

# 2020-2025 MAINE STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN



*Strengthening Maine Communities  
through Outdoor Recreation*



# Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2020-2025

**-DRAFT-**

October 2019



Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Bureau of Parks and Lands



*The preparation of this report was financed in part through a planning grant from the US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965.*

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Forward</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Part 1: Plan Context and Process</b>	<b>2-16</b>
Introduction	2
Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) & Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)	2
State Requirements	3
SCORP’s Relationship with Other Recreation and Conservation Funds	3
Planning Process	7
Executive Summary	8-16
Theme 1: Support Active, Engaged Communities	11
Theme 2: Address Workforce Attraction through Outdoor Recreation	13
Theme 3: Sustain and Grow Tourism	14
Theme 4: Promote Ecological and Environmental Resilience	15
Theme 5: Invest in Maintenance and Stewardship	16
<b>Part II: Trends &amp; Resources</b>	
<b>A. Where We Stand Today – A Big Picture Look at Outdoor Recreation in Maine</b>	<b>17</b>
Economic Recognition	17
Recent Activity and Trends	18
Recent Activity (LWCF-Funded Examples)	21
<b>B. Participation and Interests – A Look at Outdoor Recreation Demand</b>	<b>22</b>
Demographic Factors	22
National Demand for Outdoor Recreation Activities	23
Non-Participation	26
Maine Resident Outdoor Recreation Patterns	27
Activity Insights from SCORP Surveys	29
Maine’s Non-Resident Recreating Public	31
<b>C. Where &amp; What? – The Supply of Outdoor Recreation Resources in Maine</b>	<b>33</b>
Maine: It’s Places and Character	33

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Who Provides Public Conservation Lands?	34
Where are Conservation Lands Located?	35
What Does Conservation look like?	36
Recreation Sites and Infrastructures	36
Public Input on the Supply of Outdoor Recreation	43
<b>Part III: Key Themes and Implementation Strategies</b>	<b>45-60</b>
Theme 1: Support Active, Engaged Communities	46
Theme 2: Address Workforce Attraction through Outdoor Recreation	51
Theme 3: Sustain and Grow Tourism	54
Theme 4: Promote Ecological and Environmental Resilience	57
Theme 5: Invest in Maintenance and Stewardship	60
<b>Appendix A: Plan Process</b>	<b>A1</b>
<b>Appendix B: Research Report</b>	
<b>Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Survey</b>	<b>B1</b>
<b>Appendix C: Wetland Component</b>	<b>C1</b>

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

### List of Figures

Figure 1: Median Age of Maine Counties	22
Figure 2: Projected 2016-2026 Population Change for Maine Counties	22
Figure 3: Percent of Residents within a County Having a Disability	23
Figure 4: Overnight Stay Locations	30
Figure 5: Reasons to Participate in Outdoor Recreation	30
Figure 6: Maine Conservation Land Management Type	37
Figure 7: Maine Conserved Lands by Management Type	38
Figure 8: Maine Hiking Trail Locations	39
Figure 8: Rides Listed on the Bicycle Coalition of Maine's Where to Ride Web Page	39
Figure 9: Maine Bike Trail/Path Locations	40
Figure 10: Towns with Access to Bike Path/Trails	40
Figure 11: Locations of Public Parks in Maine	42
Figure 12: Locations of Playgrounds in Maine	42
Figure 13: Locations of Playing Courts & Fields in Maine	43

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

### List of Tables

Table 1: Select Programs/Funds Associated with Outdoor Recreation in Maine	6
Table 2: Select Maine County Attributes (US Census Data)	19
Table 3: Most Population and Most Frequent Outdoor Recreation Activities in the US (2013) as Reported by the Outdoor Foundation	23
Table 4: Top 5 Activity Interests of Those Not Participating in Outdoor Recreation – Categorized by Age	25
Table 5: Top 5 Activity Interests of Those Not Participating in Outdoor Recreation – Categorized by Income	25
Table 6: Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities	28
Table 7: Recreation/Conservation Sites Visited within the Last 3 Years.	29
Table 8: Ratings for Exercise and Being Physically Active as Motivation for Recreating Outdoors -Listed by Age Group	30
Table 9: Attitudes About Outdoor Recreation by Age	31
Table 10: Non-Governmental Organization Conservation Holdings in Maine.	35
Table 11: Nordic Ski Centers in Maine	40
Table 12: Commercial Campgrounds in Maine by Region	42

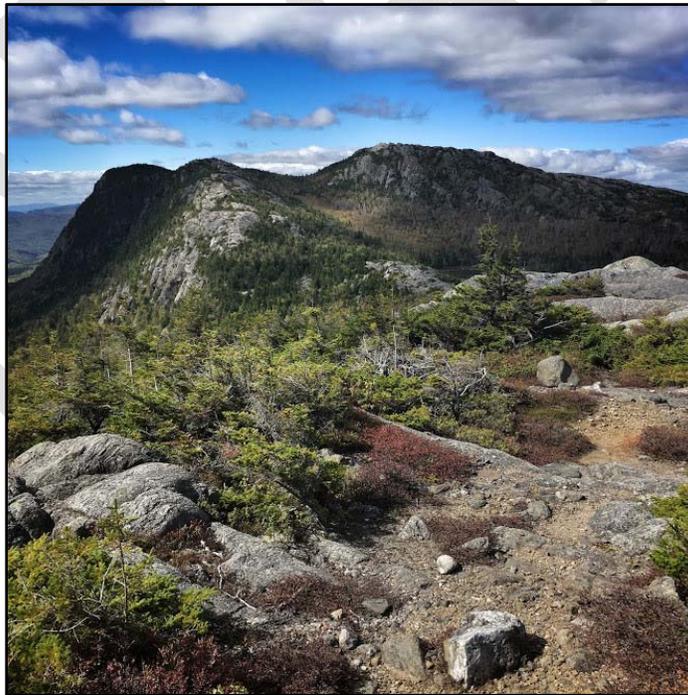
## Forward

Maine is many things; the state encompasses bald, windswept peaks, almost endless stretches of sprawling forest lands, bucolic small towns, rolling fields, spruce-clad ocean shores, island-studded harbors, mill towns, working ports, and a whole host of other environments.

This physical beauty, rooted in the allure of deep woods, clean rivers, clear lakes, and crashing surf is intertwined with a sense of place - a tempo, a way of life. Outdoor recreation is central to this way of life. Outdoor recreation's contribution to Maine is more than a collection of swimming pools or soccer fields, though they too have their role. Outdoor recreation is a broad umbrella under which Saturday morning baseball games behind the local middle school and ten-day canoe expeditions both belong - along with countless other activities. Maine life is richly imbued with opportunities to get outside and experience the benefits of nature, movement, and traditions.

There is a strong link between the special character of Maine's places and its economic, environmental, and community values. This report recognizes that "quality of place" is a driver for our recreation economy and a source of health and well-being. It therefore recognizes the fundamental need for stewardship of our natural resources and outdoor recreation infrastructure such as trails and parks. It is intended and hoped that this plan helps identify the areas in which outdoor recreation efforts can be undertaken to best serve the people of Maine and the visitors who come here to experience the outdoors. It is also hoped that the information on trends, demand, supply, and issues will be of interest to and support the work of the many diverse people and organizations that play a role in providing outdoor recreation experiences in Maine.

***-Maine SCORP Planning Team.***



***Parker Ridge Trail, Tumbledown Mt. Public Land***

## Part I: Plan Context and Process

### Introduction

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) & Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF) provides matching funds to states for statewide outdoor recreation planning and for acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. From 1966 through 2019, just under \$45 million of LWCF money has been used for non-federal projects in Maine. Administered at the federal level by the National Park Service and at the state level by the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) 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. Municipalities, schools, the State of Maine, and tribal governments are eligible to apply for local LWCF grants through BPL.

- “Established by Congress in 1965, the LWCF comprises revenue generated from offshore oil and gas leasing, not taxpayer dollars. The federal portion of the LWCF is used to acquire lands, waters, and interests therein necessary to achieve the natural, cultural, wildlife, and recreation management objectives of the NPS and other federal land management agencies.”<sup>1</sup>
- “Over 40,000 grants to states and localities have been approved under the LWCF grants program for acquisition, development and planning of outdoor recreation opportunities in the United States.”<sup>2</sup>

State participation in LWCF requires preparation of a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and approval of the plan by the National Park Service (NPS). The LWCF Act requires an approved SCORP to include the following requirements of Chapter 630.1 of the National Park Service LWCF guidelines.

- *evaluation of the demand for and supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities in the state;*
- *a program for implementation of the plan;*
- *certification by the Governor that ample opportunity for public participation has taken place in plan development; and*

The minimum requirements of the plan are:

1. *inclusion of a description of the process and methodology chosen by the state;*
2. *inclusion of ample opportunity for public participation in the planning process, involving all segments of the state’s population;*
3. *comprehensive coverage - it will be considered comprehensive if It:*

*A. identifies outdoor recreation issues of statewide importance based upon, but not limited to, input from the public participation program. The plan must also identify those issues that the state will address through the LWCF, and those issues which may be addressed by other means;*

*B. evaluates demand or public outdoor recreation preferences, but not necessarily through quantitative statewide surveys or analyses; and*

*C. evaluates the supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities, but not necessarily through quantitative statewide inventories.*

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

4. inclusion of an implementation program that identifies the state's strategies, priorities and actions for the obligation of its LWCF apportionment. The implementation program must be of sufficient detail to demonstrate that projects submitted to the NPS for LWCF funding implement the plan; and

5. inclusion of a wetlands priority component consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. At a minimum the wetlands priority component must:

A. be consistent with the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;

B. provide evidence of consultation with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources; and

C. contain a listing of those wetland types which should receive priority for acquisition.

SCORP may consist of a single document or be comprised of multiple documents, as long as the LWCF planning guidelines in chapter 630.1 are met.

### State Requirements

Prior to 2001, Maine state law required BP&L to periodically report to the governor on the supply of and demand for outdoor recreation facilities and how these might be met (12 MRSA 1817). Submittal of the SCORP to the Governor accomplished this reporting requirement. In 2001, the Maine Legislature amended this law to require the BP&L director to submit a state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over state parks and public lands matters every 5 years. The amendment specifies that a plan meeting the federal SCORP requirements will also satisfy legislative requirements, further formalizing the role of SCORP in state government.

### SCORP's Relationship with Other Recreation and 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 in light of the SCORP. **Table 1** (at the end of this section) includes additional details associated with these programs.

### Other Federal Grants and/or Programs of Note

#### 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 subdivisions of state government and to qualified non-profit organizations. The remaining one third portion 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

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

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 in order 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.

### **State Grants and/or Programs of Note**

#### **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 helped conserve over 600,000 acres of conservation and recreation lands through easement and fee acquisitions. Projects have conserved:

- 59 water access sites
- 41 farms totaling more than 9,755 acres
- 25 commercial working waterfront properties
- more than 1,272 miles of shore lands, and 58 miles of former railroad corridors for recreational trails.
- 333,425 acres of working lands reflecting LMF's efforts to conserve the working landscape and keep lands in private ownership with permanent land conservation agreements.

#### **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 habitat.

#### **Snowmobile Grants**

The Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands provides *Municipal Grants* to municipalities or counties for sharing the cost of the construction and maintenance of snowmobile trails. *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. *Capital Grants* (for grooming equipment) are available to clubs or municipalities.

**ATV Grants**

The Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands provides Municipal Grants to municipalities or counties to help defer the cost of the construction or maintenance of ATV trails. ATV club grants are also available to ATV clubs who are on file with the ATV Program and are to help cover the costs of trail construction and maintenance and also include a special landowner appreciation bonus. There has been a 600% increase in grant funding since 2000. 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 general 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 launching facilities.

**SCORP's Relation to Recreation and Conservation Efforts involving Private Philanthropy**

It is hoped that the SCORP plan may help inform the outdoor recreation planning efforts undertaken by a broad spectrum of planners, advocates, and fundraisers. One way in which a SCORP document can expand its value and impact is by serving as support for organizations seeking private funds for recreation and conservation projects. Therefore, fundraisers and grant writers are strongly encouraged to use the Maine SCORP as they seek support for outdoor recreation projects.

**SCORP & the Federal Energy Regulation Commission's (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.



2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

<b>Table 1: Select Programs/Funds Associated with Outdoor Recreation in Maine</b>		
<b>Program/Fund</b>	<b>Administered By</b>	<b>Types of Projects</b>
<i>Land and Water Conservation Fund</i>	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	Statewide recreation planning, acquisitions with recreation values, outdoor recreation facilities development
<i>Recreational Trails Program</i>	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	Restoration, construction, acquisition, and education associated with recreational trails
<i>Snowmobile/ATV Club and Municipal Grants</i>	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	Construction, maintenance, and capital expenses associated with snowmobile and ATV trails
<i>Boating Facilities Fund</i>	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	acquisition, development, enhancement, or rehabilitation of boat launching facilities
<i>ATV Enforcement Grant and Aid Program</i>	Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	maintain, improve, and expand ATV enforcement and training for state, county, and municipal enforcement officers
<i>Forest Legacy Program</i>	Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands	working forests conservation for public benefits
<i>Land for Maine's Future Program</i>	Maine Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning	Protection (fee & easement purchase) of conservation, recreation, working waterfront, and farm land.
<i>Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund</i>	seven-member board	projects that promote recreation, conservation of Maine's special places, endangered species and important fish and wildlife habitat.

## Planning Process

The planning process for this Maine SCORP report included robust public input helping to shape a vision for outdoor recreation needs and opportunities in Maine for the next five years. A major thrust of the process involved the development of a significant survey effort performed by Market Decisions Research (MDR), a private research firm based in Portland, Maine. MDR was selected to assist with survey development and analysis through a competitive bid process.

### Online Survey

Sampling was done via a convenience sample. Email messages containing a link to an online survey instrument was distributed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land (ME BPL) staff to municipal recreation departments across the state. These departments then distributed the link to individuals on their mailing and contact lists. Individuals were then free to take the survey at any time over the course of data collection. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry promoted the survey link via social media and Advisory Committee members were also encouraged to share the link widely with their respective agencies, groups, and constituencies.

The survey instrument for the 2019 Maine SCORP Survey was created by ME BPL staff and Market Decisions Research specifically for the purposes of this research. Input and guidance were provided by the SCORP Steering Committee on topics, areas of interest, and specific questions they sought to find answers to. This was combined with a review of the 2014 survey instrument, as well as exploration of the literature on recreation research. The survey instrument is presented in Appendix B.

Data collection began in March 2019 and was conducted through May 2019. All data was collected through the online survey hosting platform SurveyMonkey. In total, 3,289 individuals began the survey. Of these, 2,321 individuals answered the final survey question. This represents a completion rate of 70.5%. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents were full-time Maine residents, 2% were not residents, 2% were part-time residents, and 29% were unknown.

### Steering Committee

A plan steering committee was recruited to provide guidance, reflection, and direction related to the development of the plan. Comprised of partner agency representatives and representatives from a wide range of insight-providing nongovernmental entities, steering committee members attended a series of meetings designed to inform the process of seeking and understanding public input on outdoor recreation issues/needs. Appendix A details the composition of and meeting notes for the Steering Committee.

### Report Review & Comment

*To be described following review period, which is currently ongoing.*

### Other Research & Reports

This report relies on a multitude of information sources. Government data including but not limited to Census data, media reports, governmental and nongovernmental academic research, and reports from government and nongovernment sources all contributed to filling out a more complete perspective on the status of and issues associated with outdoor recreation in Maine.

## Executive Summary

### Background

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF) provides matching funds to states for statewide outdoor recreation planning and for acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. From 1966 through 2019, just under \$45 million of LWCF money has been used for non-federal projects in Maine – with projects spread across communities in all of Maine’s counties. LWCF funding does not come from taxpayer revenue, but rather from a portion of federal off-shore oil drilling fees.

LWCF grants can provide up to 50% of the allowable costs for approved acquisition or development projects. Municipalities, schools, the State of Maine, and tribal governments are eligible to apply for local LWCF grants through the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry). State participation in LWCF requires preparation of a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and approval of the plan by the National Park Service. A plan must include analysis of the state’s supply of outdoor recreation resources, discussion of the demand for outdoor recreation activities, a wetlands component, and a program for implementing the plan. Any plan must also include public participation in the planning process. To meet standards for being considered “comprehensive”, a plan needs to identify recreation issues of statewide importance. Maine’s SCORP plan simultaneously meets state outdoor recreation planning mandates.

This version of the Maine SCORP was developed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands with support from a diverse Steering Committee of state agency and non-governmental partners. It relies on a significant public survey component, various data sources detailing the supply of outdoor recreation sites and facilities, academic and other published reports, professional expertise from various sectors, and public input.

### Plan Elements

Part I of the plan details planning context and process. Part II discusses outdoor recreation trends and resources. Part III explores five key themes (issues of statewide importance) and lists implementation strategies for each theme. These strategies are further broken down into LWCF funding priorities and broader recommended actions. The implementation strategies are also listed by theme here in the Executive Summary. Finally, the plan appendices include steering committee members and meeting notes, the online survey report and survey instrument, and the wetlands component.

### Plan Highlights

---

#### *Economic Activity*

---

The main thrust of the plan is that outdoor recreation is a major engine **of economic activity** and an incredible asset as **communities** strive to be healthy, vibrant places where people are excited to live, work, and play. Maine’s outdoor recreation economy generates \$8.2 billion in annual consumer spending and 76,000 jobs.<sup>1</sup> The outdoor lifestyle Maine provides creates a competitive advantage opportunity as businesses seek to recruit and retain talented workers. This is crucial to Maine, as our

---

<sup>1</sup> Outdoor Industry Association. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://outdoorindustry.org/state/maine/>

oldest-in-the-nation population leads to a projected shortage of over 100,000 workers over the next two decades<sup>2</sup>.

---

## Community Health and Wellness

---

Researchers have correlated positive community health and wellness measures to access to outdoor recreation opportunities. This is especially true for close-to-home opportunities. Survey data from the Maine SCORP survey shows that Mainers value and seek a range of outdoor experiences, settings, and facilities and that they desire experiences they can seek out near where they live. Older survey respondents appear to especially value outdoor recreation for exercise and health. There is opportunity to better target community health and wellness through improved/expanded outdoor recreation facilities and programs. An important aspect of this opportunity is improving the availability of recreation sites meeting the needs of those with disabilities – a sizable population in much of our state.

---

## Tourism

---

Maine is an exception in the eastern United States for its expansive outdoor spaces and remote, wild settings. Likewise, its tradition of public access to private lands is a remarkable albeit vulnerable asset. This character, along with its iconic coastline, historic resources, and ample wildlife continue to make it a major destination for visitors. Tourism generated \$6.2 billion in direct expenditures and supported over 109,000 jobs in Maine. However, there is opportunity to grow and sustain tourism – especially in economically challenged areas looking to diversify their economy through strategic tourism planning. LWCF and other funds/programs/efforts can help strengthen and manage tourism destinations.

---

## Public Access to Private Lands

---

Mentioned above, public access to private lands continue to be a major issue. While Maine is still a national leader in having public access to private lands, Mainers rely on this access and loss of access does happen – often in response to impacts from less considerate recreationists. Loss of access and impacts to landowners are both concerns statewide and are relevant to landowners of all sizes.

---

<sup>2</sup> Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. (2017). *Workforce and Business Attraction Research: Draft Report Findings from Phase I (Exploratory Consulting)*. Retrieved from: <https://motpartners.com/research/special-research-projects/>

---

## Climate Change

---

Climate change is requiring planning and infrastructure adapt to an evolving environment. Projects, acquisitions, and ongoing management of outdoor recreation resources will require forethought, constant learning and communication, and adaptability. The plan promotes thinking and projects that support the conservation and management of resilient sites well-suited to handle evolving recreational interests and realities as well as vulnerable species and ecosystems.

---

## Maintenance, Stewardship, and Staffing

---

Maintenance, stewardship, and staffing are real challenges acknowledged in the plan. National and state data reflects the unfortunate reality of the “do more with less” approach that has characterized outdoor recreation and conservation management. At the same time, there is growing appreciation for how vital outdoor recreation is to the economy and personal lives. Public assets such as parks, open space, and infrastructure have grown in acreage and – in most cases – use, yet staffing levels are flat or even diminished. Deferred maintenance continues to grow.

---

## Investment

---

Respondents in the Maine SCORP survey indicated a widespread opinion that Maine has not invested enough in outdoor recreation. Of the 2,500+ respondents, 46% stated that Maine had not enough investment, 21% stated “about the right amount”, and less than 1% felt too much investment had been made (32% did not know). Only 5% of respondents rated **acquiring public recreational lands** as low priority or not a priority for the State of Maine; 37% rated it as essential, 34% rated it as high priority, and 24% rated it as medium priority.

---

## Information

---

Information about where and how to recreate continues to be of high interest. Outreach and data indicate the quality of outdoor recreation information (ranging from site signage to online content) has room for improvement and can be a barrier to participation.

## Theme 1: Support Active, Engaged Communities

### *Implementation Strategies*

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>3</sup>
2. Ensure LWCF and the Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF) work together enabling funding of community projects.
3. Work with the LMF and other appropriate acquisition funding sources to ensure the importance of close-to-home destinations supporting health and wellness is considered in acquisition priorities.
4. Continue to strengthen and expand partnerships, coalitions, and collaborations between public and private sectors; between agencies; between state, federal, and local entities; and across sectors including but not limited to health, economic development, community development, education, and outdoor recreation. As part of collaborations, coordinate messaging, outreach, planning, and funding strategies to reach outcome-based goals.
5. Encourage and support regional planning involving recreation, conservation, economic development, and other elements of community vitality.
6. Explore, expand, and support opportunities for outdoor recreation to address social issues (e.g., the opioid crisis, mental health, obesity, etc.).
7. Continue to engage in listening and research to understand target audiences. Tailor communication strategies and programming to meet specific participation and/or outcome goals. Promote cross-sector collaboration and sharing (e.g., parks and health professionals, etc.).
8. Prioritize and reward proposed projects supported by trend and community data indicating a likelihood of the project meeting realistic health, wellness, and economic development goals.
9. Develop a statewide outdoor recreation strategic communications and marketing plan and ensure messaging includes the promotion of how to get active and engaged in the outdoors right outside your door. Recognize messaging needs to account for time constraints and busy lives.
10. Recognize outdoor recreation's significant role in lifestyles and plan for/promote to unique audiences. Examples include but are not limited to locavores (hunting, fishing, foraging, food tourism mixed with recreation activities), wellness programming and marketing (e.g., paddle board yoga, walking/running groups), etc.
11. Prioritize projects that make it easier for Mainers to fit outdoor recreation into their busy daily lives. This applies to both development and acquisition projects.
12. Increase the availability and quality of outdoor recreation resources meeting accessibility standards, thereby better serving persons with disabilities.
13. Fund and develop projects that are well-designed for older Mainers looking to gain health and wellness benefits from outdoor recreation.
14. Strive to provide a range of close-to-home opportunities for multiple interests and capabilities. Work to identify park and other open space amenities that match the surrounding neighborhoods/community interests. Sports fields, playgrounds, community gardens, trails and boat launches, primitive backcountry areas, and more should be available as appropriate and possible.
15. Be responsive to the changing demographics of Maine – ensuring opportunities for “new Mainers” who have immigrated to our state to get outside.
16. Support facilities associated with the capacity to host trail races, community events, outdoor festivals, and other special events that grow community engagement and economic activity.

---

<sup>3</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

17. Develop and sustain a vibrant Maine State Trails Plan. Ensure the plan addresses standards, supply, demand, trends, and opportunities. While a plan would serve community values broader than tourism alone, specific attention should be paid to guidance related to developing, managing, and promoting trail assets integral to tourism and economic development. Any plan should include the full suite of trail types.
18. Develop web-based software enabling municipal, nonprofit, state, and any other planners to easily measure and document both demographic data and outdoor recreation supply data by entering project coordinates. Require grant-seekers for LWCF funds, Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and potentially other state grant funds linked with outdoor recreation to include this demographic and supply data in project narratives. Seek evidence of meeting unmet needs for populations lacking opportunity.
19. Increase the coordinated presence of Maine outdoor recreation online content. Enhance the quality and ease of access to online information about not just where to find outdoor opportunities but how to participate safely and responsibly and what the benefits are (why participate?).
20. Recognize that public schools, while technically eligible for LWCF funding, have a difficult track record of maintaining LWCF projects in perpetuity and have run into costly and difficult conversions (finding adequate replacements for nonfunctional and/or converted uses). Therefore, outdoor recreation infrastructure and programs should be strongly supported at schools but LWCF funds should be deterred at schools. Efforts should explore promote other funds and opportunities, including but not limited to the Recreational Trails Program, etc.

## Theme 2: Address Workforce Attraction through Outdoor Recreation

### *Implementation Strategies*

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>4</sup>
2. Develop a statewide outdoor recreation strategic communications and marketing plan and ensure messaging includes the promotion of how the outdoor recreation lifestyle can attract new Maine workers.
3. Prioritize and support projects that demonstrate integrated thinking/planning related to attracting workers. Additionally, support projects that have proximity and design characteristics making it easier for workers to recreate before or after work and/or during breaks.
4. Expand and encourage initiatives at scales from local to state in which employers and outdoor recreation resource managers collaborate. Strive to improve employee opportunities to learn outdoor skills and gain awareness of outdoor opportunities. Seek opportunities to weave in health & wellness components as well as volunteerism.
5. Reflecting the very significant role public access to private land plays in Maine, support landowner relations initiatives and relationships to protect traditions Maine relies on. Support efforts to educate recreationists about the values and responsibilities associated with using private land.
6. Bring together regional employers, economic development professionals, and outdoor recreation professionals & interests to collaboratively plan regional outdoor recreation efforts.
7. Develop and promote content telling the story of outdoor lifestyle opportunities in Maine communities.
8. Foster/support local groups/clubs centered around outdoor recreation.
9. Support and strengthen the newly created Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

### Theme 3: Sustain and Grow Tourism

#### *Implementation Strategies*

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>5</sup>
2. Develop a statewide outdoor recreation strategic communications and marketing plan and ensure messaging includes themes and content incorporating tourism expertise and messaging.
3. Fund and prioritize projects that plan for specific, unique experiences capable of attracting a volume of use appropriate to the site.
4. Develop or repurpose sites that fill experiential gaps for which there is documented tourism demand. Draw on region's unique assets to create or enhance experiences worthy of travel.
5. Develop and sustain a vibrant Maine State Trails Plan. Ensure the plan addresses standards, supply, demand, trends, and opportunities. While a plan would serve community values broader than tourism alone, specific attention should be paid to guidance related to developing, managing, and promoting trail assets integral to tourism and economic development. Any plan should include the full suite of trail types.
6. Continue and strengthen destination development initiatives led by the Maine Office of Tourism.
7. Increase/support partnerships between resources managers, local commercial entities, and regional tourism agencies. Pursue collaborative planning, mapping, information sharing, and public information efforts.
8. Collaborate to tell the story of Maine's outdoors. Strategic, high-quality content should be developed to inspire visitation, help direct visitors to appropriate destinations, and to inform/inspire low-impact recreational behaviors supporting landowner/manager goals.
9. Support events and programs (e.g., festivals, celebrations, skills events, etc.) that introduce travelers and potential travelers to Maine's outdoors, its traditions, and its opportunities.
10. Support and strengthen the newly created Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation.

