opportunities for larger gatherings. Maine State Parks do not offer rentable cabins or cottages, in contrast to the national average of roughly 184 cabins or cottages offered in other state park systems (DACF Annual Report, 2022).

State Parks with Campgrounds:

- Aroostook
- Bradbury Mountain
- Camden Hills
- Cobscook Bay
- Lake St. George
- Lamoine
- Lily Bay
- Peaks-Kenny
- Mount Blue
- Rangeley Lake
- Sebago Lake
- Warren Island

State Park Campgrounds with Electric & Water Hook Ups:

- Aroostook State Park
- Camden Hills State Park
- Mount Blue State Park
- Peaks-Kenny State Park
- Rangeley Lake State Park
- Sebago Lake State Park

Group Campsites

- Maine State Parks offer group campsites designed for larger gatherings (tent or group camping), which can be reserved by contacting the parks directly.

No rentable cabins/cottages by Maine State Parks

- Maine State Parks do not offer cabins or cottages for rent as part of the state park camping system. According to the Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Maine State Parks do not have cabins/cottages, whereas the national average for state park systems is about 165–185 such rentals. (CHM Government Services, 2020).



Cobscook Bay State Park campground

Primitive Campsites

Primitive camping in Maine offers an iconic and distinctly Maine outdoor experience, providing access to the state’s vast forests, lakes, and remote public lands. Unlike developed campgrounds, primitive sites are often off the beaten path accessible only by foot, boat, or winter trail and provide minimal facilities, such as a fire ring, picnic table, or vault toilet. This simplicity allows campers to immerse themselves fully in Maine’s natural environment, experiencing solitude, wildlife, and the rhythms of the wilderness firsthand. Seasonal winter camping at select state parks and backcountry sites on Public Reserved Lands exemplifies this opportunity, offering an authentic connection to Maine’s iconic landscapes that is increasingly rare in modern recreation.

Primitive camping in Maine is not just a way to stay overnight, it is a gateway to the state’s most rugged and unspoiled places, making it a cornerstone of Maine’s outdoor heritage. Listed below are some examples of primitive camping experiences available in Maine.

Backcountry & River Camping on Public Lands

Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands manage *backcountry and river campsites* on state and public reserved lands that are typically primitive in nature (first come/first serve, minimal facilities such as a picnic table, fire ring, and vault toilet). These sites are often reached by foot or boat and are designed for remote outdoor experiences rather than developed campground settings.

Seasonal Winter Primitive Camping

Select state and national parks offer *primitive winter camping* (no amenities or cleared sites), appealing to self-sufficient campers seeking solitude and seasonal wilderness immersion.

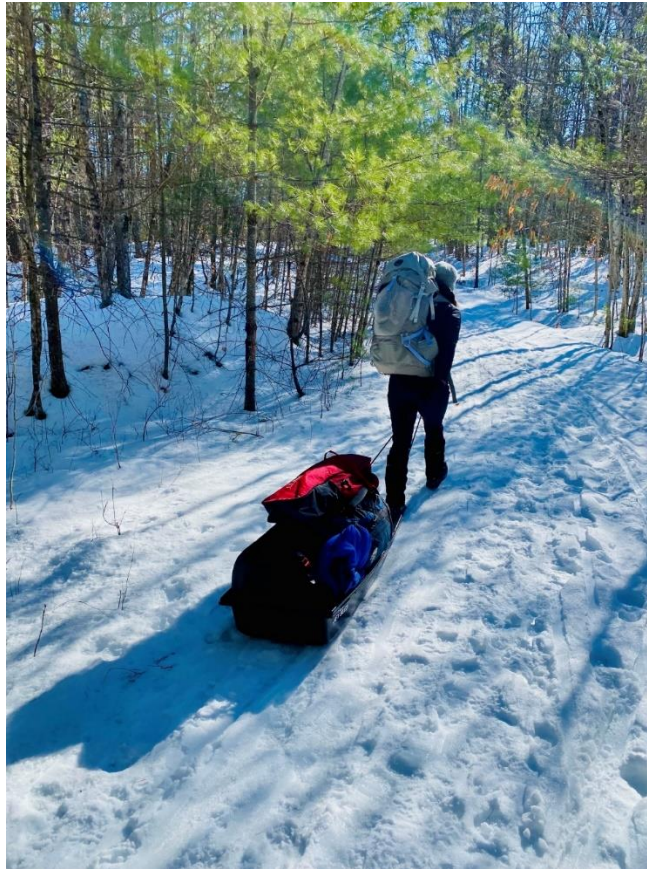


Photo Credit: Leila Murphy

Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW) Camping

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway, a 92-mile protected river and lakes corridor through the North Maine Woods is a classic *canoe and wilderness camping* destination. Camping is allowed only at designated sites along the waterway, which are primitive (picnic table, fireplace, outhouse) and accessed while paddling.

These sites are typically first come/first serve and require a permit or fee paid through checkpoints administered by the North Maine Woods (North Maine Woods, n.d.). This corridor provides one of

Maine's most iconic wilderness camping experiences, integrating water travel with remote nights under the stars.



Photo Credit: Nancy Zane, Maine Guide. Courtesy of North Star Adventures.

North Maine Woods (NMW) Camping

The North Maine Woods region a roughly 3.5-million-acre forest landscape of working timberland and recreation land offers hundreds of primitive campsites on private forest lands managed for public use. These sites are generally rustic (steel fire rings, picnic tables, some outhouses), often on lakeshores or logging roads, and are accessed after paying a land use/permit fee at NMW checkpoints. There are nearly 350 campsite locations in this region, making it one of Maine's most expansive networks of primitive camping in the woods (Northwoods, n.d.).

Appalachian Trail & Backcountry Corridors Camping

The Appalachian Trail (AT) passes through Maine for about 281 miles, offering extensive backcountry camping access (at shelters and designated sites) along ridge lines, lakes, and forested corridors. Camping along much of the AT is backcountry style with limited facilities, and campers are encouraged to follow *Leave No Trace* principles in remote areas though local regulations vary by land manager (Appalachian Trail Conservancy, n.d.). While not dispersed camping everywhere, the AT represents a long, contiguous corridor of wilderness camping opportunities tied directly into Maine's remote forest landscapes.

Maine Island Trail Association (MITA)

The Maine Island Trail is a 375+ mile water trail linking over 200 coastal islands and mainland sites available for primitive camping. MITA sites generally have little to no facilities, often no tables or outhouses, and require boat access, yielding a uniquely coastal wilderness camping experience. Many of these islands are held in trust by conservation partners, BPL, or private donors that allow primitive overnight stays through trail membership or permit programs (MITA, n.d.).

Land Trust & Conserved Lands Campsites

Across Maine, land trusts and conservation organizations protect forests, river corridors, and island preserves that allow primitive, low impact camping at designated locations. Examples include Stephen Phillips Memorial Preserve, where wilderness campsites on Mooselookmeguntic Lake provide basic tent sites with minimal improvements (Stephen Phillips Memorial Preserve, n.d.).

The Maine Coast Heritage Trust is another example and has several coastal camping options as well. The types of amenities vary but include more primitive options (MCHT, n.d.).

Commercial Sporting Camps

Commercial sporting camps are deeply rooted in Maine's heritage, particularly in regions such as Aroostook, the western mountains, Moosehead, Katahdin, and Downeast. These camps typically offer lodge and cabin operations, are in remote, wilderness settings prized for hunting and fishing, and many maintain strong ties to the tradition of Registered Maine Guides. The Maine Sporting Camp Association (MSCA) today represents around 45 to 50 member camps, offering experiences that range from rustic outpost cabins to more refined lodges with modern amenities (Maine Sporting Camps, n.d.).

Trailside Lodges

Over the past decade, trail-focused lodging has expanded significantly in Maine. Maine Huts & Trails, a nonprofit organization, has developed a network of off grid, eco lodges nestled in western Maine's mountains, connected by multi-use, non-motorized trails for hiking, biking, skiing, and snowshoeing. These huts offer a "lighten your load" experience for backcountry travelers, combining rustic comfort with sustainability (Maine Huts and Trails, n.d.).

Meanwhile, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) has extended its Maine Woods Initiative deep into the 100-Mile Wilderness, acquiring tens of thousands of acres for conservation and recreation. AMC operates three off-grid wilderness lodges linked by over 130 miles of trails, and designed to provide a comfortable base for hiking, skiing, paddling, and wildlife observation (AMC Maine Woods Initiative, n.d.). Options range from self-service to full meal service.

The Midcoast Conservancy offers reasonable year-round cabin rentals at Hidden Valley Nature Center (Midcoast Conservancy, n.d.).

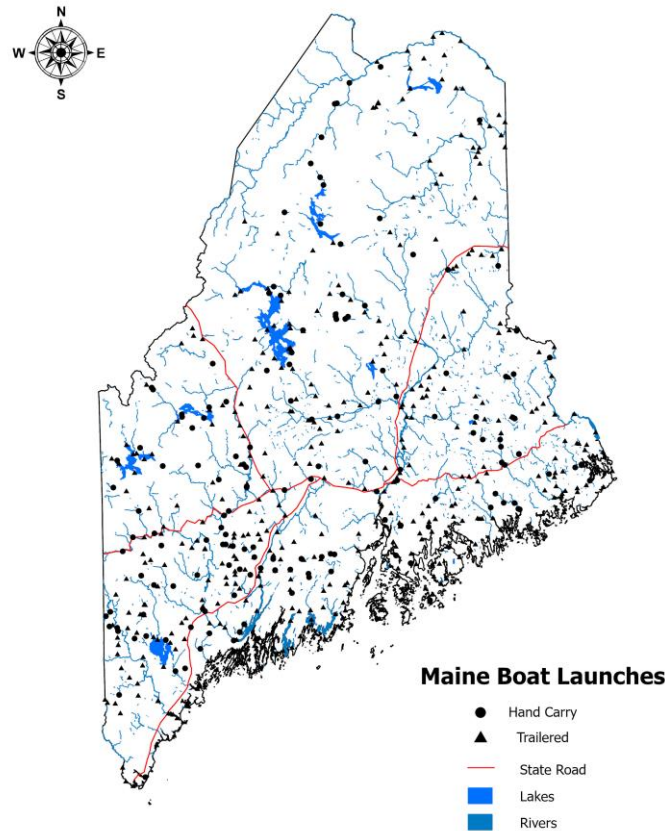


Photo Credit: Corey David Photography, Little Lyford Lodge and Cabins. Courtesy of AMC.

Boating

Maine has hundreds of public boat launch sites, managed by a variety of entities from state agencies to local governments and even hydropower license holders. The state has close to 600 boat launch locations, while state geographic data shows 424 trailered boat launches and 161 hand carry launches, totaling 585 boat launches. These sites range from primitive hand-carry canoe and kayak put-ins to fully ramped facilities with parking for trailered boats. Boaters and campers can also take advantage of formally recognized and managed water trails, such as the Maine Island Trail, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. In addition, there are many other water-access and camping opportunities outside formal “water-trail” designations.





Registered Maine Guides

Registered Maine Guides, though not quite in the category of recreation supply, are a longstanding tradition of connecting people with Maine’s abundant natural resources. They are professionally licensed outdoor guides certified by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife to accompany and assist people in Maine’s woods, waters, and wilderness across a range of outdoor activities. These guides lead trips for hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, snowmobiling, paddling, all-terrain vehicle use, sea kayaking, and primitive camping, helping residents and visitors safely access and enjoy the state’s iconic landscapes.

The licensed guide program in Maine is the oldest state regulated guide program in the United States, beginning in 1897, when hunting and fishing licenses were first required and nearly 1,700 individuals were registered in the first year. This historic heritage reflects Maine’s long tradition of wilderness travel, culture, and outdoor stewardship, with guides deeply rooted in local knowledge passed down through generations (MDIFW Staff, Personal Communication; MDIFW, n.d.).

As of 2025, there are 5,127 Registered Maine Guides licensed across the state, each qualified through a standardized testing process that includes outdoor skills, navigation, safety, and activity-specific expertise. Guides can specialize in multiple classifications such as hunting, fishing, recreational watercraft, and paddle sports expanding access to diverse experiences while ensuring safety and environmental responsibility.

The outdoor recreation industry, which includes guide services and outfitted travel, is a significant contributor to Maine’s economy.

Registered Maine Guides play a key role in connecting people with Maine’s natural resources by facilitating guided outdoor experiences that build confidence, encourage skills development, and promote responsible use of the outdoors. Their work supports outdoor tourism, enhances visitor experiences, and helps perpetuate the cultural heritage of Maine’s wilderness recreation by blending heritage, skill, safety, and stewardship. Registered Maine Guides play a crucial role in helping people access Maine’s iconic outdoor experiences, support local economies, and promote responsible use of the state’s natural resources.

Maine Licensed Guides	
Year	Regular Guides
2010	4236
2011	4183
2012	4414
2013	4563
2014	4647
2015	4779
2016	4875
2017	5001
2018	5018
2019	4730
2020	4421
2021	4356
2022	4854
2023	5170
2024	5126
2025	5127

Maine’s Ski Areas

Downhill Ski Areas

Maine’s downhill ski areas range from small community hills with rope tows or T-bars to two of the region’s largest ski resorts, Sunday River and Sugarloaf USA.

According to Ski Resort Info, Maine has 19 public downhill ski areas, which can be categorized as small, medium, or large based on the number of trails and lifts. Sunday River features 139 trails and 19 lifts, while Sugarloaf offers 176 trails and 15 lifts. Medium-size areas, such as Mt. Abram and Pleasant Mountain (formerly Shawnee Peak), have approximately 44 trails and 4–5 lifts each. The remaining ski areas generally have 1–4 lifts and 20 or fewer trails. Most ski areas now offer snowmaking and designated snowboard areas (Ski Resort Info, n.d.; Sugarloaf, n.d.).



Nordic Ski Areas

The Ski Maine Association lists 21 Nordic (cross-country) ski centers in the state, totaling 550 km of groomed ski trails. Facilities range from small operations to larger venues capable of hosting races and events. The Penobscot River Trails system provides 25 km of groomed ski trails along the East Branch of the Penobscot in the Katahdin region. Maine State Parks maintains groomed cross-country ski trails at several locations. AMC's network includes approximately 90 miles of groomed ski trails connecting lodges such as Medawisla Lodge & Cabins, Gorman Chairback Lodge & Cabins, and Little Lyford Lodge & Cabins (AMC, n.d.).

Numerous privately owned facilities such as New England Outdoor Center and Sugarloaf's Outdoor Center provide visitors with the opportunity to access trails promoting year-round recreation with beautiful backdrops.

Quarry Road in Waterville, Maine is one of the first cross country ski areas in New England to incorporate snow making on Nordic ski trails. During particularly low snow fall seasons visitors from over 5 hours away can be seen on their trails (Quarry Road Trails, n.d.).

Additional community trail areas with groomed ski trails include Quarry Road Trails in Waterville, Bond Brook Recreation Area and Viles Arboretum in Augusta, and trails in the Millinocket area maintained by the Northern Timber Cruisers. This summary does not quantify ungroomed cross-

country skiing, or multiuse trails (also used for snowmobiling) which occur on a wide variety of public and private lands (Ski Maine, n.d.).



Photo Credit: Cait Bourgault. Courtesy of AMC.

Biking in Maine

Bicycling in Maine today relies on a shared network of facilities that blend transportation corridors, multi-use trails, and recreational paths rather than an extensive system of fully separated bike lanes. The state features over 310 miles of multi-use rail-trail corridors converted from historic railroad lines that accommodate cyclists of all types on smooth gravel or packed surfaces, ideal for road, gravel, and fat-tire bikes alike (Visit Maine, n.d.).

Mountain Biking

Maine's mountain biking scene is surprisingly rich and varied, with interconnected trail networks and passionate local support that spans the state. The New England Mountain Bike Association touts 13,899 mountain bike trails in their region and oversees 35 active chapters. Maine is experiencing significant growth in mountain biking infrastructure, with new trail systems and expanded networks emerging across the state. In western Maine, the Carrabassett Valley and Sugarloaf region now offers nearly 100 miles of trails, including more than 20 miles of newly constructed singletrack designed specifically for mountain biking, reflecting sustained investment in high-quality trail development.

In western Maine around Bethel, the Inland Woods + Trails system boasts about 22 miles of purpose-built singletrack alongside 35 miles of double-track and multi-use paths, connecting Bethel Village

Trails, Bethel Community Forest, PACT, and Bacon Hill for riders of all levels (Woods & Trails, n.d.). Around Carrabassett Valley, one of the state's largest trail hubs, riders can explore extensive singletrack and multi-use trails (with dozens of miles already open and plans for further expansion), anchored by local NEMBA support and community trail initiatives (NEMBA, n.d.). In southern Maine, the Greater Portland/Gorham area features a mesh of neighborhood and wooded trails — from USM and Hamblen to Blackstrap Hill flow lines, with local riders and NEMBA chapters helping maintain and grow access. Up in northern Maine near Millinocket, the Hammond Ridge trail network has opened several miles of flowy and technical singletrack on the ridge just north of town, with ambitions to expand toward 30-50 miles of mixed-ability terrain. Complementing that, the New England Outdoor Center sits trail-side to the growing network and offers fat-bike rentals and a gateway for riders headed into the Katahdin Region's trails. Statewide, the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) supports chapters like Central Maine's and others that organize trail crews, advocacy, and trail-building projects, helping nurture both established systems and emerging local spots such as Moosehead Junction and community-built trails around towns like Patten and Mount Chase. Collectively these networks, from wilderness backcountry loops to community-built singletrack, reflect hundreds of mountain bike trails across Maine, showcasing the state's vibrant riding culture and ongoing growth.

Maine's mountain biking boom also extends into the northcentral part of the state with new trail planning underway in and around Elliotsville Plantation. The Elliotsville Foundation, a conservation and recreation nonprofit, has begun developing a major mountain bike trail network within its Seven Ponds Preserve, which includes land in Monson and Elliotsville Township. In 2024, initial construction started on about 5 miles of beginner-friendly singletrack accessible from nearby campsites, with plans to expand the system significantly in coming years. Beyond these early trails, the foundation is working toward a much larger vision: ultimately building an extensive, potentially 90+ mile mountain bike corridor that will attract riders of varying abilities and connect existing recreational resources in Piscataquis County. This project aims to provide world class mountain biking in one of Maine's most remote regions, complementing other local efforts and enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities statewide (Elliotsville Foundation, n.d.).

The numbers of MTB trails vary because different directories count trails differently (e.g., by individual named segments vs. multi-trail systems vs. mapped trail sections), but all indicate that Maine hosts hundreds of mountain bike trails of varying lengths and difficulties across its forests, parks, and local trail networks.

- The Maine Trail Finder database: a comprehensive outdoor recreation directory lists nearly 200 mountain bike trails across the state.
- MTB Project, a rider-submitted trail platform, shows 307 individual mountain bike trails in Maine, broken down by region (e.g., Western Maine ~ 97, Central Maine ~ 91, Southern Maine ~ 84)
- Some community trail lists, like those on Singletracks, show around 120+ named mountain bike trails in Maine (depending on how trails are counted).

Feedback from Maine-based NEMBA chapters states the importance of trail connectivity and the hope to have mountain bike trails within a 30-minute drive. They also mentioned that mountain biking is positioned to fill the gap of shorter ski seasons creating a “destination-worthy experience”.

They foresee the need for intra-town community-based systems like those in Gorham and Portland, ME. They also shared similar concerns with other use groups like ATV & snowmobiling concerning public access to private lands.

Gravel Biking

Gravel biking has emerged as a prominent trend in Maine’s cycling scene, blending adventure riding, bikepacking, and long-distance touring on unpaved surfaces. One of the biggest developments is the Appalachian Mountain Club’s (AMC) Maine Woods gravel network, which encompasses approximately 330 miles of historic logging and access roads opened for public gravel riding and bikepacking. This expansive system through AMC’s Maine Woods Initiative offers mapped routes and guides for riders looking to explore remote gravel terrain across rugged forestlands (AMC, 2024).

Along the southern coast, the Maine Eastern Trail serves as a key multi-use corridor with extensive gravel and crushed-stone sections, providing a *roughly 58-mile* continuous route from Kennebunk toward South Portland that’s popular with gravel riders. While the trail’s full 65-mile vision (from Kittery to Portland) mixes on-road and off-road segments, the existing gravel portions contribute significantly to the state’s network of long-distance gravel rides (NSCYC, n.d.).

Smaller regional gravel and mixed-surface systems also support this trend. For example, forest and rural backroads near Bangor, the Katahdin region, and western Maine offer gravel routes that connect villages and outdoor recreation points, often used by cyclists seeking quieter, more scenic rides (e.g., portions of the Penobscot River Trails and rural gravel roads around various Maine woods areas) (Visit Maine, n.d.). Smaller systems such as the Penobscot River Trails provide around 16 miles of gravel mountain biking routes in undeveloped forest settings (Maine Trail Finder, n.d.).

Pack Raft Maine, a Maine based guide business, leads wilderness-based trips that combine biking and rafting, demonstrating unique ways to integrate multiple outdoor adventures into one experience (Pack Raft ME, n.d.).

Across the state, gravel biking is intertwined with tourism and outdoor lifestyle growth, with events (like AMC’s Gravel Biking Weekends) and guide resources reflecting rising interest in challenging yet accessible gravel rides that go beyond typical urban bike paths.



Photo Credit: Cait Bourgault, Biking in Greenville, ME. Courtesy of AMC.

Fat-Tire Biking

Fat-tire biking using oversized tires for snow and soft surfaces has also become a notable seasonal niche. Groomed winter trail networks throughout the state offer miles of groomed paths for fat bikes, and regional clubs integrate fat-tire access with Nordic ski and snowshoe routes.



Photo Courtesy of Belfast Area NEMBA

Downhill Biking

Downhill mountain biking in Maine has grown significantly in recent years, evolving from scattered gravity-friendly trail systems into a small but developing network of lift-served bike parks and natural enduro terrain. While Maine has traditionally been known more for cross-country and backcountry riding, recent investments at ski areas have expanded opportunities for riders seeking sustained descents, technical features, and machine-built flow trails.

The most notable development is the lift-served bike park at Sugarloaf Bike Park in Carrabassett Valley. Opened in 2025, it represents Maine's most significant commitment to gravity-oriented riding. Using chairlift access, riders can descend more than 1,000 vertical feet per lap on a mix of professionally built flow trails and technical terrain. The park includes beginner-friendly routes with berms and rollers, as well as advanced trails featuring rock gardens, drops, and steep natural sections. Its opening marked an important milestone in positioning Maine as a destination for downhill mountain biking in northern New England (Sugarloaf, 2025).

In western Maine, Mount Abram Bike Park near Bethel has also played a key role in the state's downhill scene. Operating at a smaller scale, Mount Abram offers lift-assisted access to a growing network of trails that blend hand-built technical lines with machine-shaped flow features. The terrain is known for its rocky, root-strewn character reflecting Maine's rugged geology and appeals particularly to experienced riders seeking technical challenges (Mt Abram, n.d.).

Beyond lift-served parks, several trail systems provide natural downhill and enduro-style experiences. The Kennebec Highlands network in central Maine offers gravity-friendly singletrack with sustained descents, switchbacks, and technical features, although riders must pedal or shuttle

for elevation gain. In the Bethel area, trails around Gould Academy include race-oriented loops with steep downhill segments that are popular for training and regional competitions. These systems emphasize shared, multi-use trail models, where downhill riding coexists with cross-country biking and hiking.

Overall, downhill biking in Maine reflects the state's broader outdoor recreation character: rugged terrain, community-driven trail building, and growing but carefully scaled infrastructure. With the addition of modern lift-served facilities and continued volunteer investment in technical singletrack, Maine's gravity scene is expanding while remaining closely tied to its natural landscape and four-season recreation economy.

Across the state, bicycling trends point toward multi-use facility development, increasing gravel and mountain bike infrastructure, and community-based stewardship of trail networks that serve year-round riding for transportation, recreation, and tourism (DACF/ Biking, n.d.).

Snowmobile & ATV Trail Networks

Maine's ATV and snowmobile trail systems represent one of the largest components of the state's outdoor recreation supply and are a core asset identified in the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Maine maintains more than 14,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and approximately 6,000 miles of ATV trails, forming an interconnected, statewide network that links rural communities, public lands, and tourism destinations. These trails are maintained by 134 local ATV clubs, and 288 snowmobile clubs that are comprised of dedicated volunteers and through public-private partnerships with private landowners and supported by registration fees and grant programs 310 of these trail miles are comprised of State owned multi use rail trails, where old railbeds have been converted into trails (MDIFW/ATV-Snowmobile, n.d.). From a SCORP framework, these motorized trail networks are a major supply-side recreation asset that expands four-season access, particularly in northern and western Maine where winter recreation drives significant visitation.

Economically, snowmobiling alone generates hundreds of millions of dollars annually in direct and indirect spending on lodging, dining, fuel, equipment, and guiding services, making it one of the most important winter tourism drivers in rural regions. ATV recreation similarly supports local businesses during spring, summer, and fall shoulder seasons. Land-use partnerships are fundamental to this system: most trails cross privately owned working forests under permissive access agreements, demonstrating Maine's distinctive recreation model that blends conservation, forestry, and public access.

Sustaining this supply requires continued investment in maintenance, bridge replacement, trail hardening, landowner relations, and safety education to ensure long-term viability and resilience. Together, ATV and snowmobile trails significantly diversify Maine's recreation portfolio, strengthen rural economies, and enhance statewide connectivity across seasons (DACF/ATV Trails, n.d.).



