

## 8 — Another Woodpecker

Do you see anything unusual about this white pine tree? The rectangular holes are a sign that a pileated woodpecker has been here. It is the largest woodpecker in North America and has a crested red head. You must be sneaky and quiet to see it. It is usually just heard: not with a rapid tapping, but more of a chopping sound.

## 9 — Dying Birch Trees

The gray birch is one of the first trees to start growing in an area that has been disturbed—cleared by humans or by a fire. They can grow quickly in rocky or poor soil and like lots of sun. They are a key tree in forest succession.

Most of these birch trees are more than 25 years old. The average life span here is only 20 years. Over time, the trees around them grow more quickly, outgrowing and shading them. Eventually the lack of sunlight will be causing the grey birch to weaken and die. Actually, though, that is a good thing for the health of the forest. The birch tree quickly starts to decompose and returns nutrients to the soil to build a healthy forest. This is one of the reasons why parks request that you not gather firewood in the park. It is also important not to bring firewood into the park, since it may spread invasive insects. Buy firewood from the park.

## 10 — Cones, But Not Pine Cones

As you walk along the shore, you will notice another row of trees that were planted there. These trees are also scattered throughout the park.

The eastern larch, or tamarack, is unique in that it is a conifer but not an evergreen. It is the only tree that reproduces with seed cones, which lose their needles each fall and grow fresh ones in spring.

## Thank you!

We hope you have enjoyed your walk and found this guide to be helpful and informative. Your support of Lamoine State Park is appreciated. Please consider purchasing merchandise items (hats, t-shirts, hoodies, decals), donating to our small project fund, or volunteering.

Our small project fund allows the park to support items not included in the park's budget, including:

- Publishing this trail guide
- Support of the Junior Ranger program
- Prizes for “Find Larry the Lobster”
- Purchasing plants and flowers for the park



[www.parksandlands.com](http://www.parksandlands.com)

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**Hours/Season:** Open 9:00 AM to sunset daily from  
May 15 to October 15



## Lamoine State Park Loop Trail Guide

This walk begins at the statue *Dialog* and ends by the beach access below the campground. As you walk the trail, numbered signs will help you to follow the descriptions in this guide.

### *Dialog*

This sculpture was placed here in 2009. The artist, Roland Mayer, came from Germany to participate in the Schoodic Sculpture Symposium, an event which selects artists from around the world and brings them to Maine to work with Maine granite. Over 30 works have been placed in Maine cities and towns.



### 1 — Start of the Loop Trail

A 1904 photo of the area that is now Lamoine State Park shows that the land had been cleared and consisted of open fields. If people had not interfered, this grassy area would have become a meadow and then a forest. This process is called succession.

Humans have impacted this natural process. Around 1950, a youth group planted pine seedlings. You can see these trees growing in rows in several areas of the park. Today, park staff mow weekly to maintain grassy lawns and fields. From this point, you can also see several areas that are mowed just once a year, so they stay as young meadows. The annual mowing limits the growth of shrubby plants and small trees. Other areas were not mowed at all and are being allowed to return to a natural state. The area on your left as you enter the trail is an example of the next phase of succession. You can see a couple of “islands” like this one along the trail. The areas between the campsites are also transitioning from meadow to woods. The seeds from which those trees (ash, maple, birch, and aspen) grew arrived naturally.

Along the loop trail, you can see how this area is changing. Look for dying trees and plants that cannot get enough sun to survive. Taller and longer living deciduous trees such as ash, oak, and maple are taking their place. Pines and spruces will join them in the coming years as the woods change into a climax forest of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees.

## 2 — The Tree House

Our tree house is built in a white pine tree. The white pine has played an important role in Maine’s history. It is the official state tree, and the cone and tassel are the state flower. They grow tall and straight. Before the Revolutionary War, the British Royal Navy reserved the best trees for masts on the king’s ships.

The tree produces five needles per bunch and has long, skinny cones. Look at the white pine our tree house is built in. Tall? Straight? What happened? The white pine weevil likes to eat the terminal bud growing at the top of the tree. The tree doesn’t die, but it can’t grow any taller. Side branches take over and vie to be the top of the tree, and sometimes, the weevil gets them, too. That makes for a wild-looking tree.

Anyone ready for a snack? The needles can be made into an herbal tea that, by weight, has 5 times the vitamin C in lemons.

The white cambium layer (the inner bark) of the tree can be eaten. The Iroquois called the Algonquins “Adirondacks” (tree-eaters) because they would gather it, dry it, and make it into a flour during the winter when other food was scarce.

## 3 — Jack Pine

Another type of pine tree planted in the park is the jack pine. It is not as valuable for lumber as the white pine because it does not grow as tall or large.

How can we tell the difference between the jack pine and the white pine? The jack pine has shorter needles, two to a bunch, and a smaller “tight” pine cone that will only open to release its seeds in hot (or very cold) temperatures. Sometimes it spreads only after a forest fire to help the forest recover. The bark also has a distinctive “cinnamon” color on the upper trunk.

## 4 — Naval Station Fence

This fence was built around 1900 when the U.S. Navy operated a station on this land to provide coal for ships of the Atlantic Fleet. The station operated from around 1903 to 1912, when oil replaced coal to fire ships’ boilers. The University of Maine used the property until 1950, when it became Lamoine State Park.

On this post, you can see several species of moss and lichens. A lichen is actually two different organisms that form a partnership so they both can live. One part is a fungus, and the other is algae. The fungus provides a home for the algae by attaching to the surface. The algae have chlorophyll and provide food and water for the lichen. Three different forms are found in the park: crusty, leafy, and shrubby. You can see crusty and leafy on this post. Shrubby can easily be found on the pine trees near *Dialog*.

Reproduction can be tricky since it involves two organisms. The easiest way is for the lichen to break into small pieces of itself that contain both parts. They can then be spread by wind or by animals brushing against the lichen. Sometimes the fungus produces spores. An alga can attach to the spore before it is released, or the spore may have to wait for an alga partner to find it.

## 5 — The Next Phase Starts

Do you notice a difference in the trees? We can start to see the start of the next stage of the succession; ash, maple, and oak trees are starting to become more numerous. The human-planted pines are less prevalent, and the natural deciduous growth from seeds is evident.

## 6 — One Busy Bird!

This tree is one of the apple trees planted in the park years ago. You will notice the rings of holes around the trunk. These were made by a special woodpecker, the sapsucker. This bird is unique among woodpeckers in that it has a tongue that is not barbed for skewering insects, but rough to pull sap (and any insects that might be stuck in it). The extreme number of holes will eventually weaken the tree.

## 7 — Ferns Everywhere

Ferns are a plant that is between a moss (which doesn’t have leaves) and plants that have leaves and seeds. Ferns have leaves, but are spread by spores, rather than seeds. What is a spore? It is a single cell that can grow into another plant without needing to join with another cell.

In prehistoric times, ferns grew to be the size that trees are today. These giant plants are the source of much of the coal mined today.

Two predominant types of ferns at the park are the sensitive (or beaded) fern and the interrupted fern. The sensitive fern is called so because it cannot survive cold weather and the leaves die off with the first frost. The name beaded fern comes from the spores that form on a separate stalk and look like beads. On the interrupted fern, spores will form in bunches part-way down the stem.

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