---

<sup>5</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## Theme 4: Promote Ecological and Environmental Resilience

### Implementation Strategies

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>6</sup>
2. Working with other state agencies and conservation partners, prioritize projects that thoughtfully address implications of climate change and that show likelihood of being resilient and adaptable to change, including but not limited to assisting wildlife and natural ecosystems adapt and migrate.
3. Identify outdoor recreation infrastructure development projects and acquisitions that meet recreation interests while also protecting ecological resilience and habitat connectivity. Examples include but are not limited to simultaneously enabling long distance trails and corridor protections; acquiring lands with enough topography to allow plant migrations while affording trail vistas; adding conserved land to coastal recreation sites at risk to sea level change; etc. Ensure planning protects ecological integrity while facilitating outdoor recreation.
4. Invest in recreation infrastructure that is becoming more and more essential due to a changing climate (e.g., snow-making for ski trails, larger culverts to address higher volume storms and to allow fish passage, better engineered and more durable trails, splash pads and shade elements at local parks, etc.).
5. Support collaborative planning, training, and data-sharing via public-private partnerships to address best practices for managing outdoor recreation in a changing environment.<sup>7</sup>
6. Continue to ensure that outdoor recreation – an enormously significant economic and lifestyle component of Maine life – is considered as plans and communities grapple with addressing the impacts of climate change.
7. Support Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife’s efforts to protect Maine’s native brook trout fishery, recognizing climate change will require focused attention and collaboration.

---

<sup>6</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

<sup>7</sup> Aligns with Action Item 5.B. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## Theme 5: Invest in Maintenance and Stewardship

### *Implementation Strategies*

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>8</sup>
2. Prioritize rehab, upgrades, and revisions to existing sites to meet current and future outdoor recreation needs.
3. Invest in infrastructure improvements that make ongoing maintenance more sustainable.
4. Ensure trails and other infrastructure are well-designed to minimize future rehab.
5. Recognize the need for increased outdoor recreation management staff capacity (at various levels and within various agencies). Support increases in staffing to more appropriately steward outdoor recreation resources and visitor experiences, with acknowledgement that outdoor recreation has significant influence on economic development as well as health and wellness.
6. Support adding educational and law enforcement capacity to better manage recreationists' behaviors to better protect private and public resources as well as recreation experiences.
7. Support partnerships and capacity for managing volunteers engaged in stewardship.

---

<sup>8</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## Part II: Trends & Resources

### **A. Where We Stand Today – A Big Picture Look at Outdoor Recreation in Maine**

Maine’s outdoor recreation traditions and status are long-standing. As such, Maine has not had to create a culture of outdoor recreation and develop destinations from scratch over recent years. However, the need to keep up with recreational trends, demands, challenges, and opportunities is a constantly evolving task. The text below uses the 2014-2019 Maine SCORP priorities as a framework for discussing Maine’s outdoor recreation trends and developments over the last five years. More in-depth discussion of trends, use patterns, participation, and survey data is included in Part II-B of this report.

#### **Economic Recognition**

Before discussing the priorities listed below, it is important to discuss one development not neatly aligned with the listed priorities. The growing recognition of the economic significance of the outdoor economy has been a major trend across the U.S. This has been true in Maine as well. Work by the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) shows that in 2016, outdoor recreation tallied 2.2% of the nation’s gross domestic product. As a comparison, that figure is significantly larger than mining and utilities and a notch above chemical products manufacturing while only being 0.1% behind broadcasting and telecommunications.<sup>9</sup> Here in Maine, it is estimated that the state’s outdoor recreation economy generates \$8.2 billion in annual consumer spending and

**Acadia National Park’s 3.5 million visits in 2017 resulted in about 4,163 jobs and \$338 million for the local economy** (per National Park Service news release retrieved at: <https://www.nps.gov/acad/learn/news/tourism-created-284-million-in-total-economic-benefits.htm>).



76,000 jobs.<sup>10</sup> According to the BEA, Maine is among the top five states in the nation in terms the percentage of GDP attributable to outdoor recreation.

Responding to the recognition of how sizable and important the outdoor recreation economy is, more than 11 states have created state level offices of outdoor recreation. **Maine’s Office of Outdoor Recreation** has been established and funded to build coalitions and awareness, plan, communicate, and partner to strengthen outdoor recreation in Maine and its economic impact. Housed in the Maine Office of Tourism, the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation has been created to build bridges within and outside of government, between industry and agencies, and to a nationwide movement of celebrating and sustaining the outdoor economy.

**Here in Maine, it is estimated that the state’s outdoor recreation economy generates \$8.2 billion in annual consumer spending and 76,000 jobs.**

<sup>9</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2018). *Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account: Updated Statistics 2012-2016*. Capitol Hill Briefing, September 20, 2018. Erich H. Strassner.

<sup>10</sup> Outdoor Industry Association. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://outdoorindustry.org/state/maine/>

Outdoor Recreation through the Lens of the 2014-2019 ME SCORP Priorities

**Priority Area 1: Connect More Mainers of All Ages with the Health and Wellness Benefits of Outdoor Recreation.**

- A. *Encourage Increased Participation in Outdoor Activities by Raising Awareness of Outdoor Recreation’s Health & Wellness Benefits*
- B. *Improve Awareness of Existing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities*
- C. *Support Programs and Expand Opportunities that Provide Youth with Experiences that Connect Them with Nature*
- D. *Provide a Broad Range of Outdoor Opportunities to Meet the Varied Interests and Abilities of Adults, Especially the Older and Less-Abled Public*
- E. *Connect Mainers with Close to Home Outdoor Recreation Opportunities*

**Recent Activity and Trends:**

- Despite efforts by resource managers to improve trails through hardening and redesign, there is still evidence of unmet demand/need for accessible trails. Likewise, there are other recreation resources such as bathrooms and other structures that still can be greatly improved for those with disabilities. However, there have been accessibility upgrades to numerous campsites at multiple Maine State Parks – as one example of an area of progress. **Table 2** provides a county by county look at disability, age, and poverty.

***“Most Maine parks and outdoor activities do not have true handicap accessibility. I cannot use my wheelchair because terrain is too rough...”***

**Quote from SCORP Survey**



**Handicapped Accessible Fishing Pier. Songo Lock, Sebago Lake State Park.**

- Boat launches developed or upgraded over the past five years have, to the extent possible, been designed to facilitate handicapped access to the water. Features such as handicapped parking, accessible privies, accessible approach grades, etc. have been prioritized in projects and are reflected in grant scoring managed by Boating Facilities Program within the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.
- Partnerships with group homes and accessibility support groups such as Maine Adaptive are opening up parks and other destinations to more Mainers with disabilities.
- Select communities in Maine have seen significant growth in “new Mainers” – immigrants to Maine from various locations around the globe.
- Outdoor Family Fun Days at State Parks, land trust programming, community recreation programs, and

conservation/education efforts by the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife all have been examples of initiatives to connect youth with the outdoors.

- Locally-driven regional mapping initiatives have worked to showcase the outdoor recreation opportunities in regional clusters around the state. This work, while not driven by any statewide vision, has responded to the outcry for public information on where to go for outdoor recreation.
- Technology continues to evolve and influence how people find out about and get motivated for outdoor recreation experiences. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram (just to note two) are more and more central to information and aspiration. Websites such as Maine Trail Finder, a nonmotorized trail information clearinghouse, continue to play an important informational role. Smartphone-based apps, notably apps in which users share data and information related to trail and

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

other recreational experiences, have surged in use and are a source of information -though not always the information resource managers want promoted.

- Events and festivals centered around the outdoors continued to grow. Trail races such as 5ks, biking events, and other competitive and non-competitive events have taken off over the last five years. Events have tended to be relatively local, often with commercial and noncommercial partners and a strong community theme.

<b>Table 2: Select Maine County Attributes (US Census Data)</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>Total Area (Square Miles)</b>	<b>Population (2018)</b>	<b>Median Age</b>	<b>% with Disability</b>	<b>% Living Below Poverty Line</b>
Androscoggin	497	107,679	41	16%	14%
Aroostook	6,828	67,111	47	22%	18%
Cumberland	1,216	29,557	42	11%	11%
Franklin	1,744	29,897	45	17%	12%
Hancock	2,351	54,811	48	15%	12%
Kennebec	951	122,083	44	16%	14%
Knox	1,142	39,771	48	17%	12%
Lincoln	699	34,342	51	17%	12%
Oxford	2,175	57,618	46	19%	15%
Penobscot	3,556	151,096	42	18%	16%
Piscataquis	4,377	16,800	51	25%	19%
Sagadahoc	370	35,634	46	13%	11%
Somerset	4,095	50,592	46	21%	18%
Waldo	852	39,694	46	16%	14%
Washington	3,254	31,490	48	21%	18%
York	1,271	206,229	45	14%	9%

***Priority Area 2: Support Regionally Connected Trail Systems in Maine’s Less Developed Regions to Increase Access to Outdoor Recreation for Maine’s Rural Population and Enhance Economic Development.***

- A. *Support Regional Initiatives*
- B. *Encourage and Support Coordinated Management of Extended Trail Systems*
- C. *Support and Encourage Landowner Collaborations*

**Recent Activity and Trends:**

- Mountain biking continues to grow across Maine as evidenced by the significant growth in both organized clubs and miles of trails built and maintained primarily by these same volunteer clubs. Recognized Maine chapters of the New England Mountain Bike Association include the Bethel Area, Carrabassett Region, Central Maine, Greater Portland, Midcoast, Penobscot, and Six Rivers (Bath, Brunswick, Topsham) area. Clubs work with private and public landowners of all scales to develop, manage, and maintain a diversity of mountain bike trails types -including “fat tire” bikes capable of riding year-round (with winter riding predominantly on groomed snow or icy ground/frozen lakes). There is continued interest on the part of bikers and tourism entities in expanded mountain biking opportunities.
- ATV clubs, the state’s Off-Road Vehicle program, private landowners, Central Maine Power (transmission lines) and municipal partners continued to work to expand the statewide ATV trail system (Maine ATV Trail System or M.A.T.S.). Developed trailhead facilities and better regional connections (such as in the Millinocket-Patten-Aroostook County areas) have expanded regional riding opportunities and led to positive economic activity. Work has continued to maintain and add to state-held multiuse railbed trails.

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- While there has been some good news in the form of new trail groups forming and actively helping maintain a variety of trail systems and types, there is a challenging trend of aging volunteer bases and a lack of next generation volunteers supporting trail clubs. A concerning number of snowmobile clubs, for example, have dissolved or are at risk of dissolving due to lack of volunteer club members as the older generation phases out.
- Regional, locally-driven planning efforts have led to increased collaborations as communities come together and discuss outdoor recreation as part of tourism and economic development efforts. Initiatives such as in the Moosehead Lake, Katahdin, and Mahoosuc Regions have laid the ground work for improved communication, planning, management, and promotion.

### **Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument**

On August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016, President Obama designated 87,000 acres of land donated by Elliotsville Plantation, Inc. to the United States of America as Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. This designation culminated a long and at times controversial process and created a new outdoor recreation destination of national significance adjacent to Baxter State Park, a long-standing wilderness destination home to Maine's highest peak as well as over 200,000 acres of forever wild lands. This development, paired with commercial, private, and state outdoor recreation resources, expands the Katahdin Region's suite of outdoor recreation opportunities.

### ***Priority Area 3: Connect to Future Tourism Markets through Recreation Interests.***

- A. Foster and Support Mechanisms that Enhance "Base Camp" Communities as Centers of Information for Regional Recreation Opportunities*
- B. Expand and Diversify Maine's Outdoor Recreation Offerings to Appeal to Emerging Trends, Especially Target Visitor Profiles*

### **Recent Activity and Trends:**

- The Maine Woods Consortium (a Maine Woods-focused network of non-profits, businesses, and government agencies) and the Maine Office of Tourism have worked to create destination development expertise and programming to assist rural areas experiencing decline but that have the potential to become more robust economically via enhanced prominence as a tourism destination. Efforts have included substantial discussion, planning, training, and other work that includes a focus on diversifying recreation and improving the capacity of rural destinations to serve as hubs for destination-quality outdoor recreation experiences.
- The Maine Office of Tourism has shared visitor research with on-the-ground resource managers and tourism providers so that there is better understanding of the evolving attributes and desires of tourists potentially visiting Maine.
- Recreational trends, often driven by changing technology, continue to evolve. Electronic bicycles (E-bikes) are poised to become a bigger rider opportunity and management consideration. ATV designs continue to grow larger and more powerful. Off-trail, backcountry snowmobiling is a growing trend sometimes paired with landowner concerns. Backcountry skiing interest is growing, including the emergence of a regional backcountry skiing organization (Granite Backcountry Alliance).

**Priorities for Use of Land Water Conservation (LWCF) Fund Monies**

**A. Strategically Use LWCF Funds for Recreation Areas or Facilities that Provide New or Expanded Outdoor Recreation Opportunities, with Priority for Opportunities:**

- *that serve youth, seniors, the disabled, or other demographic components that are underserved;*
- *that increase access to recreation and natural areas, particularly in areas close to population centers;*
- *that provide multiple public benefits in addition to recreation benefits – i.e., address public health issues (e.g., obesity), economic development (e.g., nature-based tourism, quality of place), and protection of ecological values; or*
- *that increase connectivity among trail systems or expand regional trails systems, especially in Maine’s more rural areas.*

**Recent Activity (LWCF-Funded Examples):**

- An ADA-compliant trail and hand-carry boat launch was funded by LWCF as part of improvements at Owls Head Harbor Park in Owls Head.
- Knowlton Community Park in Ellsworth installed senior fitness stations.
- Emery Park in Kittery transformed athletic fields to become more multi-sport functional thereby serving more youth throughout more of the year.
- Accessibility upgrades and trail developments at Warren Recreation Area (Westbrook) and Goat Hill (Acton) developed new accessible opportunities in southern Maine.
- Waterville’s new Riverwalk at Head of Falls creates a dynamic setting with creative play areas for children, public performance space, and business-friendly open space near the downtown.

**B. Support the Rehabilitation or Replacement of the State’s Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure, Including Improvements for Accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

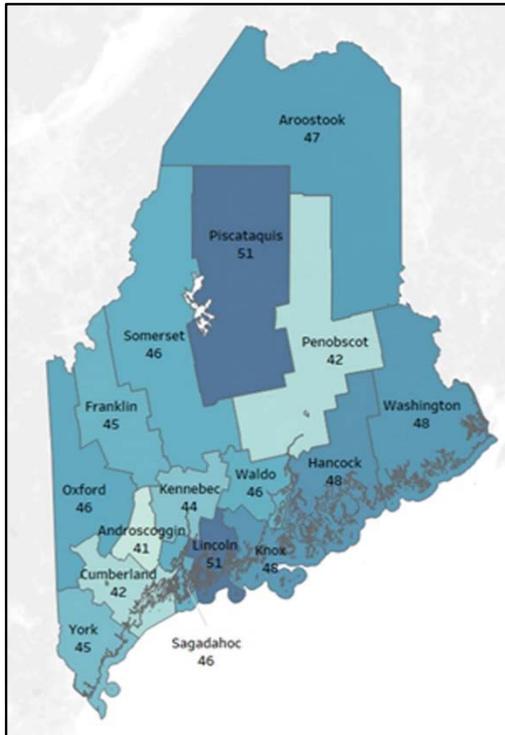
- *Rehabilitation or replacement of Maine’s aging outdoor recreation infrastructure, including the provision of ADA-accessible trails and facilities, should be a high priority in the upcoming years. ... rehabilitation and/or replacement of existing resources should continue to be a focus of LWCF funding.*

**Recent Activity (LWCF-Funded Examples):**

- In addition to projects mentioned elsewhere in this report, recent examples include but are not limited to resurfacing and accessibility improvements to Corinth tennis & basketball courts; ADA improvements to Hosmer Park in Rumford; redesigning and creating accessible facilities Pemaquid Beach pavilion (Town of Bristol); accessible restroom and trail developments in Houlton; boat launch, campsite, and trail accessibility improvements at MDIFW’s Swan Island Wildlife Management Area.

## B. Participation and Interests – A Look at Outdoor Recreation Demand

### Demographic Factors

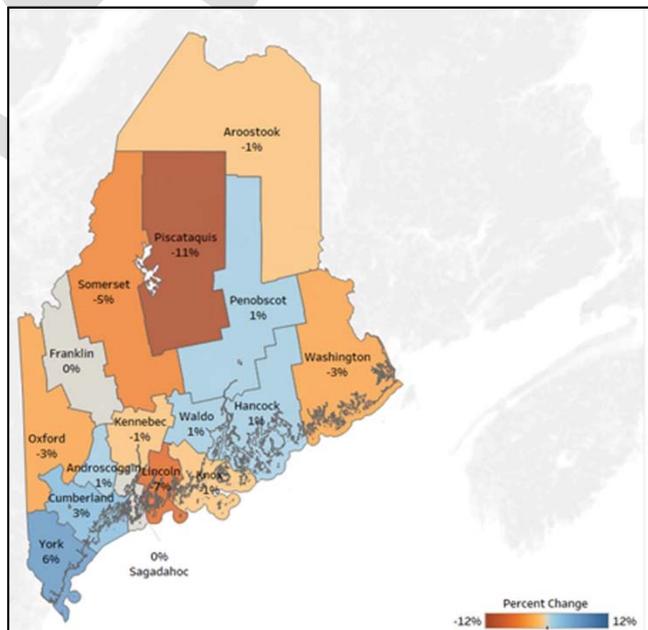


**Figure 1: Median Age of Maine Counties**

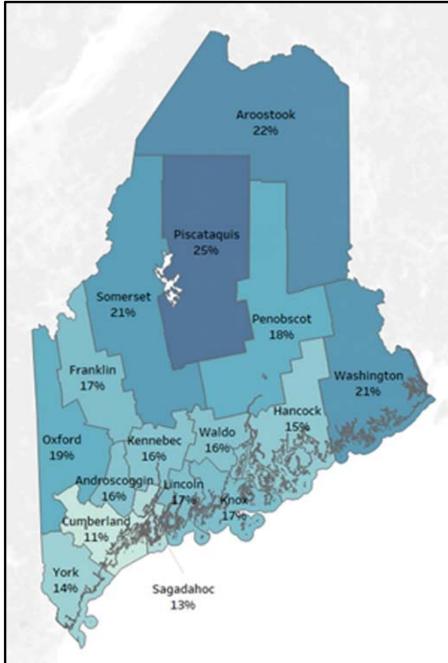
Before detailing participation data, it is valuable to identify a major influence on the demand for specific outdoor recreation opportunities and resources in Maine. Maine continues to have the nation’s oldest population per U.S. Census data. Furthermore, the relative age of specific populations across the state is not uniform. **Figure 1:** shows the median age of each Maine county. While there is diversity of interests and abilities within any age group, older populations tend to participate in specific activities at higher or lower rates when compared to younger age groups.

Two other demographic factors to acknowledge are trends in population change and disability. **Figure 2:** depicts county population change projections and **figure 3:** shows the percentage of persons with a disability by county. Population helps drive the amount of demand (volume) whereas the percentage of persons with a disability influences demand for facilities and resources that support accessible recreation.

Another demographic factor known to influence the specific demand for types of outdoor recreation experiences/resources is ethnicity/race. Maine continues to have a very low rate of diversity, with Maine’s population being 94.6% “white alone”. However, there are growing pockets of greater diversity in Maine. For example, U.S. Census data indicates that over 15% of households in Portland, Biddeford, and Lewiston speak a language other than English at home. While some households may be retaining generations of French (Canadian) language, much of this data reflects New Mainers immigrated from locations across the globe. The traditions and cultures new residents bring with them influence the demand for specific types of outdoor



**Figure 2: Projected 2016-2026 Population Change for Maine Counties**



**Figure 3: Percent of Residents within a County Having a Disability**

recreation facilities. Planners and managers need to understand the sometimes-changing composition and interests/needs within their communities.

**Demand for Outdoor Recreation Activities – National Overview**

Between 2006 and 2017, the percentage of the US population aged 6 years and older who participated in outdoor recreation has hovered between a low of 41.9% in 2006 and a high of 50% in 2007, with 2017 showing 49% participation.<sup>11</sup> While there are specific activities in which participation is losing ground, overall outdoor recreation demand is growing due to stable participation rates and increasing population in the nation.

The Physical Activity Council reports growth from 2013 to 2018 in all activity categories it tracks. Categories include the following sport groupings: fitness, individual, outdoor, racquet, team, water, winter. Growth was strongest in outdoor activities including trail running, cross-country skiing, stand-up paddling, and hiking.<sup>12</sup> These activity increases were mirrored in Outdoor Industry Foundation data as well.

The most popular and most frequent activities (national) from the Outdoor Foundation are listed in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Most Popular and Most Frequent Outdoor Recreation Activities in the US (2013) as Reported by the Outdoor Foundation.			
Top 5 Most Popular Activities	US Participants	Top 5 Most Frequently Participated in Activities	Total Outings
Running/Jogging	55.9 Million	Running/Jogging	4.2 Billion
Fishing	49.1 Million	Bicycling	2.3 Billion
Bicycling	47.5 Million	Fishing	885.2 Million
Hiking	44.9 Million	Hiking	624.4 Million
Camping	41.8 Million	Camping	523.8 Million
Note: The Outdoor Foundation has a more pronounced focus on human powered activities.			

America’s state parks saw a total of 807 million in attendance in 2018 – an 11% increase from 2013. Cumulative overnight use amounted to 66.7 million in 2018. **National Park** recreation visits in 2018 increased to 318 million.

America has seen an increase of 2.6 million campers since 2014, with the northeast seeing the largest percent gain in individuals reporting having camped. Nationally, 60% of all camper nights are spent in public lands and campgrounds.<sup>13</sup> A trend in camping includes diversification both of the ethnicity of campers themselves (half of new campers in 2017 came from non-white groups) and related to camping accommodations – with evidence

<sup>11</sup>Outdoor Foundation (2018). *Outdoor Participation Report 2018*. Retrieved from: <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2018-outdoor-participation-report>

<sup>12</sup> Physical Activity Council. (2019). *2019 Physical Activity Council’s Overview Report on U.S. Participation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.physicalactivitycouncil.com/pdfs/current.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Cairn Consulting Group. (2018). *The 2018 North American Camping Report*. Sponsored by Kampgrounds of America.

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

supporting strong interest in camping experiences ranging from backcountry camping to “glamping” (more luxurious camping amenities) to RV camping.<sup>14</sup>

The 2016 National Survey of **Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation** reports the following regarding wildlife-related recreational activity:

*“The 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation revealed that over 103 million U.S. residents 16 years and older participated in wildlife-related recreation. During that year, 35.8 million people fished, 11.5 million hunted, and 86.0 million participated in at least one type of wildlife-watching activity including observing, feeding, or photographing fish and other wildlife in the United States.”<sup>15</sup>*

The survey found that the number of anglers rose between 2006 and 2011, with another rise to a total of 35.8 million anglers in 2016. However, the days of fishing nationally increased from 2006 to 2011 but fell back in 2016 to a level below 2006 (517 million days in 2006 and 459 days in 2016). Hunting participants rose from 12.5 million in 2006 to 13.7 million in 2011 but fell back to 11.5 million in 2016. Hunting days followed a similar trend, with 2016 representing reduced activity (184 million days in 2016 vs. 220 million days in 2006). 2016 represents growth in both number of wildlife watchers and total days away from home watching wildlife. In 2016, Americans spent 386 million days away from home watching wildlife.

When looking into the more distant future (i.e., 2060) the US Forest Service forecasts that the activities in the northern United States that will see the largest number of new participants are, in order: Visiting interpretive sites (nature centers, prehistoric sites, historic sites, other); nature viewing; visiting developed sites (family gathering, picnicking, developed camping); swimming; motorized water (motor boating, water skiing, personal watercraft use).<sup>16</sup>

### Non-Participation

The sober realization is that in 2018, 82.1 million Americans did nothing active outdoors. This population, roughly a quarter of the country, did not walk for fitness, play sports, hike, paddle, ski or otherwise pursue active leisure outdoors.<sup>17</sup> The Outdoor Industry Foundation reports that of those Americans who did not participate in outdoor recreation, 46% had a desire to start participating.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the Physical Activity

***Camping, fishing, bicycling, and swimming have high appeal for those who don't participate in outdoor recreation but may have the desire to start.***

Council looked at non-participation and inquired about what activities appeal to non-participants. Tables 4 and 5 list non-participant interests by age and by income. In both cases, camping, fishing, bicycling, and swimming rate

<sup>14</sup> IBID

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

<sup>16</sup> Bowker, J.M.; Askew, Ashley E. 2013. Outlook for Outdoor Recreation in the Northern United States. A Technical Document Supporting the Northern Forest Futures Project with Projections through 2060. Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-120. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 62 p.

<sup>17</sup> Physical Activity Council. (2019). *2019 Physical Activity Council's Overview Report on U.S. Participation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.physicalactivitycouncil.com/pdfs/current.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Outdoor Foundation (2018). *Outdoor Participation Report 2018*. Retrieved from: <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2018-outdoor-participation-report>

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

as higher appeal activities for those identified as non-participants in outdoor recreation. Continually understanding not just audiences that do engage in outdoor recreation but perhaps as or more importantly those who do not is essential as leaders seek to grow outdoor recreation participation.

**Outdoor recreation participation in Maine** may follow some of the general trends and patterns seen in the wider United States, but it is unique in many ways. We know from the 2009-2014 ME SCORP that Maine residents participated in outdoor recreation activities at higher rates than both national and regional averages. Based on data from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, Mainers engaged in the following activities a minimum of 10 percentage points higher than both regional and national levels:

- Primitive camping
- Big-game hunting
- Snow/ice activities (any type)
- Snowmobiling
- Boating and canoeing
- Coldwater fishing
- Viewing/photographing other wildlife besides birds
- Gathering mushrooms, berries, etc.