Photo Courtesy of MDIFW

Maine ATV Clubs

All-terrain vehicle (ATV) clubs are a foundational component of Maine’s off-road recreation infrastructure, playing a central role in trail development, maintenance, and stewardship. Maine’s extensive ATV trail network—spanning thousands of miles statewide—is largely made possible through the coordinated efforts of local clubs working in partnership with private landowners and state agencies. Approximately 80 percent of Maine’s ATV trail system is located on private land, underscoring the importance of strong landowner relationships cultivated and maintained by clubs (MDIFW, n.d.).

ATV clubs operate as volunteer-driven, nonprofit organizations that are responsible for designing, constructing, signing, and maintaining trails, often fronting the costs of these activities and later receiving reimbursement through state grant programs (MDIFW, n.d.). Clubs also serve as a critical liaison between riders, municipalities, landowners, and emergency services, helping to ensure safe and responsible riding practices. In addition to trail stewardship, clubs promote environmental awareness, organize group rides and events, and contribute to local economies through tourism and recreation-based spending (Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, n.d.).

Statewide coordination is supported by organizations that provide a unified voice for ATV riders and affiliated clubs. This network strengthens advocacy, safety education, and landowner relations, while also facilitating communication across Maine’s diverse trail systems (ATV Maine, n.d.).

Maine Snowmobile Clubs

Snowmobile clubs are a cornerstone of Maine’s winter recreation economy and trail system management. Maine maintains one of the largest interconnected snowmobile trail networks in the United States, with over 13,000 miles of groomed trails made possible primarily through the efforts of local snowmobile clubs and volunteers (MDIFW, n.d.).

These clubs are responsible for trail grooming, signage, bridge construction, and ongoing maintenance throughout the winter season. Similar to ATV clubs, snowmobile organizations rely heavily on partnerships with private landowners—more than 85 percent of snowmobile trails traverse private lands—making landowner relations a critical component of system sustainability (MDIFW, n.d.).

Snowmobile clubs also function as community-based organizations that foster regional connectivity. Local clubs frequently collaborate to create linked trail systems that connect towns, businesses, and destinations across large geographic areas, supporting winter tourism and rural economic activity. For example, regional clubs often maintain interconnected trail corridors that enable long-distance travel between communities and key destinations.

In addition to infrastructure and economic contributions, clubs promote rider safety, provide education on responsible use, and encourage stewardship of Maine’s natural resources. Membership and volunteerism within these clubs are essential to maintaining the long-term viability of the snowmobile trail system.

Single-Track Motorcycle Clubs

Single-track motorcycle (off-road and trail bike) riding represents a smaller but growing segment of Maine’s motorized recreation landscape. Compared to ATV and snowmobile clubs, formal single-track motorcycle clubs and dedicated trail systems are less widespread and more fragmented. This is due in part to regulatory constraints, land access limitations, and the sensitivity of narrow, technical trails to environmental impacts. In 2025, Maine Single Track Club became Maine’s first licensed and insured club dedicated to building public single tracks for all ages highlighting a growing interest in the activity.

In many cases, single-track motorcycle riders rely on shared-use trail systems, informal riding networks, or participation within broader ATV club structures. Some ATV clubs permit limited motorcycle use on designated trails, provided riders comply with registration requirements and trail rules. However, access is not universal and often depends on landowner permissions and local club policies.

The development of single-track systems presents both opportunities and challenges. Purpose-built single-track trails can diversify Maine’s motorized recreation offerings that attract new user groups and supporting shoulder-season tourism. However, these trails require careful planning, sustainable design, and active management to minimize erosion, protect sensitive habitats, and maintain landowner support.

As interest in this activity grows, there is potential for increased collaboration among state agencies, land trusts, and motorized recreation groups to explore appropriate locations and management strategies for single-track riding. Expanding this segment of recreation in a sustainable manner will rely on balancing access with conservation, as well as organized user groups continuing to take on stewardship roles like those established by ATV and snowmobile clubs.

Historic Trails

Recreation/historic trails and wild, scenic, recreational river areas form two integral pillars of Maine's outdoor recreation and heritage network. Trails provide access, interpretation, and connectivity across the landscape; river corridors supplement this with unique water-based recreation, scenic vistas, and heritage value. For Maine's ensuring that trail and river corridor initiatives are properly inventoried, funded, mapped, interpreted and integrated with landownership, regulatory, and partnership frameworks will be key to maximizing public benefit and conserving resource values.

Historic Trails

Maine's historic trails provide vital connections between communities, allow non-motorized access, interpret cultural and natural heritage, and link to broader outdoor recreation networks.

Scenic Byways

Maine has a robust scenic byways program that highlights the state's natural, historic, cultural, and recreational landscapes. In total, Maine is home to 14 designated scenic byways, including one All American Road, six National Scenic Byways, and seven state-designated scenic byways, which together provide access to diverse outdoor recreation opportunities and interpretive experiences across the state (Scenic, n.d.).

Katahdin Woods & Waters Scenic Byway and the Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byway offer diverse recreational opportunities such as hiking, cycling, paddling, and snowmobiling while providing interpretive access to historic landscapes. The Old Canada Road, designated a National Scenic Byway, traces traditional river trade paths and historic portages used by the Abenaki and early European settlers, linking Maine's rugged interior with its colonial past (Federal Highway Administration, n.d.).

Appalachian Trail

Among the state's iconic routes, the Appalachian Trail, terminating at Katahdin in Baxter State Park, reflects both the region's natural beauty and the legacy of Myron Avery, who championed the trail's northern completion (Appalachian Trail History, n.d.).

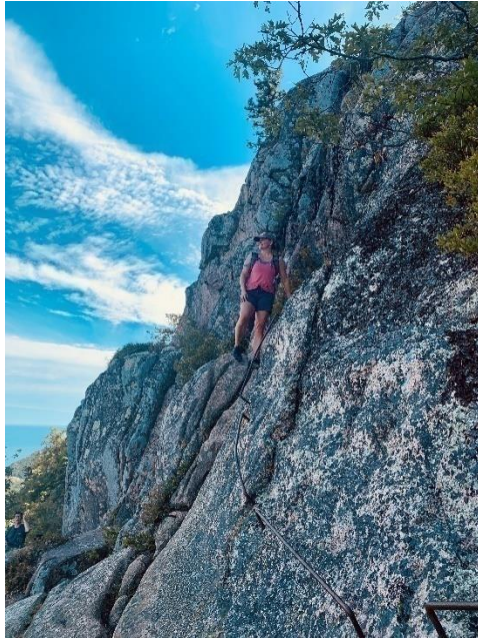
The Great Carrying Place Portage Trail

The Great Carrying Place Portage Trail, historically traversed by Native Americans and by Benedict Arnold's 1775 expedition, highlights Maine's deep historic corridors along the Kennebec and Dead Rivers (Maine Trail Finder, n.d.).

Acadia National Park Historic Trails

In Acadia National Park, trails such as the Precipice Trail and Cadillac Cliffs Trail preserve craftsmanship from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including stone stairways, iron rungs, and native rock pavements built by early village improvement associations and the Civilian Conservation Corps (NPS, n.d.).

Under Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) guidance, development of trailheads, interpretive signage, and linkages to historic sites reinforce the role of historic trails in Maine's comprehensive outdoor recreation supply.



Precipice Trail, Acadia National Park

WILD, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVER AREAS



Jalbert Campsite, AWW

Maine's Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers offer some of the state's most treasured outdoor recreation experiences, preserving free flowing waterways with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values for future generations. Under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, established by Congress in 1968 to protect rivers with remarkable scenic, recreational, historic or ecological qualities, these designations safeguard water quality and river character while enhancing opportunities for activities like canoeing, fishing, hiking, and wildlife viewing (NPS, n.d.).

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway

The Allagash River in northern Maine was one of the first rivers in the nation and the first in Maine administered under a state-federal cooperative model to receive Wild and Scenic status as part of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway in 1970, offering a nearly 92-mile corridor of wilderness paddling and hunting access amid remote forests and lakes. More recently, the York River and its major tributaries in southern Maine were designated as a Partnership Wild & Scenic River after decades of local study and community support; this designation protects roughly 30.8 miles of river and provides federal funding and technical assistance to support long term stewardship, recreation, and community led conservation (DACF, n.d.).

York River

More recently, the York River and its major tributaries in southern Maine were designated as a Partnership Wild & Scenic River after decades of local study and community support; this designation protects roughly 30.8 miles of river and provides federal funding and technical assistance to support long term stewardship, recreation, and community led conservation (National Wild and Scenic River System, n.d.).

Maine's Wild and Scenic Rivers underscores both their conservation value and their role in supporting sustainable outdoor recreation economies and local stewardship partnerships.

Additional River Corridors

Additional river corridors throughout the state, whether formally designated or informally conserved, provide access for boating, fishing, wildlife viewing and historic site interpretation (e.g., along historic logging, waterway transport or Indigenous travel routes). Under LWCF-eligible categories, public acquisition of access points, parking/launch areas, interpretive infrastructure, and trail linkages along river corridors may be funded, provided they remain designated and retained for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

- The state has roughly 31,752 miles of river channels. Of those, approximately 123.3 miles of two rivers are federally designated as part of the national wild & scenic system.
- The state also maintains its own scenic and wild rivers system. Maine law establishes classification criteria (Class I, II, III) and allows acquisition of land and easements adjacent to designated river segments.

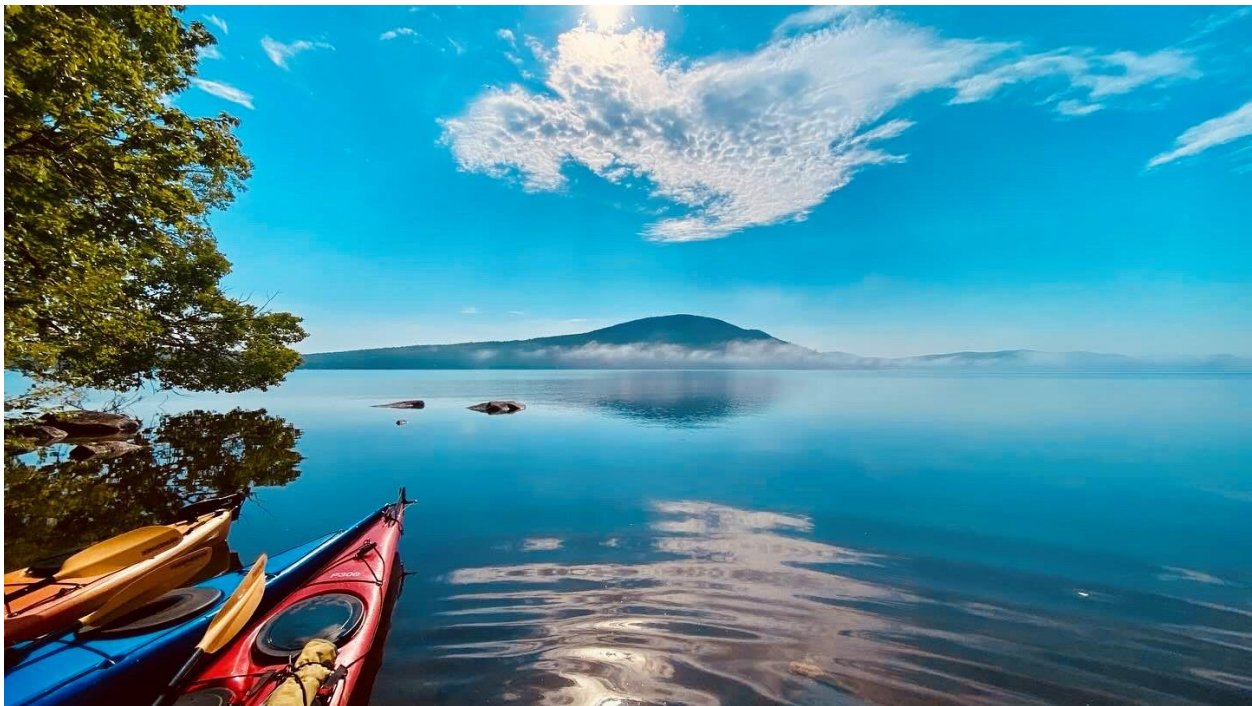


Photo Credit: Nancy Zane, Mooselookmeguntic Lake, ME

CHAPTER 6. MAINE’S OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND

BPL’s Outdoor Recreation User Survey (Demand)

The 2025 Maine Outdoor Recreation User Survey received more than 2,100 responses from individuals across all sixteen counties in Maine. Respondents reported high levels of participation across a wide range of outdoor activities, demonstrating that recreation in Maine occurs year-round and across many landscapes. Walking, hiking, and running, particularly on unpaved trails, were the most reported activities, with over 70 percent of respondents participating within the last year. Water-based recreation was also highly prevalent, including swimming in lakes and rivers, visiting beaches, fishing, and boating. Passive recreation such as wildlife watching and scenic driving was similarly popular, highlighting the importance of Maine’s natural landscapes and scenic resources.

Survey responses indicate that people are motivated to spend time outdoors primarily for mental health, happiness, connection with nature, and physical exercise. Social experiences and traditions tied to activities such as hunting, fishing, and gathering food also remain important motivations. While no single barrier to outdoor recreation emerged as dominant, respondents identified several moderate challenges, including costs, crowding, limited time, and loss of access to private lands. Access to private land was a particularly common concern in written responses, especially for activities such as hunting, snowmobiling, and ATV riding.

Looking ahead, survey participants emphasized the importance of maintaining existing recreational lands, trails, and infrastructure. Increasing stewardship capacity to maintain facilities and ensuring access to outdoor recreation opportunities, both on public and private land, were among the highest priorities identified for the next five to ten years. Overall, the survey results demonstrate strong and diverse participation in outdoor recreation and reinforce the importance of protecting access, maintaining infrastructure, and supporting the resources that enable Maine residents to recreate close to home. Refer to Appendix C for additional survey information.

Top 5 Activities Reported

Note the percentages are based on activities they’ve engaged in during the past 12 months. Respondents selected as many activities as applicable.

Trail Based Recreation

73.10%	Walking/hiking/running on unpaved trails
49.80%	Walking/hiking/running on paved trails
34.10%	ATV Riding
27.30%	Snowmobiling
20.60%	Road Biking

Land Based Recreation

81.30%	Wildlife Watching
74.20%	Scenic Driving
66.10%	Gardening
59.70%	Picnicking

56.80% Nature Center or Historic Site Visit

Water Based Recreation Top 5 Activities Reported

72.30% Swimming
70.10% Visiting the Beach
67.50% Fishing
57.40% Motorboating
50.40% Canoeing

Top Activities Respondents Reported they are Interested In

26.70% Managing Land (trail building, restoring habitat)
23.20% E-Biking on Gravel Roads
21.80% Foraging
19.40% E-Biking on Paved Trails
18.60% Winter Biking (Fat Biking)
17.70% Paddleboarding
16.90% Trapping
16.20% Sailing
15.50% Geocaching
14.60% Kiteboard or Wing Sail

Mainer's Motivations for Outdoor Recreation

When Considering the Demand for Recreation it is important to consider what motivates Maine's to engage in outdoor activities. According to our Outdoor Recreation User Survey, the percentage of respondents strongly agree that the following factors motivate them to spend time outdoors.

75.70% Mental Health/Happiness
72.50% Connection with Nature
59.50% Physical Health/Exercise
43.80% Socialization
42.20% Adventure/Challenge
36.80% Tradition (part of culture)
22.60% Food Security

Barriers To Outdoor Recreation

Survey results indicated the following were the highest percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to the following barriers to accessing the outdoors.

48.10% Places are too Crowded
43.40% Private Land/Posted/Land no longer Accessible
41.50% Costs are too High
33.50% Limited or not enough Time off from Work
32.20% Places to go are too far from home

Connecting Outdoor Activities to Tourism Based Activities

74.88% of respondents stated they would be very likely or somewhat likely to connect a recreational-based activity with a tourism-based activity such as going for a hike & eating at a restaurant. This exemplifies the importance outdoor recreation play on local communities and economic impact.

Focus Group Outdoor Recreation Demand

Additional Maine outdoor recreation demands captured through focus group studies, interviews, and land managers' feedback have indicated a strong public interest in the following activities. Some of these activities may not have been included in the survey or are specific to certain areas within the state.

Pickleball	Paddleboarding
Disc Golf	Winter biking
Mountain Biking	Downhill Biking
Gravel Biking	Surfing
Backcountry skiing	Wind sports
Highlining	Recreational Sauna's & Polar Dips

Bureau of Economic Analysis- Maine

Key findings from the "2024 Maine Outdoor Recreation" report published by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis:

- In 2024, outdoor recreation in Maine contributed \$3.9 billion in value added to the state's economy, representing about 4.0 % of Maine's gross domestic product (GDP). It supported 32,037 jobs (about 4.8 % of total employment) and generated approximately \$1.7 billion in compensation for workers in the sector.
- The report breaks down the economic contribution of different outdoor activities, showing that traditional outdoor pursuits like boating/fishing, RVing, snow activities, hunting/shooting/trapping, and climbing/hiking/camping all add measurable economic value. Bicycling and other activities also contribute, though at smaller levels relative to larger categories.
- Maine's outdoor recreation employment and value-added growth rates have generally risen in recent years, although the state ranks lower in national comparisons for some metrics like employment growth and compensation growth within the sector.

The BEA report shows that outdoor recreation is a significant and growing economic sector in Maine, supporting tens of thousands of jobs and a substantial portion of the state's GDP while encompassing a diverse range of outdoor activities. This supports a growing statewide demand for outdoor recreation experiences and greater significance to Maine's Outdoor Economy (BEA, 2024).

Outdoor Participation Trends Report- National

National trends in outdoor recreation are consistent with Maine's Outdoor Recreation User surveys with the top outdoor activities being (OIA, 2025):

Hiking

Fishing

Camping

Bicycling

Running/Jogging/Trail Running



Photo Courtesy of MDIFW

Visitor Use Records

Visitor attendance data in Maine is another measure of the statewide demand for outdoor recreation. Many responses from both the Outdoor Recreation User and Outdoor Recreation Provider surveys indicate overuse as a concern from outdoor recreation providers (supply survey) as well as places being too crowded as the number one barrier outdoor recreation users (demand survey) faced to accessing the outdoors.

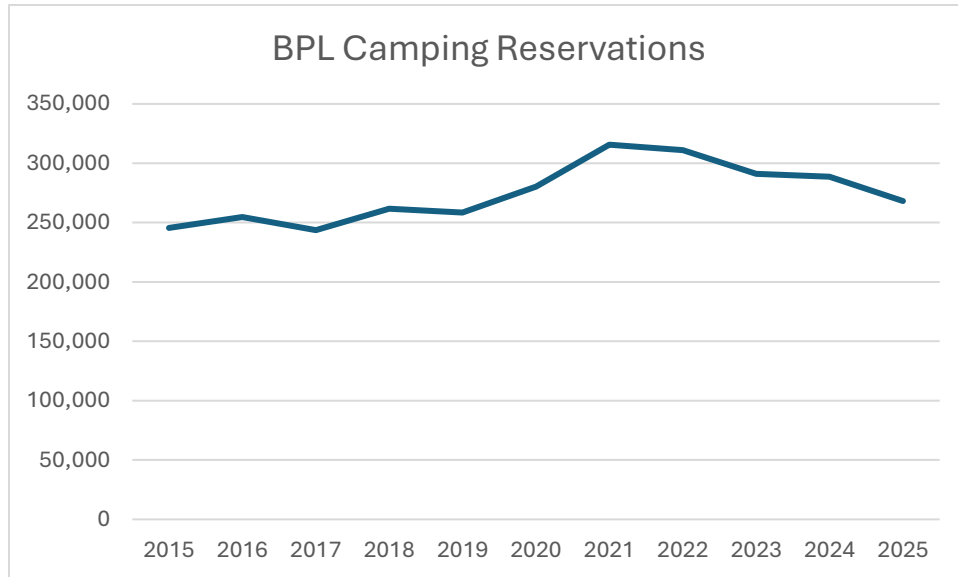
While the following figures are useful in generally showing trends in overall recreational use of outdoor resources, it is noted that they do not reflect use of state Public Reserved Lands, municipal parks and conserved lands, land trust properties, and the many private landowners who allow public recreation. However, based on focus groups with the Maine Recreation and Parks Association, largely represented by municipalities, the demand for local resources indicates a growing increase in visitor use and demand for more close-to-home outdoor recreation options.

With visitor use and camping data showing operations at capacity, there may be an additional demand for resources than state or federal resources can meet. It is also indicative for the continued collaboration with, and supply provided by private entities.

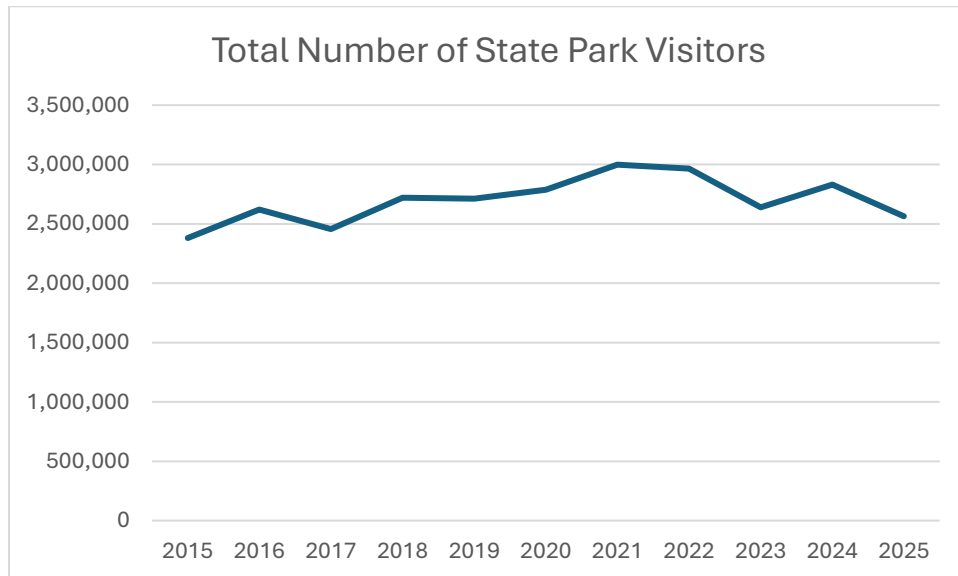
DACF Bureau of Parks & Lands State Park Camping Reservation and Visitation

The following two graphs reflect State Park camping and visitation for the past 10 years. Note that the pandemic impacted parks visitor fluctuations as did Community Outdoor Recovery Assistance Program (CORA) capital projects which closed three parks (two of which had campgrounds) for the 2025 season causing a collective decline in both camping and visitor during that year.

DACF Bureau of Parks & Lands State Park Campground Reservations



State Park Visitation



North Maine Woods

Camping and recreation use in the North Maine Woods has remained relatively steady over the past decade, with visitation levels fluctuating slightly but generally reflecting the long-term pattern of modest or stable use typical of remote North Woods destination. The area recorded consistent visitation.

While some short-term increases have occurred such as a surge in outdoor recreation interest during the COVID-19 pandemic (in which checkpoints remained open), overall visitation trends in the North Maine Woods and similar remote areas have remained stable despite its remote local. The region continues to attract campers seeking a remote, low-density backcountry experience across its extensive network of primitive campsites. Executive Director, Bill Greaves, noted that the number of visitors is remaining steady, but the visitor days are increasing, meaning that people are for longer periods.

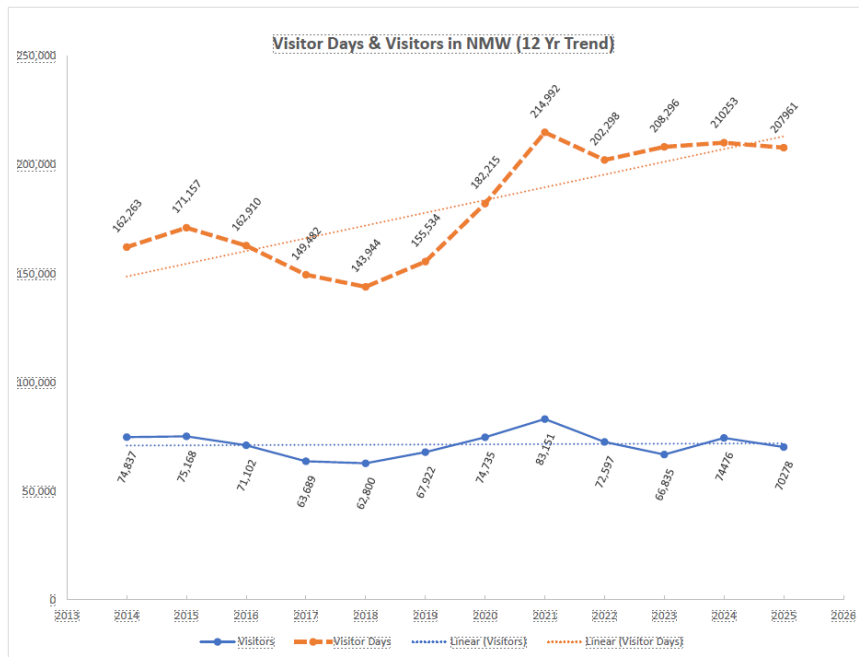


Figure courtesy of NMW.

Acadia National Park

Visitation to Acadia National Park continues to reflect the strong and sustained demand for outdoor recreation in Maine. More than 4 million people visited the park in 2025, setting a new record with 4,079,318 total visits, according to National Park Service data. The only other year the park had previously exceeded 4 million visits was 2021, during the surge in outdoor recreation that followed the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite fluctuations in visitation in the years since, the 2025 record demonstrates that interest in visiting Acadia remains exceptionally strong.