Winter Family Fun Day -Lily Bay State Park



Northern Saw-Whet Owl, One of Maine's Many Watchable Wildlife Species. Jay Hall Photograph.

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

**Table 4: Top 5 Activity Interests of Those Not Participating in Outdoor Recreation – Categorized by Age**  
(Source: Physical Activity Council, 2019)

Interest Level	Ages 6 - 12	Ages 13 - 17	Ages 18 - 24	Ages 25 - 34	Ages 35 - 44	Ages 44 - 54	Ages 55 - 64	Ages 65+
1	Soccer	Camping	Camping	Stand-up Paddling	Stand-up Paddling	Camping	Bicycling	Bird/ Wildlife Viewing
2	Fishing	Fishing	Martial Arts	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Workout with weights	Bird/ Wildlife Viewing	Fishing
3	Swimming on a team	Basketball	Backpacking	Camping	Camping	Stand-up Paddling	Workout with machines	Workout with machines
4	Camping	Workout with weights	Snowboarding	Bicycling	Bicycling	Bicycling	Camping	Swimming for fitness
5	Martial Arts	Running/ Jogging	Climbing	Surfing	Workout with weights	Swimming for fitness	Fishing	Hiking

**Table 5: Top 5 Activity Interests of Those Not Participating in Outdoor Recreation – Categorized by Income**  
(Source: Physical Activity Council, 2019)

Interest Level	Under \$25,000	\$25,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000+
1	Fishing	Fishing	Camping	Camping	Bicycling
2	Camping	Camping	Fishing	Bicycling	Swimming for fitness
3	Bicycling	Bicycling	Bicycling	Fishing	Workout with weights
4	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Camping
5	Workout with machines	Workout with machines	Workout with weights	Workout with weights	Fishing

**Maine Resident Outdoor Recreation Patterns:  
License Sales, Registrations, and Attendance  
Figures**

Data provided by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shows 180,498 **resident fishing** licenses sold and another 131,404 **resident hunting** licenses sold in 2017. When the 2010-2017 period is compared to the 2002-2009 period, annual fishing licenses sold decreased 2.6% and annual hunting licenses decreased 11.2%. During those same periods, **nonresident fishing licenses** sold increased 2.6% and **nonresident hunting licenses** sold decreased 26%.

It is noteworthy that license sales growth for lifetime licenses first instituted in 2000 has steadily grown. Lifetime hunting, fishing, or combination lifetime licenses are available for purchase for citizens under 16 and over 64. When lifetime licenses (which by their nature never expire and therefore cumulatively add to the active license holder population) are added to 2017 annual license sales, total active (resident) fishing licenses amount to 259,175 and hunting licenses equal 188,405. Nonresident fishing grand totals amounted to 84,380 in 2017 while the grand total for nonresident hunting came out to 26,860.

Resident **ATV registrations** over the past ten years have hovered between 52,000 and 58,000. However, it should be noted that there has been strong and steady growth in the number of non-resident seasonal ATV registrations, which totaled over 11,000 in 2017/2018. It is also worth noting that ATV riders shifting from smaller one up machines to larger side by sides machines may be cutting the number of ATVs being registered in that couples, families, etc. are more likely to now be sharing an ATV that seats multiple riders.

**Snowmobile** registrations during the past ten years have shown notable fluctuation, with reductions in registrations during low snow years and the challenging economic periods. The 2014-2019 ME SCORP survey data shows that snowmobile use is greater by residents in the typically high snow areas of the mountain/northern/eastern counties as compared with residents in the typically low snow areas of the southern coastal and mid-coast regions.

When comparing snowmobile registrations across time, it is important to recognize the significance of nonresident registrations. For example, when **resident snowmobile registrations** are averaged for 5-year intervals, the most recent five years (encompassing the '13/'14 season through the '17/'18 season) show a 9.7% decrease compared to the previous five-year average. However, when **nonresident registrations** are included, total average registrations show only a 6.2% decrease. In this same analysis, nonresident seasonal snowmobile registrations actually rose by 6.6%. Trends indicate nonresident snowmobilers continuing to be an important and growing source of snowmobile use in Maine.

Maine **boat registrations** do not have a non-resident component and are not required unless a motor is attached (i.e., canoes, kayaks, and other small boats do not require registration unless a motor is attached). When comparing 2002-2009 average registrations per year to the 2010 -2017 period, Maine boat registrations dipped 3.8%.



**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

**Park and conservation areas attendance** data in Maine is available from a variety of sources. While these 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 majority of private landowners who allow public recreation.

**Maine State Parks** also show total attendance growth over the last five years. State Parks have seen increased average day-use attendance rise nearly 10% when 2014-2018 is compared to 2009-2013. The five-year camping average at Maine State Parks also rose (7.5% increase).

<b>Table 6: Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities (n=3,289)</b>			
<i>Q1. What types of outdoor recreation activities do you most enjoy doing? (List up to 5)</i>			
<i>*Only categories with 2% or greater response frequency are displayed.</i>			
<b>Comment</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>%</b>
Trekking/hiking	69%	Wildlife watching	8%
Bicycling	37%	ATV, Snowmobile	8%
Walking	29%	Gardening	5%
Swimming	27%	Sightseeing	4%
Skiing/Ski	25%	Local parks	4%
Camping/camp	23%	Picnicking	3%
Fishing	23%	Playground	3%
Kayaking	21%	Sailing	3%
Team sports	14%	Ice Skating	3%
Visiting Beaches	14%	Paddle-boarding	3%
Boating/boat	13%	Paddling	2%
Running	12%	Photography	2%
Canoeing	12%	Rock climbing	2%
Hunting	11%	Other	13%
Snowshoeing	11%		

**Acadia National Park**, located in eastern coastal Maine, shows growth in its visitation and in camping. Its average number of visitors for the period of 2014- 2018 (3,144,910) is up 33% from the previous five-year period. Camping comparisons for the same periods show a 20% increase in tent camping visits at Acadia, with a 55% increase in RV camping visits.

**Baxter State Park**, an independently (from Maine State Parks) operated wilderness park of over 200,000 acres maintains detailed public use figures. Using the same five-year analysis mentioned above, Baxter State Park shows an increase of 8.5% for total summer visitor days with 122,156 summer visits in 2018. Winter visitor days in 2018 equaled 2,422. Occupancy rates at Baxter State Park overnight sites were the following in 2018: lean-tos – 69.7% occupancy rate (70 sites); tent sites - 54.6% occupancy (77 sites); bunk houses – 76.6% occupancy (5 sites); group areas – 41.9% occupancy (14 sites); cabins – 81.7% occupancy (23 sites).

Not all outdoor recreation destinations in Maine have seen increases in visitation. **North Maine Woods** (3.5 million acres) has

experienced losses in visitation. These gated areas of (predominantly) private timberland are open to many types of public, forest-based recreation (fees apply). Using the aforementioned five-year analysis, North Maine

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

Woods has seen a total 5% drop in visitation. Camping visitor days dropped 9.5% between the two time periods. In 2018, the North Maine Woods saw 143,944 visitor days.

Camping data for the **Allagash Wilderness Waterway**, a state-administered scenic river in the Federal Wild & Scenic River System, shows a five-year average drop of 2.4% from the 2009-2013 average.

<b>Table 7: Recreation/Conservation Sites Visited within the Last 3 Years.</b>	
<b>Site/Site Type</b>	<b>Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Visiting Site/Type</b>
Town/City Parks & Open Spaces	88%
Maine State Parks & Historic Sites	78%
Local Outdoor Sports & Recreation Spaces	75%
Acadia National Park	61%
Farm/Agricultural Sites Open to Public Visitation	61%
Land Trust Properties	60%
Maine DIFW Wildlife Management Areas	57%
Private Forest Land Open for Recreation	52%
Maine Public Lands	44%
White Mountain National Forest	40%
Baxter State Park	33%
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Refuges	28%
Water Trails (e.g., Maine Island Trail, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, etc.)	25%

**Activity Insights from SCORP Surveys**

Registration, license, and attendance figures aren't the only sets of data with a story to tell regarding outdoor recreation in Maine. Thousands of respondents surveyed as part of this SCORP plan shared their perspectives. As part of the survey, several questioned probed participation in specific outdoor activities. When asked to list up to five favorite outdoor recreation activities, trekking/hiking

came out on top as a favorite activity followed in order by bicycling, walking, swimming, and skiing. **Table 6** (pg. 28) lists percentages listing activities as one of their five favorites.

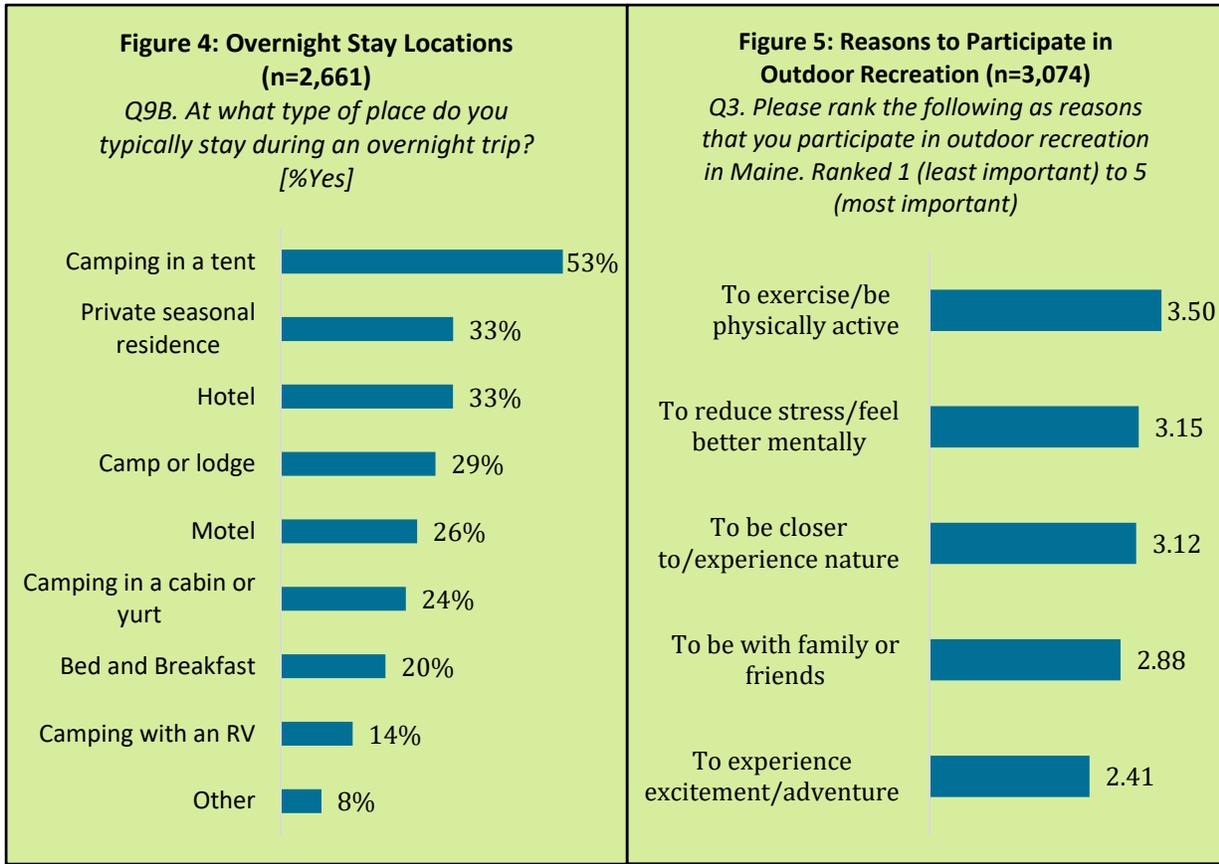
Survey data also provides a look at what types of outdoor destinations people are recreating at. **Table 7** (above) provides the percentage of respondents reporting having visited specific types of conservation or recreations areas within the last three years. As can be seen, Mainers have high rates of visiting outdoor recreation sites, especially when it is taken into consideration that the survey indicates 42% of respondents reported visiting outdoor recreation sites in or near their community every few days (only 15% of respondents reported visiting community sites less than monthly). Additionally, a majority of respondents reported taking a day trip or overnight outing 50 miles or more from home a few times a year or more. In short, a large number of Mainers are recreating close to home frequently and are travelling further from home multiple times per year to engage in outdoor recreation. When asked what types of places they typically stay during an overnight trip, over half of respondents reported staying in a tent. Other response rates are shown in **Figure 4** (pg. 30).

**Programs and Events**

Data from the Maine SCORP survey shows that there is strong interest in outdoor recreation programs and events. ***Self-guided educational hikes*** demonstrated the most interest, with over 80% of respondents expressing interest. Other high-ranking interests included:

- ***Outdoor Festivals***
- ***Outdoor Skills Workshops and instructional programs***
- ***Volunteer in the Park Events***

***Fishing derbies, sports tournaments, and race events/competitions*** all skewed younger whereas ***guided nature walks*** skewed older.



The survey also investigated motivations behind outdoor recreation. While multiple motivations listed scored reasonably high as reasons people participate in outdoor recreation, exercise/physically active was the leading reason – most notably with respondents aged 65+. This is shown in **Figure 5** and **Table 8**.

Survey data also indicates that attitudes about outdoor recreation and activity are influenced by both the proximity of outdoor recreation sites and the availability of public information about those sites. **Table 9** shares this data by age. Lack of available sites and information appear to be especially impactful on younger respondents.

**Table 8: Ratings for Exercise and Being Physically Active as Motivation for Recreating Outdoors -Listed by Age Group Ranked 1 (least important) to 5 (most important) (n=2,886)**

<u>Age</u>	<u>Motivation: "To Exercise/Be Physically Active"</u>
24 or younger	3.18
25 to 34	3.16
35 to 44	3.34
45 to 54	3.40
<u>55 to 64</u>	<u>3.65</u>
<u>65 or older</u>	<u>3.80</u>
Unknown	3.54

Table 9: Attitudes About Outdoor Recreation by Age [% Agree]		
Age	I would be more active if there were more outdoor recreation opportunities available near me (n=1,173)	I would participate in outdoor recreation more often if I knew more about what resources and activities were available in the state (n=1,308)
24 or younger	74%	71%
25 to 34	70%	68%
35 to 44	54%	67%
45 to 54	51%	58%
55 to 64	44%	47%
65 or older	43%	50%
Unknown	49%	44%

**Maine’s Non-Resident Recreating Public**

In 2018, tourism in Maine contributed \$6.2 billion in direct **expenditures**. This activity supported 109,000 **jobs**<sup>19</sup>. Maine’s natural resources and recreation opportunities are central to Maine’s tourism industry.

**Tourism/Recreation Findings:** The Maine Office of Tourism contracts for **visitor research**. In addition to supporting the tourism industry, aspects of this information are useful for understanding tourist-related demand for outdoor recreation in Maine. This research reinforces that outdoor recreation is a key tourism driver in Maine. When asked the primary purpose of their overnight leisure trip to Maine, 23% chose outdoor recreation. Only “general visit to see friends or relatives” (26%) was higher. Hiking, exploring state and national parks, camping, bicycling or mountain biking, going to the beach, outdoor swimming, canoeing or kayaking, fishing, and visiting historic sites were all activities highly rated by visitors.<sup>20</sup>

**Hunting and fishing** continue to be a draw for non-residents visiting Maine, though overall licenses sold to non-resident hunters indicate a 26% drop. The number of fishing licenses sold to non-residents are up 2.6% in the last five years vs. the prior five.

**ATV** use in Maine by non-residents has been an area of strong recreational growth. The 2017/2018 season saw over 12,000 non-resident ATV registrations. Approximately 30% of the **snowmobile** registrations in Maine in 2017/2018 belonged to non-residents. This is up from 25% in 2013/2014.

<sup>19</sup> Maine Office of Tourism (2019). *Five-Year Strategic Plan*. Augusta, ME.

<sup>20</sup> Maine Office of Tourism. (2019) Visitor Tracking Research: 2018 Calendar Year Report. Prepared by: DPA. Retrieved from: <https://motpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2018-Annual-Report.pdf>

**Key Take-Aways:**

- Age is a huge factor in the demand for outdoor recreation in Maine. Having the nation's oldest population, Maine planners and resource managers need to consider the needs of older residents. Motivations for recreation as well as programs and activities of interest are influenced by age. Interestingly, compared to younger age groups, older Mainers rate exercise and being physically active as a higher motivation for recreating outdoors.
- There are substantial numbers of Mainers who have a disability. This reality influences the demand for outdoor recreation infrastructure serving the needs of those having a disability. In addition to quantitative data, the Maine SCORP survey enabled open-ended comments; comments supporting more opportunities (trails, access, etc.) for persons with disabilities were quite common.
- Mainers enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation activities. Survey results reflect the high importance of local, close to home sites/activities. This is likely related to lack of time, which is a barrier to recreation that cuts across all sociodemographic groups.
- There is also demonstrated (and growing) demand for certain destinations requiring more commitment, such as Baxter State Park, Acadia National Park, and Maine's State Parks (which serve as a mixture of local resource and vacation destination). This trend for increased visitation at more distant destinations is not uniform across Maine's north woods.
- Demand for destinations is also shown in strong non-resident participation in activities such as snowmobiling, ATV riding, and to a slightly lesser degree fishing. Nonresident use of Maine's National and State Parks is also strong and indicative of Maine being a destination for (most notably) northeast North America.
- Survey respondents once again demonstrated that there is high demand for a diversity of programs and events. People want to learn, experience, socialize, and grow – all in outdoor settings.
- Survey respondents also indicate that increased and better-quality information about recreation opportunities as well as more opportunities near where people live would increase overall personal activity rates. Increased information and opportunity is likely have the biggest impact on those under 34 years old.
- Tourism research findings continue to show that recreating in Maine's iconic outdoor settings is a huge motivation driving tourists and economic activity into our state.

## C. Where & What? - The Supply of Outdoor Recreation Resources in Maine

### Maine: It's Places and Character

Maine's 20.4 million acres offer a diverse natural environment that supports a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities for residents and visitors. The state's 5,000-mile coast includes miles of sandy beach and rocky headlands, as well as over 3,000 islands. In northern and western Maine, the Longfellow Range of the Appalachian Mountains contains more than 100 mountains over 3,000 feet, and all of the state's "4,000 footers." Maine's inland waters total nearly 1,450 square miles in area and include about 5,800 lakes and ponds and almost 32,000 miles of rivers and streams. Maine also has about 5 million acres of wetlands ranging from small vernal pools to extensive coastal salt marshes. About 90% of the state's land area is forested.



**Rugged Coastline – Cutler, Maine**

The majority of Maine's forests are privately owned. When public and private forestlands are taken in totality, Maine has the largest contiguous block of undeveloped forestland east of the Mississippi. This block includes approximately 10.5 million acres of "unorganized territory" (no city or town government entities). This region's forests are primarily managed for timber production and are typically available for various forms of public recreation. Private forests in more developed portions of the state (generally southern and coastal Maine) are also significant in terms of public recreation and other multiple values associated with forests.

Maine's climate is marked by distinct seasons. Winters are generally cold, with average annual snowfall from 50 to 70 inches along the coast and 60-110 inches inland. Spring comes later than the majority of the Continental United States. Summer temperatures range as high as the 80s along the coast and 90s inland. Fall weather is typically pleasant and cool with dramatic fall foliage occurring in the middle of the season. Maine's pronounced and distinctive seasons greatly shape the character and traditions associated with outdoor recreation.

Maine is the nation's most rural state, with over 60% of the state's residents classified by the US Census Bureau as living in a rural area. Small towns, often with historic village greens and buildings, dot the landscape and provide a sense of place. Similarly, fishing villages and current and former mill towns help define the cultural landscape.

### Outdoor Recreation Resources Open to the Public in Maine

Maine residents and visitors alike rely on a mix of public and private lands for outdoor recreation. As just one example, roughly 95% of snowmobile trails in Maine are located on private lands. Hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, birding, snowmobiling, paddling, camping, and a host of other activities routinely occur on private lands open to public recreation not typically through legal agreements but rather via a tradition of public access (though Maine's strong landowner liability laws underpin these traditions). At the same time, a mosaic of

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

ownership and private conservation has been growing to create increased conservation and recreation assurances across the state. One major area of conservation growth is in public easements on private lands. Many, though not all, conservation easements have at least some degree of public recreational access guaranteed. While there some lands conserved almost exclusively for ecological purposes, the vast majority of publicly accessible conservation lands have strong recreation values and opportunities. Conservation lands are discussed below.

### Public Conservation Lands

#### *Who Provides Public Conservation Lands?*

**Federal Lands:** Most federal recreation lands in Maine are administered by three agencies: the US Department of the Interior's **National Park Service (NPS)** and **US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**; and the US Department of Agriculture's **National Forest Service (NFS)**. Federal military and veterans' agencies also administer some lands available for public recreation. The principal federal recreation lands in Maine are **Acadia National Park** and the newly established **Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument**. In total, National Park lands amount to 122,832 acres in fee-owned land and another 12,416 acres of conservation easement along with 32,000 acres of National Park Service lands along the Appalachian Trail. The Maine portion of the White Mountain National Forest equals 49,980 acres and Maine's National Wildlife Refuges total 64,660 total acres.

**State Lands:** The **Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL)** owns and manages 632,468 acres of Public Reserved and Non-Reserved lands (tracts managed for multiple use including forestry, wildlife and recreation; with no user fees) and 86,233 acres in Parks, Historic Sites, and Boat Access sites, including 968 acres leased from USFWS, which are managed primarily for recreation, subject to user fees. BPL also owns approximately 1,095 acres in coastal islands, some of which are managed under contract as part of the Maine Island Trail. Finally, BPL holds public access easements allowing pedestrian use and vehicular use on designated roads, donated by three large landowners whose combined acreage is 602,423 acres.

The **Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife** is responsible for management on all State-owned Wildlife Management Areas. The WMAs comprise approximately 100,000 acres and contain a diverse array of habitats. These properties are available for traditional recreational opportunities, with a focus on hunting, fishing and trapping.



**Doubletop Mt. – Baxter State Park**

**Baxter State Park** includes 209,644 acres managed as a wilderness park. It is overseen by an authority comprised of the Maine Attorney General, Director of the Maine Forest Service, and the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Management is based on park founder Governor Percival Baxter's deeds of trust. About 75% of the Park (156,874 acres) is managed as a wildlife sanctuary while 25% of the Park (52,628 acres) is open to hunting and trapping with the exception that moose hunting is prohibited in the Park. 29,537 acres was designated by

Governor Baxter to be managed as the Scientific Forest Management Area and is currently a Forest Stewardship Certified showplace for sound forestry.

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

**Not-for-Profit Land Conservation:** 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. Over 2 million acres of land across Maine have been conserved by private conservation organizations and land trusts.

**Table 10** shares data about the scale and regional composition of Maine land trust properties.

It is notable that the 2014-2019 Maine SCORP survey indicates that just over 50% of residents and over 28% of non-residents report having visited a land trust property within the last two years. Survey data from this 2019 SCORP indicates 60% of respondents have visited a land trust property in the last three years.

<b>Table 10: Non-Governmental Organization Conservation Holdings in Maine.</b>				
	<b># of Properties</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b># of Easements</b>	<b>Easement Acres</b>
Southern Maine	355	13,398	169	9019
Casco Bay	108	2,249	170	5,019
Midcoast	331	16,187	354	21,303
Penobscot Bay	269	19,527	270	14,053
Downeast	168	71,956	88	6,729
Western Mountains	142	29,597	162	44,137
Inland	100	84,163	11	5,720
Statewide	367	390,304	630	1,951,631
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>627,381</b>	<b>1,854</b>	<b>2,057,611</b>
Adapted from <i>2019 Maine Land Trust Census</i> . Maine Land Trust Network – a program of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.				

**Municipal Lands:** Approximately 45,000 acres of conservation land are held by Maine municipalities.<sup>21</sup> It is important to recognize that many municipal lands serving vital recreation needs such as sports fields and playgrounds may NOT be included in this figure. Furthermore, the local significance of municipal lands is often not their overall acreage but rather their proximity to citizens.

**Where Are Conservation Lands Located?**

A simplistic look at where conservation lands are located indicates that conservation lands are spread across every county of the state. A more detailed analysis shows that while it is true that every county in Maine at least some conservation lands, the amounts vary greatly. The pattern is that Maine’s most rural counties have not only the largest amount of conserved lands by acreage, but they also have the largest proportion of their acreage in some form of land conservation. For example, large conservation holdings including but not limited to

<sup>21</sup> Irland, Lloyd C.. Maine’s Public Estate and Conservation Lands: Brief History and Assessment.” *Maine Policy Review* 27.2 (2018): 11-29, <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol27/iss2/3>.

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Baxter State Park and numerous Public Lands combined with several very large working forest conservation easements make Piscataquis County the state’s most conserved county. Conversely, Androscoggin, Kennebec, and Lincoln counties- in the State’s more populated areas- all have a relatively small amount of their respective land area under some form of conservation.



**Snowmobiling at Nahmakanta Public Land- Located in a Remote Portion of Piscataquis County**

One factor that accounts for the larger area in conserved lands in the predominantly rural counties such as Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis, Aroostook, and Washington is the amount of large tracts of managed timberland with working forest conservation easements. In populated counties like Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, and York, land ownership is more highly fragmented, and conserved lands tend to be smaller.