The park’s popularity has grown steadily over the past decade. For much of its history, Acadia recorded between 2 and 2.5 million annual visits, but visitation surpassed 3 million in 2016 during the park’s centennial and has remained elevated since then. Today, Acadia consistently ranks among the ten most visited national parks in the United States, drawing visitors to its iconic coastal landscapes, extensive trail network, carriage roads, and scenic destinations such as Cadillac Mountain (Martin, 2026).

Peak visitation occurs during the summer months of July and August, when the park experiences its highest use levels. According to Maine Public, the continued growth in visitation highlights both the importance of Acadia as a major tourism destination and the broader trend of increasing demand for outdoor recreation experiences across Maine and the nation (Maine Public, 2026).

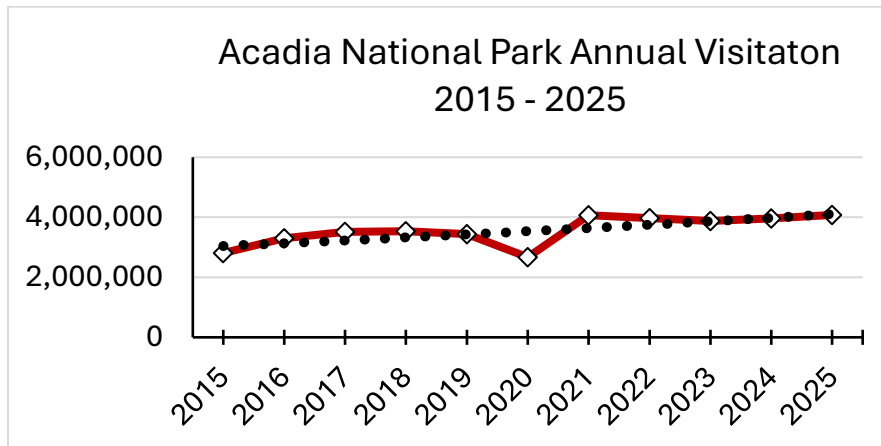


Figure Courtesy of Acadia National Park.

Maine Resident Outdoor Recreation Patterns: License Sales & Registrations

(Section In Progress)



Photo Courtesy of MDIFW



Photo Courtesy of MDIFW

Overall, the findings in this chapter demonstrate that outdoor recreation demand in Maine remains strong, steady, and in many cases growing, playing an increasingly important role in the state's economy and quality of life. Survey responses show widespread participation across trail, water, and land-based activities, with particularly high engagement in walking and hiking, wildlife watching, swimming, fishing, and scenic driving. Residents consistently report that time outdoors supports mental health, connection with nature, and physical well-being, while emerging activities such as

mountain biking, gravel biking, winter biking, and paddle sports reflect evolving recreation interests. Visitor data from locations such as Acadia National Park and steady use of the North Maine Woods further illustrate sustained recreation demand across both highly visited and remote destinations. At the same time, economic data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis shows that outdoor recreation contributes Maine's economy and workforce underscoring the sector's significance to statewide economic growth. Together, these indicators highlight outdoor recreation as a foundational component of Maine's identity, economy, and future development.

CHAPTER 6: DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

This chapter explores the key demographics and trends shaping outdoor recreation in Maine, highlighting how social, demographic, environmental, and economic factors influence participation and management. This chapter sets the stage for understanding how these trends informed the 2025–2035 SCORP priorities and strategies to sustain and expand Maine’s outdoor recreation system.

Demographics

Maine Continues to be the Oldest State in the Nation

(Accessibility, Stewardship, Health & Wellness)

Maine continues to have the highest median age in the nation. In 2024, the state’s median age was 44.8 years, a slight increase from 44.7 in 2023. Notably, Maine was the only state that did not experience an increase in median age since 2020, when the median age was also 44.8. By comparison, the national median age increased by 0.1 years to 39.1 years in 2024 (Maine State Economy Office, 2025).

U.S. Census Bureau data confirms that Maine remains the oldest state in the country by median age. This demographic trend has important implications for outdoor recreation participation, workforce capacity, tourism, volunteerism, and service delivery statewide (Maine Public, 2025).

Research conducted as part of the SCORP process found that many organizations rely heavily on an aging volunteer base of active older adults for stewardship, maintenance, and program delivery. This reliance highlights both a strength and a vulnerability within Maine’s outdoor recreation system.

The 2025 Maine Healthy Aging Data Report underscores the need for “thoughtful action to address the key domains of age-friendly communities,” including housing, communication, community supports, outdoor spaces, transportation, social participation, social inclusion, and civic participation. The report also notes that Maine had the highest rate of individuals ever diagnosed with depression (34.8%) compared to other New England states.

The study further found that the largest increase in depression rates occurred during 2020–2021, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. Communities experiencing the highest rates and largest increases in depression during this period tended to have lower socioeconomic status, higher chronic disease burdens, and were more likely to be urban or suburban. These findings reinforce the importance of social connection and inclusion as essential components of optimal health. As the report notes, “Longevity research shows that our social health is as important to our overall well-being as physical or financial health (Dugan et al, 2025).”

When planning outdoor recreation facilities, programs, and investments, the needs of Maine’s older population should not be overlooked. Improving access to outdoor spaces, expanding amenities such as pickleball courts, paved pathways, or community gardens in high-use areas, and tailoring programs to be more inclusive are all strategies that can help ensure aging Mainers remain active, connected, and engaged.

At the same time, Maine’s older population represents a significant asset. Older adults contribute extensively through volunteering, stewardship, mentorship, employment, and board and committee service. Leveraging the knowledge, skills, and experience of older Mainers not only strengthens outdoor recreation systems but also provides meaningful opportunities for social engagement, purpose, and community connection, creating mutual benefits for individuals and the state.

Continued Need for Inclusive & Accessible Spaces

(Accessibility)

As Maine’s population continues to age, there is a growing recognition of the importance of improving overall access to outdoor recreation opportunities and amenities. Ensuring that residents and visitors can understand and safely access outdoor spaces, regardless of age or ability—is increasingly viewed as a core component of equitable recreation planning. The Outdoor Industry Association’s annual participation trends report shows record levels of outdoor recreation participation across demographics, including growth among women and diverse populations. This broader trend implies a need for better access and inclusive facilities nationwide (OIA, 2024).

Outdoor recreation accessibility in Maine is shaped not only by physical access to land but also by economic and cultural barriers that affect who can meaningfully participate. Although Maine’s overall poverty rate (10.5%) is slightly below the national average, significant disparities exist, with rural counties and BIPOC households experiencing higher rates of economic hardship, which can limit access to transportation, gear, and time needed to recreate outdoors (Maine Development Foundation, 2024).

A study published in the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism* shows that recreational participation also reflects cultural and systemic barriers: national data show that people of color participate in outdoor recreation at lower rates than white populations, in part due to issues like transportation costs, gear expenses, and feelings of exclusion or lack of representation (Gretchen, et al., 2025).









Maine’s aging population, with nearly one in four residents aged 65 or older, further influences accessibility needs, as older adults may face mobility, transportation, or health-related barriers that make distant trailheads or rugged terrain less attainable without adaptive infrastructure or closer-to-home recreation options. Demographic realities underscore the importance of planning for *equitable access* that address both economic constraints and cultural inclusiveness, ensuring that community members of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds can benefit from Maine’s outdoor recreation resources.

In 2024, grants administered through Maine’s Office of Outdoor Recreation supported this trend. Funding from the Community Outdoor Recreation Assistance Recovery Program (CORA), financed through the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation State Grant, provided critical resources to improve outdoor recreation facilities across the state. The CORA subaward program was designed to support the

economic recovery of Maine’s travel and tourism sectors following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One notable CORA-funded project was led by Outdoor Access Solutions in partnership with Maine Trail Finder. This initiative conducted trail accessibility assessments at sites across the state and enhanced publicly available accessibility information on the Maine Trail Finder website. Beyond improving access at individual locations, this effort established a foundation for a consistent, statewide approach to communicating trail accessibility information in a clear, user-centered manner. An example of this approach is illustrated below (Maine Trail Finder, n.d.).

TRAIL ACCESS INFORMATION & CONSIDERATIONS

	SURFACE(S) Gravel, packed dirt, forest floor		TRAILHEAD ACCESS Parking (accessible), bike parking
	WIDTH <i>Typical: 8 ft</i> <i>Minimum: 7 ft</i>		RESTROOMS Yes on trails (not at trailhead)
	SLOPE <i>Typical: 4%</i> <i>Maximum: 10%</i>		CELL SERVICE Yes
	CROSS SLOPE <i>Typical: 0-2%</i> <i>Maximum: 3%</i>		SERVICES Map at trailhead, rest spots

Trail conditions can change without warning. Trail last assessed: 12/13/2024.

Providing detailed and standardized trail information allows users to make informed decisions that align with their individual needs and abilities. While fully accessible trails may not be feasible in all locations, the provision of transparent, site-specific information—such as surface type, grade, width, and amenities—supports safer and more inclusive recreation experiences. Projects like those led by Outdoor Access Solutions and Maine Trail Finder reflect best practices and represent a standard endorsed by SCORP for improving accessibility statewide.

Additional Accessibility resources can be found here:

- The American Trails “Trail Accessibility Hub” provides comprehensive resources for planning and designing accessible trails, including guidelines and tools that reflect increasing emphasis on inclusion and accessibility in outdoor recreation planning (Americal Trails, n.d.)
- The U.S. Forest Service accessibility guidebook provides technical and design guidance for making outdoor recreation facilities and trails accessible to people with disabilities – a key trend in infrastructure planning (US Forest Service, n.d.).
- Maine Trail Finder’s accessibility page details efforts to communicate trail accessibility information clearly and improve engagement with users facing mobility challenges, underscoring a trend toward better accessibility information statewide (Maine Trail Finder, n.d.).

Equitable Programming and Opportunities

Maine has increasingly prioritized reducing financial barriers that can prevent people from participating in outdoor recreation by supporting programs that provide access to equipment, experiences, and community-based opportunities. State and nonprofit partners have expanded initiatives that allow residents, especially youth and families, to try outdoor activities without the high upfront cost of gear. The Maine Outdoor Recreation Office and partners support the Maine Gear Shed Program, which provides shared outdoor equipment such as tents, backpacks, paddle sports gear, and winter recreation equipment that schools and community groups can borrow.

Programs through the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) offers Maine Outdoor Programs, providing hands-on learning experiences for all ages and skill levels. These programs help participants build and enhance skills in hunting, fishing, trapping, outdoor preparedness, and wildlife viewing in a supportive and engaging environment.

Towns and organizations such as Skowhegan Main Street are beginning to offer gear lending and outdoor programming to make recreation more accessible. Programs such as Teens to Trails support school outing clubs and maintains gear sheds that allow students to participate in hiking, camping, skiing, and paddling regardless of household income. Gear libraries are emerging as access hubs for outdoor recreation.

The Bureau of Parks & Lands hosts a traveling winter recreation trailer bringing snowshoes and cross-country skis to State Park events across the state, allowing families to try winter sports at no cost.

These efforts illustrate how partnerships between state agencies, nonprofits, schools, and local organizations are helping ensure that Maine's outdoor recreation opportunities are accessible to people of all income levels.

Recent national research indicates that LGBTQ+ individuals represent one of the fastest growing and most active segments of outdoor recreation participants in the United States. According to the Outdoor Participation Trends Report produced by the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA, 2024), more than 20.6 million participants identified as LGBTQ+ in 2024, accounting for approximately 11 percent of all outdoor recreation participants. Participation rates among LGBTQ+ adults exceed 60 percent—higher than any other adult cohort—and surpass those of heterosexual adults, which are in the high-50 percent range. These findings demonstrate strong engagement and demand for activities such as hiking, camping, paddling, and cycling (OIA, 2024).

Increased Planning for 4-Season Recreation

(Sustainability, Stewardship, Maine's Outdoor Recreation Economy)

Maine's outdoor recreation sector has become an increasingly central part of the state's economy and a driving force behind investments aimed at supporting *four-season recreation*. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis state and federal economic data, outdoor recreation contributed roughly \$3.9 billion to Maine's economy in 2024, accounting for about 4.0 percent of the state's gross

domestic product and supporting over 32,000 jobs a share that ranks Maine among the top states in the nation for outdoor recreation's economic impact (BEA, 2024).

On the ground, recreation providers are actively responding to this statewide strategy by enhancing facilities that extend usability beyond traditional seasonal boundaries. Major resorts like Sugarloaf have expanded snowmaking capacity to improve winter reliability and target early and consistent openings, while also debuting New England's newest lift-served downhill mountain bike park with multiple flow trails to draw summer and shoulder-season visitation (Sugarloaf, 2025).

Community-level assets like Quarry Road Trails in Waterville illustrate similar ambitions, offering a year-round network of biking, hiking, Nordic skiing, and snowshoeing with dedicated snowmaking to ensure early and reliable winter conditions (Quarry Road Trails, n.d.).

Facilities such as the New England Outdoor Center (NEOC) in Millinocket illustrate a growing trend toward integrated, four-season outdoor recreation hubs that combine lodging, guiding services, and direct trail access within a connected regional network. Rather than operating as single-season destinations, these facilities leverage natural assets and coordinated trail development to provide year-round opportunities, including cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, fat biking, paddling, hiking, mountain biking, and wildlife viewing. Importantly, they function not only as activity providers but also as trailheads and connectors, linking on-site trail systems to broader regional networks such as the Interconnected Trail System (ITS), community trail initiatives led by organizations like Katahdin Area Trails, and nearby public lands including Baxter State Park. This model reflects a broader shift in Maine toward destination-based recreation planning that emphasizes multi-use trail connectivity, shoulder-season economic activity, and partnerships between private businesses, nonprofits, and public land managers. By anchoring local trail systems and supporting year-round visitation, facilities like NEOC demonstrate how recreation infrastructure can strengthen rural economies while expanding access and connectivity for residents and visitors alike (NEOC, n.d.).

Together, along with the many other 4-season projects around the state these signal a concerted movement in Maine toward diversified, four-season outdoor recreation infrastructure that supports economic growth, enhances tourism, and makes outdoor activities accessible year-round.

Increasing Storm Damage due to Changing Weather Patterns

(Sustainability, Stewardship, Health & Wellness, Maine's Outdoor Economy)

In recent years, Maine's extensive trail networks ranging from ATV and snowmobile corridors to multi-use recreational paths have suffered significant storm-related damage that has disrupted access and required costly, ongoing repairs. During the severe storm events of late 2023 and early 2024, intense rainfall and flooding washed out trail beds, destroyed bridges, and left deep gullies in both motorized and non-motorized systems, forcing many sections to remain closed into what should have been peak recreational season and leaving volunteers scrambling to reopen them.

Increasingly frequent and severe storm events have underscored the need for more resilient and sustainable trail design across Maine. New trail development must incorporate best management

practices such as proper drainage, grade reversals, armoring, elevated structures in flood-prone areas, and climate-informed siting to reduce long-term maintenance costs and vulnerability. At the same time, many legacy trails, often located in fall-line alignments or unstable shoreline corridors, require rerouting to more sustainable grades and soils to prevent chronic erosion and resource damage. Shoreline stabilization, culvert upgrades, bridge hardening, and improved stormwater management are becoming essential investments to protect both recreation infrastructure and adjacent natural resources. These approaches not only enhance environmental stewardship and user safety, but also strengthen grant competitiveness by demonstrating climate resilience, fiscal responsibility, and long-term viability. As public funding becomes increasingly tied to sustainability outcomes, proactive design and adaptation strategies are critical to keeping Maine's trail systems both durable and fundable.

Domestic Migration to Maine

(Maine's Outdoor Recreation Economy, Public Access, Health & Wellness)

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Maine experienced an influx of new residents, driven largely by domestic migration from other U.S. states rather than natural growth (births minus deaths). According to the U.S. Census Bureau population estimates, Maine's population reached a record high of 1,414,874 as of mid-2025, growing about 0.5 % from 2024 to 2025 and ranking 7th nationally for net migration and highest in New England. Maine's total net migration from April 2020 to July 2025 was 77,918 people, with domestic in-migration consistently outpacing international migration in recent years (Maine State Economist, 2025). Note starting in 2025, international migration has essentially stopped due to federal policies (Maine State Economist, 2025).

A recently published "Why People Move to Maine" study by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development highlights outdoor recreation as a major driver in post-pandemic migration to the state. In survey results from over 2,500 recent migrants, outdoor recreation amenities ranked as the most important factor influencing decisions to relocate, with roughly one-quarter of respondents rating them as an *extremely strong* influence and another similar share as a *somewhat strong* influence on their choice to move to Maine. This places recreation above other quality-of-life considerations such as social connections, community safety, cost of living, and cultural amenities, indicating that access to trails, water sports, skiing, hiking, hunting, and other outdoor pursuits is a defining attraction for many newcomers. The influence of recreation is consistently across age groups and regions, underscoring how Maine's natural environment and outdoor lifestyle are central to its appeal in migration decisions (MDECD, 2025).

The Cost of Caring for Maine's Natural Areas

(Stewardship, Maine Outdoor Economy, Health & Wellness, Sustainability)

Stewardship is a critical theme for Maine's outdoor recreation system, reflecting the ongoing challenge of balancing public access with the protection and sustainability of natural and recreational resources. Effective stewardship requires adequate funding, sufficient staffing, and long-term planning to ensure that Maine's lands, waters, and recreational infrastructure are maintained for future generations. Funding remains a persistent challenge, with many state and local agencies relying on a mix of federal grants, state allocations, and philanthropic support. Limited funding can

restrict the ability to maintain trails, campsites, and other public facilities, leaving them vulnerable to deterioration from heavy use or environmental impacts.

Staffing is closely linked to funding constraints, and Maine's trail networks, parks, and recreation areas often rely heavily on seasonal employees and volunteers. Seasonal employment, while essential to meet peak visitor demand, can create continuity challenges, as institutional knowledge is lost when staff transition annually. Similarly, Maine faces an aging volunteer workforce, particularly in trail maintenance and stewardship roles, which raises concerns about the long-term sustainability of volunteer-dependent programs. Engaging and training a new generation of volunteers will be vital to maintaining stewardship efforts, particularly as visitation to outdoor recreation areas continues to rise.

Visitor use and recreation pressures have increased in recent years, highlighting the need for strategic stewardship practices. Popular areas experience erosion, trail widening, and vegetation loss, while campsites and waterways can be impacted by overuse. Managing visitor impacts requires a combination of infrastructure investment, education, and monitoring, as well as adaptive management strategies to ensure the ecological integrity of the areas being enjoyed.

Climate change further complicates stewardship responsibilities. Maine's natural systems are experiencing increased storm intensity, flooding, shifting wildlife habitats, and changing forest composition. These changes place additional strain on recreation infrastructure, requiring proactive planning to make trails, campsites, and access points resilient to extreme weather events and long-term environmental shifts. Stewardship must therefore incorporate climate adaptation strategies, such as rerouting trails away from flood-prone areas or reinforcing facilities to withstand harsher conditions.

Overall, stewardship in Maine's outdoor recreation system requires a holistic approach that addresses funding limitations, staff capacity, volunteer sustainability, visitor impacts, and climate-related pressures. Successful stewardship ensures that public land remains accessible, safe, and ecologically sound while providing meaningful recreation experiences. Strategic investments in staff, volunteer engagement, and adaptive management will be essential to maintaining Maine's reputation as a premier outdoor recreation destination while protecting the natural resources that make it so unique.

Maine's Growing Outdoor Economy

(Theme: Maine's Outdoor Economy, Health & Wellness)

According to the 2024 Bureau of Economic Analysis, Outdoor recreation is a significant economic engine for Maine, contributing an estimated \$3.9 billion (up .5 billion from 2023) to the state's gross domestic product and supporting 32,037 jobs, making up roughly 4.8 % of the state economy (BEA, 2024).

This economic strength spans sectors from boating, fishing, RV-ing, and snow activities to outdoor gear manufacturing and retail, underscoring the industry's role in employment and business growth.

However, economic barriers pose challenges to sustaining and growing this impact. Affordable housing shortages and high living costs hinder recruitment and retention of workers, particularly for outdoor recreation businesses and seasonal employers, where housing near trailheads and tourist hubs is often limited or priced out of reach for year-round staff. Recent workforce analysis of Maine’s outdoor recreation industry shows that employers frequently cite housing costs and a lack of local workforce as major barriers to hiring and retention, even as they plan to expand hiring in the coming years (USM, 2025).

Seasonal patterns, exacerbated by COVID19, highlighted vulnerabilities in year-round employment, with many businesses relying heavily on short term labor and struggling to maintain operations outside peak tourist seasons. Tourism itself, while a boon for revenue, introduces economic volatility; visitor spending boosts local economies but also places pressure on infrastructure and labor markets that already face shortages. Maine Public states as Maine works to develop workforce pathways and training programs tailored to the outdoor economy, addressing housing affordability, stable year-round employment, and workforce development will be key to sustaining the sector’s economic benefits equitably across communities (Maine Public, 2025).

Technology’s Influence of Visitor Behaviors *(Sustainability, Health & Wellness, & Stewardship)*

Rapid advances in digital technology have significantly changed how people discover, plan, and experience outdoor recreation. Smartphones, GPS navigation, mapping platforms, and social media now shape visitor behavior before, during, and after trips. Navigation and trip-planning apps such as AllTrails, Gaia GPS, and similar platforms allow users to quickly find trails, read reviews, and download maps, lowering barriers to participation and enabling people with less outdoor experience to access recreation opportunities. Some platforms now incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) features that generate custom routes, provide trail condition forecasts, and suggest itineraries based on user preferences, making trip planning faster and more personalized. For example, AllTrails’ new “Peak” tier uses AI to generate routes that can automatically adjust factors such as distance, elevation gain, or scenic features. While these tools make recreation more accessible, they also raise concerns about data accuracy, outdated trail information, and overreliance on digital guidance in remote environments.

At the same time, social media has become a powerful driver of outdoor recreation demand. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube increasingly influence destination choice, with visually compelling images and viral posts drawing attention to specific locations. In Casey Wichman’s research project titled “Social media influences National Park visitation”, published in PNSA they found that U.S. national parks receiving high levels of social media exposure experienced visitation increases of approximately 16–22% compared with parks receiving less online attention. Since 2010, visitation to national parks has increased by more than 25%, rising from roughly 70 million to about 90 million visits annually, with social media identified as a major contributing factor. While increased exposure can support tourism economies and encourage people to spend time outdoors, it can also contribute to overcrowding, traffic congestion, and resource impacts at popular sites (Wichman, 2024).

Crowdsourced mapping platforms and fitness-tracking apps are also influencing where recreation occurs. Applications such as Strava use GPS data from millions of users to generate “heatmaps” that show where people run, cycle, hike, and ski. These visualizations highlight routes with frequent activity and can reveal unofficial or previously unmapped trails. For outdoor recreation users, heatmaps can help identify popular routes and discover new areas to explore. However, this crowdsourced data can also unintentionally expose sensitive locations, encourage use of unofficial trails, and concentrate visitation on routes highlighted as popular. Strava’s Global Heatmap, built from aggregated user activity data, has even been used by transportation planners and researchers to analyze patterns of movement and recreation use (Strava, n.d.).

Technology is also transforming how managers understand recreation patterns. Geotagged photos, social media posts, and GPS activity data increasingly supplement traditional visitor counts. Research has demonstrated that aggregated social media data can effectively map visitation patterns on public lands and help identify emerging recreation hotspots that may not appear in official trail inventories. This type of digital data provides managers with a new tool for monitoring recreation trends and planning infrastructure improvements, but it also highlights how rapidly technology can alter recreation demand and user behavior.

In Maine, these technological trends are increasingly visible across the state’s outdoor recreation system. Locations such as Acadia National Park, popular viewpoints, and well-known hiking/historic destinations frequently circulate on social media and recreation apps, contributing to concentrated visitation at specific sites. Even when managers have actively removed sites from maps and resources. Similarly, GPS tracking apps have helped reveal growing patterns of mountain biking, trail running, snowmobile trails, and backcountry skiing across the state, sometimes highlighting routes that are not part of formal trail inventories. While these technologies help residents and visitors discover Maine’s outdoor assets, they also present new management challenges related to crowding, infrastructure capacity, resource protection, and visitor safety.

Overall, technology has both expanded access to outdoor recreation and reshaped how people interact with landscapes. Digital tools make trip planning easier, improve navigation and safety, and help managers understand visitor patterns. At the same time, social media exposure, crowdsourced mapping data, and algorithm-driven recommendations can accelerate visitation to specific sites, contributing to crowding and environmental pressures. Information is not always accurate and may leave visitors unprepared and misinformed. As technology continues to evolve, particularly with the integration of artificial intelligence into recreation platforms, public land managers may increasingly need to consider how digital tools influence recreation demand, spatial use patterns, and visitor expectations (Zhang et al, 2021).

Access to Information Sources

(Accessibility, Maine’s Outdoor Economy, Public Access to Recreation, Health & Wellness)

Maine’s geography presents unique challenges for recreation planning. Remote roads, limited cell service, and extensive private lands (accessible through agreements or informal partnerships) can create barriers for first-time visitors, people with accessibility needs, and those unfamiliar with local

rules and etiquette. Even in urban and suburban areas, underutilized parks, trails, and waterfronts highlight the need for clear guidance and outreach.

Outdoor recreation users are seeking centralized and improved access to outdoor recreation information. Reliable, comprehensive information is essential to equitable participation, helping residents and visitors navigate the state's diverse recreational opportunities, from urban parks and waterfronts to remote backcountry areas and private lands. Centralized information improves safety, promotes stewardship, and enhances visitor experiences. Providing clear guidance and real-time information on landownership and access permissions, trail conditions, closures, parking, amenities, safety protocols, and connectivity to other recreation resources reduces barriers for all users, including historically underserved populations.

Beyond improving participation, centralized information can support tourism and local economic development by connecting visitors with nearby businesses, lodging, cultural attractions, and outdoor amenities. Multi-platform delivery, including web-based resources, mobile apps, printed guides, and on-site signage, ensures information is accessible to diverse audiences, regardless of technological resources or familiarity with the outdoors.

Summary

These are just some of the demographics, trends and challenges that illustrate the evolving landscape of outdoor recreation in Maine and their influence on SCORP priorities. Aging populations, diverse user groups, and growing demand for year-round activities highlight the importance of accessibility, equity, and inclusive programming. At the same time, economic opportunities, storm resilience, and stewardship need underscore the importance of sustainable infrastructure and long-term resource management. Together, these insights shaped SCORP's focus on strengthening participation, supporting Maine's outdoor economy, enhancing visitor experiences, and ensuring that natural and recreational resources remain protected and accessible for generations to come.

CHAPTER 7: Program for Implementing the Plan (LWCF Requirement)

Implementation Framework

Implementation of Maine’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) will be led by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry’s Bureau of Parks and Lands in coordination with key state agency partners. Achieving the goals outlined in this plan will require a collaborative, cross-sector approach that engages municipalities, regional organizations, tribal governments, nonprofit partners, and private landowners.

Given that a significant portion of Maine’s outdoor recreation occurs on privately owned lands, successful implementation will depend on maintaining strong landowner relationships and supporting voluntary public access traditions. State agencies will play a central role in aligning programs, funding, and policy decisions with SCORP priorities, while local and regional partners will help deliver on-the-ground projects and programming. Priority actions identified in this plan will guide investment decisions, program development, and policy initiatives over the next five to ten years.

Priority Action Plan

The Themes, Goals and Strategies are outlined in Chapter 3 and implementation periods will be set by partners opting using SCORP Goals in outdoor recreation planning. See Chapter 3 for a comprehensive list of priority actions.

In addition to implementing SCORP priorities. Outdoor Recreation managers should consult with additional Statewide Actions Plans including but not limited to:

[Forest Opportunity Roadmap / Maine \(FOR/Maine\)](#) (2018)

[Maine Wildlife Action Plan](#) (2015)

[Maine Climate Council Climate Action Plan](#) (2025)

[State Forest Service Action Plan](#) (2020)

[Maine Outdoor Recreation Roadmap](#) (2025)

[Maine Wetland Development Plan](#) (2023-2028)

[Office of Tourism Destination Management Plan](#) (2024)

[Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan](#) (2024)

Funding Alignment

SCORP priorities will guide the allocation of federal and state funding to outdoor recreation projects across Maine. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) will remain a key funding source for improving outdoor recreation access and infrastructure.

State-administered grant programs will be aligned with SCORP goals to prioritize projects that:

- Improve equitable access to outdoor recreation
- Enhance and maintain existing infrastructure
- Support community and regional recreation planning efforts

Additional funding opportunities will be pursued through federal programs, philanthropic partnerships, and private investment to support implementation.

Partnerships

Throughout the public input period, the importance of partnerships was a key theme. The implementation of this plan will rely on strong partnerships across sectors. Key partners include:

- Municipalities and Regional Organizations: Leading local recreation planning and project implementation
- Nonprofit Organizations and Land Trusts: Supporting land conservation, trail development, and stewardship
- Private Landowners: Continuing Maine’s tradition of public access on working lands
- Tribal Nations: Collaborating on stewardship, access, and cultural resource protection
- Outdoor Industry and Businesses: Supporting economic development and recreation-based tourism
- State Agencies: Agencies such as BPL, IF& W, MFS, MOOR, MTO will help ensure projects are aligned with statewide priorities and goals

These partnerships will be essential to expanding recreation opportunities while maintaining Maine’s natural resource base.

Performance Measurement

Progress toward SCORP goals will be tracked using a set of performance indicators and data sources.

Key metrics may include:

- Participation rates in outdoor recreation activities
- Acres of conserved land and miles of trails developed or maintained
- Public access improvements (e.g., new or enhanced access points)
- Economic contributions of outdoor recreation
- Program participation and outreach metrics

State agencies will work collaboratively to improve data collection and reporting. A mid-cycle review will be conducted to assess progress and adjust priorities as needed.

Equity and Accessibility

Ensuring equitable access to outdoor recreation is a priority for implementation. Efforts will focus on reducing barriers related to cost, transportation, awareness, and physical accessibility.

Key strategies include:

- Expanding programs that provide access to outdoor gear and equipment
- Supporting inclusive and accessible infrastructure design
- Increasing outreach to underserved and underrepresented populations
- Enhancing close-to-home recreation opportunities, particularly in rural and underserved communities

These actions will help ensure that all residents and visitors have the opportunity to benefit from Maine’s outdoor recreation resources.

Adaptive Management

This SCORP is intended to be a dynamic document that responds to changing conditions, emerging trends, and new opportunities. Implementation will follow an adaptive management approach, allowing for adjustments based on performance data, stakeholder feedback, and evolving needs.

A formal review of the plan will be conducted at the midpoint of the five-year cycle to evaluate progress and refine strategies. Ongoing stakeholder engagement will ensure that the plan remains

relevant and responsive to Maine’s outdoor recreation system. This review will include updating to include a comprehensive statewide trails plan as an amendment.

SCORP Priority Focused Project Ideas

Theme 1. Health & Wellness

- Community Gardens and Outdoor Learning: A city develops accessible community gardens in urban parks, integrating raised beds, seating, and shade structures to promote physical activity and social connection.
- Active Transportation Corridors: A regional land trust creates multi-use trails linking neighborhoods, schools, and downtown areas for walking, biking, and rolling.
- Waterfront Revitalization: A coastal town upgrades its waterfront access and picnic area to provide intergenerational recreation opportunities (benches, shade, kayak launch).
- Outdoor Fitness Zones: A municipality installs outdoor fitness equipment along walking trails and in parks to promote year-round physical activity for all ages.
- Pop-up Recreation Sites: A town repurposes underused public lots into temporary recreation spaces (e.g., small playgrounds, gardens, or community seating).

Theme 2. Maine’s Outdoor Recreation Economy

- Downtown Trail Connections: A small-town builds trail connections from its Main Street to nearby recreation assets, encouraging outdoor recreation tourism and local business growth.
- Regional Outdoor Recreation Hub: A county develops a multi-use outdoor recreation center that serves as a launch point for trails, paddling, and local guiding services.
- Public Access Infrastructure Supporting Events: A community installs restrooms, wayfinding signage, and staging areas to support outdoor events and seasonal recreation-based festivals.
- Trail System Enhancement for Economic Vitality: A regional land trust improves a multi-town trail system to attract tourism and support local lodging, dining, and guiding industries.
- Water Access Development for Tourism: A town develops a small boat launch with accessible docks and wayfinding signage to expand recreation tourism opportunities.
- Landowner representative allows public access, installs campsites, access to water etc.
- Extended Learning Opportunity coordinator at local school works with nearby outdoor recreation business for job shadowing and other career exposure opportunities.

Theme 3. Stewardship

- Trail Maintenance & Infrastructure Upgrade Program: A municipality applies for LWCF funding to replace aging trail bridges, boardwalks, and signage to protect sensitive wetland habitats.
- Volunteer Stewardship Hub: A land trust develops a stewardship center with storage, tools, and training facilities to support volunteers maintaining public access lands and trail systems.
- Erosion Control and Habitat Protection: A coastal town installs erosion control structures along a popular shoreline trail to protect dunes and maintain safe public access.

- Wayfinding & Educational Signage: A regional park installs interpretive signs and wayfinding markers to encourage Leave No Trace principles and increase public engagement with stewardship practices.
- Trail Monitoring Technology Pilot: A public agency tests digital trail counters and environmental monitoring systems to inform long-term resource management decisions.

Theme 4. Accessibility

- Accessibility Inventories & Mapping: State and municipal land managers inventory trail accessibility and update public databases with detailed grade, surface, and facilities information.
- Adaptive Equipment Lending Hubs: Gear lending libraries purchase adaptive recreation equipment and distribute through regional hubs across Maine.
- Beach & Waterfront Access: A state park installs accessible pathways, matting, and beach wheelchairs to improve shoreline access for all visitors.
- Universal Trail Upgrades: A community park upgrades trails to meet ADA standards with improved surfacing, rest areas, and interpretive signage.
- Accessible Playgrounds & Gathering Spaces: A town revitalizes a playground with inclusive play structures, surfacing, and seating designed for users with varying mobility needs.

Theme 5. Public Access to Recreation

- Public Access Easement Acquisition: A town partners with a land trust to purchase or secure a recreation easement on a privately owned forest parcel to allow year-round public trail use for hiking, skiing, and snowmobiling.
- Water Access Agreements: A municipality secures long-term legal public access to a privately owned pond or river shoreline for swimming, paddling, and fishing through an easement or cooperative access agreement.
- Trailhead Development on Private Land: A regional trail organization collaborates with a private timber company to establish a signed and maintained public trailhead with parking and kiosks through a formal access agreement.
- Hunting & Fishing Access Corridors: A state agency funds a project to formalize and sign public hunting access corridors on private lands traditionally used by the community, ensuring continued legal use.
- Community Stewardship Partnership: A town and local snowmobile/ATV club collaborate with a private landowner to upgrade an existing trail crossing with clear signage and stewardship agreements.

Theme 6. Sustainability

- Climate-Resilient Infrastructure: A state park replaces traditional boardwalks with raised flood-resistant walkways to adapt to changing weather patterns.
- Renewable Energy Integration: A recreation facility installs solar-powered lighting and EV charging stations at trailheads and parking lots.
- Low-Impact Trail Design: A regional trail network applies for funding to reroute trails out of flood-prone areas, reducing maintenance costs and environmental impacts.
- Pollinator Habitat Enhancements: A park incorporates pollinator gardens and native landscaping into recreation areas to increase biodiversity.

- Green Infrastructure in Recreation Areas: A town integrates permeable surfaces, rain gardens, and green roofs into park upgrades to manage stormwater.

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Appendix A: Wetland Priority Component

(Section in Review with MNAP)

APPENDIX B: MAINE OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

MAINE OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

USE OF ANNUAL APPORTIONMENT

The LWCF program is funded through revenue from offshore oil and gas drilling. LWCF monies are apportioned to the states by the Secretary of the Department of Interior each fiscal year in accordance with the apportionment formula contained in the LWCF Act. This formula includes a factor for equal distribution of a portion of the fund among the states, as well as factors for distribution on the basis of population and need.

In recent years, Maine's available apportionment has increased to approximately \$2.5 million. Each grant round half of available funding is made available to local projects. The other half is made available to state projects. During our annual grant cycle, local project applicants are reviewed, scored, and selected for award before any state agency applicants are considered. Unobligated funds from the local applicant pool are shifted to the state side and in this way, we make every effort to fully obligate each year's apportionment. Should active project expenditures be less than the annual obligated amount, the unexpended balance reverts to the "special reappropriation account" (SRA), which the Bureau must request from the NPS to be reappropriated back to Maine. In order to receive SRA, 100% of current apportionment must be committed to viable projects and the amount of SRA requested from NPS must be allocated to viable but yet unfunded projects. This emphasizes the need to cultivate and commit to shovel ready projects at all levels.

Annual apportionments and SRA funds not allocated each fiscal year may be applied to cost overruns on active projects. Amendments to increase federal assistance without further competition through the Open Project Selection Process may be approved based on demonstrated need and assurance that the additional funding will support the original project objectives to benefit public outdoor recreation. The State SLO/ASLO may limit or deny a request for increased funding based on the perceived merit of the request and/or the availability of funding to support the request.

OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The National Park Service requires each state to develop an Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) by which LWCF grant project proposals are prioritized and recommended for funding.

Maine's OPSP has been designed to accomplish the following federally required goals:

- a) Provide for public knowledge of and participation in the formulation and application of the project selection process used to allocate LWCF assistance.
- b) Ensure all potential applicants are aware of the availability of and process for obtaining LWCF assistance and provide opportunities for all eligible agencies to submit project applications and have them considered on an equitable basis.
- c) Provide a measurable link, through published selection criteria, to the specific outdoor recreation needs and priorities identified in Maine's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
- d) Assure that distribution of LWCF assistance is accomplished in a non-discriminatory manner, especially with regard to minority, elderly, disabled, and other underserved

populations as well as ensure a fair and equitable evaluation of all applications for LWCF assistance.

APPLICANT NOTIFICATION

To ensure that all eligible political sub divisions are informed of the availability of federal funding assistance, information is posted on the Bureau of Parks & Lands website: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/land_water_conservation_fund.html. Information posted includes a description of the LWCF program; eligibility requirements; a web link to the SCORP http://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/publications_maps/statewide_recreation_plan.html and the process for submitting a project application, including a copy of the application (Appendix A); which incorporates the federally required Project Description/Environmental Screening Form and a copy of the LWCF Project Application Guide (Appendix B). Additionally, the Bureau coordinates with the Maine Recreation and Parks Association, the Maine Municipal Association, Maine Planners Association, and Maine Association of City and Town Managers to disseminate information to local governments regarding the annual call for projects. The Bureau also disseminates the information to local officials through the Bureau's email listserv, as well as to members of the Maine Recreation and Park Association through their email listserv. A sample notification email is provided in Appendix C. Throughout the year; the Bureau's Grants & Community Recreation staff also participate in various conferences and provide regional grant workshops to further promote the awareness and use of the program.

PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

The Maine Grants & Community Recreation program has limited resources to promote the program and provide program assistance. In addition to written materials and support documents posted on the Bureau's website, primary program assistance comes in the form of the required pre-approval site inspections and ongoing contact with applicants up to submission of applications. At the pre-approval site inspection, as much time as needed is spent with the applicant to review their vision for acquisition and/or development, review program requirements, provide application tips and keys to success, and generally leading the applicant to an understanding of how robust the application is, to ensure an understanding of how significant the stewardship obligations are. LWCF presentations are regularly included in MRPA annual conferences, and we are working to develop a new template where the annual presentations are led by recent LWCF award recipients. Who better advocate for the use of the program and council future applicants of the challenges and obligations inherent in the program than those who have firsthand knowledge?

PRIORITY RANKING

Project applications for LWCF assistance are reviewed by Grants & Community Recreation (GCR) staff to ensure they meet minimum eligibility requirements. Previous history regarding project sponsor compliance with LWCF program requirements is also reviewed and factored into the overall project application scores. Additionally, an application scoring matrix (Appendix E) has been developed by the GCR program manager to assist in the priority ranking process. A review committee made up of bureau staff and selects municipal parks and recreation department directors, all of

whom are knowledgeable about acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation facilities, then reviews and scores all applications. Scoring criteria places emphasis on:

- Acquisition of property to prevent loss of an existing public outdoor recreation facility.
- Acquisition of land to protect critical natural areas and/or wetlands.
- Development of public outdoor recreation facilities to meet established, documented needs in a community or region.
- Development of public outdoor recreation facilities to serve a broad range of users including special needs and disabled populations.
- Renovation of existing public outdoor recreation facilities that have previously received LWCF assistance and/or serve an established, documented need (only if renovation need is not a result of neglect during the reasonable life of the facility).

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Grant applications will not be reviewed for completeness or accuracy prior to distributing the applications to the review committee for scoring. Applications will be scored as submitted based on their merits.

The project applications will be reviewed, scored, and ranked using criteria (see “Project Review Criteria” below) approved by the Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands and the National Park Service (NPS). Projects are then selected for funding. Once project viability has been verified, selected projects are submitted to NPS for final approval.

PROJECT REVIEW CRITERIA

1. **Project Type (10 points)**

- a. Renovation: Renovation of a public outdoor recreation facility that is at least twenty (20) years old. Documentation must be provided identifying when the facility was originally developed/constructed and when it was last renovated. (10 points)
- b. Combination Renovation/Development: Renovation of an outdoor recreation facility that is at least twenty (20) years old (provide documentation as described in 1.a above), and development/construction of a new outdoor recreation facility. (7 points)
- c. Combination Acquisition/Development: The purchase of permanent rights (fee simple or easement) in land for public outdoor recreation purposes and development/construction of a new public outdoor Recreation facility(ies). (7 points)
- d. New Construction: Development/construction of a new public outdoor recreation facility(ies). (5 points)
- e. Acquisition: The purchase of permanent rights (fee simple or easement) in land for public outdoor recreation purposes. (5 points)

2. **Needs Assessment (47 points)**

- a. Project is identified as a priority need in a municipal comprehensive plan/municipal recreation/open-space plan, and or another community wide planning process and has documented community support. (15 points)
 - i. Planning Effort (0-5 points): no plan (0); plan, but recreation facilities not mentioned in plan (1); vague reference to recreation in plan (2); reference to

- specific facility in plan (3); facility referenced with support in plan (4); facility is a major priority in plan (5).
 - ii. Community Support (0-5 points): no support (0); very weak support, no documentation (1); weak support, little documentation (2); support, some documentation (3); strong documented support (4); very strong broad documented support (5).
 - iii. Bonus Points (0-5 points): applicant’s comprehensive plan is current and has been determined by State Planning Office (SPO) to be a “Consistent Comprehensive Plan” (3); applicant has a current “State Certified Growth Management Program” (5).
 - b. Project Impact on Recreational Opportunity (10 points): little increase, similar recreational opportunities available (0-2); expands on recreational opportunities for existing programs (3-6); provides significant recreational opportunity not available locally or regionally (7-10).
 - c. Project Implementation Priority (2 points): project may be delayed without serious consequences (0); loss of recreation opportunity or open space if project is not funded (2).
 - d. Project Service Area (10 points): neighborhood only (1-2); large segment of municipality (3-4); entire municipality (5-6); multi-town/region (7-8); statewide (9-10).
 - e. Intended User Profile (10 points): limited user or age group (1-3); organized publicly sponsored (team sports) activities (4-5); spontaneous activities for both sexes/several age groups (6-7); spontaneous activities for broad range of age groups and types of users (8-10).
 - f. Participant/Spectator Use (5 points): mainly passive/spectator activities (1-2); team sport facilities without excessive seating (3-4); spontaneous activity (non-team activities) areas with high participant to spectator ratio (5).
- 3. Site and Project Quality (40 points)**
 - a. Appropriateness of the Site for the Intended Purpose (15 points)
 - i. Location and accessibility of the site to intended users (5 points): poor access (0); fair access (1-2); good access (3-4); excellent access (5).
 - ii. Compatibility (size, slope, soils, etc.) of the proposed development with site characteristics (5 points): poor site (0); fair site (1-2); good site (3-4); excellent site (5).
 - iii. Bonus Points (5 points): site location supports alternative transportation options (walking, biking, etc.) and is consistent with Smart Growth Initiative goals to reduce sprawl and make more efficient use of public investment.
 - b. Quality of Project Design (10 points): poor design practices, lack of information, vague description (0-4); design adequate but some details missing (5-7); good planning concepts, soils analysis/grading plan/design complete (8-10).
 - c. Site Aesthetics (5 points): unattractive site (0); average (1); above average (2-3); outstanding natural area (4-5).
 - d. Access for Disabled (5 points): limited or no ADA access, or no plans for ADA access (0); plans for ADA access at most major portions of the facility (1-4); all portions of facility are ADA accessible (5).

- e. Bonus Points (5 points): Site is a former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) contaminated/hazardous site that has been re-mediated and approved for public use.

4. Cost/Financial Assessment/Capability (35 points)

- a. Cost Analysis (10 points): cost estimates do not appear adequate for type of facility (0-2); cost appears to be adequate, but some information is lacking or unclear (3-5); good design and quality, cost estimate may be high (6-8); quality design with reasonable cost (9-10).
- b. Availability of Project Match (10 points): match not available/approved, questionable local support (0); match heavily dependent on future donation or other non-cash sources (1-4); at least 50% of match is available/approved, support for balance documented (5-9); 100% of match is available/approved at time of application (10),
- c. Maintenance Planning (10 points): maintenance planning unclear/resources inadequate (0-2); planning fair to good, resources adequate (3-7); planning excellent, personnel and equipment available (8-10).
- d. Condition of Applicant's Recreation Facilities (5 points): facility(ies) not useable (0); poor (1); good (2); average (3); above average (4); excellent (5).

5. LWCF History/Compliance (10 points)

- a. Number of LWCF Grants Previously Awarded (5 points): five (5) or more LWCF grants (0); four (4) LWCF grants (1); three (3) LWCF grants (2); two (2) LWCF grants (3); one (1) LWCF grant (4); no LWCF grants (5).
- b. Five Year Inspection Reports (10 or 0 points): Is applicant up to date on five-year inspection reports for all LWCF funded projects? Yes, or not applicable (0); no (-10).
- c. LWCF Signage (-10 points or 0 points): Do all of applicant's LWCF funded sites have all required signs on site? yes, or not applicable (0); no (-10).
- d. Verification of 6(f)(3) Boundaries/Conversions (-10 or 0 points): Have any unauthorized changes been made to any LWCF project 6(f)(3) boundaries? no, or not applicable (0); yes (-10).
- e. Application Preparation (5 points): poor preparation, apparent disregard of instructions, missing material/documentation (0); fair preparation, fair description of project/conditions, one or two major items missing or lacking in detail (1-2); good preparation, few minor items incomplete or lacking in detail (3-4); excellent preparation, well detailed project/process, no items missing, excellent plans and environmental assessment (5).

OPSP TIMELINE

The OPSP will occur at least annually, beginning with a call for projects that usually occur in March of each year. The number of ranked projects that will be recommended for funding is determined by the state's LWCF apportionment for the current fiscal year. Below is a typical timeline for the OPSP.

 Year 1 –

- o March: The OPSP commences with a call for project proposals. The application and application guide are posted on the website. Notices are distributed in a variety of formats to local political sub-Bureaus. Important upcoming dates are posted on the website.

- May – December: Pre-approval site inspections are scheduled and meetings with prospective project sponsors held.
- June: The last Friday in June applications are due.
- July – August: applications are reviewed and scored by committee members followed by a group meeting to review individual scores and to make funding determinations.
- Notice of selection for award made by September 1 & preliminary notice of award sent to successful applicants.
- September – December: Match capacity is reviewed and those demonstrating immediate capacity are prepared for submission to NPS for review, approval, and authorization to submit application to Grants.gov.

 Year 2 -

- March – July: Notice of Award for submitted applications received from NPS. Contracts between the State and local project sponsors are prepared and fully executed project agreements are distributed to award recipients.
- Based on project approval by NPS, project sponsors receive a minimum of two full construction seasons from project agreement start date. Project termination is targeted for late spring / early summer, so final inspections can take place when landscapes are most favorable to record completed, open, and inviting public outdoor recreation facility status.

APPENDIX C: MAINE SCORP SURVEYS



**Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine SCORP Surveys Report
2026**

Survey Description

Two surveys were created: one for “users,” or those who recreate in Maine, and one for “providers,” or those who offer services within Maine’s outdoor recreation industry. Both surveys were designed to gauge respondents’ priorities for outdoor recreation and to identify patterns in how Maine people are currently recreating.

The introduction to the user survey asked that respondents be eighteen years of age and residents of Maine; the introduction to the provider survey asked that respondents be eighteen years of age.

Both surveys included multiple choice questions and short-answer questions. The data from the multiple-choice questions has been included in charts below. Though the answers to the short-answer questions have not been listed below, when relevant these answers are mentioned in the analysis of the multiple-choice questions.

Data Collection

A link to the surveys was posted on the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife social media sites and was also sent directly to other smaller groups related to outdoor recreation in Maine. Groups that received the surveys included: state park managers; those who received newsletters from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Office of Outdoor Recreation, and the Appalachian Mountain Club; Maine outdoor brands; the Maine Land Trust Alliance network; the Maine Parks and Recreation Association; and the Appalachian Trail Land Trust.

Study Limitations

Because the surveys were open access and available to anyone with the link, the total number of those invited to participate is unknown. The results cannot be said to represent Maine (or Maine businesses) more broadly but are representative only of those who chose to participate in the surveys. Because the surveys were distributed to outdoor-focused groups and posted on social media pages related to the outdoors, there is likely a strong bias in favor of those who already value, at least to some degree, outdoor recreation.

Because the surveys were open access, there was also no way to ensure that residents were eighteen years of age and Maine residents. Several of the written answers to questions that allowed for short answers rather than multiple choice do indicate that a small percentage of those who answered were not Maine residents but were individuals with second homes in Maine, and who participate in local Maine organizations while in the state.

Respondents

For the user survey, 2,162 people responded. For the provider survey, 212 people responded. Respondents were not required to answer every question, meaning that participation totals vary slightly for each question. Participation totals for each question are listed alongside the detailed breakdowns provided in the sections below.

Though the user survey was open to individuals of all genders and incomes, and to most ages, some groups were overrepresented in the responses.¹ The self-reported demographic information indicates overrepresentation by respondents nearing or at retirement age, and an underrepresentation of women.

Overall Trends

Both users and providers who responded to these surveys were concerned with maintaining existing lands and infrastructure, and with ensuring access to recreational and natural spaces, both public and private. Great emphasis was placed on the value of trails, both hiking and motorized, as well as on access to the ocean, lakes, and streams. Though less popular than hiking and swimming, hunting and fishing were prioritized by both providers and users. Both groups also recognized the importance of Maine as an outdoor destination, where engagement can help boost local economies. Concern over the loss of access to private land was also apparent, especially in the context of snowmobiling and ATVing, which both groups saw as important components of Maine's outdoor recreation economy. Several key points of data from the multiple-choice questions also indicate that respondents see outdoor recreation as important for mental health, physical health, and community health.