As shown in **Table 10** land trusts and other non-governmental conservation organizations play a vital role in

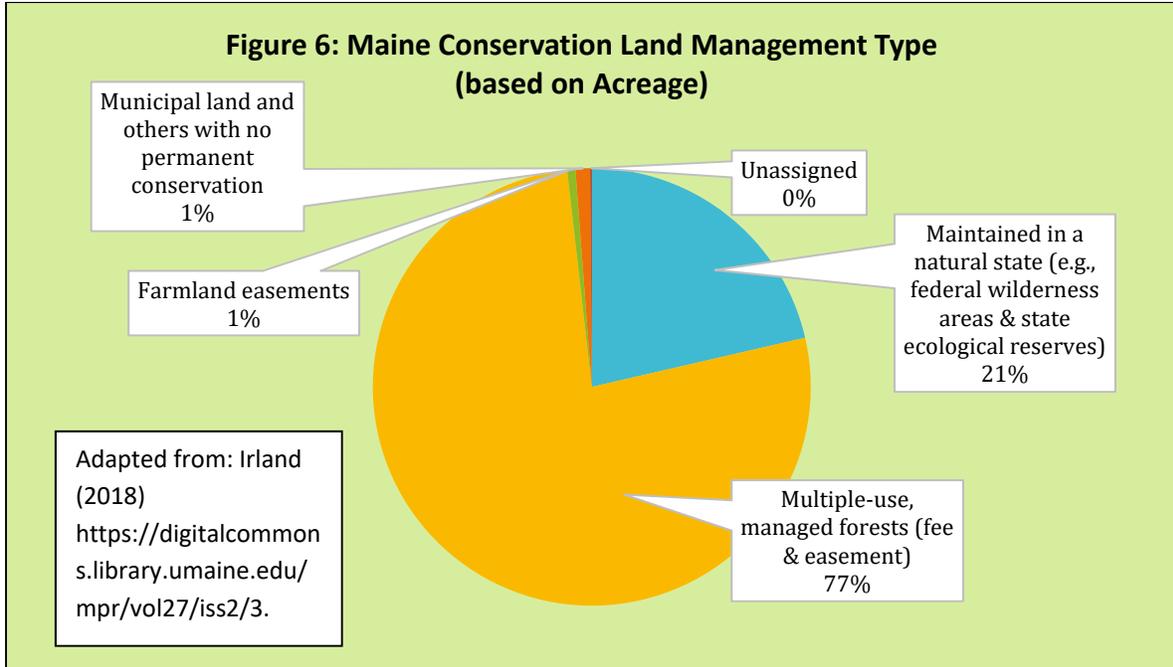
conservation across the state, but especially in more populated southern and coastal areas. The table shows that the overall acreage of land trust properties in these southern/coastal areas (i.e., “Southern Maine, Casco Bay, Midcoast, Penobscot Bay, Downeast”) may not rival the other regions, but the number of properties is significant in the relatively more developed regions – signifying the role of multiple, smaller properties in less rural and less remote areas.

### ***What does conservation look like?***

Land conservation encompasses a wide range of goals, objectives, and management approaches. When looked at by acreage, though, it becomes clear that the dominant category of management is multiple-use, managed forest lands (fee-owned and easement lands). **Figures 6 & 7** depicts the overall breakdown of conservation lands in Maine by general management approach.

### **Recreation Sites and Infrastructure**

Whereas conservation lands typically provide for at least dispersed, primitive outdoor recreation activities (e.g., hunting, recreational foraging, photography, etc.) and often contain recreation infrastructure such as campsites and trails, conservation lands are only one a portion of public recreation sites and infrastructure. Outdoor recreation sites range from wilderness hiking trails to community pools. The following text and figures seek to describe the supply of various outdoor recreation sites/infrastructure across Maine using best available data.



**Hiking Trails**

There is a vast array of hiking trails across Maine. Trails exist on a wide range of landowner types, including privately owned land. Unlike motorized trails, the large majority of hiking trails are on land with some form of public ownership. **Figure 8** depicts the locations of hiking trails in Maine. This “best available data” comes from two sources. The map on the left is sourced from Rural Active Living Assessment (RALA) data obtained through town by town data collection led by the Maine Center for Disease Control. As such, it is focused on resources available within or near organized towns. The map to the right is from data obtained from the Maine Trail Finder website managed by the Center for Community GIS. Established to serve as a source of trail information for nonmotorized trail users, the website includes more remote trails far from town centers. The map on the left shows 622 hiking/walking trails while the map on the right shows 509. There is significant overlap in that many (though not all) individual trails are shown on both maps. It should be observed that Maine’s hiking and walking trails are clustered near more populated towns, along the coast, in Maine’s western mountains, and on/near the mountains of Piscataquis County. Due to Maine’s topography, glacial history, and often wet climate and soils, Maine’s hiking trails are frequently rocky, root-strewn, and- in many cases- steep.

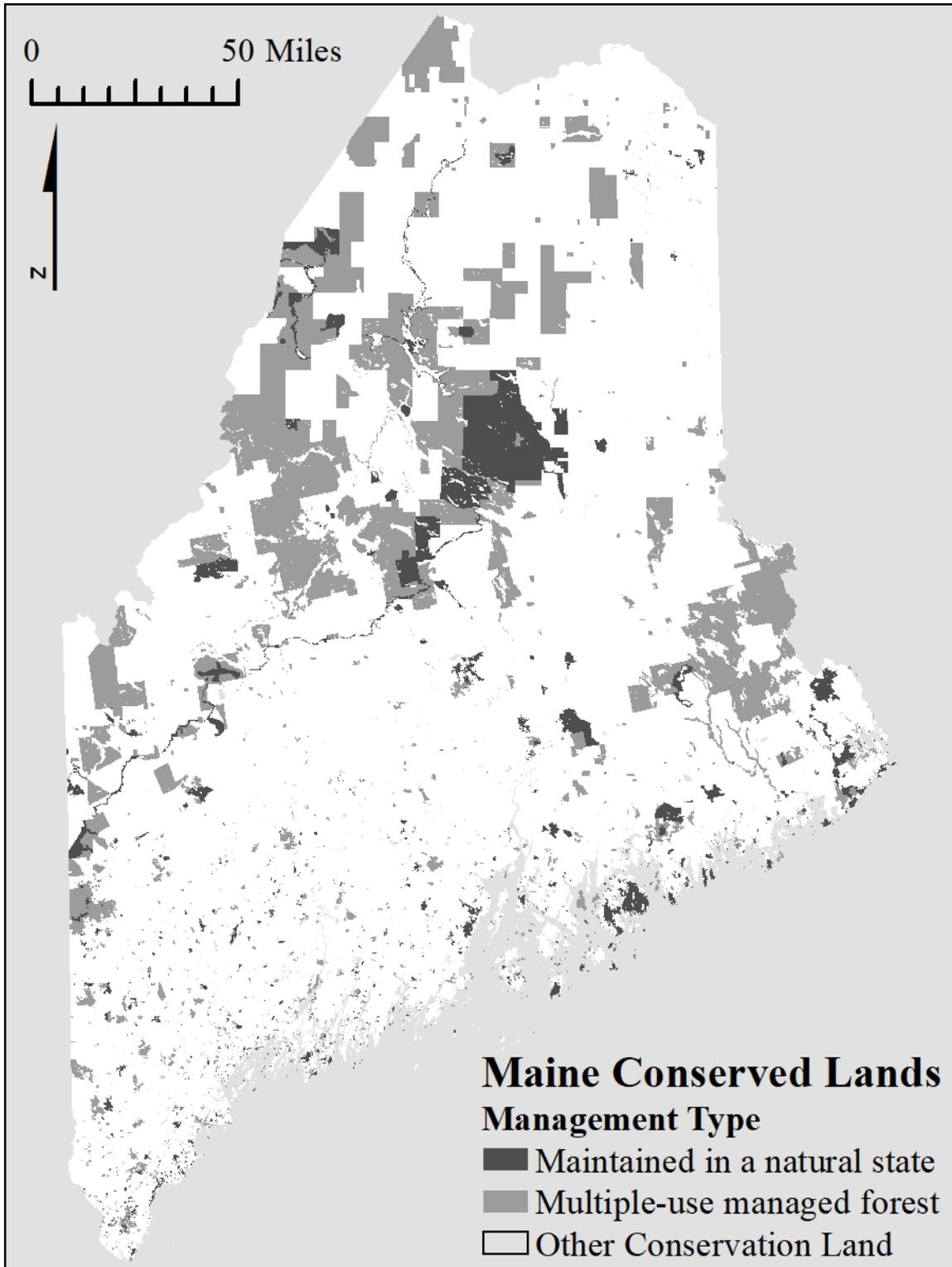
**Select hiking-related responses from the Maine SCORP Survey question, “What types of outdoor recreation opportunities are most lacking in the state?”**

*“Natural areas for walking/hiking closer to towns rather than having to drive long distances.”*

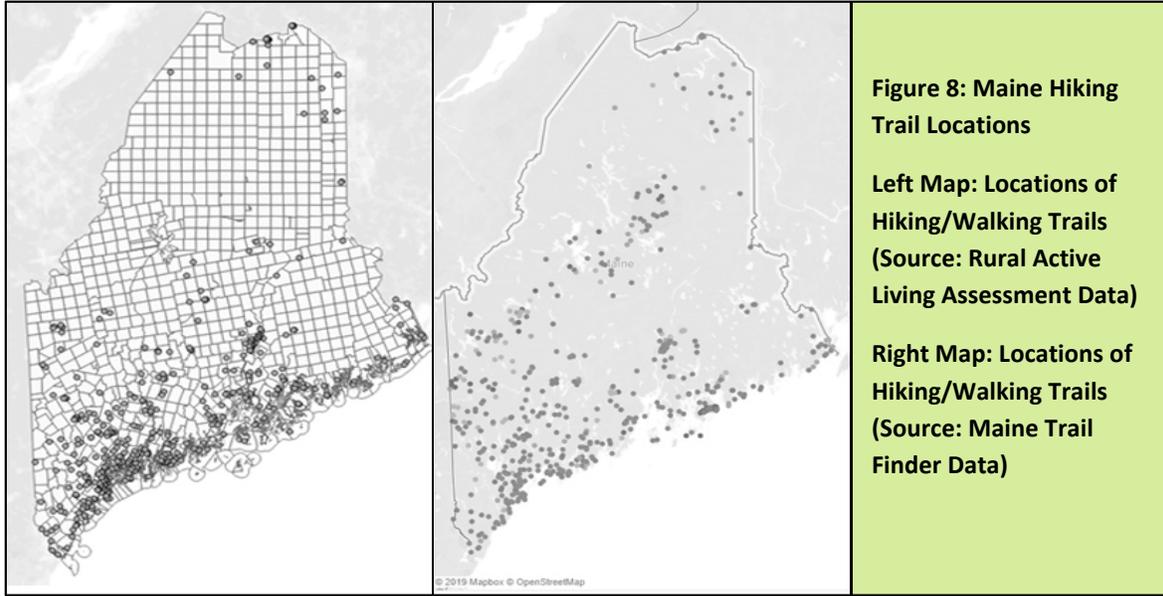
*“Hiking/walking trails in wooded areas for handicapped or physically challenged”*

*“In the southern part of the state, moderate and long hiking trails are almost completely lacking”*

*“It’s not that they’re necessarily lacking, but I think Maine should market it’s hiking trails more.”*



**Figure 7: Maine Conserved Lands by Management Type.** Note that the dominant management type on Maine’s vast private forest lands (not mapped) is also multiple-use managed forest. *Map courtesy Maine Natural Areas Program.*

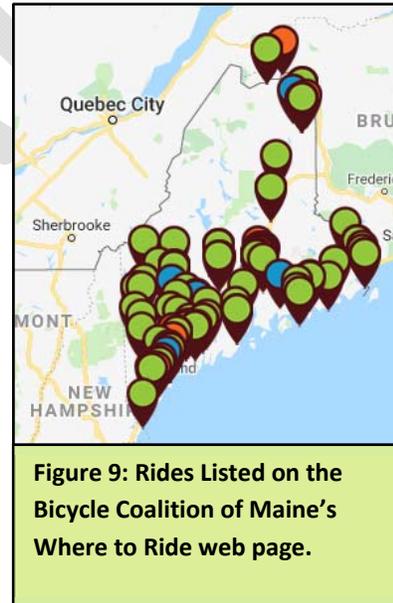


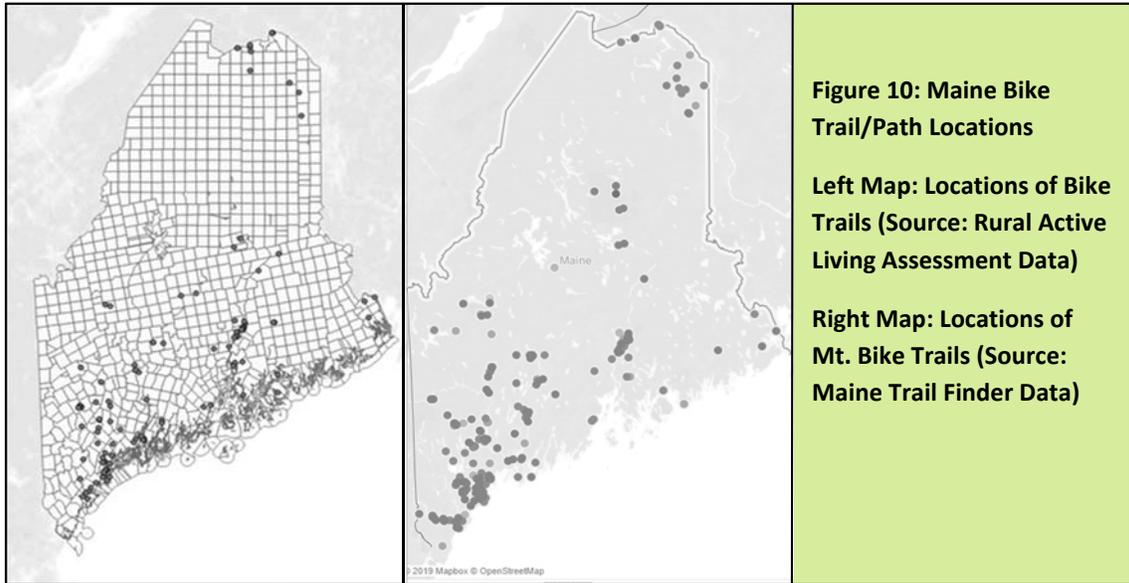
**Bicycle Trails**

**Figure 10** depicts the location of bike trails in Maine. Again, the source data is from RALA (left) and Maine Trail Finder (right). The RALA map (left) captures biking paths/trails and the Maine Trail Finder data (right) captures mountain biking trails. Though there is strong overlap, there may be slight definitional differences in the two sources. Additionally, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine provides public information on where to ride. Its website (<https://wheretoride.bikemaine.org/findaride/>) lists on road rides (113), wide paved or unpaved paths (14), and off-road, dirt trails (18). **Figure 9** shows the approximate location of these listed rides.

The RALA data collection effort also included community assessment of outdoor resources at a town-wide level. When asked whether their individual community had access to bicycle paths, a significant number of local assessors indicated their community did not. **Figure 11** shows this assessment across Maine.

It should be recognized that the grass-roots development of new singletrack mountain bike trails is a significant trail trend in Maine. Local chapters of the New England Mountain Bike Association have expanded and are working with landowners developing new, purpose-built trails designed for mountain bike use.



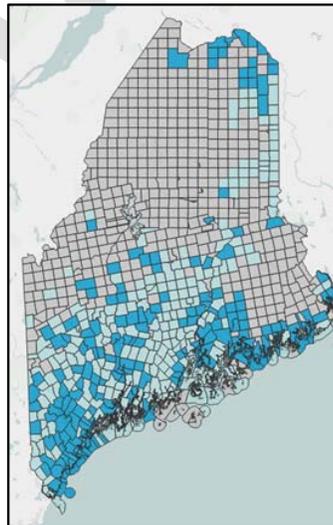


**Downhill and Cross-Country Skiing**

Maine **downhill ski areas** range from a handful of surviving small community hills with rope tows or t-bars that operate occasionally to two of the region’s largest ski resorts, Sunday River and Sugarloaf USA. Maine has 20 operating downhill ski areas open to the public that can be characterized as small, medium, and large according to the number of trails and lifts. Sunday River and Sugarloaf USA each have over 130 trails and 15 or more lifts. Medium size areas include Mt Abram and Shawnee Peak, which have 30-66 trails and 4-5 lifts each. The remaining ski areas have 1-3 lifts and 20 or fewer trails<sup>22</sup>. Most ski areas now have some level of snowmaking and designated snowboard areas.



**Ski and Snowshoe (Free) Rental Trailer**



**Figure 11: Towns with Access to Bike Paths/Trails (Darker Shading). Source: RALA Data**

<sup>22</sup> Retrieved from: <https://skimaine.com/ski-areas/>

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Ski Maine Association lists 21 **Nordic (cross-country) ski centers** in Maine with a total of 760.5 km of groomed ski trails (**Table 11**). Facilities range from “mom and pop” operations to major facilities including the Nordic Heritage Center (NHC) in Presque Isle, a world-class venue for cross country skiing, and biathlon; and the Maine Huts and Trails groomed ski system in Western Maine. The newly developed Penobscot River Trails system offers 25 km of groomed ski trails and related facilities along the East Branch of the Penobscot (Katahdin Region). Maine State Parks maintains groomed ski trail systems at Mt. Blue State Park (Weld), Sebago Lake State Park (Naples), Bradbury Mountain State Park (Pownal), Lily Bay State Park (Beaver Cove), Aroostook State Park (Presque Isle), Camden Hills (Camden), Cobscook Bay (Dennysville), and Range Pond (Poland). In addition, several community trail areas/projects include groomed ski trails. Examples include Quarry Road Trails in Waterville, Bond Brook Recreation Area and the Viles Arboretum in Augusta, and trails in the Millinocket area maintained by Northern Timber Cruisers. This report does not attempt to quantify ungroomed cross-country skiing, which can and does occur across a wide array of public and private settings.

Table 11: Nordic Ski Centers in Maine		
Nordic Ski Center & Location	Trail KM	County
Fort Kent Outdoor Center	23	Aroostook
Four Seasons Trail - Madawaska	14	Aroostook
Bethel Nordic Ski Center- Bethel	33	Oxford
Black Mountain of Maine- Rumford	18	Oxford
Carters Cross Country Center -Bethel	55	Oxford
Carters Cross County Center- Oxford	30	Oxford
Five Fields Farm- Bridgton	27	Cumberland
Harris Farm XC Center- Dayton	40	York
Lost Valley Touring Center- Auburn	10	Androscoggin
Maine Huts & Trails- Carrabassett Valley	72	Franklin
Maine Wilderness Lodges (AMC)- Moosehead Lake	100	Piscataquis
New England Outdoor Center- Millinocket	10	Penobscot
Nordic Heritage Center- Presque Isle	20	Aroostook
Pineland Farms- New Gloucester	25	Cumberland
Rangeley Lakes Trail Center- Rangeley	67	Franklin
Spruce Mountain Nordic- Jay	5	Franklin
Sugarloaf Outdoor Center- Carrabassett Valley	90	Franklin
Titcomb Mountain Nordic- West Farmington	16	Franklin
The Birches - Rockwood	40	Somerset
Camden Snow Bowl - Camden	55	Knox
Quarry Road Trails- Waterville	10.5	Kennebec
Source: Ski Maine Association		

**Snowshoe Trails**

The Maine Trail Finder data set lists 436 snowshoe trails in Maine. Typically, snowshoeing is possible on most hiking trails and can be undertaken most anywhere when conditions permit. However, from an infrastructure standpoint, the typical limiting factor is plowed trailhead access.

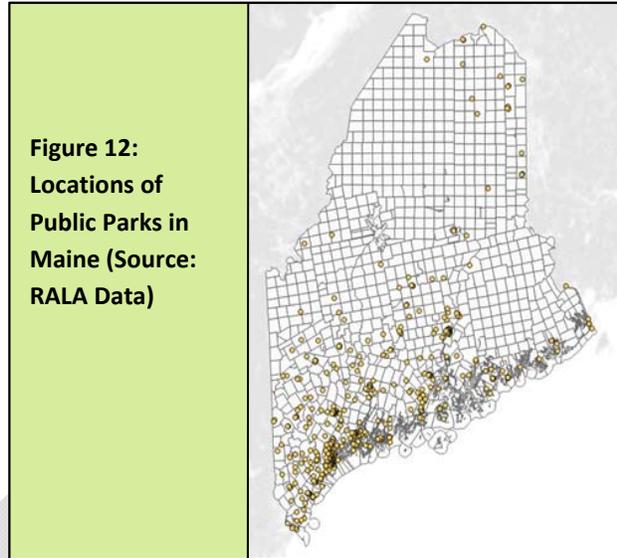
**Swim Beaches**

Swim beaches are a popular traditional destination for much of Maine’s population. There are 15 Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands properties within 50 miles of one of Maine’s ten most populated cities and provide swimming opportunities. Of those State beaches, 8 serve multiple large communities in southern Maine. When state park swim beaches are combined with similar municipal and other public sites, the total number of swim beaches

reaches 137 (based on Rural Active Living Assessment or RALA data). The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) lists Maine as having more than 29 miles of public access beaches stretching along Maine’s coast<sup>23</sup>.

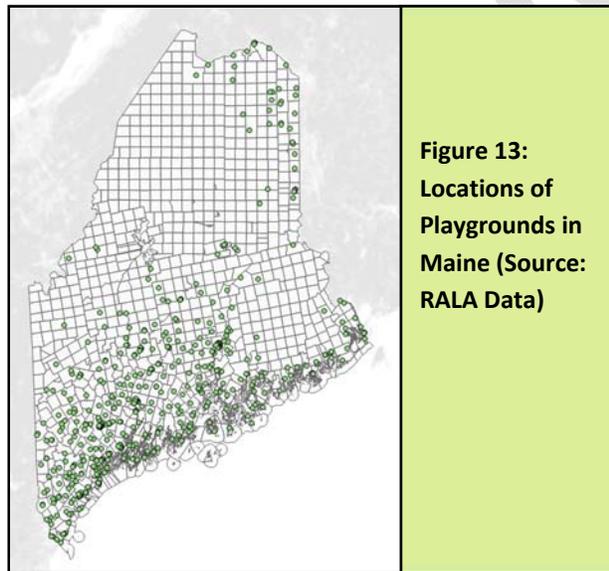
**Public Parks**

Maine Parks predominantly fall under two different ownership types. The first type is municipal parks owned and managed by towns and cities. The second type includes Maine State Parks, which number 48 and are located across the state. **Figure 12** shows the location of public parks in Maine.



**Playgrounds**

RALA data lists 313 playgrounds spread across Maine. **Figure 13** depicts the location of these playgrounds. The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands has 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. **Figure 14** shows the location of nearly a thousand playing courts and fields identified in the RALA data. In addition, that data set identifies 62 ice skating rinks and 35 skate parks.

**Campgrounds**

Maine is home to a variety of commercial and public campgrounds as well as numerous commercial sporting camps. This is in addition to the hundreds if

not thousands of primitive campsites found in the state.

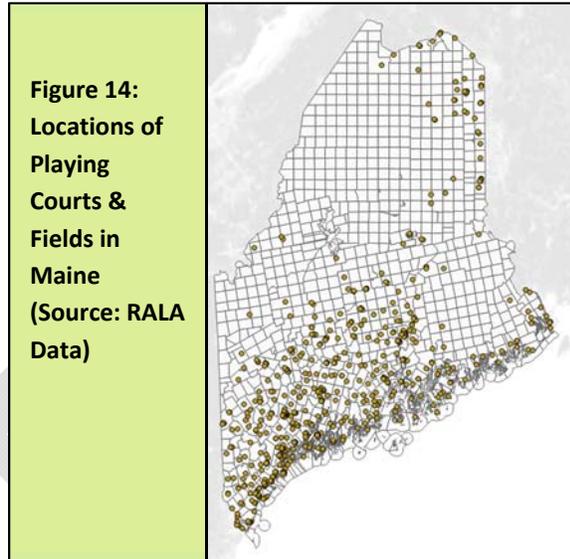
**Commercial campgrounds in Maine** play an important role in meeting camping demand and supporting the tourism economy. The Maine Campground Owners Association reports 180 campgrounds in Maine, (**Table 13**) not including State Park Campgrounds or Federal sites such as Seawall, Blackwoods, and (new) Schoodic Woods campgrounds in Acadia National Park. Taken as a whole, privately operated campgrounds in Maine provide more developed facilities than public campgrounds such as State Park campgrounds. Amenities such as

<sup>23</sup> Maine Department of Environmental Protection. (2015). *Maine Healthy Beaches 2014 Report to US EPA*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mainehealthybeaches.org/resources.html#reports>

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

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.

**Maine State Park campgrounds** are found at 12 State Parks spread across 8 counties. Generally speaking, Maine State Park campgrounds provide traditional camping experiences with a focus on natural settings. Playgrounds, trails, boat launches, and hot showers (11 of the 12 campgrounds) are examples of facilities found at many but not all park campgrounds. Water hookups and electric service is available at a portion of the campsites at Sebago Lake, Camden Hills, and Peaks Kenny State Parks. 2020 will see the addition of upgraded water and electric sites at Mount Blue, Aroostook, and Rangeley Lakes State Parks. Limited (and popular) reservable group campsites are found at 10 of the 12 campground parks. Maine State Parks offer no cabins or cottages for rent; the national average number of such rentals in other state park systems is 184.<sup>24</sup>



**Figure 14:**  
**Locations of**  
**Playing**  
**Courts &**  
**Fields in**  
**Maine**  
**(Source: RALA**  
**Data)**

**Commercial sporting camps** have a long tradition in Maine, most notably in the Aroostook, western mountains, Moosehead, Katahdin, and Downeast regions. These cabin/lodge-based operations are typically located in remote areas renowned for hunting and fishing opportunities. They are strongly tied to the Maine Guide traditions and can include rustic yet up-scale lodging and dining. The Maine Sporting Camp Association lists 50 member camps.

Table 12: Commercial Campgrounds in Maine by Region	
Region	# Campgrounds
Aroostook	6
Downeast/Acadia	25
Katahdin/Moosehead	24
Kennebec Valley	13
Mid-Coast	18
Portland & Freeport	7
South Coast	44
Western Lakes & Mountains	45
<i>(Source: Maine Campground Owners Association - <a href="http://www.campmaine.com">http://www.campmaine.com</a>)</i>	

**Trailside Lodges**

Within the last decade, two new examples of trail-focused lodging have developed. **Maine Huts and Trails** is a not-for-profit organization developing a multi-use/multi-season, non-motorized trail system of interconnected lodges in western Maine. The huts are described as eco-lodges or “boutique hostels”.<sup>25</sup> The **Appalachian Mountain Club** (not-for-profit) has acquired thousands of acres of land in the “100-Mile

Wilderness” Region between Moosehead Lake and Baxter State Park with a series of Maine Wilderness Lodges and lodge-to lodge skiing and other lodge-based activities as a preminent recreational opportunity on their properties.

<sup>24</sup> Leung, Yu-Fai, Jordan Smith, and Anna Miller. (2019). *Statistical Report of State Park Operations:2017-2018*. Prepared for the National Association of State Park Directors, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>25</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.maine-huts.org/about-mht/>

## Boating

Maine has over 575 boat launch sites managed by a variety of entities ranging from state and local government to companies providing public access as part of Federal Energy Regulation Commission hydropower licenses. Sites range from primitive hand-carry canoe and kayak access points to large ramped facilities with significant parking for high volume trailered parking. Boaters (and campers) can take advantage of formally recognized and managed water trails such as the Maine Island Trail along Maine's coast, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Allagash Wilderness Waterway, etc. Significantly more boating and camping opportunities exist where there is no formal "water trail" management in place.

## Golf Courses

Golf, like skiing, is also one of Maine's more popular "developed" outdoor recreation activities (2008 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment reported New England participation rates of 17.4%). According to the Maine State Golf Association, Maine has 123 golf courses. Maine golf courses have been predominantly developed by the private sector. The Maine State Golf Association lists 6 municipal golf courses (Bangor, Dexter, Frye Island, Riverside in Portland, South Portland, and Val Halla in Cumberland). It also lists 12 private clubs, 82 public courses, 7 resort courses, and 16 semi-private courses.<sup>26</sup>

## Public Input on the Supply of Outdoor Recreation

The 2019 Maine SCORP survey effort included collecting input on what is lacking in the state, if enough has been invested in Maine's outdoor recreation settings and activities, and what types of lands should be conserved.

When asked "**what types of outdoor recreation opportunities are most lacking in the state?**", respondents' top responses were:

- Mountain and off-road biking trails (9%)
- Walking Trails (6%), trekking/hiking trails (6%), general access for all populations (6%)
- Organized sporting and outdoor activities (5%), swimming spots (5%), Campsites (5%)

**46% of survey respondents don't think Maine has invested enough in outdoor recreation; less than 1% thinks too much has been spent.**

When asked, "**Do you think that Maine has invested enough in public outdoor recreation settings and activities?**", 46% responded "not enough", 32% responded they did not know, 21% replied that the amount was about right, and less than 1% stated that the State had invested too much. Top reasons cited for believing Maine has not invested enough include: needing to purchase and preserve more land for public recreation use (25%), under/limited staffing (15%), not a political priority (15%),

lack of information and advertising (11%), outdated/failing infrastructure (11%)

The survey also asked, "**What types of land should be conserved?**" Respondents were asked to rank a series of land types from 1 (least important) to 8 (most important). The leading type based on 2,557 responses was:

- "Land supporting opportunities for remote, backcountry trails and camping" (5.65)

Other types ranking 5 points or higher on the scale include:

<sup>26</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.mesga.org/>

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- “Small park properties within towns for a range of uses” (5.11)
- “Land providing access to coastal recreation opportunities/beaches” (5.07)
- “Undeveloped wildlife habitat supporting hunting, fishing, and limited primitive recreation” (5.06)
- “Land for more developed trails, camping, and nature-based recreation.” (5.00)

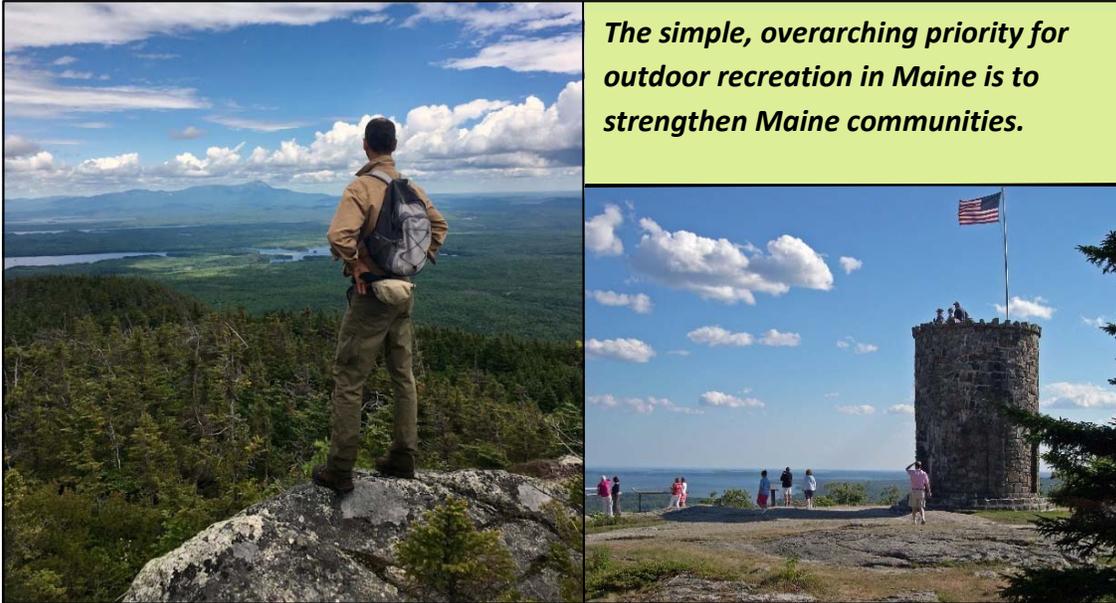
Types ranking lower than 5 include:

- “Land providing freshwater access for boating and fishing” (4.43%)
- “Easements providing public recreation rights while keeping the land otherwise privately owned” (3.88)
- “Areas supporting the development of community sports fields” (2.97)

### Key Take-Aways:

- Maine holds a unique place in the eastern United States in terms of landscape-scale opportunities to experience remoteness, pristine settings, and wild, natural settings.
- While the northwestern, northern, and eastern (interior) regions of Maine are home to larger percentages of conserved lands, the more southern, coastal regions of the state have more individually conserved land sites and more recreation infrastructure ranging from parks and playgrounds to trails.
- Non-government entities play a major role in providing outdoor recreation opportunity in Maine. Land trusts-especially in the more densely populated regions of the state -have been instrumental in preserving land and recreation opportunities. Grass-roots trail groups continue to be a force in promoting, developing, and managing recreational trails of all kinds. Commercial recreation providers support the diversity of recreation opportunities available (e.g., rafting, skiing, guided activities) and are important to community economic activity.
- Public access to private lands is a tradition in Maine but is vulnerable and is not a guarantee of future recreation opportunity. Private landowner relations and other efforts to sustain the tradition are warranted as access should not be taken for granted.
- Mainers seem quite satisfied with the state’s overall availability of outdoor recreation opportunities. However, satisfaction is somewhat lower and more geographically distinct when Mainers consider how satisfied they are with outdoor recreation in their communities.
- Data suggests that both the most rural and most urban Mainers seek close-to-home facilities/opportunities and there may be gaps in meeting that demand.
- Relatively more urban populations are more likely to have access to public parks, playgrounds, etc., but have much less opportunity for remote or remote feeling experiences without substantial travel. Supporting efforts to conserve and manage larger blocks of undeveloped natural areas near more populated areas in southern/coastal Maine could expand opportunities for residents of Maine’s population centers to find solitude and other wild/primitive land values closer to home.
- Survey respondents prioritize a range of recreational lands/opportunities. Responses indicate that there is significant opinion that Maine has not invested enough in outdoor recreation and that outdoor recreation facilities are an investment in the community.

## **Part III: Key Themes and Implementation Strategies**



*The simple, overarching priority for outdoor recreation in Maine is to strengthen Maine communities.*

The broad goal of strengthening Maine communities is broken down into five key themes.

- 1. Support Active, Engaged Communities**
- 2. Address Workforce Attraction through Outdoor Recreation**
- 3. Sustain and Grow Tourism**
- 4. Promote Ecological and Environmental Resilience**
- 5. Invest in Maintenance and Stewardship**

Within each theme, a vision and targeted strategies are discussed. Some of these strategies may be broader than the direct funding parameters for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program. Therefore, LWCF funding priorities are specifically called out. These funding priorities are specific to LWCF eligible costs. It is worth noting that these themes are presented separately to organize thinking about outdoor recreation, though in reality strategies and priorities in one area often are relevant across multiple themes.

## Theme 1: Support Active, Engaged Communities

**Vision:** *All Maine residents have ample access to outdoor areas capable of sustaining their physical and mental well-being and sense of belonging.*

**Background:** access to parks, outdoor spaces, forests, trails, fields, swim areas and other assorted outdoor recreation sites is associated with healthy, vibrant communities. While there is strong evidence supporting personal benefits stemming from outdoor recreation, there are also multiple benefits to the larger community. Both individual and community benefits are discussed below.

### Individual benefits

Growing scientific literature shows positive links between contact with nature and blood pressure, cholesterol, outlook on life, stress reduction, and behavioral problems.<sup>27</sup> Children's cognitive functioning, resilience to stress, and reduced ADHD symptoms have all been correlated with green spaces and outdoor settings.<sup>28</sup> Green play spaces at schools have been shown to be associated with higher test scores vs similar school populations without green space.<sup>29</sup> Access to and participation in outdoor recreation improves individual's lives in meaningful, measurable ways.

Outdoor recreation is uniquely positioned to address the issue of obesity and its cascading set of negative health associations. For instance, pleasurable exercise (such as gardening, hiking, tennis, etc.) has been found to increase human movement in middle-aged and older adults more than exercise undertaken to improve health (e.g., weight-lifting, aerobics) or exercise necessary for work (housework, etc.).<sup>30</sup> This is especially noteworthy given Maine's status as the oldest state in the nation.

Youth sports— as just one component of outdoor recreation—is shown to be linked with physical activity and energy expenditure (keys to fighting childhood obesity) as well as depression and suicidal tendencies.<sup>31</sup> Youth sports are also associated with stronger bones and muscles, an increased likelihood of being physically active later in life, being less likely to smoke, improved self-esteem, lower levels of aggressive behaviors, and improved academic performance.<sup>32</sup>

Whether for youth, elders, or anyone in between, outdoor recreation provides a multitude of personal benefits. And – indications are that outdoor exercise is more beneficial to mental health than indoor exercise activities. As stated by Gladwell et al, "*outdoor natural environments may provide some of the best all-around health benefits by increasing physical activity levels with lower levels of perceived exertion, altering physiological*

---

<sup>27</sup> Outdoor Resources Review Group; Resources for the Future Background Study. (2009). *Outdoor Recreation, Health, and Wellness: Understanding and Enhancing the Relationship*. Washington, DC: Geoffrey Godbey.

<sup>28</sup> Novotney, Amy. (2008, May). Getting Back to the Great Outdoors. *Monitor on Psychology*. Pg. 52.

<sup>29</sup> National Wildlife Federation. (2010). *Back to School: Back Outside! Create High Performing Students*. Washington, DC: Kevin J. Coyle

<sup>30</sup> Chow, H. (2007). *Physically Active Leisure Among Older Adults: Measurement, Comparison, and Impact*. Germany: VDM Verlag Publishers.

<sup>31</sup> Merkel, Donna L. (2013). Youth Sport: Positive and Negative Impact on Young Athletes. *Journal of Sports Medicine*, 4, 151–160

<sup>32</sup> Datalys Center: Sports Injury Research and Prevention. (2019). *Benefits of Youth Sports* [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from [https://www.datalyscenter.org/sites/datalyscenter.org/files/Benefits\\_of\\_Youth\\_Sports.pdf](https://www.datalyscenter.org/sites/datalyscenter.org/files/Benefits_of_Youth_Sports.pdf)

functioning including stress reduction, restoring mental fatigue, and improving mood and self-esteem and perceived health.”<sup>33</sup>

### Community Benefits

If, as research shows, outdoor recreation has significant value to the health and wellness of individuals, then it is only natural to assume those individual values add up to important benefits for communities. A 2018 study by Oregon State University quantified these cumulative health benefits by looking at the healthcare cost savings in Oregon attributable to outdoor recreation activity. Findings placed healthcare savings (“cost of illness” savings) at \$1.4 Billion or 17% of Oregon’s total healthcare expenditures treating chronic illness.<sup>34</sup> Outdoor recreation in Maine is no different than Oregon in that Mainers engaged in outdoor recreation are —whether intentionally or not— saving their communities and state hundreds of millions of dollars in healthcare costs! It is no wonder, then, that substantial majorities view parks, trails, and open space as an essential component of the healthcare system.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to reducing healthcare costs, outdoor recreation sites and facilities are integral to community vitality. Workforce retention and attraction, economic activity from tourism, and ecological benefits to communities, are discussed elsewhere in this report. However, there are other community benefits worth noting here. For instance, parks<sup>36</sup> and recreational trails<sup>37</sup> are shown to improve nearby residential property values. Greening otherwise vacant urban spaces has been shown to reduce crime.<sup>38</sup>

### *Community Interaction, Pride, and Sense of Belonging*

There are varying and deeply meaningful ways in which outdoor recreation resources create bonds. Community green spaces such as neighborhood parks build social interaction. Case in point— green spaces in public housing and in neighborhoods with large numbers of older residents have been shown, in both cases, to increase unity, foster belonging, and reduce crime.<sup>39</sup> Local sports teams, playing and practicing at public outdoor recreation sites, create community pride and engagement. Yoga in the park, mt. bike club rides at public trails, youth fishing days, and a myriad of other activities bring communities together.

Even access to the landscape itself can be a powerful driver of shared meaning and value. Protecting ecologically and culturally significant areas for public benefit gives community members a sense of common pride and heritage. In other words, community members see the local mountain park, conserved rocky shoreline, long-

---

<sup>33</sup> Gladwell, Valerie F., Daniel K. Brown, Carly Wood, Gavin R. Sandercock, and Jo L. Barton. (2013). The Great Outdoors: How a Green Exercise Environment can Benefit All. *Extreme Physiology & Medicine*, 2:3.

<sup>34</sup> Oregon State University. (2018). 2019-2023 *Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Supporting Documentation. Part A: Health Benefits Estimates for Oregonians from Their Outdoor Recreation Participation in Oregon*. Corvallis, OR: Randall S. Rosenberger and Tara Dunn.

<sup>35</sup> Mowen, A.J., A.G. Barrett, A.R. Graefe, J.L. Kraschnewski, C.N. Sciamanna. (2017). Take Two Parks and Call Me in the Morning- Perceptions of Parks as an Essential Component of our Healthcare System. *Preventative Medicine Reports*. 6, pg 63-65.

<sup>36</sup> The Trust for Public Land. (2009). *Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System*. Peter Harnik, Ben Welle, and Linda S. Keenan.

<sup>37</sup> Headwaters Economics. (2016). *Measuring Trails Benefits: Property Value*. [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/trails-library-property-value-overview.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> National Environmental Education Foundation. (2019). *How Greening Communities Can Reduce Violence and Promote Health*. [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.neefusa.org/health/outdoor-activity/how-greening-communities-can-reduce-violence-and-promote-health>

<sup>39</sup> Wolf, K.L., and M.A. Rozance. (2013). *Social Strengths - A Literature Review*. In: *Green Cities: Good Health* (www.greenhealth.washington.edu). College of the Environment, University of Washington.

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

distance trail weaving through their town, lighthouse, or other iconic public outdoor spaces as part of what makes their town *and themselves* unique.

### *Volunteerism*

When communities are engaged with their outdoor recreation resources and resource managers, there is the opportunity to foster volunteerism not only for the benefit of the resources or those entrusted to manage them, but also for the volunteers themselves. And while it is unwise to rely on volunteerism solely to manage incredibly valuable public assets, there is strong community benefit to doing even more with the help of committed volunteers.

Taking both individual and community benefits into account, it may not be surprising then to learn that residents of states that spend more (per capita) on public goods (libraries, parks and recreation, natural resources, highways not including toll roads, and police protection) self-report higher levels of happiness.<sup>40</sup>

### Proximity is Essential

With growing evidence pointing to the importance of close-to-home recreation opportunities, it's not surprising that those focused on the outdoors, health, and activity are starting to team up to work on equitable access to the outdoors. For example, the National Recreation and Parks Association, the Trust for Public Land, and the Urban Land Institute have come together to promote a 10-minute Walk Campaign to increase park access, quality, and funding. This initiative and others like it reflect the imperative to ensure parks and access to the outdoors is not the leisure opportunity of the privileged few but rather the universal opportunity of the many.

Maine, as one of if not the most rural state in the nation, is a unique case when it comes to proximity – which often has been looked at in the urban context. Nonetheless, Maine's rural and urban populations alike deserve easily reached opportunities to make outdoor recreation and all its benefits part of their daily lives.

### **Support Active, Engaged Communities: Implementation Strategies**

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>41</sup>
2. Develop a statewide outdoor recreation strategic communications and marketing plan and ensure messaging includes the promotion of how to get active and engaged in the outdoors right outside your door. Recognize messaging needs to account for time constraints and busy lives.
3. Develop and sustain a vibrant Maine State Trails Plan. Ensure the plan addresses standards, supply, demand, trends, and opportunities. While a plan would serve community values broader than tourism alone, specific attention should be paid to guidance related to developing, managing, and promoting trail assets integral to tourism and economic development. Any plan should include the full suite of trail types.
4. Develop web-based software enabling municipal, nonprofit, state, and any other planners to easily measure and document both demographic data and outdoor recreation supply data by entering project coordinates. Require grant-seekers for LWCF funds, Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and potentially other state grant funds linked with outdoor recreation to include this demographic and supply data in project narratives. Seek evidence of meeting unmet needs for populations lacking opportunity.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ingraham, Christopher. (2019, January 11). People are happier in states that spend more money on public places like parks and libraries. *The Washington Post*.

<sup>41</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

5. Ensure LWCF and the Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF) work together enabling funding of community projects.
6. Prioritize and reward proposed projects supported by trend and community data indicating a likelihood of the project meeting realistic health, wellness, and economic development goals.
7. Prioritize projects that make it easier for Mainers to fit outdoor recreation into their busy daily lives. This applies to both development and acquisition projects.
8. Increase the availability and quality of outdoor recreation resources meeting accessibility standards, thereby better serving persons with disabilities.
9. Fund and develop projects that are well-designed for older Mainers looking to gain health and wellness benefits from outdoor recreation.
10. Support facilities associated with the capacity to host trail races, community events, outdoor festivals, and other special events that grow community engagement and economic activity.
11. Strive to provide a range of close-to-home opportunities for multiple interests and capabilities. Work to identify park and other open space amenities that match the surrounding neighborhoods/community interests. Sports fields, playgrounds, community gardens, trails and boat launches, primitive backcountry areas, and more should be available as appropriate and possible.
12. Work with the Land for Maine's Future program and other appropriate acquisition funding sources to ensure the importance of close-to-home destinations supporting health and wellness is considered in acquisition priorities.
13. Continue to strengthen and expand partnerships, coalitions, and collaborations between public and private sectors; between agencies; between state, federal, and local entities; and across sectors including but not limited to health, economic development, community development, education, and outdoor recreation. As part of collaborations, coordinate messaging, outreach, planning, and funding strategies to reach outcome-based goals.
14. Recognize outdoor recreation's significant role in lifestyles and plan for/promote to unique audiences. Examples include but are not limited to locavores (hunting, fishing, foraging, food tourism mixed with recreation activities), wellness programming and marketing (e.g., paddle board yoga, walking/running groups), etc.
15. Increase the coordinated presence of Maine outdoor recreation online content. Enhance the quality and ease of access to online information about not just where to find outdoor opportunities but how to participate safely and responsibly and what the benefits are (why participate?).
16. Continue to engage in listening and research to understand target audiences. Tailor communication strategies and programming to meet specific participation and/or outcome goals. Promote cross-sector collaboration and sharing (e.g., parks and health professionals, etc.).
17. Encourage and support regional planning involving recreation, conservation, economic development, and other elements of community vitality.
18. Explore, expand, and support opportunities for outdoor recreation to address social issues (e.g., the opioid crisis, mental health, obesity, etc.).
19. Recognize that public schools, while technically eligible for LWCF funding, have a difficult track record of maintaining LWCF projects in perpetuity and have run into costly and difficult conversions (finding adequate replacements for nonfunctional and/or converted uses). Therefore, outdoor recreation infrastructure and programs should be strongly supported at schools but LWCF funds should be deterred at schools. Efforts should explore promote other funds and opportunities, including but not limited to the Recreational Trails Program, etc.

## Theme 2: Address Workforce Attraction through Outdoor Recreation

**Vision:** *Maine’s outdoor recreation lifestyle creates communities capable of competing nation-wide to draw in talented workers strengthening our state.*

### **Background:**

#### The Issue

Maine has the nation’s oldest median age, meaning our state is the oldest in the country. As the large Baby Boomer generation continues to age and move out of the workforce, Maine’s working-age population (20-64 years) is projected to decrease 6% from 2016 to 2026.<sup>42</sup> Maine is expected to face a shortage of more than 100,000 workers over the next two decades. Stakeholders and business people have described this shortage as “critical”, “massive”, “dramatic”, and “scary”.<sup>43</sup>

While the state as a whole is forecast to experience shortages in workforce, certain geographic areas and their communities are facing especially challenging demographic trends. Aroostook, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, and Washington Counties all are projected to see negative population change in the next ten years — with Lincoln, Piscataquis, and Somerset Counties projected to see 5% or greater population loss.<sup>44</sup> This population loss in rural communities is a national trend that, while perhaps accelerating, is not new. Counties such as Aroostook, Piscataquis, and Washington have been experiencing population loss for decades (over 100 years in the case of Washington County).

Furthermore, the population dynamics of regions vary beyond the simple number of persons. For example, Washington County has 22.7% of its population in the 65 years and older category. This compares to 18.8% for Maine and 14.9% for the United States.<sup>45</sup> Other Maine regions similarly have older populations than the national (or for that matter, state) averages. In short, many rural communities in Maine are facing critical issues associated with aging populations, shrinking workforces, and the financial stresses of maintaining services with fewer economic and social inputs.

The Maine State Economist summarizes the situation:

*“We need to continue to pursue policies and opportunities that will continue to attract young people and businesses to the state. Population growth is key to economic growth, and Maine will need to continue attracting residents and businesses to the state in the coming years as the Baby Boom generation retires.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Outdoor Recreation’s Role

<sup>42</sup> Maine State Economist. Department of Administrative and Financial Services. (2018). *Maine Population Outlook: 2016 to 2026*.

<sup>43</sup> Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. (2017). *Workforce and Business Attraction Research: Draft Report Findings from Phase I (Exploratory Consulting)*. Retrieved from: <https://motpartners.com/research/special-research-projects/>

<sup>44</sup> Maine State Economist. Department of Administrative and Financial Services. (2018). *Maine Population Outlook: 2016 to 2026*.

<sup>45</sup> *Populations at Risk*. (2019). Headwaters Economics. Retrieved from: [headwaterseconomics.org/par](http://headwaterseconomics.org/par)

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

High quality outdoor recreation opportunities are one of the most powerful tools Maine has to attract and retain workers and residents. Encouragingly for Maine, outdoor recreation has been shown to mitigate the pattern of population loss in rural America. Following the Great Recession's end in 2010, recreation counties (identified by the USDA Agriculture Research Service as being particularly dependent on recreation-based economic attributes) have been significantly less likely to have more people move out than move in. This pattern holds for all types of recreation counties, whether metropolitan, micropolitan, or rural. For micropolitan and rural counties, being one of America's recreation counties versus not being one was the difference between losing population (non-recreation counties) and maintaining (rural recreation counties) and significantly gaining population (micropolitan recreation counties).<sup>46</sup>

Outdoor recreation and its associated lifestyle is a statewide calling card. In addition to attracting tourism-based economic activity, outdoor recreation opportunities attract potential entrepreneurs, workers, and retirees. As stated in the Maine Office of Tourism Five-Year Strategic Plan, "*Given the state's critical workforce shortage, there is a greater opportunity to highlight the Maine lifestyle in tourism marketing for the benefit of not only tourism growth, but also resident recruitment.*"<sup>47</sup> Based on research commissioned by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development performed by Davidson-Peterson and Associates, substantial majorities of residents of the Mid-Atlantic, South-Atlantic, Northeast, and North-Central US say outdoor recreation options and pristine natural areas would be highly important in a decision about where they live. These same residents rate Maine higher than where they currently live in "offering access to water", and "having pristine natural areas" (they rated Maine equal to where they currently live in, "providing easy access to natural areas/outdoor recreation opportunities").<sup>48</sup>

Access to local parks, discussed elsewhere in this report related to health and other values, also play a notable role in attracting residents. More than 30 studies link parks to enhanced residential property values.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, public recreational trails have been shown to increase property values of nearby homes —with a price premium ranging from five to ten percent in most studies.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, land protection in New England has led to modest yet statistically significant increases in employment and labor force — boosting, not depressing local economies.<sup>51</sup> Outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities help create desirable, valuable communities where people want to live and work.

---

<sup>46</sup> Headwaters Economics. (2019). Recreation Counties Attracting New Residents and Higher Incomes. [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/recreation-counties-attract-report.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Maine Office of Tourism. (2018). *Five Year Strategic Plan*. Augusta, ME.

<sup>48</sup> Department of Economic and Community Development. (2017). *Workforce and Business Attraction Research*

*Phase III: Report of Findings From a Quantitative Survey of Potential Movers to Maine*. Retrieved from: <https://motpartners.com/research/special-research-projects>

<sup>49</sup> The Trust for Public Land. (2009). *Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System*. Washington, DC: Peter Harnik, Ben Welle, and Linda S. Keenan.

<sup>50</sup> Headwaters Economics. (2016). *Measuring Trail Benefits: Property Value*. [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/trails-library-property-value-overview.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Sims, K., Thompson, J.R., Meyer, S.R., Nolte, C., Plisinski, J.S. (2019). Assessing the local economic impacts of land protection. *Conservation Biology*, March.

**Workforce Attraction: Implementation Strategies**

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>52</sup>
2. Develop a statewide outdoor recreation strategic communications and marketing plan and ensure messaging includes the promotion of how the outdoor recreation lifestyle can attract new Maine workers.
3. Prioritize and support projects that demonstrate integrated thinking/planning related to attracting workers. Additionally, support projects that have proximity and design characteristics making it easier for workers to recreate before or after work and/or during breaks.
4. Expand and encourage initiatives at scales from local to state in which employers and outdoor recreation resource managers collaborate. Strive to improve employee opportunities to learn outdoor skills and gain awareness of outdoor opportunities. Seek opportunities to weave in health & wellness components as well as volunteerism.
5. Reflecting the very significant role public access to private land plays in Maine, support landowner relations initiatives and relationships to protect traditions Maine relies on. Support efforts to educate recreationists about the values and responsibilities associated with using private land.
6. Bring together regional employers, economic development professionals, and outdoor recreation professionals & interests to collaboratively plan regional outdoor recreation efforts.
7. Develop and promote content telling the story of outdoor lifestyle opportunities in Maine communities.
8. Foster/support local groups/clubs centered around outdoor recreation.
9. Support and strengthen the newly created Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation.