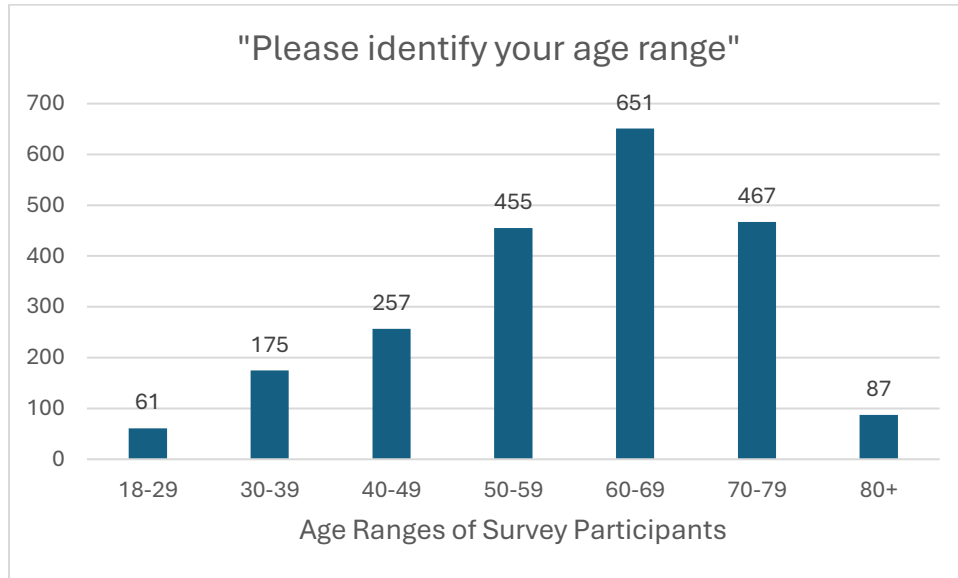
¹ A group is considered "overrepresented" when they comprise a greater proportion of the survey responses than they do the Maine state population.

2025 Maine Outdoor Recreation User Survey

Survey Results

Section 1: Demographics

Figure One: detailed breakdown of age range of survey participants

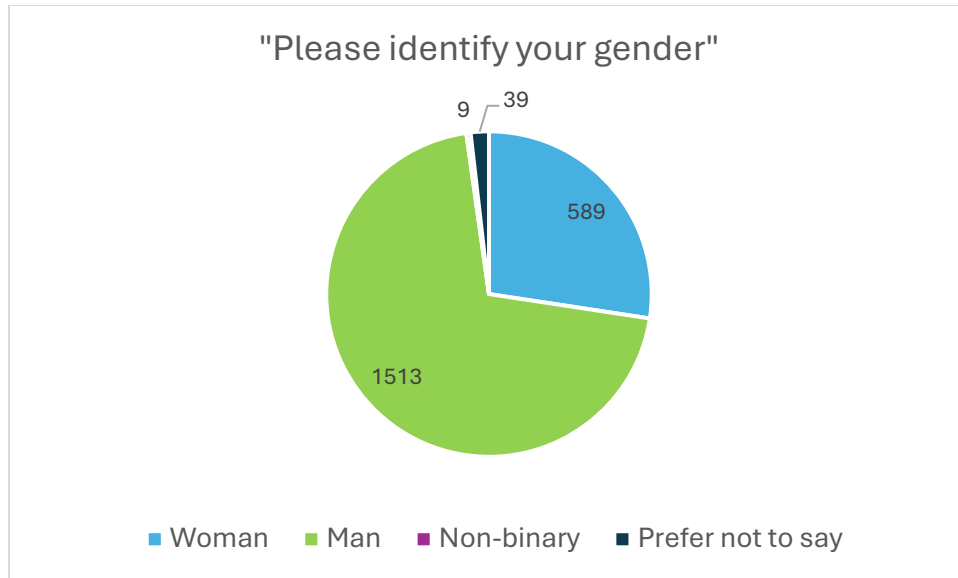


There were 2,153 responses to this question.

Results indicate that survey responses are more representative of the portion of the population that is nearing or at retirement age (77.10% of respondents were nearing or at retirement age—fifty years of age or older—whereas 22.90% were under 50, and only 10.96% under the age of 40).² This was reflected in the short-answer comments that respondents provided, where there was a heavy emphasis on an aging volunteer group, especially in relation to snowmobile clubs. Multiple respondents noted that it was difficult to convince younger volunteers to join and expressed concern for the impact that this would have on the sustainability of the system in the years to come.

Figure Two: detailed breakdown of gender of survey participants

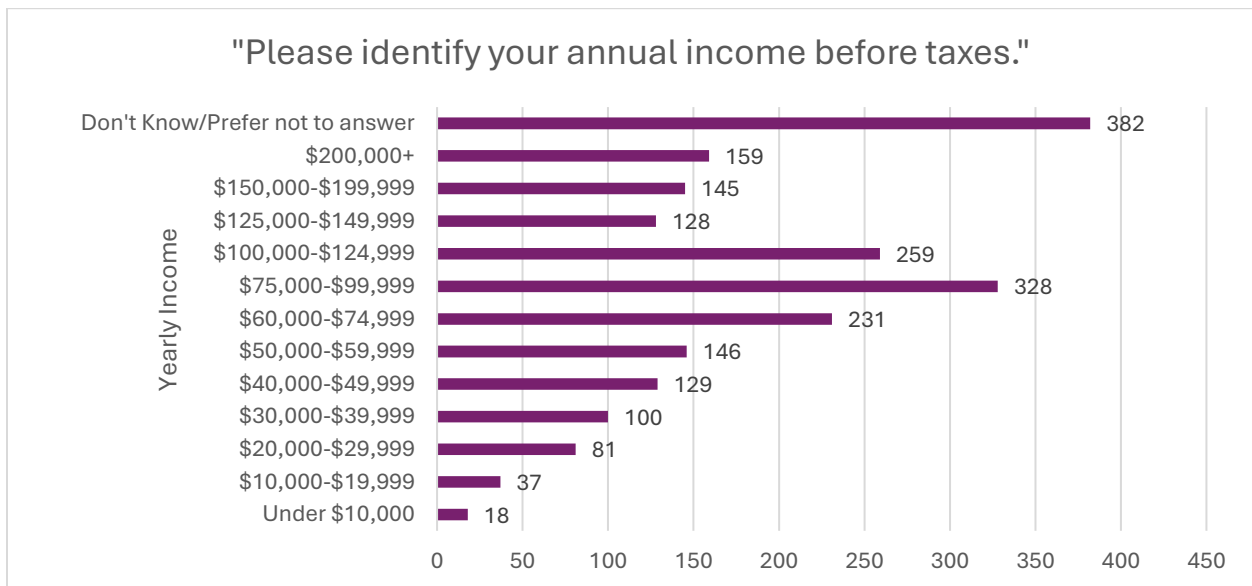
² As of 2024, 44.1% of the population of Maine was over the age of fifty years. “Population Estimates by Race, Ethnicity, and Total Population,” Department of Administrative and Financial Services: State Economist, State of Maine, July 9, 2025, <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/Dashboards/PopulationEstimatesbyRaceEthnicityandTotalPopulation>



There were 2,150 responses to this question.

Results show a disproportionate number of male respondents. Because this survey was sent specifically to outdoor recreation organizations across the state, this overrepresentation may reflect the demographic makeup of those organizations. However, without further information on the makeup of those organizations, no conclusions can confidently be drawn.

Figure Three: detailed breakdown of income of participants



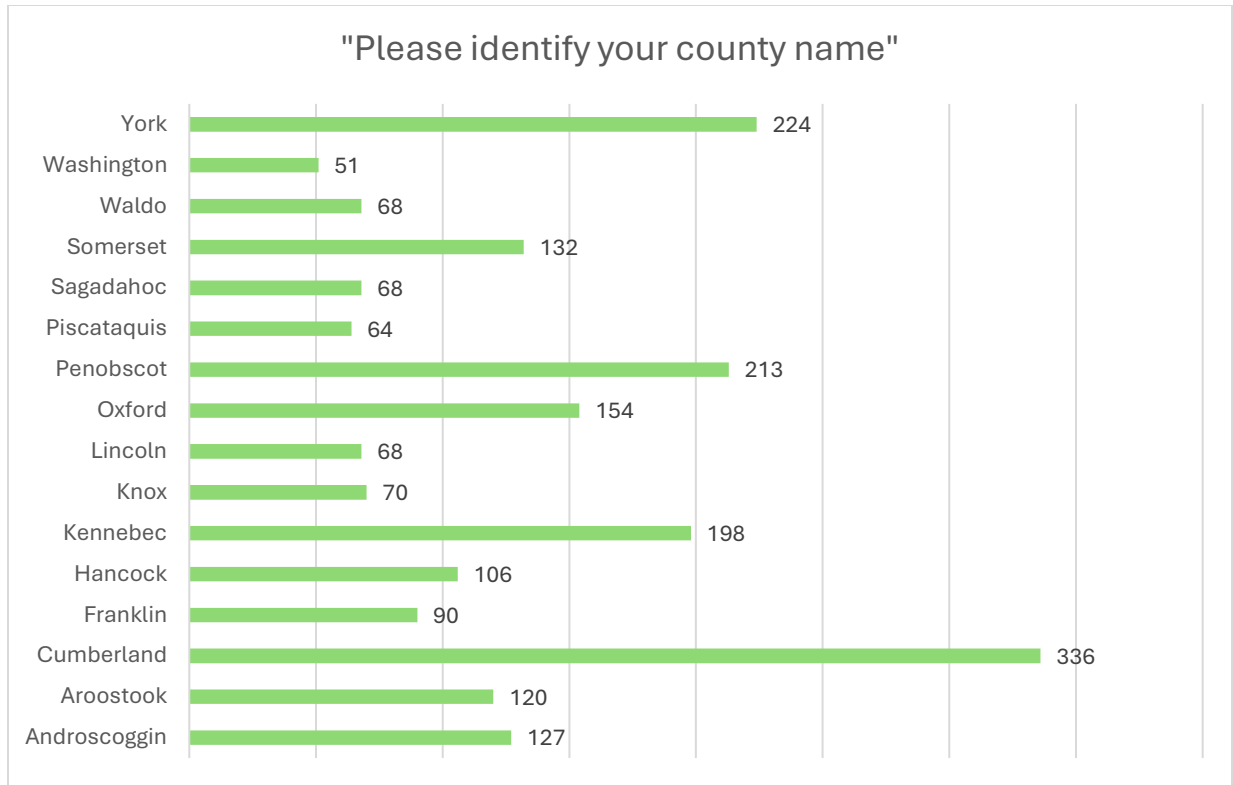
There were 2,143 responses to this question.

Because 18% of people selected “Don’t know/Prefer not to answer,” the results are somewhat incomplete and any conclusions drawn based on the income levels of those that did answer cannot be said to entirely represent the full group of participants.

Responses to this question, when paired with responses to other questions in the survey, indicate that income levels do affect how respondents perceive the cost of recreation. “Figure Sixteen” shows how respondents answered when asked, “Please identify any barriers you have experienced when wanting to engage in outdoor recreational activities.” Of those who responded, 10.5% “strongly agree” with the choice “Costs are too high,” while 31% “agree,” 32.9% “disagree,” 7.6% “strongly disagree,” and 18% are neutral. Thus, 40.5% of respondents disagree (either “disagree” or “strongly disagree”) that costs are too high, and 41.5% agree (either “agree” or “strongly agree”). Of the 1,019 survey participants that disclosed their annual income as being over \$75,000 annually, 997 of them also answered this question about barriers. Of this group, 28.99% “agree” costs are too high, 7.62% “strongly agree,” 9.73% “strongly disagree,” 36.21% “disagree,” and the remainder are neutral. Thus, 36.61% agreed on some level that costs are too high, and 45.94% disagreed. Compare this with the results from the 742 participants who reported income under \$74,999 annually. Of these respondents, 726 of them answered the question about barriers. Of these 726 respondents, 34.85% “agree” costs are too high, 14.46% “strongly agree,” 4.27% “strongly disagree,” and 29.89% “disagree.” Thus, 49.31% agree, and 34.16% disagree. This shows that those with lower income levels did report more concern about the affordability of outdoor recreation—but not overwhelmingly so.

Are costs of recreation too high?	Income under \$74,999 annually	Income over \$75,000 annually	All Incomes
Strongly Agree	14.46%	7.62%	10.50%
Agree	34.85%	28.99%	31.00%
Strongly Disagree	4.27%	9.73%	7.60%
Disagree	29.89%	36.21%	32.90%
Neutral	16.53%	17.45%	18.00%

Figure Four: detailed breakdown of respondents’ locations

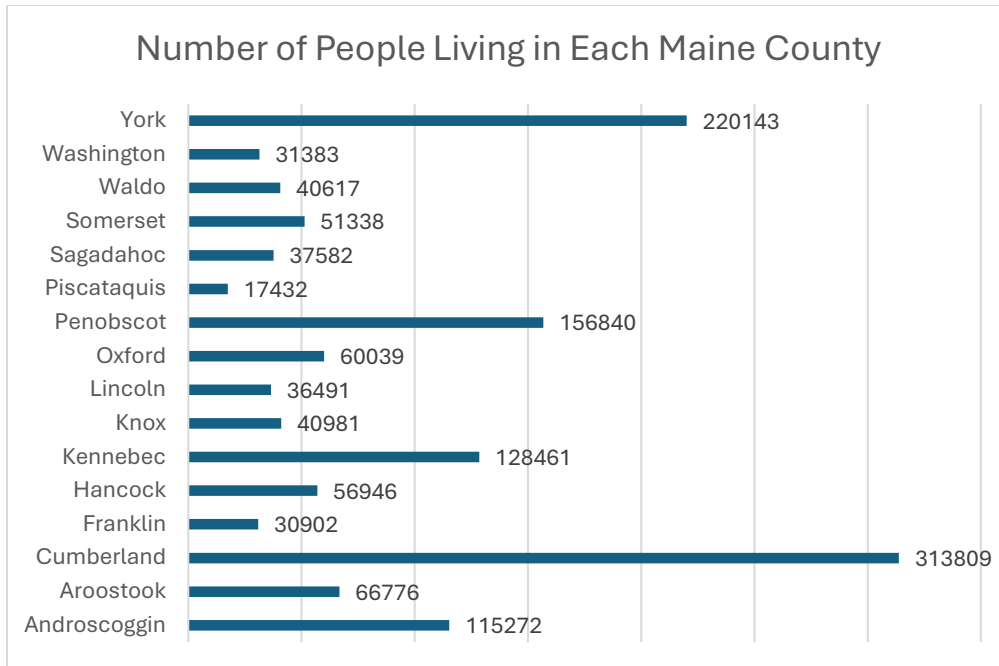


There were 2,089 responses to this question.

All sixteen Maine counties are represented and, overall, responses are relatively proportional to the populations for each Maine county, which are shown in “Figure Five.”³

Figure Five: populations of counties in Maine

³ “Population Estimates by Race, Ethnicity, and Total Population,” Department of Administrative and Financial Services: State Economist, State of Maine, July 9, 2025, <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/Dashboards/PopulationEstimatesbyRaceEthnicityandTotalPopulation>



Section 2: Types of Recreation

In the following questions, survey participants were presented with four groups of recreational activities (trail-based, land-based, water-based, and winter-based). Each group contained a list of activities, and participants were asked to note how recently they had engaged in each activity. Options were “I did this in the last 12 months,” “I have done this in the past but not recently,” “I am interested in doing this,” “I am not interested in doing this,” and “I am not familiar with this activity.”

There were very few activities with which participants were not familiar. Geocaching was the least known activity, with 12.8% of participants reporting that they were not familiar, followed by kiteboard or wing sail at 8.6%, then e-biking (7.70%) and winter biking (6.7%).

Participants’ answers to these questions indicate that recreation is occurring consistently across a variety of landscapes, both rural and urban, and during all four seasons.

Figure Six: detailed breakdown of trail-based recreation

"Trail Based Recreation - Indicate the level of engagement in the activities listed below. "					
	I did this in the last 12 months	I have done this in the past but not recently	I am interested in doing this	I am not interested in doing this	I am not familiar with this activity
Walk/hike/run on paved trails	49.80%	21.90%	5.30%	20.20%	2.90%
Walk/hike/run on unpaved trails	73.10%	14.10%	5%	6.70%	1.20%
Road Biking	20.60%	23.90%	6.70%	45.50%	3.20%
Gravel Biking	19.30%	21.70%	11.70%	42.90%	4.40%
Mountain Biking	14.50%	20.90%	10.30%	50.10%	4.20%
E-Bike (road)	7.30%	3.20%	19.40%	62.30%	7.70%
E-Bike (trail or gravel)	7%	3.30%	23.20%	58.60%	8%
Horseback Riding	2.40%	21.10%	14.90%	55.70%	5.90%
ATV Riding	34.10%	18.10%	12.40%	32.60%	2.80%
Snowmobiling	27.30%	24.30%	14.80%	30.90%	2.70%

There were 2,098 responses to this question.

Walking, hiking, and running on trails is by far the most popular activity. Respondents expressed a preference for unpaved, rather than paved, trails. Even those who reported that they had not walked, hiked, or run on unpaved trails in the last year maintained an interest in the activity (only 6.7% expressed that they were uninterested, and 1.2% were unfamiliar with the activity).

Though respondents expressed less interest in biking than in walking, hiking, and running, their answers do indicate that biking is occurring—and show that bikers have less of a preference than hikers do for whether their activity occurs on paved or unpaved surfaces. In the last twelve months, 20.6% of respondents have participated in “Road Biking,” 19.3% have participated in “Gravel Biking” and 14.5% have participated in “Mountain Biking.” Similarly, those who participate in e-biking do not seem to have much of a preference for paved versus unpaved surfaces: 7.3% of respondents had e-biked on a road in the last twelve months, while 7% had used an e-bike on trail or gravel.

Survey respondents indicated an interest in motorized sports—both ATVing and snowmobiling. Because these surveys were sent to ATV and snowmobile clubs, the level of interest shown here is likely influenced by an over-representation of club members in the pool of respondents.

Figure Seven: proportional visualization of trail-based recreation

"Trail Based Recreation - Indicate the level of engagement in the activities listed below. "

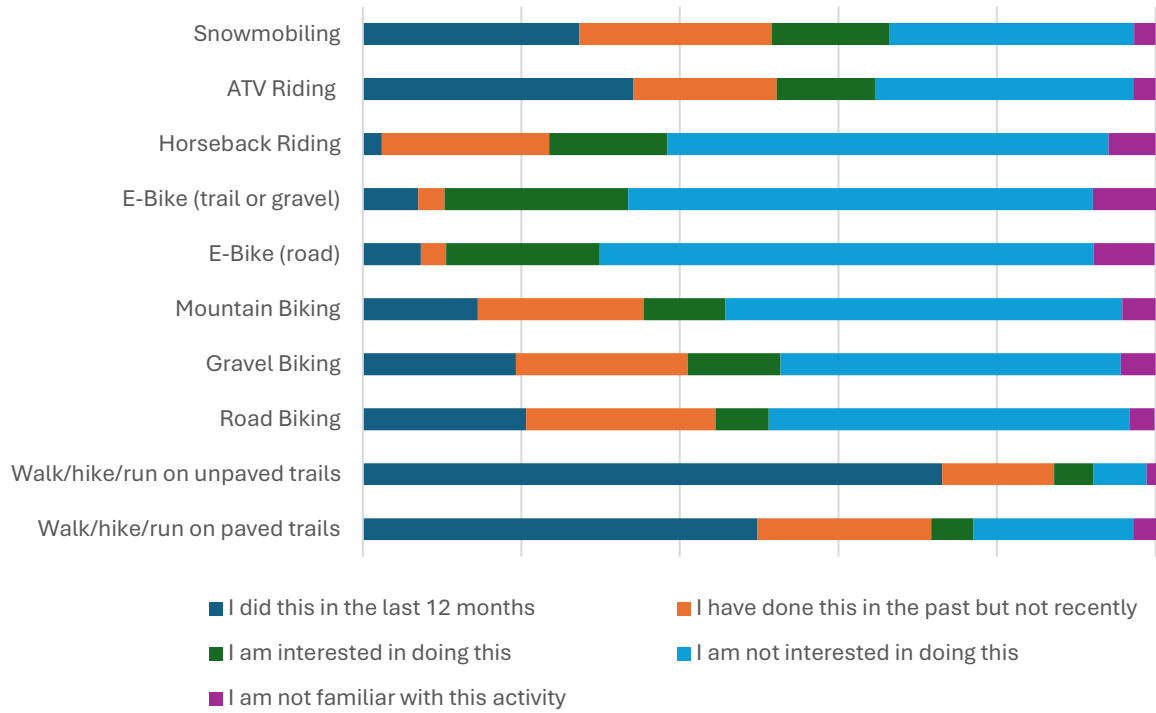


Figure Eight: detailed breakdown of land-based recreation

“Land Based Recreation - Indicate the level of engagement in the activities listed below.”					
	I did this in the last 12 months	I have done this in the past but not recently	I am interested in doing this	I am not interested in doing this	I am not familiar with this activity
Wildlife Watching	81.30%	7.50%	6.70%	3.90%	0.50%
Picnicking	59.70%	22.30%	7.90%	9.40%	0.70%
Nature Center Visit or Historic Site	56.80%	25.10%	10.70%	6.50%	0.90%
Gardening	66.10%	13.20%	7.30%	12.40%	1.00%
Dog Park Visit	14.30%	19.60%	10.10%	52.80%	3.30%
Camping in a Tent	34.60%	38.70%	6.30%	19.50%	1.00%
Camping--RV, Pop Up, Trailer, etc.	25.90%	28.20%	16.40%	27.40%	2.00%
Playing Court Sports (tennis, basketball, pickleball)	14.00%	25.70%	12.20%	45.00%	3.10%
Hunting	47.60%	12.00%	10.40%	28.70%	1.30%
Trapping	4.80%	9.20%	16.90%	64.50%	4.70%
Recreational Firearms	46.60%	14.40%	11.40%	26.00%	1.70%
Playing Field Sports (soccer, football, baseball)	9.50%	30.10%	5.70%	51.70%	2.90%
Foraging or Gathering	31.50%	17.70%	21.80%	25.10%	3.90%
Managing Land (trail building, restoring habitat)	27.40%	20.90%	26.70%	20.10%	5.00%
Playing Disc Golf	4.40%	11.80%	11.90%	64.90%	7.10%
Geocaching	2.80%	15.40%	15.50%	53.40%	12.80%
Rock Climbing/Bouldering	4.40%	19.20%	11.60%	60.10%	4.70%
Scenic Driving	74.20%	11.40%	8.20%	5.80%	0.40%
Visited Botanical Gardens	34.80%	29.10%	16.00%	17.80%	2.40%
Visited Playground	30.00%	24.60%	5.10%	38.30%	2.10%

There were 2,102 responses to this question.

Passive activities, such as wildlife watching (81.30%) or scenic driving (74.20%) were the activities most commonly done in the last twelve months. Picnicking was also popular (59.70%), as were visits to a nature center or historic site (56.8%).

Activities related to food security were also consistently popular. Of those participants that reported that they gardened, 66.1% did so in the last year, and only 12.4% said they had no interest in this activity. Hunting was also popular, with 47.6% of survey participants reporting that they hunted in the last year, while only roughly a quarter of respondents indicated they were not interested in this activity. These findings are supported by the short answer sections of this survey, which expressed a concern with losing access to private land for the purposes of hunting, and with laws related to hunting on Sunday. Trapping, however, was much less popular, with only 4.8% of respondents having done this activity in the last twelve months, and 64.50% selecting “I am not interested in doing this.” This is significantly higher than the 28.7% of people who are not interested in hunting.

Sports requiring a playing field or facility did receive some interest (disc golf, tennis, basketball, pickleball, soccer, football, baseball), but this interest is minimal compared to the activities related to food security, or the more passive activities such as nature watching or scenic driving.

Figure Nine: proportional visualization of land-based recreation

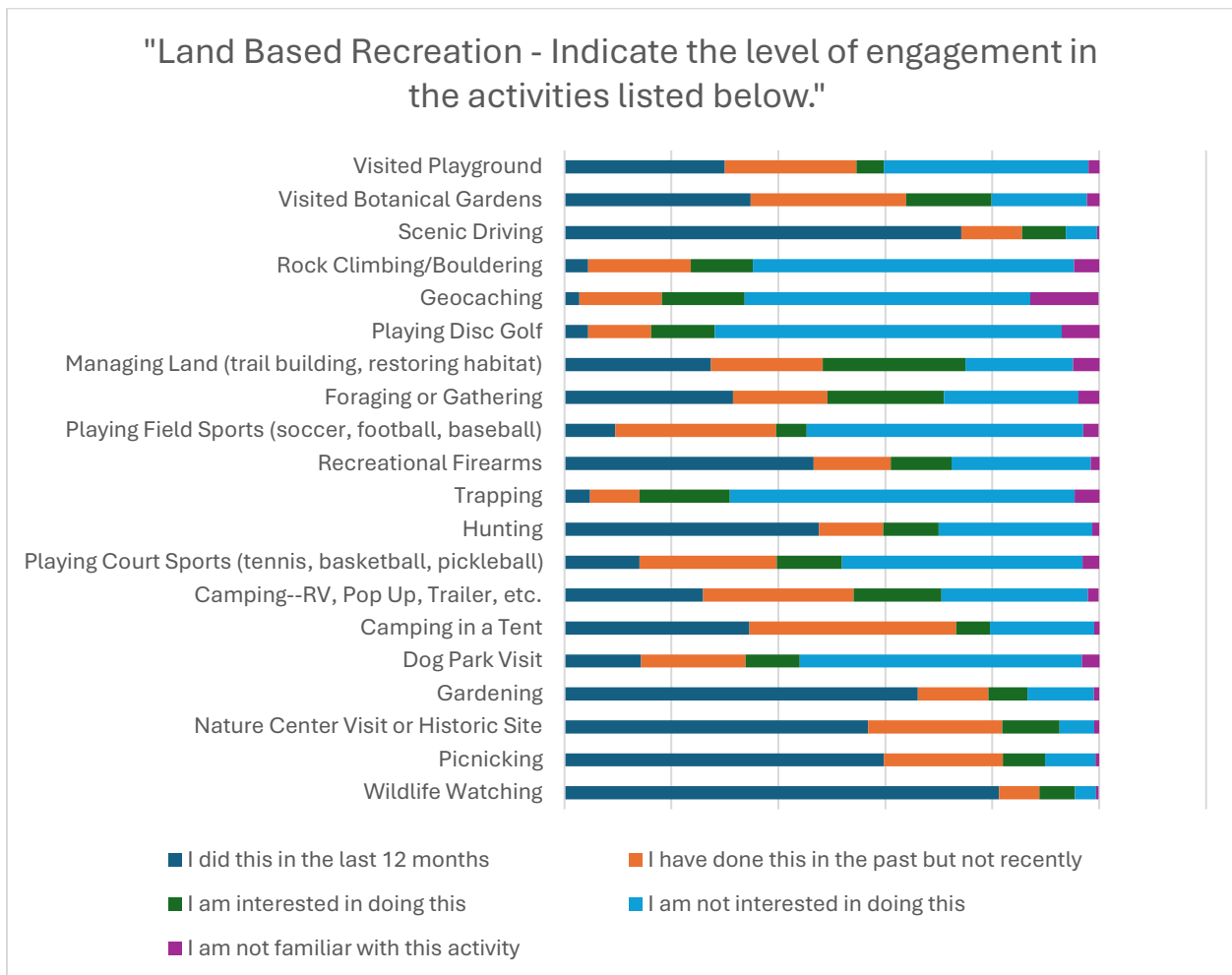


Figure Ten: detailed breakdown of water-based recreation

“Water-Based - Indicate the level of engagement in the activities listed below.”					
	I did this in the last 12 months	I have done this in the past but not recently	I am interested in doing this	I am not interested in doing this	I am not familiar with this activity
Swimming in lakes, ponds, or rivers	72.30%	18.60%	3.80%	5.00%	0.40%
Fishing (fresh or saltwater)	67.50%	18.60%	5.40%	8.30%	0.20%
Visit the Beach	70.10%	19.80%	4.60%	5.20%	0.30%
Motorboating	57.40%	23.30%	7.50%	11.00%	0.80%
Sailing	10.90%	28.50%	16.20%	41.30%	3.10%
Canoeing	44.80%	37.80%	7.90%	8.90%	0.70%
Kayaking	50.40%	27.10%	9.60%	11.80%	1.20%
Paddleboarding	18.40%	15.30%	17.70%	44.60%	4.00%
Water skiing/wakeboarding	8.50%	29.70%	8.80%	50.20%	2.80%
Kiteboard or Wing Sail	0.70%	3.30%	14.60%	72.80%	8.60%
Town or Community Pool	6.00%	19.70%	9.80%	60.40%	4.10%

There were 2,091 responses to this question.

Results in this section indicate survey participants are actively accessing Maine’s bodies of water. Nearly three-quarters of respondents reported swimming in lakes, ponds, or rivers in the last twelve months (72.3%), with only slightly less than that (70.1%) visiting the beach. Fishing (67.5% did this in the last twelve months) was more popular than hunting (47.6% did this in the last twelve months—see “Figure Eight”), and motorboating was one of the most popular motorized activities (57.4% did this in the last twelve months—compare to snowmobiling in “Figure Twelve” at 27.30%).

Figure Eleven: proportional visualization of water-based recreation

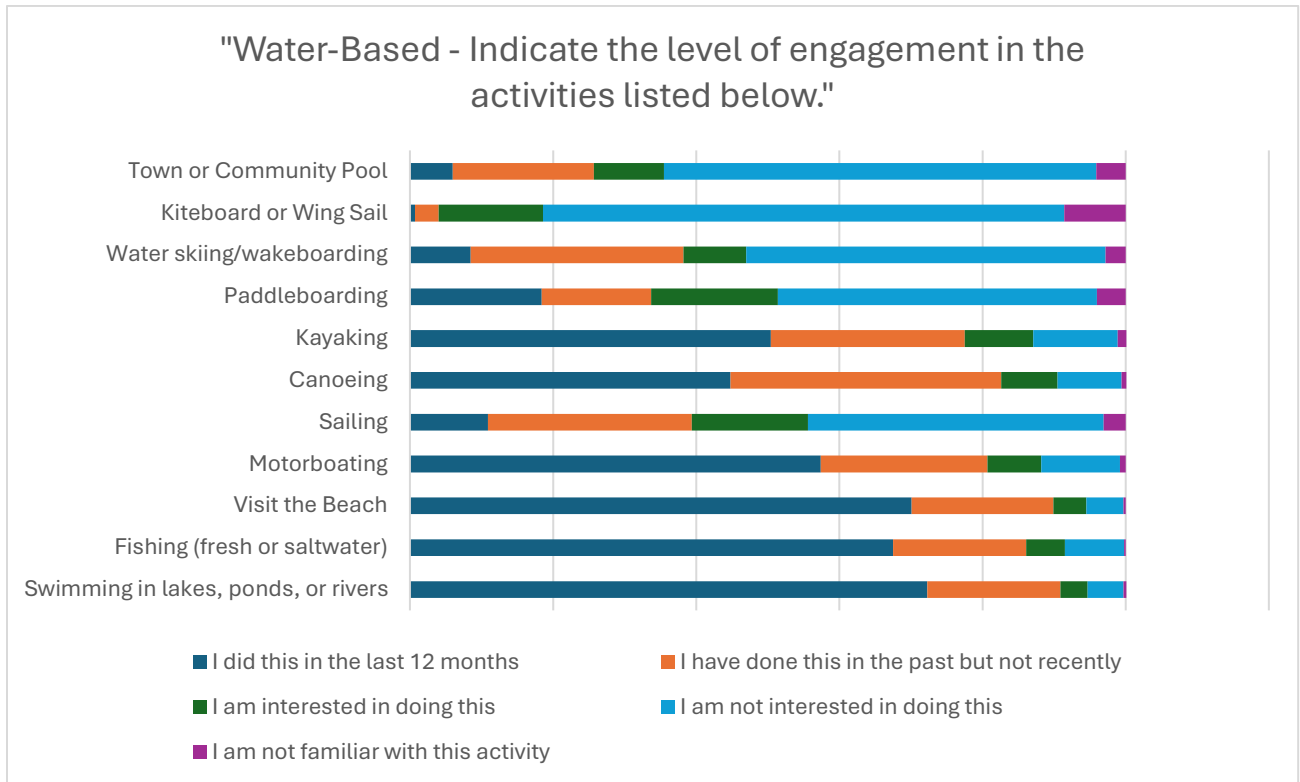


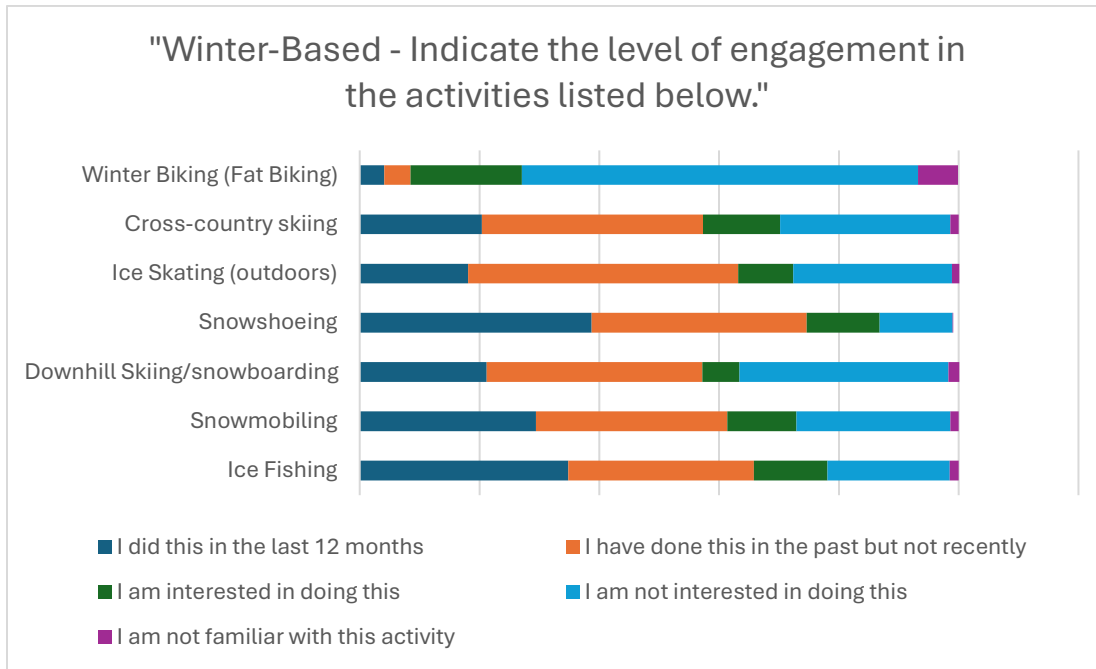
Figure Twelve: detailed breakdown of winter-based recreation

“Winter-Based - Indicate the level of engagement in the activities listed below.”					
	I did this in the last 12 months	I have done this in the past but not recently	I am interested in doing this	I am not interested in doing this	I am not familiar with this activity
Ice Fishing	34.80%	31.00%	12.30%	20.40%	1.50%
Snowmobiling	29.40%	32.00%	11.50%	25.70%	1.40%
Downhill Skiing/snowboarding	21.20%	36.00%	6.20%	34.90%	1.80%
Snowshoeing	38.70%	35.90%	12.20%	12.20%	0.10%
Ice Skating (outdoors)	18.10%	45.10%	9.20%	26.50%	1.20%
Cross-country skiing	20.40%	36.90%	12.90%	28.40%	1.40%
Winter Biking (Fat Biking)	4.10%	4.40%	18.60%	66.10%	6.70%

There were 2,044 responses to this question.

While responses indicate that fewer survey participants are engaging in winter activities than they are in activities that typically occur during the summer (i.e. hiking, biking, and swimming—see “Figure Ten,” “Figure Eight,” and “Figure Six”), these responses do show that survey participants are certainly familiar with winter activities, and in many cases are engaging in them. Short-answer questions confirm that respondents value these winter activities, with particular emphasis on snowmobiling, the needs of snowmobile clubs, and the contributions that the snowmobiling industry makes to Maine’s outdoor recreation economy. However, percentages indicating interest in snowmobiling may be especially high, because these surveys were sent to multiple snowmobile clubs.

Figure Thirteen: proportional visualization of winter-based recreation



Section 3: Motivations for and Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

Figure Fourteen: detailed breakdown of factors that motivate respondents to spend leisure time outdoors

"Rate the following factors on what motivates you to spend leisure time outdoors."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral
Physical health/exercise	59.50%	36.80%	0.90%	0.30%	2.50%
Mental health/happiness	75.70%	23.30%	0.30%	0.10%	0.50%
Connection with nature	72.50%	26.10%	0.30%	0.20%	0.90%
Socialization/being with friends and family	43.80%	46.10%	3.80%	0.60%	5.70%
Adventure/Challenge	42.40%	45.60%	4.50%	0.90%	6.60%
Food Security (foraging, hunting, fishing)	22.60%	31.30%	21.10%	7.20%	17.80%
Tradition (part of culture)	36.80%	37.00%	9.10%	2.30%	14.80%

There were 2,139 responses to this question.

Food security motivates 53.9% of people to spend time in the outdoors, which likely correlates with the high percentage of people that noted they had hunted (47.6%—see “Figure Eight”), fished (67.5%—see “Figure Ten”), or gardened (66.1%—see “Figure Eight”) in the last twelve months.

The heavy emphasis on mental health and happiness (75.7% report that they “strongly agree” that this motivates them to spend leisure time in the outdoors), on wanting a connection with nature (72.5% “strongly agree”), and on socialization (43.8% “strongly agree,” and 46.1% “agree” that this motivates them) shows that, while physical needs such as food security and exercise are highly important to those who responded to this survey, they also value less tangible elements such as connection, socialization, and happiness. This was, however, not reflected in the short answer portions of this survey. While comments about hunting, snowmobiling, caring for existing infrastructure, climate change, and the loss of access to private land were frequent topics, there were only a few comments about mental health.

Figure Fifteen: proportional visualization of factors that motivate respondents to spend leisure time outdoors

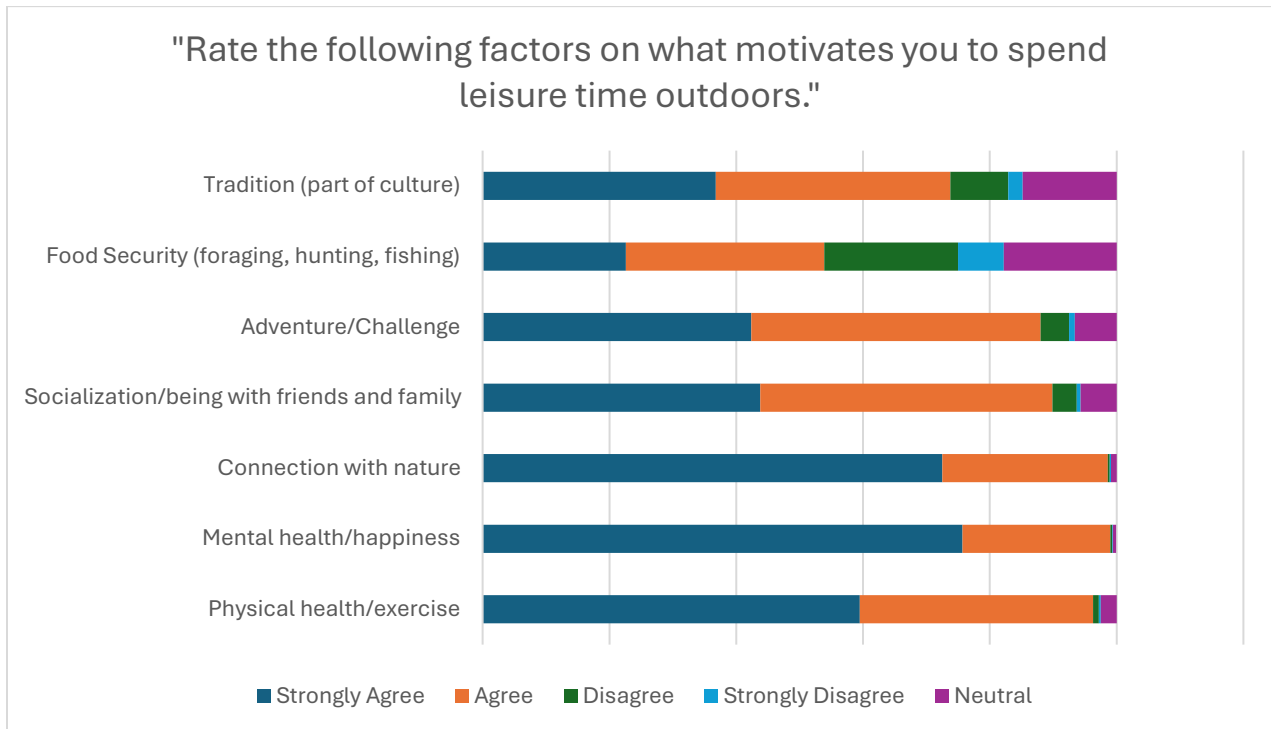


Figure Sixteen: detailed breakdown of barriers to outdoor recreation

"Please identify any barriers you have experienced when wanting to engage in outdoor recreational activities."					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral
Costs are too high	10.50%	31.00%	32.90%	7.60%	18.00%
Don't know where to go/unaware of options	4.80%	27.20%	45.40%	12.00%	10.60%
Places to go are too far from home	4.30%	28.20%	44.70%	9.30%	13.40%
No one to participate in activity with	3.10%	20.40%	49.40%	12.50%	14.50%
Personal health/physical ability	7.10%	25.30%	43.10%	15.10%	9.40%
Limited or not enough paid time off from work	9.70%	23.80%	35.70%	15.60%	15.30%
Places are too crowded or overused	10.40%	37.70%	31.20%	5.90%	14.80%
Don't have the necessary gear/equipment	2.60%	17.60%	53.60%	12.20%	14.00%
Don't have the necessary skills or know-how	2.20%	15.80%	54.00%	15.60%	12.40%
Can't get there/lack of transportation	1.00%	2.70%	63.00%	25.10%	8.20%
I don't have interest in participating	1.00%	6.50%	49.20%	30.50%	12.70%
Places close to home have inadequate or poorly maintained facilities	3.00%	14.20%	51.30%	13.20%	18.40%
Personal safety concerns	1.60%	13.30%	51.60%	21.10%	12.40%
Lack of access for my physical needs/ability	1.40%	6.70%	55.40%	24.70%	11.90%
Don't feel welcomed by other visitors	0.60%	4.60%	57.30%	24.00%	13.50%
Lack of information in my language/language barrier	0.20%	0.50%	51.10%	38.60%	9.60%
Private Land/Posted/land is no longer accessible	14.00%	29.40%	32.20%	9.60%	14.80%
Lack of time/Taking care of family members	4.50%	22.20%	44.30%	15.80%	13.20%
Other Barriers	2.90%	8.10%	29.30%	9.70%	50.10%

There were 2101 responses to this question.

Responses to this question show that the barriers to outdoor recreation are highly varied, with no one barrier clearly identified as the overwhelming issue for the majority of respondents. Multiple options within this

question are also evenly split between those who agree and disagree. For example, 41.5% of people either “agree” or “strongly agree” that costs are too high, but 40.5% either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that this is the case. In some cases, this split is surprising when placed in the context of the short answer questions. For instance, 43.4% of people either “agree” or “strongly agree” that “Private Land/Posted/land is no longer accessible” is a barrier; and 41.8% “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that this is a barrier (14.8% were neutral). However, when asked “Please share any other barriers you may have experienced to accessing activities you like to, or would like to, engage in,” this was the topic most frequently mentioned.

There are several survey choices that were clearly not perceived as barriers to those who responded to this survey. Only 5.2% of people “agree” or “strongly agree” that they “Don’t feel welcomed by other visitors.” Similarly, only .7% said that “Lack of information in my language/language barrier” was a barrier, and only 3.7% identified “Can’t get there/lack of transportation” as a barrier. Only 7.5% saw “I don’t have interest in participating” as a barrier, and only 8.1% considered “Lack of access for my physical needs/ability” to be a barrier. However, some of these answers may be a symptom of the participant pool. Those who are uninterested in recreating or physically unable to do so are unlikely to have joined the outdoor clubs to whom these surveys were sent, or to frequent the Facebook pages of outdoor recreation organizations, where links to the surveys were posted.

Figure Seventeen: proportional visualization of barriers to outdoor recreation

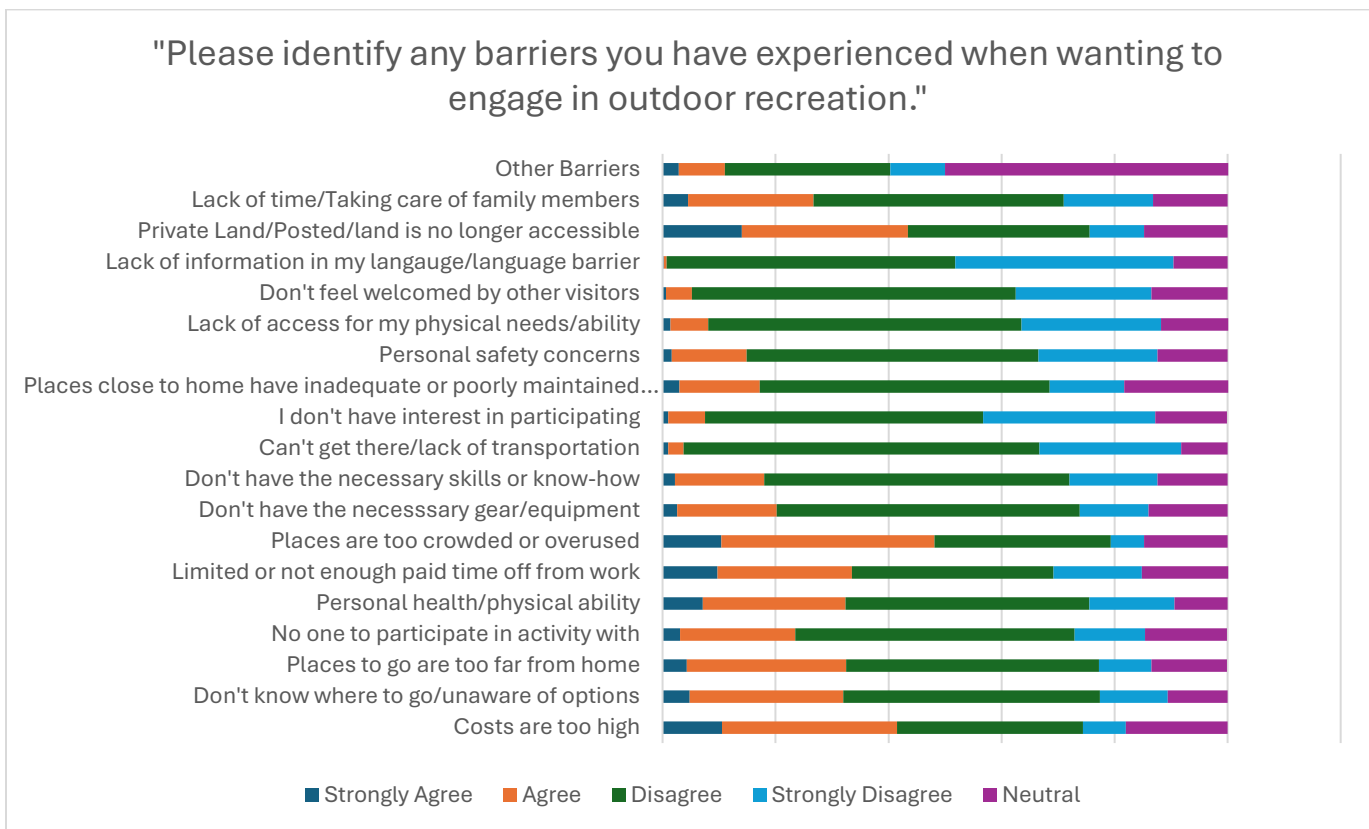


Figure Eighteen: detailed breakdown of distance that respondents are willing to travel to access recreational activities

“Regardless of personal use, please indicate how far you would need to travel to access the following recreational opportunities.”

	10-minute walk	10-minute drive	30-minute drive	60-minute drive	60+ minute drive	Unsure
Walking Path	40.00%	35.40%	13.40%	1.90%	3.50%	5.90%
Bike Path (any type)	28.00%	28.00%	17.80%	2.60%	3.00%	20.60%
Hiking Path	30.30%	34.90%	18.90%	3.80%	5.10%	6.90%
Boat Ramp (pond or lake access point)	15.40%	48.10%	23.50%	3.20%	4.20%	5.70%
Public Swimming Access	15.90%	40.70%	24.30%	2.90%	2.50%	13.60%
Town Park	18.70%	49.90%	15.80%	1.20%	1.90%	12.50%
State Park	1.60%	14.90%	42.30%	20.70%	12.50%	8.00%
National Park	0.60%	2.00%	6.00%	15.20%	64.80%	11.40%
Playground	18.20%	50.60%	11.20%	0.80%	1.50%	17.80%
Public Greenspace	22.70%	36.90%	11.00%	1.00%	1.80%	26.70%
ATV/Multipurpose Trail	20.60%	24.80%	18.10%	5.60%	7.80%	23.10%
Museum or Nature Center	3.20%	16.60%	33.10%	14.50%	10.20%	22.40%
Historic Site	5.60%	22.10%	32.00%	11.20%	9.10%	20.00%
Court (pickleball, tennis, basketball)	11.70%	40.60%	18.30%	1.70%	1.80%	26.10%
Course (golf, disc golf, archery)	4.20%	36.20%	31.80%	3.60%	2.60%	21.60%
Ballfield	13.40%	51.50%	14.50%	0.90%	1.90%	17.90%
Community Wellness Center (YMCA, Gym)	5.50%	32.00%	33.00%	5.40%	4.40%	19.70%

There were 2,100 responses to this question.

The results for this question should be viewed in light of “Figure Four,” which indicates that all sixteen counties were represented in this survey, with the number of participants from each county aligning in reasonably close proportion to the population of each county.

Responses indicate that the majority of survey participants are located within a half-hour of some kind of nature-based or recreational space. However, out of the seventeen options, in the case of seven of those options over 20% of respondents said they were “unsure” of how close they were to the facility or natural space. This could suggest that in some cases participants are either not interested enough in these spaces to research their locations, or they may have had trouble accessing information about these locations.

Most respondents knew their proximity to walking paths, hiking paths, and boat launches. This correlates with the information in “Figure Six” and “Figure Ten,” which shows high levels of popularity related to swimming, boating, and hiking (in the last twelve months, 72.3% of respondents swam in lakes, ponds, or rivers; 73.1% of respondents walked/hiked/ran on unpaved trails; 57.4% went motorboating; 44.8% went canoeing; and 50.4% went kayaking). Respondents also report widespread access to bodies of water, with 48.1% of survey participants living within a ten-minute drive of a boat launch, and 40.7% living within a ten-minute drive of a public swimming area. While roughly a quarter of respondents do need to drive more than thirty minutes to reach these things, very few must drive over an hour.