---

<sup>52</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

### Theme 3: Sustain and Grow Tourism

**Vision:** *Outdoor recreation continues to be a lynchpin for the Maine Tourism economy and is harnessed to sustainably expand local economies while enhancing quality of life.*

**Background:** Tourism generated \$6.2 billion in direct expenditures and supported over 109,000 jobs in Maine in 2018.<sup>53</sup> While there are many reasons tourists visit our state, outdoor recreation is recognized as an enormous draw and a strength for Maine. This is reflected in one of the objectives listed in the 2019 five-Year Strategic Plan developed by the Maine Office of Tourism. Specifically, the plan calls for Maine to, “*Capitalize on Maine’s inherent equities and strengths, including its abundant natural assets and distinctive quality of place*”.<sup>54</sup>

Outdoor recreation’s role in Maine tourism is further recognized by the Maine Destination Next Assessment – a region by region assessment project evaluating aspects of tourism performance and opportunity in Maine. This report involving the input of over 1,000 stakeholders regularly scored outdoor recreation elements above average. This was frequently not the case for ratings of other, non-outdoor recreation categories. Highly rated elements included: “*a wide diversity of outdoor recreation options for hiking, biking, paddling, etc.*”; “*trails systems*”; “*lakes and rivers to support good fishing and vast wooded areas to support hunting areas*”; “*an abundance of parks and outdoor spaces for handling events*”.<sup>55</sup> Outdoor recreation is a central pillar of the Maine experience tourists seek out.

#### Strength and Opportunity

As noted above, tourism – notably outdoor recreation-based tourism – serves an essential role in Maine’s tourism economy. And while this has been true for generations, there is a recognition that now there is opportunity to do more for the betterment of Maine communities. In some cases, the challenge is to sustain existing strong-performing tourism destinations while retaining quality of life for area residents. In other areas, the opportunity exists to enhance tourism to diversify and strengthen local economies adapting to change.

Again, the Destination Next work provides insightful perspectives. When asked, “*What are the three biggest opportunities for expanding jobs and the economic benefits of the tourism industry?*”, respondents chose, 1) “*advertising, branding, & marketing*”, 2) “*Outdoor recreation & sports*”, and 3) “*Workforce*”. Asked a similar question about growth potential, respondents chose, 1) “*Food & Beverage*”, 2) “*Outdoor Recreation*”, and 3) “*Nature/wellness*”.<sup>56</sup>

“*Outdoor recreation & sports*” and “*nature/wellness*” sit at the center of what outdoor recreation in Maine is. Maine is well positioned to take advantage of growing nature-based tourism trends including experiential tourism (with its focus on heritage and character of place) and active adventure tourism. Increasing adventure travel trends such as seeking to be a “*temporary local*” and seeking wellness and mental health benefits in itineraries can be advantageous to Maine, with our preponderance of small towns and healthy environment. Visitors looking for sustainable travel/tourism with positive local impacts can find those values in Maine. And where 74% of travel consumers report improving physical and emotional wellbeing is a bigger focus today than

---

<sup>53</sup> Maine Office of Tourism. (2019). *Maine Five Year Strategic Plan*. Augusta, ME.

<sup>54</sup> IBID

<sup>55</sup> Destinations International. (2018). *Destination Next: Maine Statewide Assessment*. Retrieved from: [https://motpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Maine\\_DestinationsNEXT\\_results.pdf](https://motpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Maine_DestinationsNEXT_results.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> IBID

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

in the past,<sup>57</sup> Maine's outdoor spaces can answer the demand for transformative experiences feeding body and mind.

Not all local tourism economies in Maine face the same circumstances. The Maine Woods (defined as the Lakes and Mountains, Kennebec & Moose River Valley, Maine Highlands, Aroostook County, and Washington County Tourism Regions) is facing demographic and workforce challenges which can be partially addressed by strengthening tourism. While these regions saw over \$2 billion in tourism spending and nearly 40,000 tourism related jobs in 2017, there is opportunity for significant growth. As stated in the *Future of Tourism – The Maine Woods* report, “There is little doubt that the combined economic value of the forest and tourism economy could grow to help spur economic vitality across the Maine Woods Region.”<sup>58</sup> Regional visitation growth of 3% (annual) and 4% growth in spending per visitor (annual) would double the Maine Woods tourism revenue within only 13 years.<sup>59</sup>

To be strong tourism destinations, Maine regions need to uphold or be able to attain certain characteristics. Destinations are places worthy of travel for an extended visit where something unique is offered that travelers cannot find closer to home for less money. Attractions – often outdoor recreation attractions – drive visitation with a critical mass of services (transportation, meals & lodging, retail, etc.) performing an important support role. Outdoor recreation resources in regions with existing and/or aspiring levels of destination development should be developed, managed, and promoted in ways that sustain those resources and strategically target segments of the outdoor recreation travel market. Regional collaboration, coordination and planning with all appropriate public and private entities is essential.

### **Sustain and Grow Tourism: Implementation Strategies**

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>60</sup>
2. Working with the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, develop a statewide outdoor recreation strategic communications and marketing plan and ensure messaging includes themes and content incorporating tourism expertise and messaging.
3. Fund and prioritize projects that plan for specific, unique experiences capable of attracting a volume of use appropriate to the site.
4. Develop or repurpose sites that fill experiential gaps for which there is documented tourism demand. Draw on region's unique assets to create or enhance experiences worthy of travel.
5. Develop and sustain a vibrant Maine State Trails Plan. Ensure the plan addresses standards, supply, demand, trends, and opportunities. While a plan would serve community values broader than tourism alone, specific attention should be paid to guidance related to developing, managing, and promoting trail assets integral to tourism and economic development. Any plan should include the full suite of trail types.
6. Continue and strengthen destination development initiatives led by the Maine Office of Tourism.
7. Increase/support partnerships between resources managers, local commercial entities, and regional tourism agencies. Pursue collaborative planning, mapping, information sharing, and public information efforts.

---

<sup>57</sup> Maine Office of Tourism. (2019). *Maine Five Year Strategic Plan*. Augusta, ME.

<sup>58</sup> Future IQ. (2018). *Future of Tourism – The Maine Woods. Part 2. Potential Scenarios & Impacts*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mainewoodsconsortium.org/2018/05/11/network-and-policy/>

<sup>59</sup> IBID

<sup>60</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

8. Collaborate to tell the story of Maine's outdoors. Strategic, high-quality content should be developed to inspire visitation, help direct visitors to appropriate destinations, and to inform/inspire low-impact recreational behaviors supporting landowner/manager goals.
9. Support events and programs (e.g., festivals, celebrations, skills events, etc.) that introduce travelers and potential travelers to Maine's outdoors, its traditions, and its opportunities.
10. Support and strengthen the newly created Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation.



Interpretive Panel at a Trailhead for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail

## Theme 4: Promote Ecological and Environmental Resilience

**Vision:** *Maine’s outdoor recreation resources – both built and natural – are acquired, managed, and adapted with an eye towards a continually changing climate and environment.*

**Background:** Maine’s average annual temperature has warmed about 3 degrees Fahrenheit between 1895 and 2014 – with temperature predicted to rise another 3 – 5 degrees between now and 2050.<sup>61</sup> Within those 2050 numbers, other seasonal trends also emerge. Winters are warming faster than summers and the number of summer days qualifying as excessive heat index days per year is predicted to roughly triple for communities across Maine.<sup>62</sup> Precipitation is on the rise as well. As stated in the *Fourth National Climate Assessment*, “the recent dominant trend in precipitation throughout the Northeast has been towards increases in rainfall intensity, with increases in intensity exceeding those of other regions of the contiguous United States”.<sup>63</sup> Data trends show increasing extreme precipitation events across Maine.<sup>64</sup> And while extreme snowfall events are likely to increase in frequency, the snowpack duration and total accumulated snow is predicted to decline – most notably in coastal areas.

The Maine Coast’s iconic status is legendary, and yet Maine’s coast is vulnerable to climate change. The Gulf of Maine has warmed faster than 99% of the world’s oceans.<sup>65</sup> The Gulf of Maine may also particularly susceptible to ocean acidification, which is a global trend. In addition to warming and more acidic water in the Gulf of Maine, the actual sea level itself is also rapidly changing (much faster than any other time in the last 5,000 years). Conservative estimates of sea level change project between 2 and 3 feet of rise by 2050.<sup>66</sup>

### What does all this mean for outdoor recreation in Maine?

Publicity of climate change’s impacts often focus on high profile issues such as sea level rise and corresponding loss of or damage to coastal assets. However, impacts come in many forms.

#### *Winter Recreation Impacts:*

One major area of impact to Maine’s outdoor recreation character is diminishment of winter snow and ice. Snowmobiling is a lifeblood of personal recreation and community economic activity in many regions of Maine. Shorter periods of snow cover coupled with less consistent cold and more frequent winter rains present real challenges. Inconsistent snows and less reliably frozen ground create the need to construct more developed snowmobile trails to better handle, in particular, damaging winter rain events.

---

<sup>61</sup> Fernandez, I.J., C.V. Schmitt, S.D. Birkel, E. Stancioff, A.J. Pershing, J.T. Kelley, J.A. Runge, G.L. Jacobson, and P.A. Mayewski. 2015. *Maine’s Climate Future: 2015 Update*. Orono, ME: University of Maine. 24pp.

<sup>62</sup> IBID

<sup>63</sup> USGCRP, 2018: *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Report-in-Brief* [Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, K.L.M. Lewis, T.K. Maycock, and B.C. Stewart (eds.)]. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA, 186 pp.

<sup>64</sup> Fernandez, I.J., C.V. Schmitt, S.D. Birkel, E. Stancioff, A.J. Pershing, J.T. Kelley, J.A. Runge, G.L. Jacobson, and P.A. Mayewski. 2015. *Maine’s Climate Future: 2015 Update*. Orono, ME: University of Maine. 24pp.

<sup>65</sup> IBID

<sup>66</sup> IBID

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

As with snowmobiling, ski areas – both downhill and cross-country – are projected to see diminished days with natural snow pack. This increases the need for and costs associated with greater levels of snow-making.

On the water, warming winters threaten ice-dependent activities such as the aforementioned snowmobiling as well ice fishing and even outdoor skating rinks- typically managed by municipalities and some other parks.

### *Spring-Summer-Fall Recreation Impacts:*

The transition from winter to spring is marked by snowmelt and increased runoff (river and stream flow). However, with shorter winters and less snow predicted, runoff is similarly predicted to continue to be earlier. Changes to this seasonal phenomenon, upon which certain paddling experiences such as the St. John River Trip are reliant, impact the timing and availability of those opportunities. The increase in extreme precipitation events stress roads and trails which serve as major recreation resources. Increased extreme precipitation requires more trail infrastructure and more robust road design (i.e., larger sized culverts and bridges).

Alluded to earlier, sea level change is a threat to Maine’s iconic coastal recreation resources. Beach erosion, loss of shoreline structures and historical sites, and damage to significant fish and wildlife habitats in coastal wetlands all are risks associated with rising sea level.

The predicted sharp uptick in excessive heat days threatens to make outdoor recreation more difficult if not dangerous to certain populations during those exceptionally warm days. Communities may struggle to provide cool, safe spaces for their population – especially vulnerable populations.

Even the act of breathing while recreating is impacted by climate change. Increased temperatures are associated with stress on persons with asthma and other respiratory diseases; allergies increase with temperature and increased carbon dioxide as well.<sup>67</sup>

### Choosing Resilience:

Resilient sites, according to work from the Nature Conservancy, have sufficient variability and microclimate options to help species and ecosystems persist despite rapid climate change.<sup>68</sup> A range of habitat types borne out of topographic and elevation diversity strengthens resiliency. Likewise, highly connected landscapes with limited barriers to species movement increases resiliency. As such, parks and other protected natural areas – especially those sites to be protected in upcoming years – should be chosen with an eye towards resilience.

Physical infrastructure can be resilient or at least adaptable to the effects of climate change. New coastal structures such as buildings and boat launch facilities should account for sea level change. Parks and open space may serve double duty by assisting with flood mitigation in addition to providing outdoor recreation space. Potentially flood-prone structures can be designed with mold-proof materials and other design elements incorporating the need to plan for changing climate. Improved recreational trail design and location will be even more important as predicted increases in high-intensity storms will tax trails not designed to shed water as effectively.

---

<sup>67</sup> Union of Concerned Scientists. *Maine: Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast. [Factsheet].*

Retrieved from:

[https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/NortheastClimateImpactsAssessment\(MaineSummary\).pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/NortheastClimateImpactsAssessment(MaineSummary).pdf)

<sup>68</sup> Anderson, M.G., A. Barnett, M. Clark, C. Ferree, A. Olivero Sheldon, J. Prince. 2016. Resilient Sites for Terrestrial Conservation in Eastern North America. The Nature Conservancy, Eastern Conservation Science.

**Promoting Ecological and Environmental Resilience: Implementation Strategies**

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges. <sup>69</sup>
2. Working with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and other conservation partners, prioritize projects that thoughtfully address implications of climate change and that show likelihood of being resilient and adaptable to change, including but not limited to assisting wildlife and natural ecosystems adapt and migrate.
3. Identify outdoor recreation infrastructure development projects and acquisitions that meet recreation interests while also protecting ecological resilience and habitat connectivity. Examples include but are not limited to simultaneously enabling long distance trails and corridor protections; acquiring lands with enough topography to allow plant migrations while affording trail vistas; adding conserved land to coastal recreation sites at risk to sea level change; etc. Ensure planning protects ecological integrity while facilitating outdoor recreation.
4. Invest in recreation infrastructure that is becoming more and more essential due to a changing climate (e.g., snow-making for ski trails, larger culverts to address higher volume storms, better engineered and more durable trails, splash pads and shade elements at local parks, etc.).
5. Support collaborative planning, training, and data-sharing via public-private partnerships to address best practices for managing outdoor recreation in a changing environment. <sup>70</sup>
6. Continue to ensure that outdoor recreation – an enormously significant economic and lifestyle component of Maine life – is considered as plans and communities grapple with addressing the impacts of climate change.



**2011 Photograph of the Morse River at Popham Beach State Park**

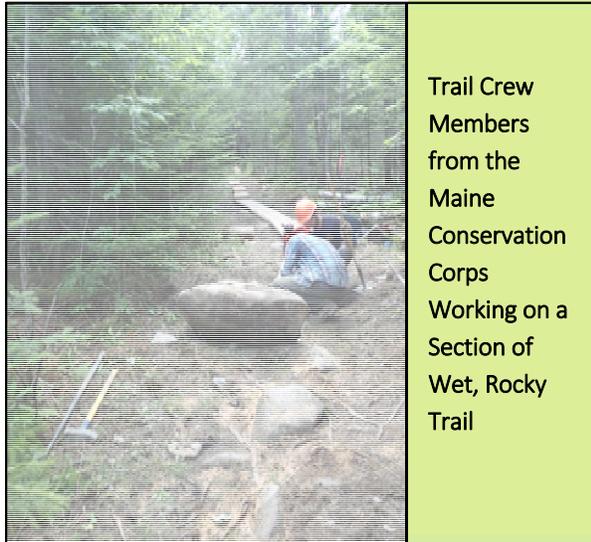
<sup>69</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

<sup>70</sup> Aligns with Action Item 5.B. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## Theme 5: Invest in Maintenance and Stewardship

**Vision:** *Maine’s outdoor recreation resources receive levels of care and management commensurate with their significant ecological, economic, and community values.*

**Background:**



Trail Crew Members from the Maine Conservation Corps Working on a Section of Wet, Rocky Trail

Outdoor recreation sites and infrastructure require maintenance and stewardship. Whether responding to impacts from wear and tear associated with recreational use, weathering and decay, storm damage, vandalism, invasive species, and a myriad of other impacts, resource managers need to maintain and steward the sites and infrastructure falling under their care. And while the acres of public land, miles of trails, number of sites, and other metrics of outdoor recreation supply are up, staffing numbers across the public sector are not. Data tracking by the National Association of State Park Directors shows that while acreage and visitation have increased, total state parks staffing across the country peaked in 1985 and has been declining since 2002. As stated by Utah State

University’s Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, *“The trends illustrate a persistent demand placed upon state park operators to accommodate more users across larger areas with fewer and fewer personnel.”*<sup>71</sup>

This trend of increasing stewardship responsibility with limited staff and funding resources is mirrored in survey data from the Maine Land Trust Network. In a survey of 76 Maine land trusts, 85.1% of respondents listed ongoing maintenance as one of their respective organization’s biggest stewardship challenges – beating out other challenges by over 30 percentage points.<sup>72</sup> Anecdotal sentiments from Maine municipal and state professionals tasked with managing public resources for outdoor recreation similarly echo this extreme challenge of keeping up with basic maintenance given often severe staff and financial capacity issues.

Interestingly, the public seems to also recognize the need for investment and capacity building. When asked in the Planning Survey developed for this Maine SCORP report, *“Do you think Maine has invested enough in public outdoor recreation settings and activities?”*, 46% of the 2,554 respondents answering the question chose *“not enough”*. Thirty-two percent (32%) indicated they, *“Have no knowledge of what the State of Maine has invested in this area.”* Only 21% replied investments had been about the right amount and a mere 1% replied that too much has been invested. Of the 1,044 respondents who also provided reasons they say Maine has not invested enough, 15% listed, *“understaffed land and resource management programs”* and another 15% listed, *“investment not a political priority, not much funding”*.

<sup>71</sup> Smith, Jordan W., and Yu-Fai Leung. 2018. *2018 Outlook and Analysis Letter: The Vital Statistics of America’s State Park Systems*. Utah State University. Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.

<sup>72</sup> Maine Coast Heritage Trust, 2019. *2019 Maine Land Trust Census*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mltn.org/resources/publications/>

**Maintenance and Stewardship: Implementation Strategies**

1. Building off this SCORP plan, engage state agencies and other partners to define roles, priorities, and action steps towards addressing conservation and recreation gaps and challenges.<sup>73</sup>
2. Prioritize rehab, upgrades, and revisions to existing sites to meet current and future outdoor recreation needs.
3. Invest in infrastructure improvements that make ongoing maintenance more sustainable.
4. Ensure trails and other infrastructure are well-designed to minimize future rehab.
5. Recognize the need for increased outdoor recreation management staff capacity (at various levels and within various agencies). Support increases in staffing to more appropriately steward outdoor recreation resources and visitor experiences, with acknowledgement that outdoor recreation has significant influence on economic development as well as health and wellness.
6. Support adding educational and law enforcement capacity to better manage recreationists' behaviors to better protect private and public resources as well as recreation experiences.
7. Support partnerships and capacity for managing volunteers engaged in stewardship



**ATVs at Shelter – Bangor & Aroostook Trail**

---

<sup>73</sup> Aligns with Action Item 1.A. of the final report of the Land Conservation Task Force (2019).

## **APPENDIX A: PLAN PROCESS**

### **Initial Background Research & Planning**

The initial phases of plan creation involved staff review of the 2014-2019 Maine SCORP, review of state and national trends and issues identified in various reports and research, and a review of the issues affecting outdoor recreation and conservation in Maine. This initial process informed the overall thrust of research and discussions brought to the SCORP Advisory Committee for input.

### **Contracted Survey Research**

A public survey was performed by Market Decisions Research (MDR), a private research firm based in Portland, Maine. MDR was selected to assist with survey development and analysis through a competitive bid process. The Bureau elected to work with MDR to develop an online survey to solicit perspectives on outdoor recreation participation, preferences, and use patterns.

### **Online Survey**

Sampling was done via a convenience sample. Email messages containing a link to an online survey instrument was distributed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land (ME BPL) staff to municipal recreation departments across the state. These departments then distributed the link to individuals on their mailing and contact lists. Individuals were then free to take the survey at any time over the course of data collection. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry promoted the survey link via social media and Advisory Committee members were also encouraged to share the link widely with their respective agencies, groups, and constituencies.

The survey instrument for the 2019 Maine SCORP Survey was created by ME BPL staff and Market Decisions Research. Input and guidance were provided by the SCORP Steering Committee on topics, areas of interest, and specific questions they sought to find answers to. This was combined with a review of the 2014 survey instrument, as well as exploration of the literature on recreation research. The survey instrument is presented in Appendix B. of this document.

Data collection began in March, 2019, and was conducted through May, 2019. All data was collected through the online survey hosting platform SurveyMonkey. In total, 3,289 individuals began the survey. Of these, 2,321 individuals answered the final survey question. This represents a completion rate of 70.5%. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents were full-time Maine residents, 2% were not residents, 2% were part-time residents, and 29% were unknown.

### **Steering Committee**

A plan steering committee was recruited to provide guidance, reflection, and direction related to the development of the plan. Comprised of partner agency representatives and representatives from a wide range of insight-providing nongovernmental entities, steering committee members attended a series of meetings designed to inform the process of seeking and understanding public input on outdoor recreation issues/needs. Appendix A-I. describes Steering Committee meeting outcomes.

*Committee members included:*

- **Rex Turner**, Outdoor Recreation Planner (SCORP coordinator, writer), Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- **Doug Beck** Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation (LWCF program manager), Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
- **Jessie Perkins**, Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce
- **Carolann Ouellette**, Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation
- **Matt Postein**, New England Outdoor Center
- **Fred Michaud**, Maine DOT
- **Scott Rollins**, Maine DOT
- **Katie Yates**, MDIFW
- **Scott Brown**, Maine Veterans Services
- **Sarah Medina**, Seven Islands Land Company
- **Hannah Stevens** Seven Islands Land Company
- **Lia Morris** and subsequently **Alicia Heyburn**, Teens to Trails
- **Mark Noyes**, Market Decisions Research
- **Mike Wilson**, Northern Forest Center
- **Tracey Willette**, Maine Recreation and Parks Association
- **Kay Henry**, Maine Outdoor Brands
- **Dawn Gordon**, Maine Center for Disease Control
- **Jeff Romano**, Maine Coast Heritage Trust

### Data Reporting

MDR produced a study report detailing and discussing findings (attached to this report as Appendix B).

### Web Postings

The process of updating the 2020-2025 Maine SCORP was detailed on the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands' permanent SCORP webpage. This webpage encouraged comments/questions in general and specifically promoted a) public participation in the online survey (when open) and b) public review of the draft plan [IN PROGRESS].

### Report Drafting

Report drafting took place over 2019. Research and analysis, especially continued analysis of the robust survey responses, occurred concurrent with drafting.

### Public Comment Period

A draft final plan was available online for public review and comment. The plan availability for comment was promoted via Bureau press releases and online. [IN PROGRESS]

### Submittal to National Park Service

After review and comment by the public, and review and adoption by the State of Maine by and through its Governor, the final Plan was submitted to the National Park Service for approval. [IN PROGRESS]

**Appendix A-I: Steering Committee Meetings**

MAINE STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

OUTCOMES



December 18, 9-11

MaineDOT Headquarters, 24 Child St., Augusta, ME 04330

Attendees

**Rex Turner & Doug Beck** ME Parks and Lands  
**Jessie Perkins** Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce  
**Carolann Ouellette** Office of Outdoor Recreation  
**Matt Postein** New England Outdoor Center  
**Fred Michaud** Maine DOT  
**Scott Rollins** Maine DOT  
**Katie Yates** MDIFW  
**Sarah Medina** Seven Islands Land Company  
**Hannah Stevens** Seven Islands Land Company  
**Lia Morris** Teens to Trails  
**Mark Noyes** Market Decisions Research  
**Mike Wilson** Northern Forest Center  
**Tracey Willette** Maine Recreation and Parks Association

AGENDA:

1. **Introductions [5 min]**
2. **General SCORP overview [10 min.]**
  - SCORP- purpose, requirements, on-the-ground history
    - See:  
[http://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/publications\\_maps/statewide\\_recreation\\_plan.html](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/publications_maps/statewide_recreation_plan.html)

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- Big picture: addressing key issues that matter to all Maine's people and communities (e.g., health & wellness, economic vitality, community desirability/work force attraction, etc.).
  - For tone of this broad vision, see attachment, "Maine and Outdoor Culture".
- Diverse perspectives – both on steering committee and via public participation & data
- 2019 Plan process: where are we?
  - The Bureau has been and will continue to gather research data, reports, etc. Please feel free to share resources, reports, etc., that could be of assistance. We may set up a Dropbox or other cloud tool for sharing documents.
  - The Bureau has selected Market Decisions Research (Portland) to provide contracted survey, data analysis, and reporting support.

### 2. Data Overview [20 min]

- Supply
  - Rural Active Living Assessment
    - See Augusta example (attached excel spreadsheet). Program and policy data also available town x town).
  - GIS sets (note and discuss new)
    - See data visualization PDF.
  - Narratives (private land significance, other)
    - It was noted that while there will be a focus on geospatial data analysis, narrative reporting and discussion will occur too. An example may be discussing the role of private lands that may not otherwise shine through supply analysis.
- Demand
  - 2014 survey – as part of existing SCORP plan. Starting point for new survey and still quite valid.
  - Trend data (licenses, attendance, other reports)
  - 2019 contracted survey – Being developed as we speak.
- Resource Manager Survey
  - New idea for this process. May be used to gain insights from individuals such as Park Managers, town recreation managers, etc.

### 3. Break [5 min]

### 4. Group Activity: What are the Key Questions We Need to Ask? [30 min]

- **Objective: ID key questions (broad to narrow) to investigate.**

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

### Listed Items:

- **Barriers** to opportunities – rural and urban? Can we understand barriers to those already inclined to activity and those not inclined?
- How does **transportation access** limit engagement in outdoor recreation in your municipality?
- What **limits** your **use** of outdoor recreation?
- How do you **measure** the **use** and the **economic impact** of an investment?
- When is something considered **under used or obsolete**? How can assets be **repurposed**?
- Defining **new audiences**... How to **target and engage**? Examples: 20 - 40-year-olds; family-oriented; women.
- What are the **trends**? What is increasing/declining?
- Where do **events** (outdoor recreation and sporting) fit in? Examples: bass tournaments, marathons, softball regions.
- How do **public assets** create **business opportunities**?
- How do we assess **local vs. visitor demand**?
- How does your community **engage youth**? K-5; 6-8; 9-12
- Does your school district have **outing clubs** at the middle school and high school level? If no, what are the barriers?
- How do we identify the **guides/leaders** of different activities?
- How can **trails** be managed, designed, and maintained to provide at least a minimum quality standard for **tourism** purposes?
- Defining **total product** for likely success (trail development). What is needed beyond trails?
- How to manage mixed-use **conflict**?
  
- **Objective: ID possible means of inquiry (i.e., where might we find answers).**

### Listed Items:

- Maine Office of Tourism data
- North Maine Woods visitation data
- Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife data (licenses, etc.)
- American Recreation Coalition
- Adventure Travel Trade Association – trends
- Outdoor Industry Association

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- Maine Recreation and Parks Association
  - Land Trusts
  - Environmental Living and Learning for Maine Students (ELMS)
  - Health & Human Services
  - Maine Woods Coalition – Future IQ
- **Objective:** show how specific answers/insights might directly link to tangible, productive actions

### **Listed Items:**

- Engage Public in implementing results (not just data/opinions)
- Get BPL a marketing/communications department.
- Engage other state agencies in a working group model. “Assign” actions.
- Survey business community – those in outdoor recreation and/or large employees seeking workforce.
- Make resulting data extremely accessible to local planners, recreation clubs, etc. (town rec departments, small businesses, nonprofits, anyone applying for grants).
- Data-based choices; follow up modifications based on results
- Define success
- Tackle specific barriers to outdoor recreation (ex. time, cost, distance, lack of skills, ease of access).
- Nontraditional partners...microbreweries etc.

### **5. Group Discussion: Priorities for Survey Inquiries [20 min]**

- What data is most important?
- What data can be best put to use identifying specific infrastructure and/or programmatic projects?

*[Discussion was cut short due to time. Brief conversation identified the following keys:]*

- Marketing the outdoors
- Coordination
- Identifying barriers to “everyday” recreation opportunities.

### **6. Next steps & scheduling [15 min]**

- Steering committee- next meeting schedule & purpose
- Other questions

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

*[Discussion was cut short due to time. Brief conversation discussed the committee meeting several times across the plan production period as well as having opportunities to review content and resources electronically. More to come.]*

DRAFT

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

### MAINE STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

#### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING (II)

March 11, 1-3; First Floor Conference Room

ME DACF Headquarters, (Harlow Bldg.) 18 Elkins Lane, Augusta, ME



#### Participants

<i>Rex Turner, ME Bureau of Parks and Lands</i>	<i>Jeff Romano, Maine Coast Heritage Trust</i>
<i>Doug Beck, ME Bureau of Parks and Lands</i>	<i>Patrick Madden, Market Decisions Research</i>
<i>Fred Michaud, ME Dept. of Transportation</i>	<i>Mark Noyes, Market Decisions Research</i>
<i>Jessie Perkins, Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce</i>	<i>Tracy Willette, Maine Recreation and Parks Association</i>
<i>Carolann Oullette, ME Office of Outdoor Recreation</i>	
<i>Kay Henry, Maine Outdoor Brands</i>	
<i>Dawn Gordon, Maine Center for Disease Control</i>	
<i>Scott Brown, Maine Veterans Services</i>	

#### Outcomes

##### General-

*Rex Turner discussed the imminent public survey (ME SCORP Survey). Group discussion supported adding to the survey dissemination approach (sending the survey out via partnership with municipal recreation departments) by also widely making the survey available through use of social media etc. There was also discussion about the intent/possibility of engaging in a separate survey aimed at resource managers.*

*There was a brief overview of the proposed plan structure. This was discussed to highlight the types of background literature and non-survey data (e.g., license data, attendance data, etc.). Some sample data, such as trends in snowmobile registrations, was shared.*

##### Group Brainstorming-

*The group discussed/brainstormed topics grouped into, “developments”, “trends”, “issues”, and “opportunities”. Then, the group went on to identify/brainstorm topics grouped into 6 categories (listed below).*

#### **DEVELOPMENTS**

- *An increase in mt. bike clubs and miles of trails*
- *Increase in interest in and development of purpose-built trails (as opposed to multi-use, “generic” trails)*

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- *Ski area ownership changes*
- *ADA trails*
  - *Seek more*
  - *Gray area of easier trails with less challenges to mobility-limited, but not fully ADA*
- *Office of Outdoor Recreation & Destination Development positions at MOT.*

### **TRENDS**

- *Backcountry, off-trail snowmobiling growing interest & issue*
- *E-bikes*
- *ADA, including aging population and higher trends for ADA needs/issues*
- *Lack of free time...how to deal w/ & fight against*
- *ATVs*
- *Urbanization*
- *Outdoor recreation disconnects...lack of skills*
- *Aging motorized club members...replacement by younger generation?*

### **ISSUES**

- *Private lands*
  - *Conflicts*
  - *Monetization & access...pros & cons*
  - *Changes to traditions*
  - *Generational turnover...of smaller private landowners*
- *Multi-use trails – use conflicts*
- *CMP corridor*
- *Fiscal capacity & maintenance capacity*
- *Younger generation- lack of exposure & experiences*

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- *Trail ADA and ABA design training (accessibility)*
- *Introduce kids to experiences*

### **1. PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELLNESS**

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- *Instrumental & important – evidence based and linked to better health*
- *Counter fear messaging (ticks, for example)*
- *Youth programs (k-12)*
- *Proximity...to parks and places to be active*
- *Connect with healthy community groups working on: opioids, ACEs (adverse childhood experiences?), obesity*
- *Better communications*

### 2. WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

- *Definite links & benefits for increasing workforce.... There are changes in minimum wage and decreases in population/workforce.*
- *Engage business/employers to understand need and how to promote*
- *Small business development/loans – Maine has strong resources for small businesses*
- *Outdoor assets important to decision to relocate*
- *University/community college degrees/certifications in outdoor recreation*
- *Recreation also attracts workers in forest products industry.*

### 3. COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

- *Outdoor events spaces – sports/tournaments, races, festivals, etc. ...Quarry Road example*
- *Harpswell Land Trust as an example*
- *Public open spaces – in town parks*
- *Scouting as a youth-energizing approach to recreation outdoors*
- *Pet-friendly parks*
- *Access*
- *Connectivity of trails, recreation spaces, & downtowns*
- *Marketing- including locals not knowing local resources exist*
- *Engaging younger generations in service/stewardship*

### 4. RECREATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR DESTINATION COMMUNITIES

- *Mapping*
- *Parking*
- *Wayfinding*

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- *Promotion...with centralized resources*
- *All of the above need more funding*
- *Current, comprehensive, centralized information needed*
- *Maine should be the eastern leader for outdoor recreation*
- *Interpretation to define place for visitors*
- *Transportation to and within destination communities*
- *Public bathrooms*

### 5. RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

- *Volunteers – figure out ways to stop relying on them when we know assets are important.*
- *Climate- diversifying activities available now in case one or more become impossible in the future.*
- *Look at existing snowmobile clubs (that are diminishing) ...what will work to replace them?*
- *Look at beach erosion issues w/climate change*
- *Overlay climate resilience (TNC) and recreation to find matching opportunities*

### 6. EQUITY & RELEVANCE

- *Trails for all*
- *High school and middle school outing clubs open to all. Alternative/augment to organized sports.*
- *Inventory fee-based vs. free facilities*
- *Educating about funding sources*
- *Connect with healthy community coalitions*
- *Organized/supported activities*

**APPENDIX B: RESEARCH REPORT**

**MAINE STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION SURVEY**

DRAFT



75 Washington Ave, Suite 206

Portland, ME 04101

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

(207) 767-6440

Prepared by: Market Decisions Research

Jotham Illuminati, MSPH

Mark Noyes, MPH

Patrick Madden, MBA



# RESEARCH REPORT

# Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning Survey

## Table of Contents

<a href="#">How to Read This Report</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Key Findings</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Discussion</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Survey Methodology</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Detailed Findings</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Use and Interest in Activities</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Barriers</a> .....	24
<a href="#">Programs and Events</a> .....	27
<a href="#">Funding of Resources</a> .....	31
<a href="#">Land Conservation and Acquisition</a> .....	33
<a href="#">Knowledge and Motivation</a> .....	36
<a href="#">What They Are Saying</a> .....	41
<a href="#">Demographic Characteristics</a> .....	42
<a href="#">Appendices</a> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<a href="#">Appendix I. Survey Instrument</a> .....	45
<a href="#">Appendix II. Introduction Email</a> .....	53

## How to Read This Report

To simplify reporting, certain phrases are abbreviated in reports as follows:

MDR	Market Decisions Research
BPL	Bureau of Parks and Lands
SCORP	State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

In addition, several abbreviations are used denote standard responses:

DK	Respondent says, "I don't know" or similar
REF	Respondent refuses to answer
NA	Question is not applicable
Other	Infrequent responses combined

### Call-outs

**What they are saying:**

*"Responses to open-ended questions are coded into categories and reported quantitatively in tables. For open-ended questions where comments are particularly insightful a sample of actual comments are presented in a call-out like this one."*

## Key Findings

### Use and Interest in Activities

- Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents said trekking and hiking is one of the activities they most enjoy.
  - Bicycling (37%), walking (29%), swimming (27%) and skiing (25%) are the next most frequently mentioned activities.
- Nearly nine in ten (88%) respondents said they visited a municipal park or open space within the past three years. Three quarters or more said they visited Maine State Parks or Historic Sites (78%) or local outdoor sports and recreation spaces
- Respondents ranked getting exercise and physical activity as the primary reason they participate in outdoor recreation (3.5 out of 5). Experiencing excitement and adventure was the lowest scoring reason (2.4).
- 97% of respondents visit community recreation sites multiple times per year.
- 93% of respondents take daytrips or outings more than once per year with the a few times per year (42%) being the most common frequency.
- 72% of respondents said they go on overnight trips more than once per year, while 4% never take overnight trips.
- Respondents are more likely to participant in outdoor recreation near their homes with almost all types of company, or alone.
- Over three quarters (77%) of respondents are satisfied with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in their community.
- Almost all (92%) respondents are satisfied with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine.
- The availability of mountain and off-road biking trails, walking trails, and hiking trails were the most frequent items mentioned when respondents thought about what opportunities the state lacked.
- Nearly half (49%) said they have camped at a Maine state park within the last 5 years, and 44% have purchased a Maine fishing license. One in ten have registered either an ATV (12%) or snowmobile (11%).
- The most common overnight activity is trekking and hiking (43%). One quarter mentioned camping (27%).
- When on overnight trips, half (53%) of respondents who take overnight trips said they camp in a tent. One third stay in either a private seasonal residence (33%) or a hotel (33%).

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- Airbnb and personal residences are also utilized for overnight trips.
- 80% of respondents are satisfied with the availability of resources and accommodations for overnight trips in Maine.
  - Among those dissatisfied, cost (27%) and lack of places to stay (27%) are the drivers of unmet expectations.

### Barriers

- 44% of respondents said lack of free time is a barrier to participating in outdoor recreation. Slightly fewer (38%) said busy and crowded sites prevent them from participating.
  - Other barriers to participation include weather and insects (16%), health or personal barriers (16%), and costs of participating (13%).
- Among ways to improve participation suggested by respondents, having more free time (20%), more nearby opportunities (16%), and greater advertising and awareness of opportunities (11%) were the most common responses among respondents.
- The activities which respondents expressed most frequent interest in are self-guided educational hikes (83%), outdoor festivals (82%), and outdoor skills workshops (81%).
- 20% of those providing a response said they would like to see more non-motorized, outdoor activities and programs offered in Maine. 9% advocated for more family and child focused learning opportunities.
- 45% of respondents said they felt unknowledgeable about funding for public outdoor recreation. Only 34% felt knowledgeable.
- 46% of respondents think Maine has not invested enough into public outdoor recreation.
  - Among those who want more investment purchasing and preserving more land for public use is the top priority.
  - While extremely few (<1%), those who thought investment was too high said that government oversight and involvement is a problem.

### Land Conservation and Acquisition

- More than a third (37%) of respondents said acquiring land or access to land should be an essential priority of the State of Maine. Only 1% said this should not be a priority.
- In ranking candidate land types for conservation, land supporting opportunities for remote, backcountry trails and camping scored the highest among respondents, at 5.56 (out of 8).
- When considering other types of land, 14% of those providing a response said animal habitat and wildlife corridors ought to be conserved. Similar numbers said forested land (12%), recreation space (10%), and coastal land (10%) should be conserved too.

### Knowledge and Motivation

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of respondents said they are knowledgeable about outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine.
- 84% of respondents utilize internet searches to find outdoor recreation information. Less than a quarter (24%) use magazines and newspapers.
- Among other outdoor recreation information sources, travel guides and maps were mentioned by 19% of those providing a response.
  - 38% of those who reference websites said they visit Maine.gov or other state-sponsored pages. 30% rely on basic search engine browsing to find outdoor recreation information.
- Nearly a third (32%) of answering respondents expressed interest in learning flora/fauna identification and animal tracking skills. 24% want to learn more about bush craft and wilderness survival.
- Similar numbers of respondents said they wanted to learn more about the locations of recreation activities (21%) and activities available/accessible to them (21%).
- 96% of respondents said they agree that outdoor recreation facilities are an investment in the community.
  - Half (51%) said they would be more active if more opportunities were available nearby.

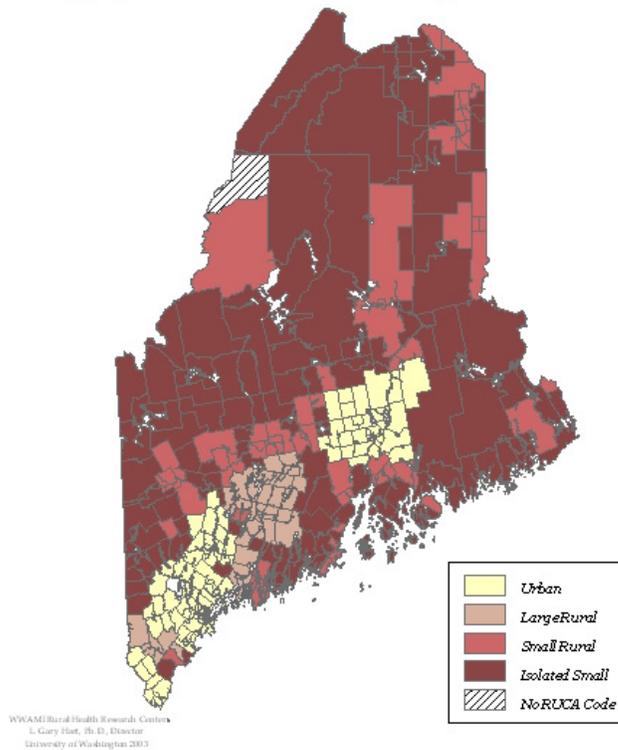
## Discussion – Survey Results by Geography

### **Rurality – Rural-Urban Commuting Areas (RUCA)**

RUCA codes are a series of designations created by the US Department of Agriculture to describe small, specific areas and understand their links to regional economies. RUCA codes are designated at the Census Tract level, the smallest designation at which population density information is collected. RUCA codes combine information on density, population, and commuting time and linkages in order to classify an area as metropolitan (urban), micropolitan (large rural areas), small town/rural areas, and isolated rural areas.

These areas are defined as much by their commuting patterns and economies as by population density. Thus, many areas with very low population density but who primarily work in a nearby urban area would be considered metropolitan because they have access to that urban area’s resources, economy, and amenities. This makes RUCA codes a more comprehensive consideration of an area’s rurality than many population density measures.

**Maine**  
Aggregated RUCA Designations by Census Tract



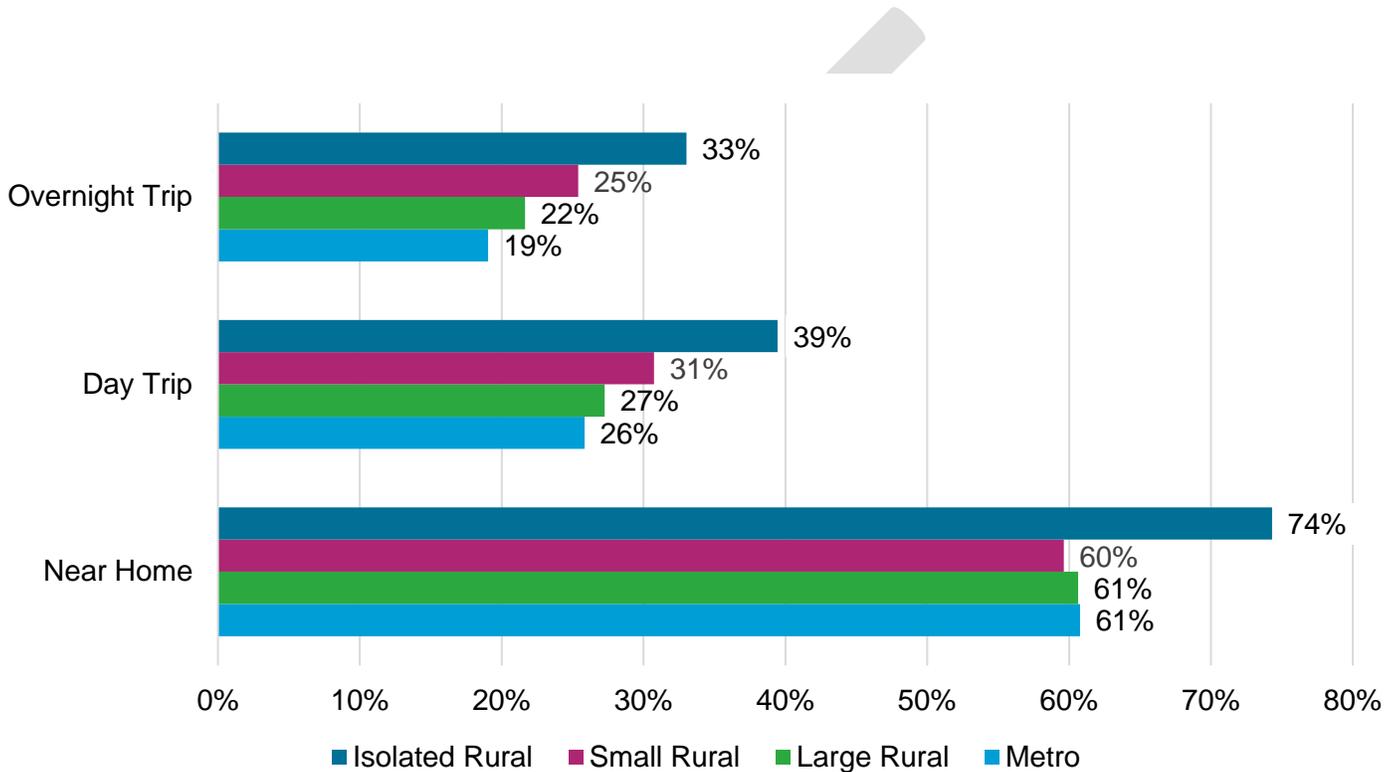
### **Results by RUCA Findings**

While individuals in rural and urban areas of the state are in most ways very similar, there are some distinctions which stand out as requiring further examination.

## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Individuals who live in the smallest communities (isolated rural communities, with few links to metropolitan areas) are more likely to participate in outdoor recreation events alone than individuals living in any other type of community (see Figure 1). This holds true no matter the length of the trip. While individuals within the three other community types used in this analysis are fairly similar in this behavior, those in isolated rural communities are notable outliers.

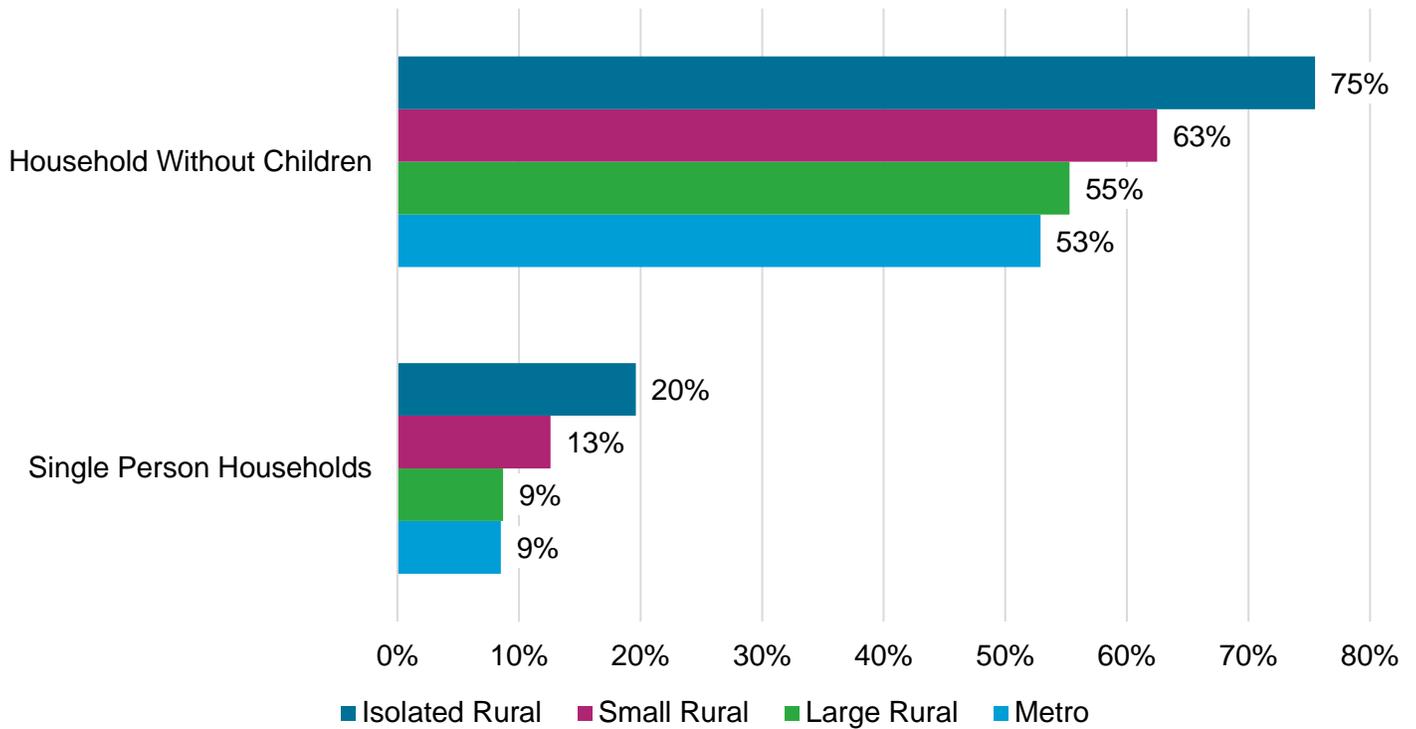
Figure 1: Outdoor Recreation 'By yourself' by RUCA Rurality



## 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

This may be related to these isolated rural respondents living in different sorts of households from their more-urban counterparts. Isolated rural respondents are more likely to report being members of single member households than others, and are almost 50% more than respondents in metropolitan households and large rural households to report having no children under the age of 18 in their home (see Figure 2). This difference in composition may result in a different sort of demand for outdoor recreation resources.

Figure 2: Household Composition by RUCA Rurality



Unsurprisingly, those in isolated rural communities are less likely than others to report interest in activities targeted toward children and families (39% very interested or interested in isolated rural communities vs 48% overall). And, while those in all types of communities report barriers in roughly the same order, those in more rural communities tend to report lower rates of all sorts of barriers than those in more urban communities, per Table 1.

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Table 1: Barriers by RUCA Rurality

	Metro	Large Rural	Small Rural	Isolated Rural
Lack of time	46%	44%	47%	44%
Sites too busy/crowded	40%	40%	34%	27%
Lack someone to participate with in activity	18%	16%	21%	17%
Lack of equipment/gear	15%	16%	14%	14%
Don't know where to find information about available activities/sites	17%	18%	15%	13%
Lack of facilities/opportunities near my home	21%	22%	22%	13%
Cost of outdoor recreation activities too high	23%	23%	18%	13%
Concern about personal safety at recreation sites /in the outdoors	8%	8%	5%	6%
Don't know how to do activities I like or lack skills	9%	8%	7%	4%
Lack of transportation	4%	3%	3%	3%
Lack of facilities that meet my physical needs	5%	3%	3%	3%
None of the above	12%	12%	16%	23%

## Survey Methodology

### Research Objectives

The 2019 Maine SCORP Consumer Survey was designed to better understand the use, demand, and perceptions of outdoor recreation facilities where they live and around the state more generally. This was created to help inform the state’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, informing current demand for outdoor recreation facilities and spending. This research is intended to form and act as part of the state’s SCORP process, as an element to consider when shaping the future plans of outdoor recreation in Maine.

### Sample

Sampling for this research was done via a convenience sample. Email messages containing a link to an online survey instrument was distributed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land (ME BPL) staff to municipal recreation departments across the state. These departments then distributed the link to individuals on their mailing and contact lists. Individuals were then free to take the survey at any time over the course of data collection.

The text of this introductory email is presented in Appendix II of this document.

### Survey Instrument

The survey instrument for the 2019 Maine SCORP Consumer Survey was created by ME BPL staff and Market Decisions Research specifically for the purposes of this research. Input and guidance were provided by the SCORP Steering Committee on topics, areas of interest, and specific questions they sought to find answers to. This was combined with a review of the 2014 survey instrument, as well as exploration of the literature on recreation research.

This survey instrument, once approved by ME BPL, was programmed into SurveyMonkey survey software for ease of distribution. It was thoroughly tested by MDR staff for consistency, spelling and grammar, and that all survey logic was working correctly. Once completed, this survey was sent to BPL staff for similar testing.

The survey instrument is presented in Appendix I of this document.

### Data Collection

Data collection began in March, 2019, and was conducted through May, 2019. All data was collected through the online survey hosting platform SurveyMonkey.

### Completed Surveys

In total, 3,289 individuals began the survey. Of these, 2,321 individuals answered the final survey question. This represents a completion rate of 70.5%.

**Table 2: Residence of Survey Respondents**

	%
Full time Maine resident	67%
Part time Maine resident	2%
Not a resident	2%
Unknown	29%

### **Weight & Measurement Error**

Convenience samples differ from probability samples in that they cannot be reliably run through weighting procedures in order to produce estimates generalizable to the population. The sampling frame for this survey differs from the population of Maine in several known ways, and potentially in other, unknown ways. One deviation can be observed with gender. Maine's demographic split is approximately 49% male and 51% female while the distribution in this survey is 25% male, 41% female, and 34% unknown<sup>1</sup>. Survey respondents also differ racially in that 94% of Maine residents are identified as white while only 63% of survey respondents identified themselves as white<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, 34% did not identify their race, making it difficult to assess what demographic their views might represent in this survey and the larger population. As such, care should be taken when describing the results.

The results of this survey accurately and completely reflect the views and experiences of those individuals who took the survey. They are not adjusted for, and cannot be said to represent, the views of Mainers in general or outdoor recreationalists more broadly.