Although access to a national park is low (for 64.80% of participants, it is more than an hour drive), almost half of survey respondents can reach a town park by driving ten minutes, and only 12.5% have to drive more than an hour to reach a state park.

Figure Nineteen: proportional visualization of distance that respondents are willing to travel to access recreational activities

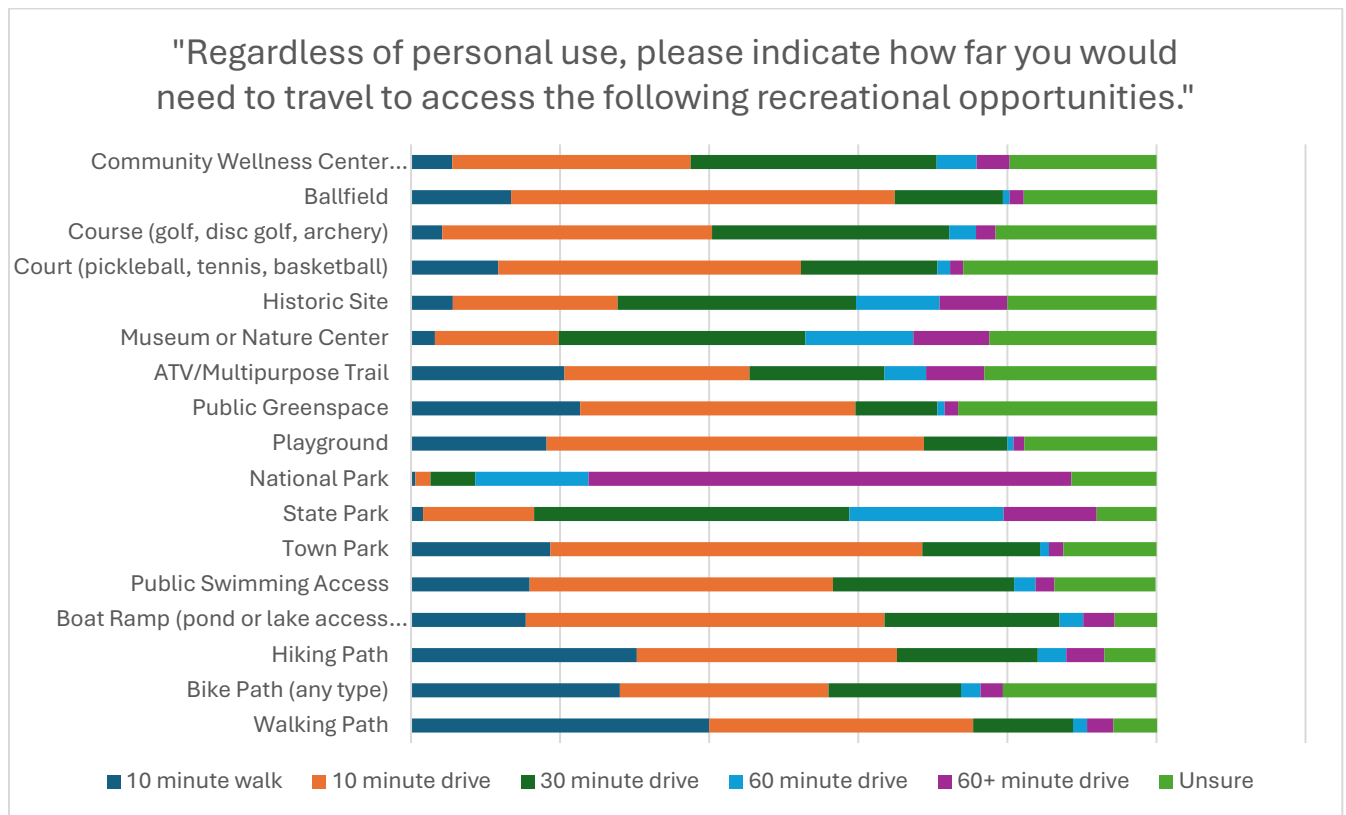
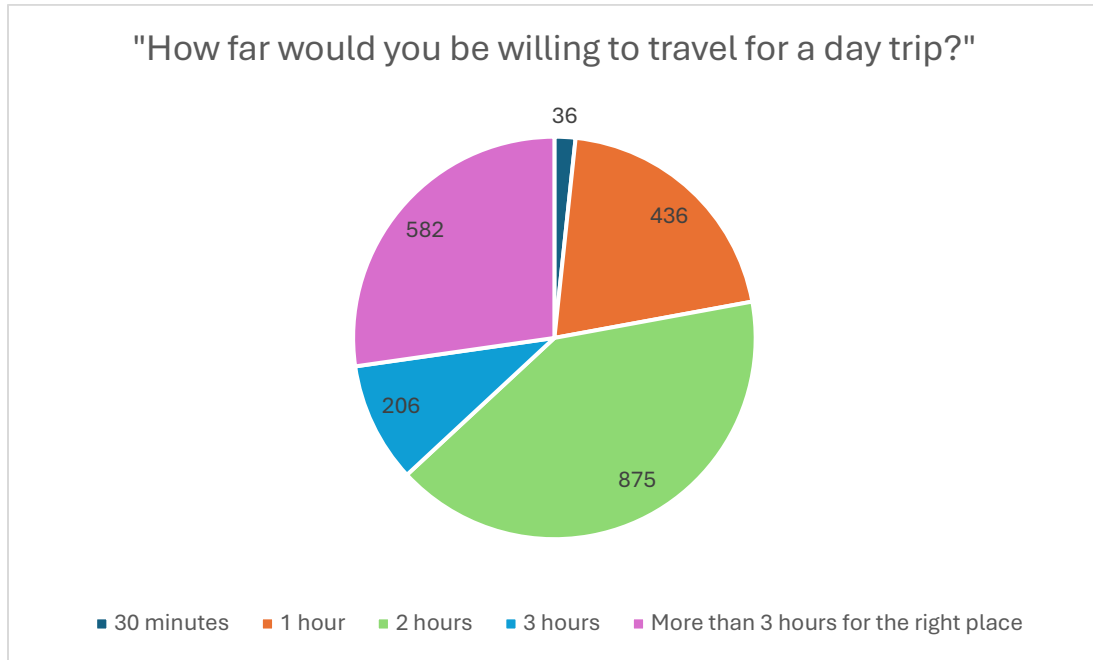


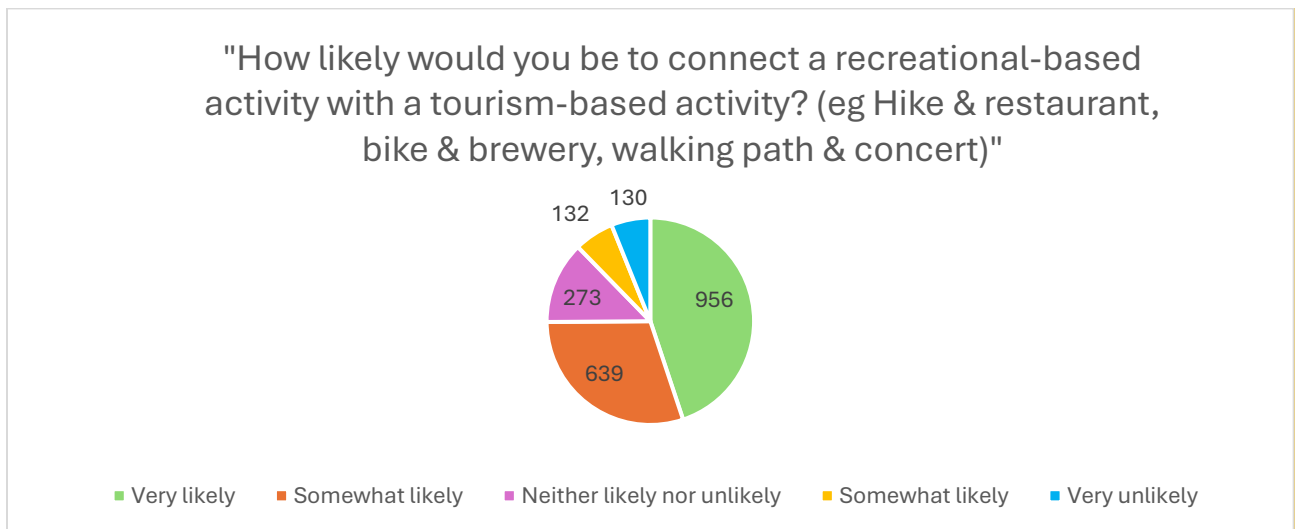
Figure Twenty: detailed breakdown of distance that respondents are willing to travel for a day trip



There were 2,135 responses to this question.

Half of survey participants reported that they were willing to travel more than two hours for a day trip. This is especially significant when viewed in the context of the responses shown in “Figure Eighteen,” where respondents indicated that very few of the recreational opportunities listed required them to drive more than sixty minutes. While answers to the short-answer questions do confirm that survey participants value having recreational opportunities in their towns or local communities, the responses to this question also confirm that survey participants do have a variety of recreational opportunities available to them within an easily accessible distance, and that, in cases when specific opportunities may be further away, most survey participants were willing to drive several hours to reach those opportunities.

Figure Twenty-One: detailed breakdown of respondents’ desire to connect recreation- and tourism-based activities.

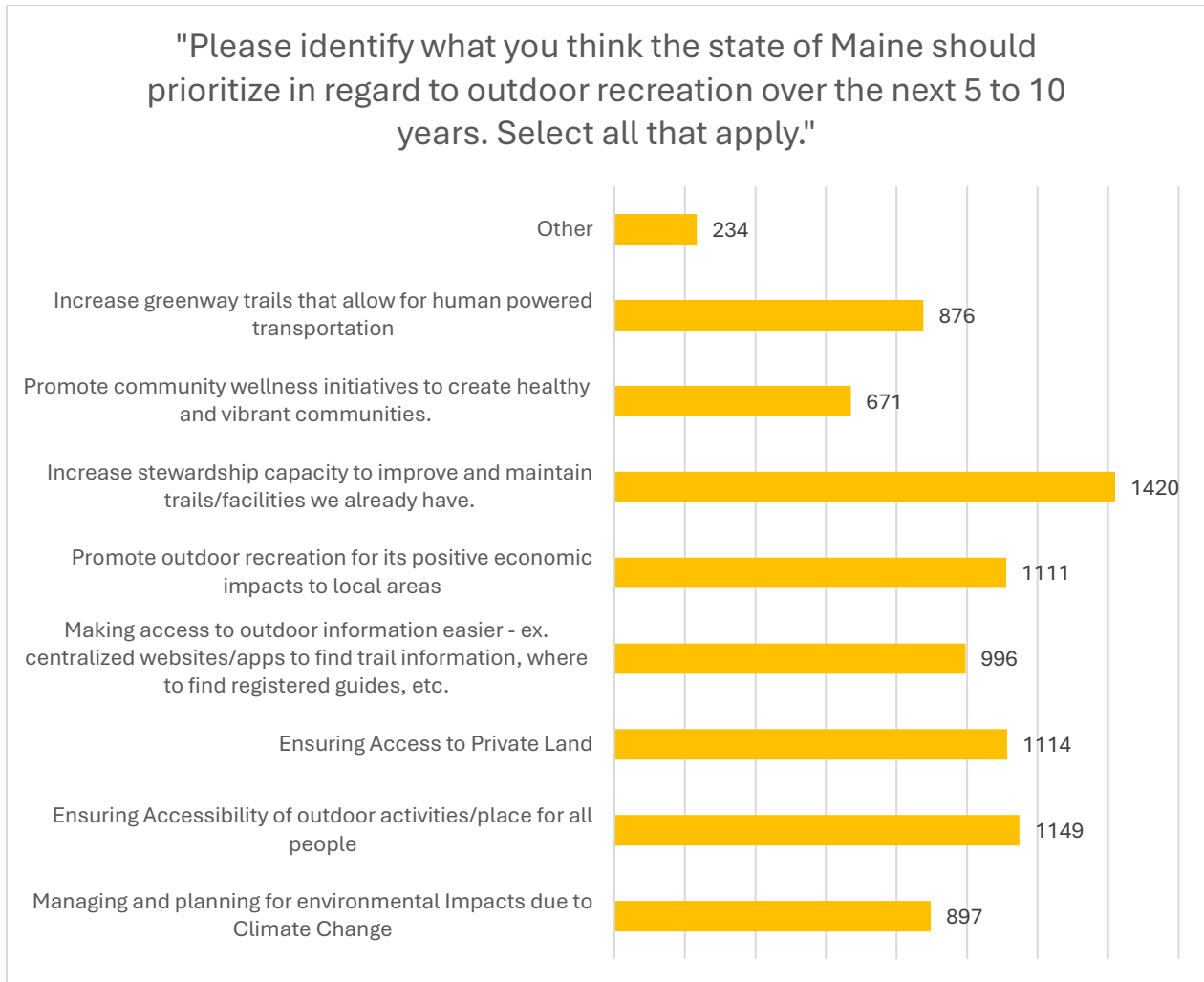


There were 2,130 responses to this question.

Responses show an interest in this combination, with approximately three-quarters of respondents reporting that they would be likely to connect recreational-based activities with tourism-based activities.

Section 4: Priorities for Outdoor Recreation

Figure Twenty-Two: detailed breakdown of respondents' priorities for outdoor recreation in the next five to ten years



There were 2,162 responses to this question.

Survey respondents were highly concerned with maintaining access and existing infrastructure. “Increase stewardship capacity to improve and maintain trails/facilities we already have” was the most popular option, with 65.68% of respondents identifying this as something that should be prioritized in the next five to ten years. The deterioration of existing infrastructure was also a concern that was frequently noted in the short-answer questions, as well as in the survey for outdoor recreation providers (see “Figure Twenty-Eight,” where 71.6% of respondents said “Maintaining Existing Parks and Recreation Areas” was a top priority). Ensuring access and accessibility were also major concerns, both as relates to private land and to outdoor activities for all people. Concerns with maintaining infrastructure did not, however, always translate into a concern with climate change: only 41.49% of respondents felt that in the next five to ten years the state of Maine should prioritize “managing and planning for environmental impacts due to climate change.” Potentially, this could be because respondents did not associate “environmental impact” with damage to existing lands, trails, and facilities.

The least frequently selected choice (other than “other”) was “Promote community wellness initiatives to create healthy and vibrant communities” (31.03%). This can be compared with the information in “Figure Fourteen,” which shows how survey participants responded when asked to “Rate the following factors on what

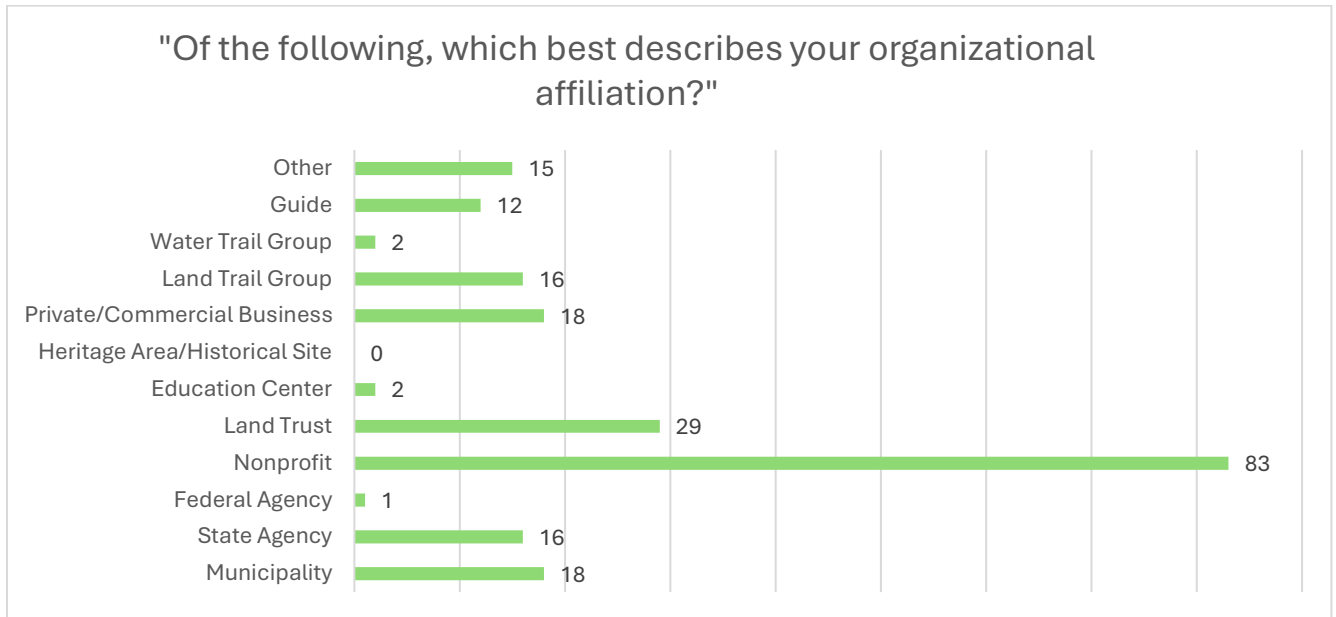
motivates you to spend leisure time outdoors.” There was a heavy emphasis on mental health and happiness, (75.7% said that they “strongly agree” that this motivates them to spend leisure time in the outdoors), on wanting a connection with nature (72.5% “strongly agree”), and on socialization (43.8% “strongly agree,” and 46.1% “agree” that this motivates them). However, when the question suggests initiatives that might boost opportunities for socialization or wellness, users responded less favorably.

2025 Maine Outdoor Recreation Providers Survey

Survey Results

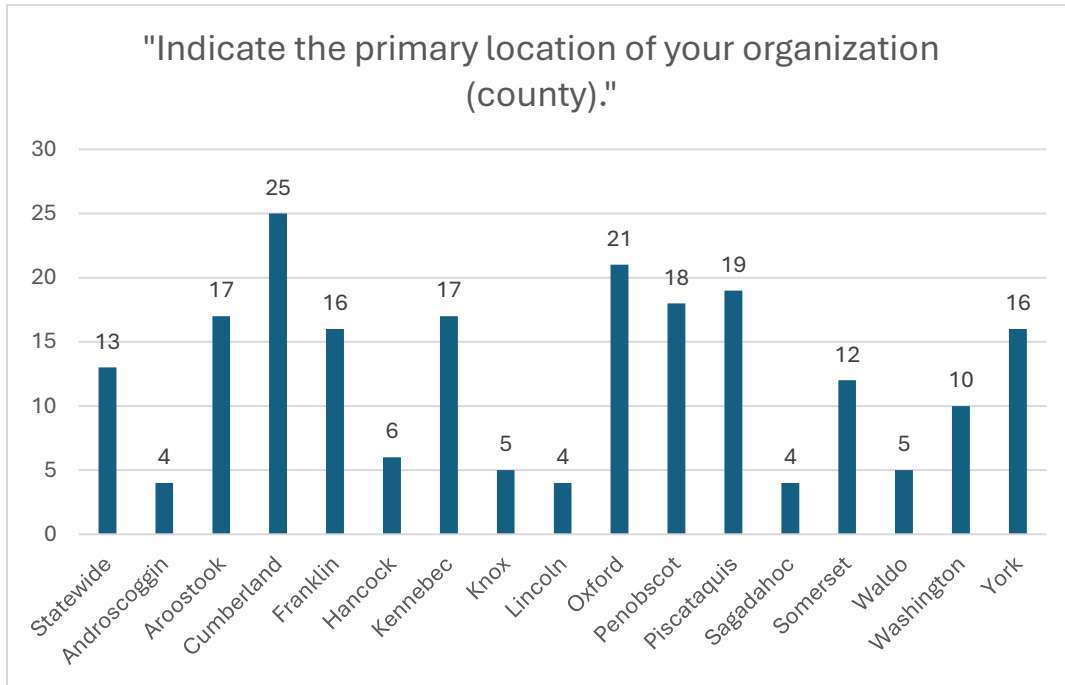
Section 1: Demographics

Figure Twenty-Three: detailed breakdown of respondents' organizational affiliations



There were 212 responses to this question.

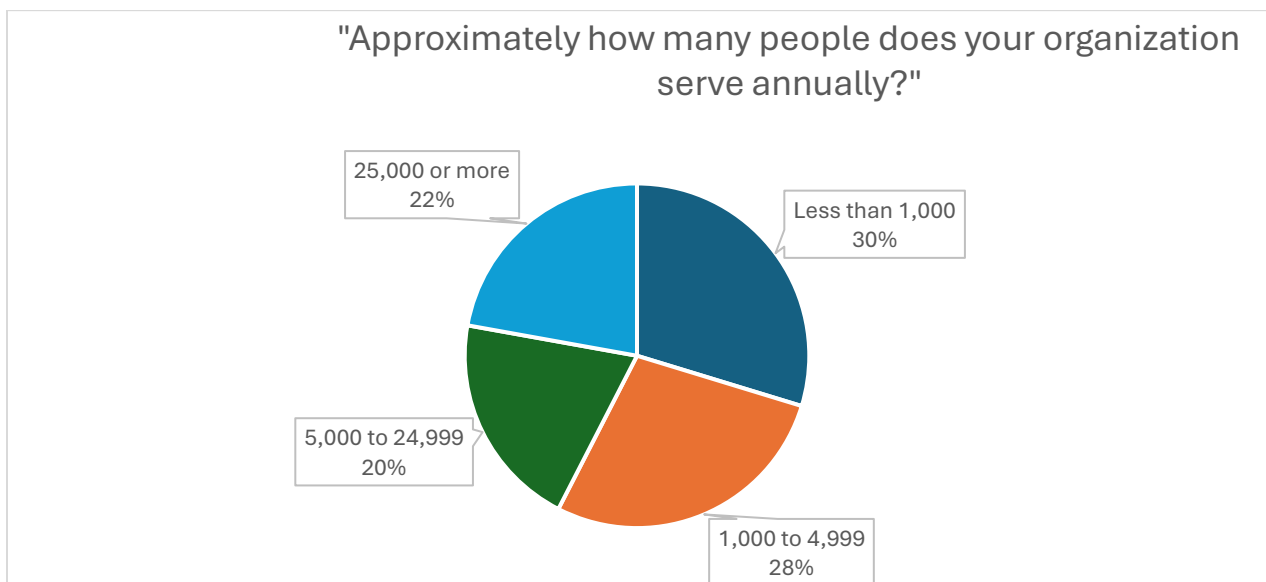
Figure Twenty-Four: detailed breakdown of respondents' locations



There were 212 responses to this question.

As was the case with the Maine Outdoor Recreation User Survey, all sixteen Maine counties were represented.

Figure Twenty-Five: detailed breakdown of people served annually by the organizations



There were 212 responses to this question.

Responses indicated a relatively balanced spread among organizations of differing sizes.

Section 2: Priorities and Concerns in Outdoor Recreation

Figure Twenty-Six: detailed breakdown of the priority organizations place on investing in facilities over the next five to ten years

“Please rate the level of priority your organization places on investing in each of the following facilities over the next 5 to 10 years. 1=Lowest Priority, 5= Highest Priority.”

	1	2	3	4	5
Hiking/Walking/Running Trails	22.6%	6.3%	13.5%	16.8%	40.9%
Trails for motorized activities (ATV, snowmobile, etc.)	32.2%	13.0%	7.7%	5.8%	41.3%
Community or regional trail systems	10.7%	6.8%	18.0%	18.0%	46.6%
Mountain Bike Trails	39.2%	11.3%	19.6%	17.2%	12.7%
Community or Regional Parks	39.6%	10.9%	22.3%	11.9%	15.3%
Playgrounds	66.2%	12.4%	10.0%	6.0%	5.5%
Neighborhood Parks	62.1%	10.6%	13.6%	8.1%	5.6%
Access to Water-based Recreation	26.7%	7.4%	17.3%	18.3%	30.2%
Pavilions, Amphitheaters or similar outdoor spaces	54.8%	17.6%	14.6%	6.5%	6.5%
Sports Courts	75.4%	7.0%	9.0%	6.0%	2.5%
Outdoor Interpretative Facilities	40.9%	16.7%	24.6%	11.3%	6.4%
Community Gardens	64.8%	12.1%	13.1%	4.5%	5.5%
Areas for Hunting and/or Fishing	31.5%	10.3%	15.3%	14.8%	28.1%
Off-leash dog parks	73.0%	9.2%	13.3%	3.1%	1.5%
Action Sports Parks (skate parks, pump tracks)	76.3%	9.6%	6.1%	3.5%	4.5%
Swimming Pools/Water Parks	81.8%	8.6%	5.6%	1.0%	3.0%
Inclusive, Universally Accessible Facilities	29.9%	10.0%	22.4%	11.4%	26.4%

There were 208 responses to this question.

Responses to this question indicate that trails are the largest priority for outdoor recreation providers. This includes trails for hiking, walking, and running, as well as for motorized sports. Providers also indicated the importance they place on community or regional trail systems. After trails, water-based recreation is the next highest priority (30.2% rated it as the highest priority), followed by “Areas for Hunting and/or Fishing” (28.1% rated it as the highest priority).

Provider priorities align closely with the priorities expressed in the user survey. As shown in “Figure Six,” the activity that users had most commonly done in the last twelve months was “Walk/hike/run on unpaved trails” (73.1%), followed by “Walk/hike/run” on paved trails (49.8%). Similarly, nearly three-quarters of respondents

reported swimming in lakes, ponds, or rivers in the last twelve months (72.3%), with only slightly less than that (70.1%) visiting the beach (see “Figure Ten”). Fishing (67.5% did this in the last twelve months) and hunting (47.6% did this in the last twelve months—see “Figure Eight”) were also popular. These results indicate that outdoor recreation providers are indeed prioritizing those activities in which users are engaging most frequently.

Figure Twenty-Seven: proportional visualization of the priority organizations place on investing in facilities over the next five to ten years

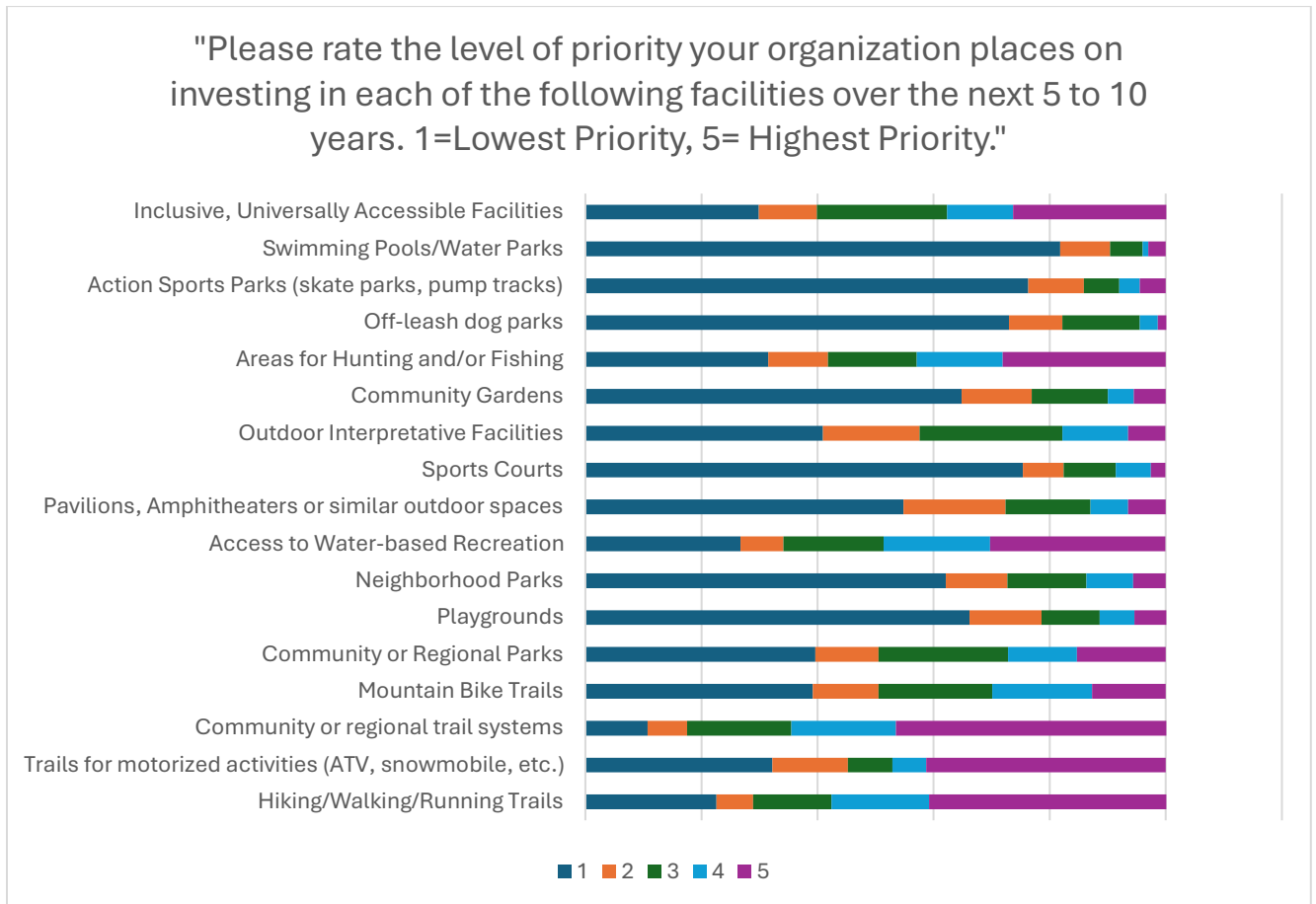


Figure Twenty-Eight: detailed breakdown of the priority organizations place on recreation and conservation efforts in Maine

“How important are the following priorities for outdoor recreation and conservation efforts in Maine? 1=Lowest Priority, 5=Highest Priority.”					
	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining Existing Parks and Recreation Areas	4.30%	0.50%	7.60%	16.10%	71.60%
Building Walking Paths, Bike Lanes, or Trails to connect places within your community	13.40%	11.00%	18.20%	18.70%	38.80%
Protecting Wildlife and Fish Habitat	1.40%	1.40%	9.60%	20.10%	67.50%
Acquiring and Protecting Open Space (as undeveloped and conserved land)	9.10%	3.40%	21.20%	17.30%	49.00%
Providing Environmental and Conservation Programs	11.10%	11.50%	23.10%	25.00%	29.30%
Restoring damaged Rivers and Streams	12.90%	8.10%	16.30%	20.10%	42.60%
Acquiring Additional Land and Water for Developed Recreation	13.30%	10.00%	21.40%	20.50%	34.80%
Forecasting, Mitigating, and Addressing Ways Climate Change Impacts Outdoor Recreation in Maine	14.80%	10.50%	22.90%	15.70%	36.20%
Making Maine a Premier Destination for Outdoor Recreation based Tourism	7.10%	5.70%	17.10%	16.60%	53.60%
Enhancing Visitor Use Management to Protect Areas from Overuse or Depreciative Behaviors	7.10%	5.70%	16.10%	18.00%	53.10%

There were 212 responses to this question.

The results of this question show that protecting and maintaining existing infrastructure and habitat is a central concern for outdoor recreation providers. Though “Maintaining existing Parks and Recreation Areas” was the most popular option (71.6% rate it a top priority), “Protecting Wildlife and Fish Habitat” was a close second (67.5%). “Enhancing Visitor Use Management to Protect Areas from Overuse or Depreciative Behaviors” was also rated highly (53.10%). “Restoring Damaged Rivers and Streams” was rated as a highest priority by 42.6% of respondents. All four of these options show an emphasis on maintaining or fixing what already exists, rather than on creating new infrastructure or acquiring more land. Less popular, however, was “Forecasting, Mitigating, and Addressing Ways Climate Change Impacts Outdoor Recreation in Maine.” While climate change has the potential to impact existing infrastructure, only 36.2% of outdoor recreation providers rated it as a “5”—only two options scored lower.

One of the two options that providers rated lower than “Forecasting, Mitigating, and Addressing Ways Climate Change Impacts Outdoor Recreation in Maine” was “Acquiring Additional Land and Water for Developed Recreation.” Of those who responded, 34.8% rated this as a highest priority, and 20.5% rated it as “4” on the scale. Again, this aligns with the heavier emphasis on maintaining existing infrastructure that is present throughout both the user and provider survey answers.

Though the emphasis on maintaining and protecting existing resources is the top priority, outdoor recreation providers overall indicated that they do not believe that this is incompatible with “Making Maine a Premier Destination for Outdoor Recreation based Tourism.” This was the third most popular highest priority, with 53.60% of respondents rating it as a highest priority. However, directly following that is “Enhancing Visitor Use Management to Protect Areas from Overuse or Depreciative Behavior,” with 53.10% of respondents rating that as a highest priority. This seems to suggest that while providers recognized that an increase in tourism could mean an increased strain on existing resources, they are prepared to prioritize the mitigation of those effects. Multiple short-answer question responses display this kind of reasoning, especially in relation to the snowmobile industry, where continued tourism relies on access to and maintenance of trails.

Figure Twenty-Nine: proportional visualization of the priority organizations place on recreation and conservation efforts in Maine

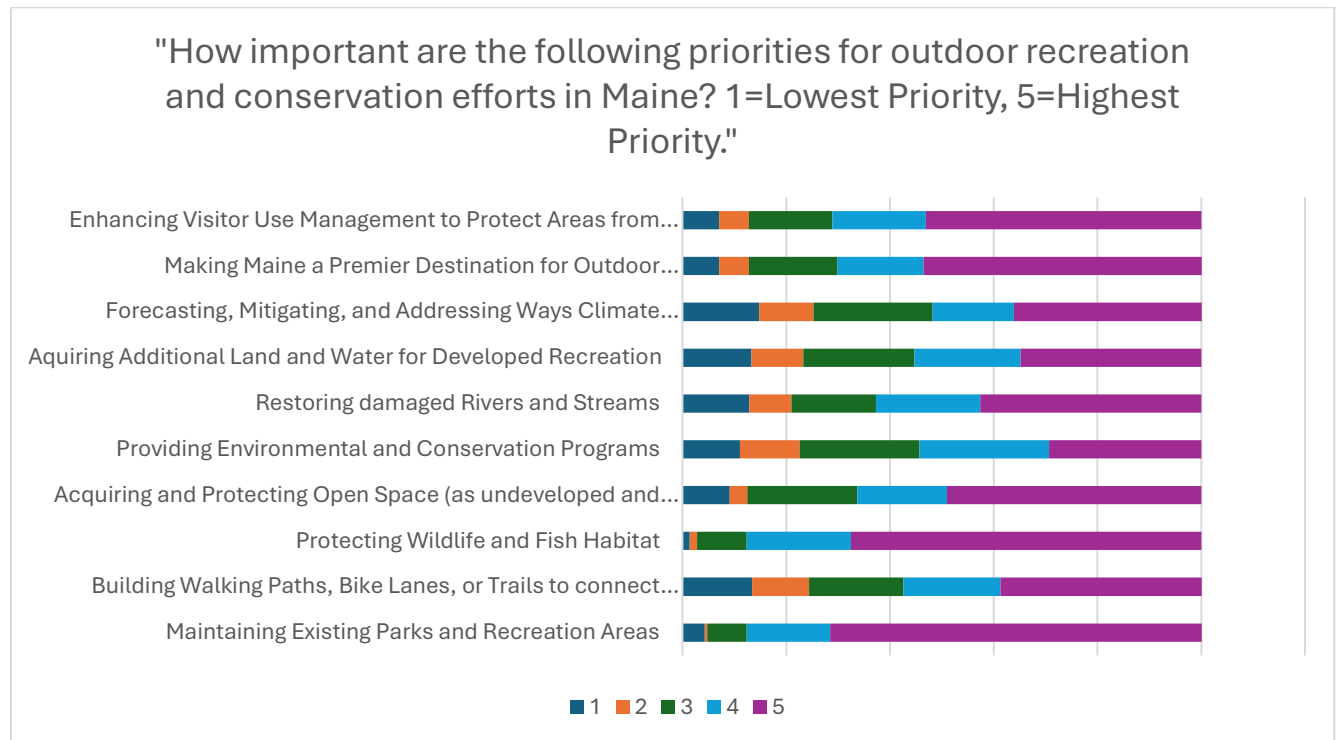


Figure Thirty: detailed breakdown of the degree to which issues are challenges or concerns for organizations

“Please specify the degree to which the following issues are challenges or concerns for your organization. 1= Low Concern/Challenge, 5= High Concern/Challenge”					
	1	2	3	4	5
Impacts to Recreation from Climate Change or Changing Weather Patterns	8.10%	7.70%	23.90%	18.70%	41.60%
Connecting with a More Diverse Population	17.50%	12.80%	19.90%	26.50%	23.20%
Providing Opportunities for Aging Population	14.80%	18.20%	23.00%	23.40%	20.60%
Competing with Private Youth Sports Organizations	62.70%	14.70%	11.80%	4.90%	5.90%
Assessing Public Health & Community Wellness through Outdoor Recreation	26.60%	15.90%	24.60%	13.50%	19.30%
Providing Facilities/Services that meet needs of individuals with disabilities	16.60%	13.30%	23.20%	19.40%	27.50%
Connecting Youth to Outdoor Recreation	8.10%	10.00%	15.70%	20.50%	45.70%
Responding to Electrified Forms of Recreation (e-bikes, scooters, etc.)	47.60%	18.80%	17.80%	5.30%	10.60%
Maintaining Public Access to Private Lands	6.20%	8.60%	7.60%	12.90%	64.80%
Hiring and Retaining a Sustainable Workforce	19.00%	13.30%	13.70%	14.70%	39.30%
Funding Challenges (General)	4.80%	3.80%	14.80%	16.70%	59.80%
Conflicts Among Varying User Groups	17.90%	18.40%	25.10%	15.50%	23.20%
Crowding and Visitor Use Management	23.10%	14.90%	24.00%	15.90%	22.10%

There were 212 responses to this question.

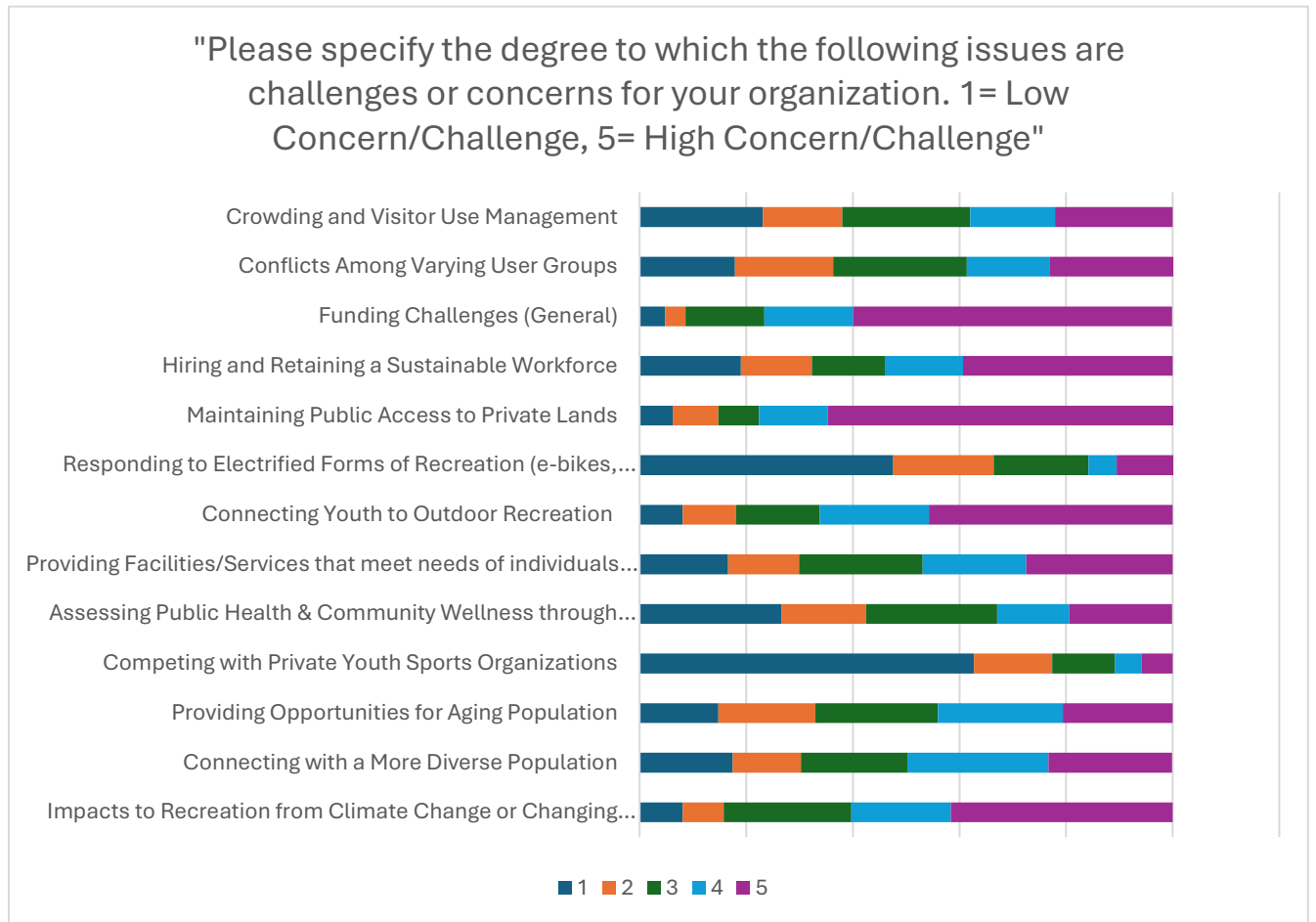
The challenges identified in this question are, overall, in accordance with those expressed elsewhere in both the provider and user surveys. The most highly-rated concern was “Maintaining Public Access to Private Lands,” with 64.8% of providers rating that at “5.” Users consistently prioritized this issue also, though when asked what they thought the state of Maine should prioritize in regard to outdoor recreation over the next 5 to 10 years, users ranked this issue third (see “Figure Twenty-Two”), after the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities, and access to outdoor activities for all people.

Other major challenges identified in this question include challenges that would not apply to users, such as “Funding Challenges” (59.8% of respondents rated it as a “5”). This appears to be a concern for almost all providers, as only 4.8% of providers rated this as “1,” or “low priority”—the lowest percentage for any option listed under this question.

There is a slight incongruity between the results of this question and the results displayed in “Figure Twenty-Eight,” which shows how providers responded when asked “How important are the following priorities for outdoor recreation and conservation efforts in Maine?” There, only 36.2% of providers rated “Forecasting,

Mitigating, and Addressing Ways Climate Change Impacts Outdoor Recreation in Maine” as their highest priority (15.7% rated it as “4” and 22.9% rated it as “3”). However, when asked if “Impacts to Recreation from Climate Change or Changing Weather Patterns” are a challenge or concern for the organization, 41.6% of users rated it “5,” meaning a high concern, 18.7% as “4,” and 23.9% as “3.” Providers thus seem to be slightly more willing to recognize climate change as a challenge or concern than they are to prioritize efforts to address this challenge/concern.

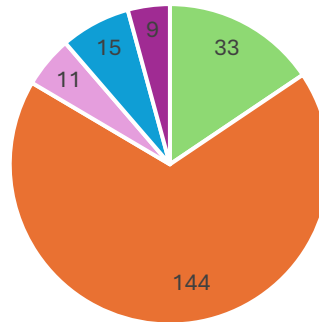
Figure Thirty-One: proportional visualization of the degree to which issues are challenges or concerns for organizations



Section 3: Trends in Outdoor Recreation

Figure Thirty-Two: detailed breakdown of trends over the last five years

"When considering the volume of recreational use at your site(s), which option best represents the trend in use over the last five years?"



- Use has stayed roughly the same across the past 5 years
- Overall use has increased vs. 5 years ago
- Overall use has decreased vs. 5 years ago
- Use has been very volatile, rising and sinking throughout the past 5 years
- I'm not sure how use has or has not changed.

There were 212 responses to this question.

For roughly three quarters of organizations, overall use has increased in the last five years. This likely helps explain the results displayed in "Figure Twenty-Eight," which shows that 52.10% of respondents saw "Enhancing Visitor Use Management to Protect Areas from Overuse or Depreciative Behaviors" as the highest of priorities.

APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL CONSERVATION FUNDS

Additional Conservation Funds

The intended purpose of the SCORP goes beyond the LWCF program in that it serves as an assessment of outdoor recreation issues and recommends priorities for a broad range of programs and actions related to outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine. The following describes other programs that fund outdoor recreation projects, many of which assess potential projects considering the SCORP.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act transfers a percentage of gasoline taxes paid on non-highway recreational use in off-highway vehicles from the Highway Trust Fund into the Recreational Trails Program for trail development, improvement and maintenance.

The Bureau of Parks and Lands has been designated as the state agency to administer the program in Maine. Within the Bureau, the Division of Grants and Community Recreation provides day-to-day program management. Two thirds of RTP funds are disbursed as grants-in-aid to municipalities, other qualified sub- divisions of state government and qualified non-profit organizations. The remaining one third of funding is allocated to BPL projects on state lands. Both state and local share projects are evaluated for need, viability and positive impact via an application process under guidelines established by the Federal Highway RTP as modified by the Bureau of Parks and Lands in coordination with the Maine Trails Advisory Committee. Coordination with the Maine SCORP is a scoring criterion.

Forest Legacy Program

The USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy program protects forestlands that provide timber and other forest products, opportunities for public recreation, high value plant and animal habitat, scenic resources, water quality protection and other public benefits. The Maine Forest Legacy Program focuses on acquiring conservation easements or fee interest in lands to protect the traditional uses and public values of Maine's forests and requires that projects funded with Forest Legacy funds allow public access to the lands. The Maine Forest Legacy Committee advises the Department of Conservation, Agriculture, and Forestry- Bureau of Parks and Lands on program policy and recommends projects to the State to be submitted for consideration in a competitive process for funding through the national Forest Legacy program.

Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF)

In 1987, the Maine Legislature created the LMF Program to secure "the traditional Maine heritage of public access to Maine's land and water resources or continued quality and availability of natural resources important to the interests and continued heritage of Maine people." Since then, multiple bonds supporting the LMF Program have passed by large margins.

LMF assistance has funded over 300 hundred projects with over 616,000 acres of conservation and recreation lands, including 333,425 acres of working lands, LMF has protected a total of almost 630,000 acres, including:

- 73 water access sites

- 41 farms and 9,884 acres of farmlands
- 30 working waterfront properties
- 158 miles of former railroad corridors for recreational trails and over 62 miles of coastal access

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund

The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund conserves wildlife and open spaces through the sale of instant Lottery tickets. With proceeds from ticket sales, grants are awarded twice a year. The seven-member Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board chooses projects in four categories that promote recreation as well as conservation of Maine's special places, endangered species and important fish and wildlife habitats.

Snowmobile Grants

The Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands provides four primary grants to support snowmobiling in the State of Maine. They are municipal, club, capital and disaster relief.

Snowmobile Municipal Grants are available to municipalities or counties for sharing the cost of the construction and maintenance of snowmobile trails. It differs from a club grant in that an application must be submitted by the town, city or county and requires local money.

Snowmobile Club Grants are made available to all snowmobile clubs who are on file with the Snowmobile Program (BPL) and wish to participate. It is intended to help defray some of the expenses incurred in snowmobile trail preparation, including pre-season work and winter grooming. This differs from the municipal grant in that it is made directly to a club and does not require municipal involvement.

Snowmobile Capital Equipment Grants, established in 1998 to help offset the cost of expensive grooming equipment, are available to registered clubs, towns or counties for equipment primarily used for the grooming of snowmobile trails in the State of Maine.

Snowmobile Disaster Relief Grants are available to registered snowmobile clubs or political subdivisions for the remediation of catastrophic weather events that significantly impact the connectivity of the state funded trail system.

In 2020, the Snowmobile Program approved \$5,512,536.85 towards the State's Snowmobile Trails In-Aid Grant Programs for trail equipment and maintenance.

In 2024, the Snowmobile Program approved \$6,778,813.79 towards the State's Snowmobile Trails In-Aid Grant Programs for trail equipment and maintenance.

The increase is from LD280 that took effect in the 2021-22 season. The result is a 22.97% increase to the grant programs

ATV Grants

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands provide grant funding opportunities as a cost share to municipalities and counties supporting the maintenance and development of ATV trails. Grant

funding is also available for incorporated ATV clubs who are on file with the ATV program office helping cover special landowner relations costs as well as construction and maintenance costs.

Additionally, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife manages the ATV Enforcement Grant and Aid Program. Grants from this program are intended to maintain, improve, and expand ATV enforcement and training for state, county, and municipal enforcement officers. Grants are available for three different project types: General ATV Enforcement, Multi- Jurisdictional Enforcement, and Training & Equipment.

Boating Facilities Fund

The Boating Facilities Fund funds development and acquisition projects providing access to the waters of Maine for public recreational boating. The Boating Facilities Fund Grant Program, administered by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, assists towns, cities, districts and other public and private agencies in the acquisition, development, enhancement, or rehabilitation of boat launching facilities available to the public. Sites on both tidal and non-tidal waters are eligible. Funding is available to assist in the development of hand-carry as well as trailered boat launch facilities.

Federal Energy Regulation Commissions (FERC)

FERC licensing procedures require that recreation facilities and needs are evaluated as part of licensing process for hydroelectric facilities. Furthermore, 6-year recreation updates (Form 80) are also required. An approved SCORP is given consideration in the FERC licensing process, along with other State plans related to conservation and recreation.

Table 1: Select Programs/Funds Associated with Outdoor Recreation in Maine

Program/Fund	Administered By	Types of Projects
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	<i>Statewide recreation planning, acquisitions with recreation values, outdoor recreation facilities development</i>
Recreational Trails Program	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	<i>Restoration, construction, acquisition, and education associated with recreational trails</i>
Maine Trails Program	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	<i>Trail design, development of new trails, renovation, trail support facilities.</i>
Snowmobile/ATV Club Grants Municipal Grants Capital Equipment Grants Disaster Relief Grants	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	<i>Construction, maintenance, and equipment expenses associated with snowmobile and ATV trails</i>
Boating Facilities Fund	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	<i>Acquisition, development, enhancement, or rehabilitation of boat launching facilities</i>
ATV Enforcement Grant and Aid Program	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	<i>Maintenance, improvement, and expansion of ATV enforcement and training for state, county, and municipal enforcement officers</i>
Forest Legacy Program	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	<i>Working forests conservation for public benefits</i>
Land for Maine's Future Program	Maine Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning	<i>Protection (fee & easement purchase) of conservation, recreation, working waterfront, and farmland</i>
Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund	Board of Directors	<i>Projects that promote recreation, conservation of Maine's special places, endangered species and important fish and wildlife habitat.</i>