#### *References:*

1. U.S. Census Bureau; 2018 Population Estimates Quick Facts; generated June 27, 2019; <<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/ME/RHI125218>>

**Detailed Findings**

**Use and Interest in Activities**

Q1. What types of outdoor recreation activities do you most enjoy doing? (List up to 5)

Table 3: Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities (n=3,289) \*

Comment	%
Trekking/hiking	69%
Bicycling	37%
Walking	29%
Swimming	27%
Skiing/Ski	25%
Camping/camp	23%
Fishing	23%
Kayaking	21%
Team sports	14%
Visiting Beaches	14%
Boating/boat	13%
Running	12%
Canoeing	12%
Hunting	11%
Snowshoeing	11%
Wildlife watching	8%
ATV, Snowmobile	8%
Gardening	5%
Sightseeing	4%
Local parks	4%
Picnicking	3%
Playground	3%
Sailing	3%
Ice Skating	3%
Paddle-boarding	3%
Paddling	2%
Photography	2%
Rock climbing	2%
Other	13%

\*Only categories with 2% or greater response frequency are displayed.

**Summary**

Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents said trekking and hiking is one of the activities they most enjoy.

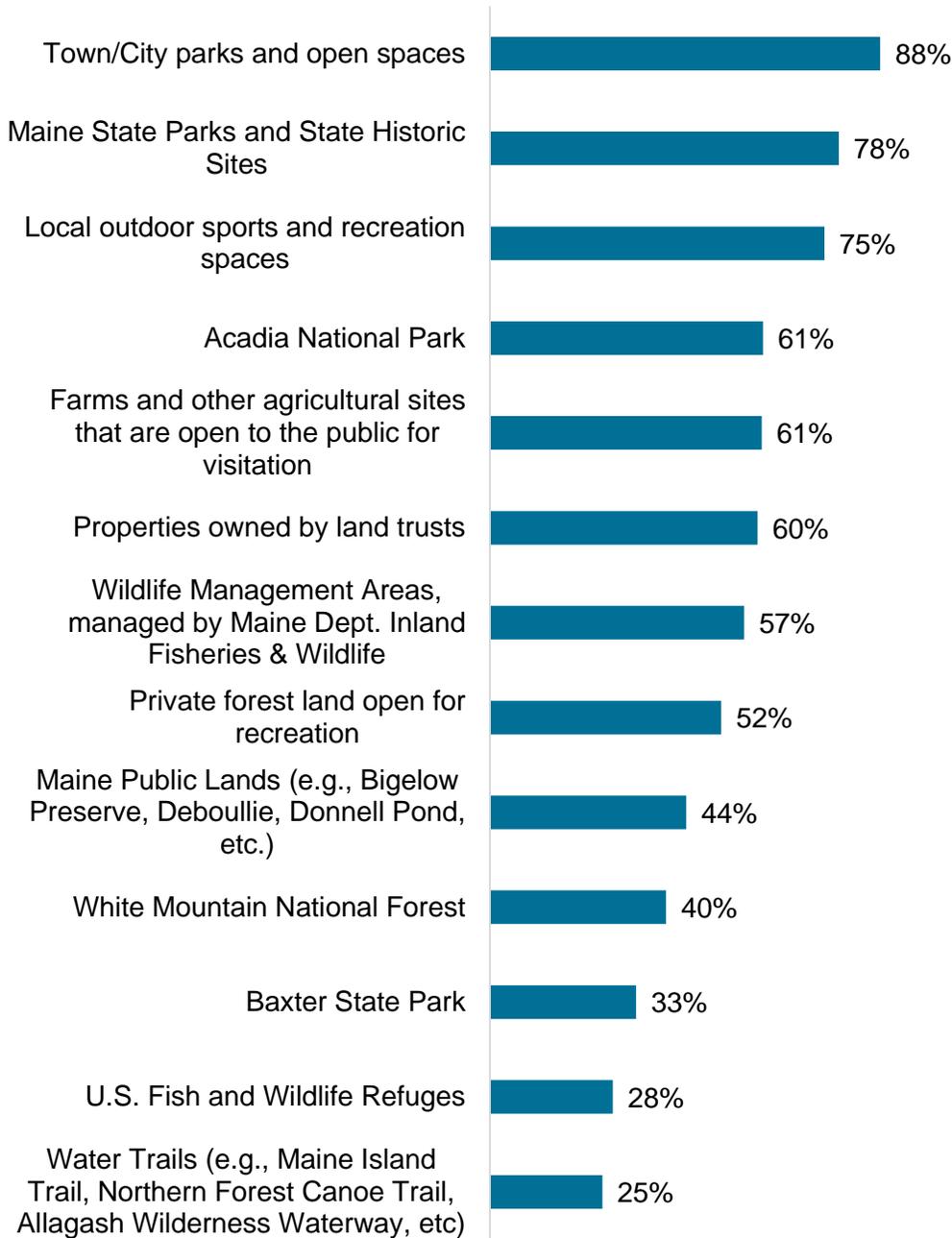
Bicycling (37%), walking (29%), swimming (27%) and skiing (25%) are the next most frequently mentioned activities.

**Bottom Line**

The most popular activities have many common traits. They can be enjoyed alone or in groups, require relatively modest investment to enjoy, and can be done in a variety of locations and time frames.

Q2. Which of the following outdoor recreation/conservation sites have you visited in Maine within the past three years? [%Yes]

Figure 3: Sites Visited Within the Past Three Years (n=3,226)



## Summary

Nearly nine in ten (88%) respondents said they visited a municipal park or open space within the past three years. Three quarters or more said they visited Maine State Parks or Historic Sites (78%) or local outdoor sports and recreation spaces

## Bottom Line

Next to Maine State Parks and historic sites, local recreation spaces and municipal parks are among the most frequented recreation sites. Convenience is likely a driver of high visitation for local sites.

Q3. Please rank the following as reasons that you participate in outdoor recreation in Maine. [Score – Ranked 1 (least important) to 5 (most important)]

Figure 4: Reasons to Participate in Outdoor Recreation (n=3,074)

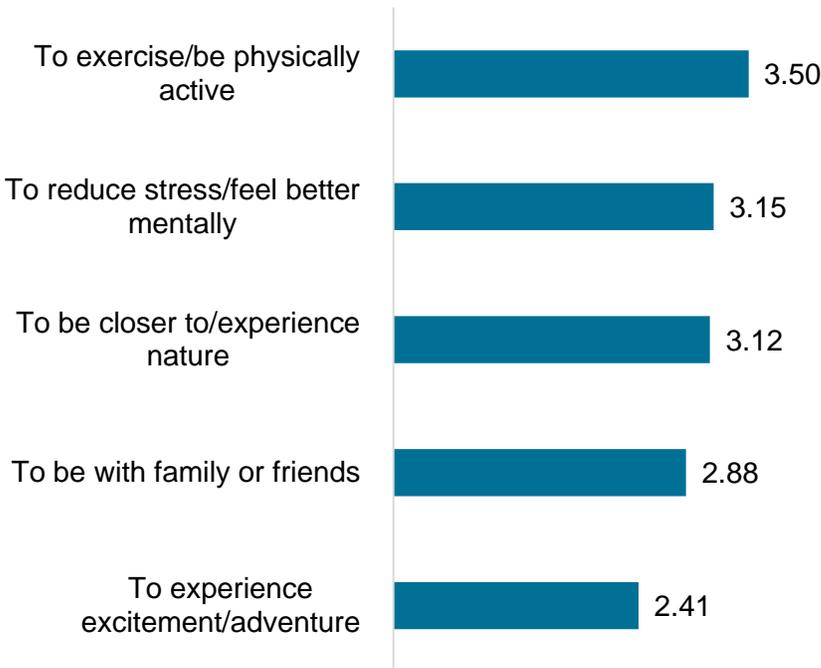


Table 4: To Exercise/Be Physically Active [Score] by Age (n=2,886)

	To Exercise/Be Physically Active
24 or younger	3.18
25 to 34	3.16
35 to 44	3.34
45 to 54	3.40
55 to 64	3.65
65 or older	3.80
Unknown	3.54

## Summary

Respondents ranked getting exercise and physical activity as the primary reason they participate in outdoor recreation (3.5 out of 5). Experiencing excitement and adventure was the lowest scoring reason (2.4).

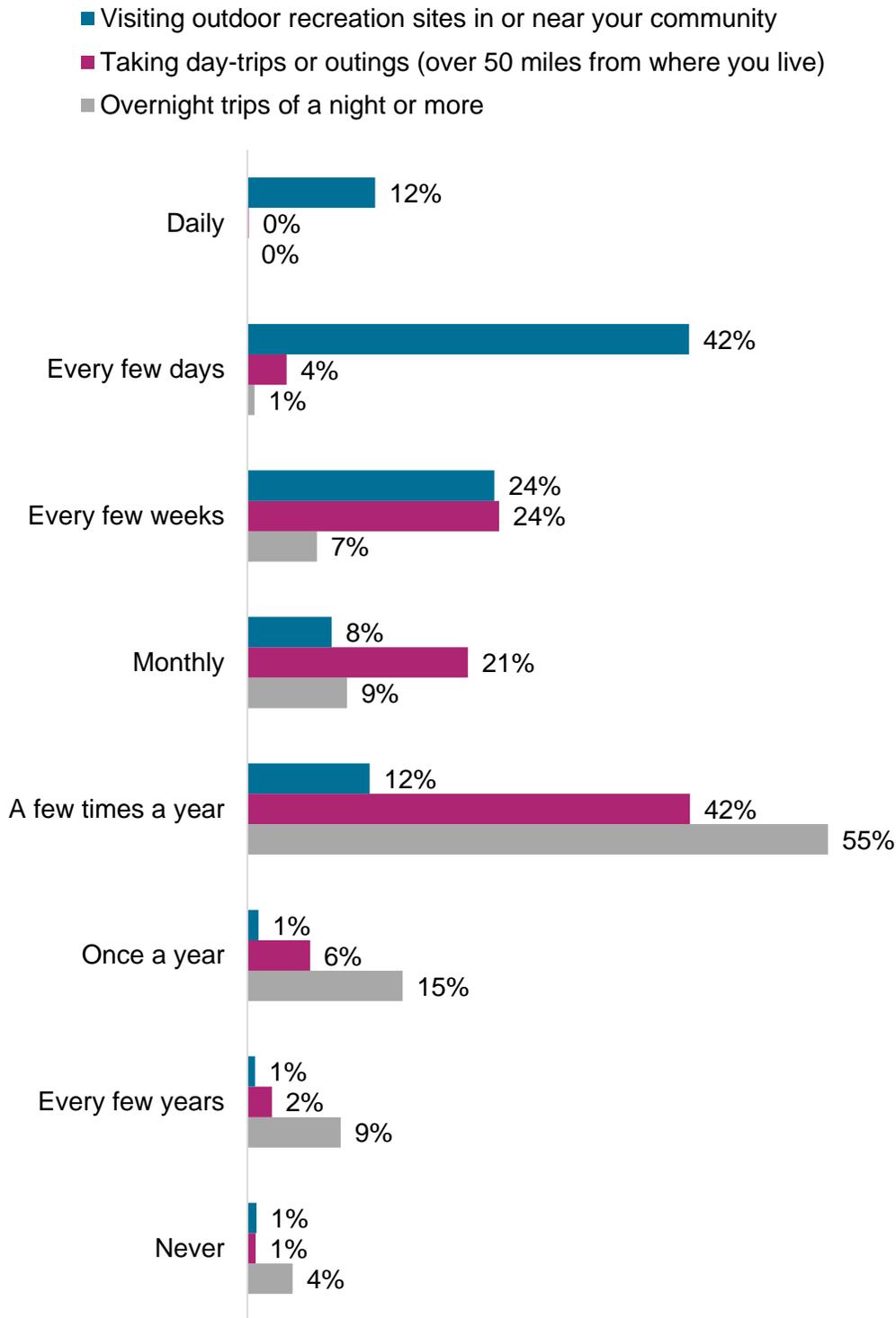
Among those aged 65 or older, exercise and physical activity ranked at 3.8 of 5, higher than any other age category and the overall score (3.50) for this reason to participate in outdoor recreation.

## Bottom Line

Exercising and being physically active is an important driver of participation in outdoor recreation, especially among the elderly. Emphasizing the physical activity and health benefits - both physical and mental/emotional – associated with outdoor recreation may be an effective way to encourage participation.

Q4. How often do you participate in the following in Maine? [% Yes]

Figure 5: Frequency of Participation in Outdoor Recreation (n=3,074)



### Summary

When visiting recreation sites in their community, respondents are most likely to go every few days (42%)

Day trips or outings over 50 miles from where respondents live occur a few times a year (42%)

55% said they take overnight trips a few times per year.

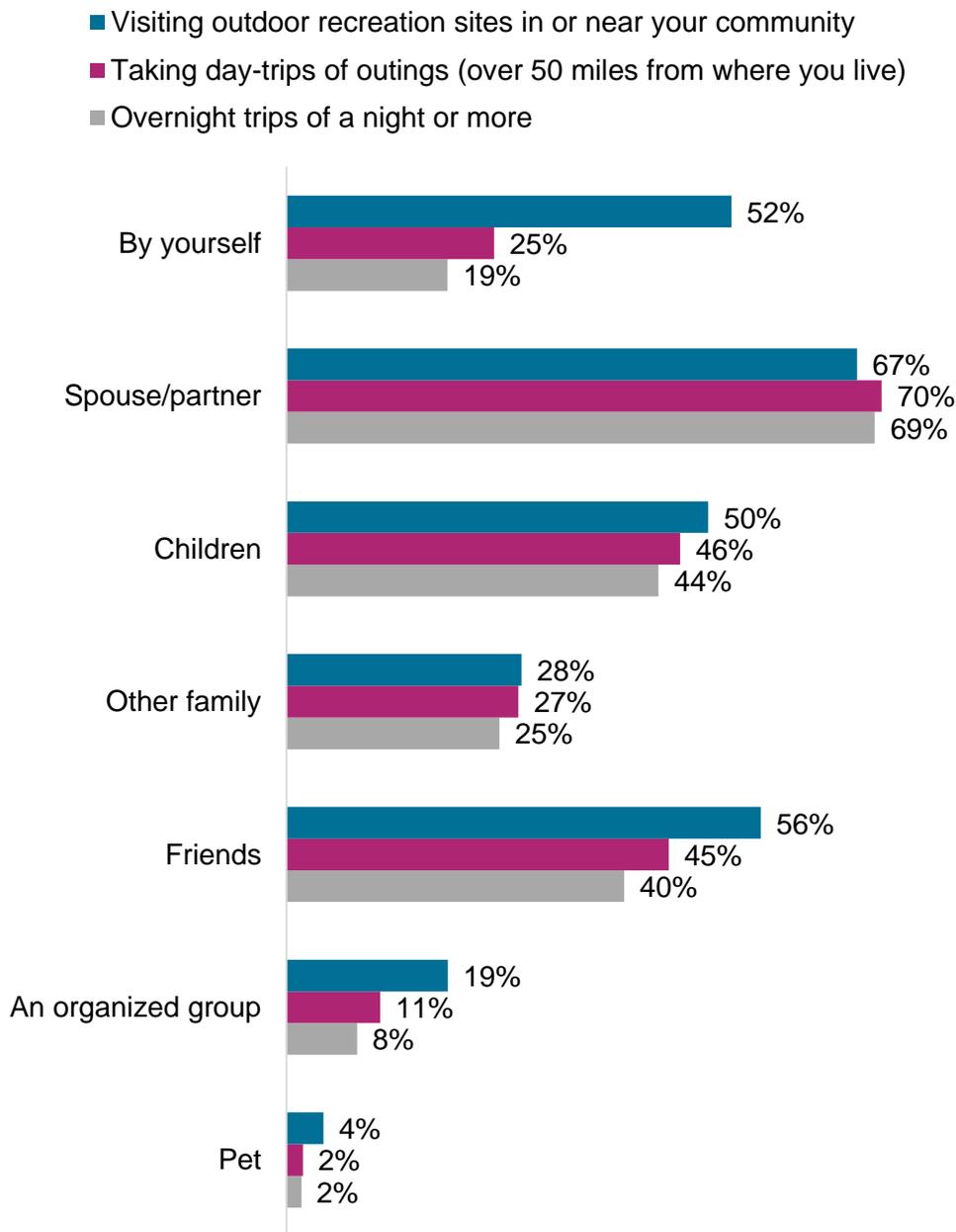
### Bottom Line

Local communities are a frequent touchpoint for outdoor recreation in Maine.

Advertising and developing local sites may increase the frequency of outdoor recreation most significantly due to the convenience of access.

Q5. When participating in outdoor recreation activities in Maine, with whom do you typically participate? [%Yes]

Figure 6: Company During Outdoor Recreation (n=3,074)



\*The “Pet” category was coded in using open ended responses. Other open ends were coded back into the original categories above.

### Summary

Respondents are more likely to participate in outdoor recreation near their homes with almost all types of company, or alone.

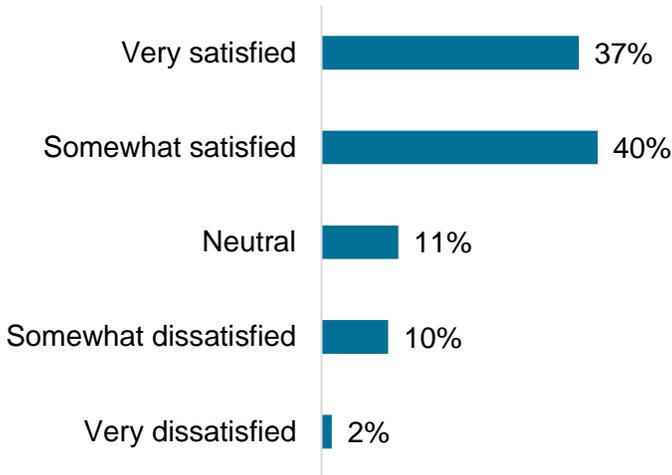
### Bottom Line

Children and other relatives are part of all types of trips with very little variation. Longer trips are less likely to be done alone, and organized groups are most likely to be used for local events.

Q6A. How satisfied are you with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in your community?

Figure 7: Figure 5. Satisfaction with Availability of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in Your Community (n=2,838)

Table 5: Satisfaction by Rurality [% very or somewhat satisfied] \*



	Opportunities in Your Community	Opportunities in Maine
Isolated Rural	86%	92%
Metro	82%	93%
Small Rural	78%	92%
Large Rural	77%	90%
Unknown*	72%	90%

\*Unknown includes respondents who provided a non-Maine zip code, invalid zip code, or did not report a zip code.

## Summary

Over three quarters (77%) of respondents are very or somewhat satisfied with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in their community.

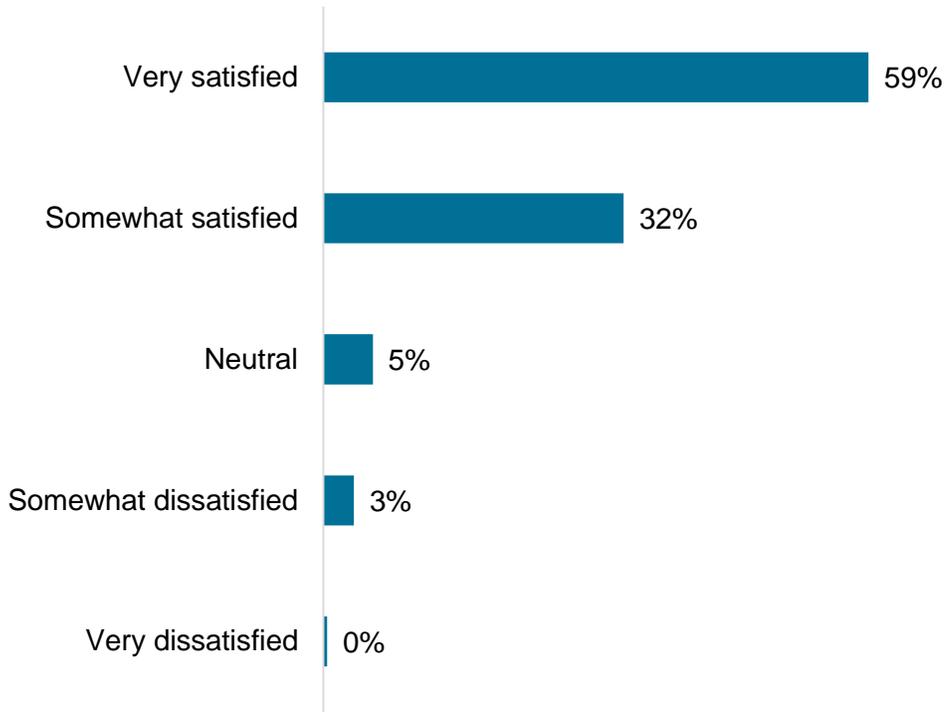
The most rural respondents are more likely to be satisfied (86%) with opportunities in their community while urban respondents are most satisfied with opportunities in Maine, overall.

## Bottom Line

While the majority are satisfied with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in their communities, rural communities may be more satisfied overall due to their proximity to or knowledge of recreation opportunities. Increasing recreation opportunities or awareness of existing opportunities in urban areas may improve satisfaction.

Q6B. How satisfied are you with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine?

Figure 8: Figure 6. Satisfaction with Availability of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in Maine (n=2,853)



### Summary

Almost all (92%) respondents are very or somewhat satisfied with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine.

### Bottom Line

Satisfaction with the available recreation opportunities in Maine is extremely high. Almost no respondents expressed even mild dissatisfaction.

Q7. What types of outdoor recreation opportunities are most lacking in the state?

Table 6: Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Lacking in the State (n=2,020)

Comment	%
Mountain and Off-road Biking Trails	9%
Walking trails	6%
Trekking/Hiking Trails	6%
General access for all populations	6%
Organized Sporting and Outdoor Activities	5%
Swimming Spots	5%
Camp Sites, Back-country Sites	5%
Waterway Access	4%
Beach and Waterfront Access	3%
Dog parks and friendly spaces	3%
Local Parks	2%
Fishing Locations	2%
ATV and Snowmobile Trails	2%
Cross Country Skiing Trails	2%
Skiing and Back-country Skiing	2%
Hunting Lands and Opportunities	2%
Land conservation and preservation of existing opportunities	2%
Other	9%
DK-REF	16%

**Summary**

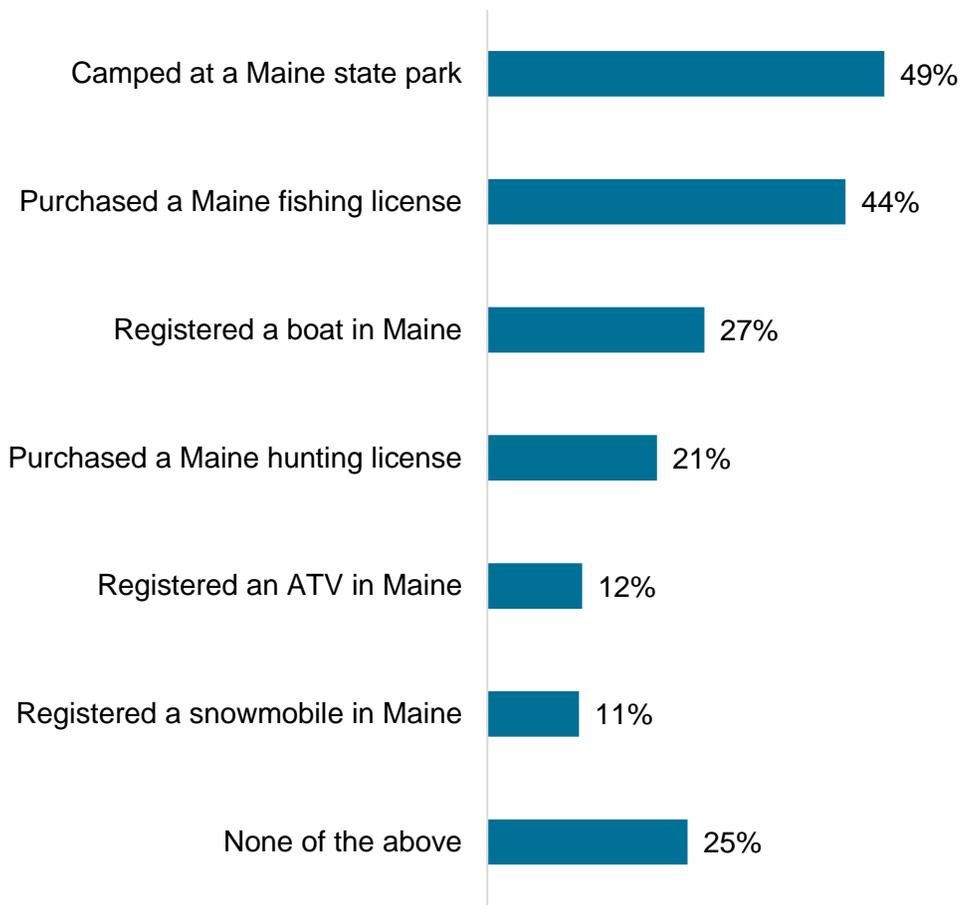
The availability of mountain and off-road biking trails, walking trails, and hiking trails were the most frequent items mentioned when respondents thought about what opportunities the state lacked.

**Bottom Line**

Opportunities that are perceived as lacking in Maine differ somewhat from the activities that respondents are most likely to engage in.

Q8. Have you done any of the following within the last 5 years? [%Yes]

Figure 9: Licensing and Registration History (n=2,826)



### Summary

Nearly half (49%) said they have camped at a Maine state park within the last 5 years, and 44% have purchased a Maine fishing license. One in ten have registered either an ATV (12%) or snowmobile (11%).

### Bottom Line

Fishing and camping in Maine state parks are high use activities. Registrations of recreational vehicles like boats, ATV's and snowmobiles are relatively low among respondents, reflecting the increased time and expense of these hobbies.

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Q9A. When taking overnight trips in Maine, what types of activities do you typically do? - [Combined]

Table 7: Types of Overnight Recreation (n=2,494)

Comment	%
Trekking/hiking	43%
Camping/camp	27%
Fishing	11%
Swimming	9%
Bicycling	8%
Sightseeing	8%
Canoeing	7%
Skiing/Ski	7%
Kayaking	6%
Walking	6%
Boating/boat	5%
Hunting	4%
ATV, Snowmobile	3%
Visiting Beaches	3%
Wilderness skills	2%
Wildlife watching	2%
Mountain-biking	2%
Local parks	2%
Other	6%

**Summary**

The most common overnight activity is trekking and hiking (43%). One quarter mentioned camping (27%).

**Bottom Line**

Trekking and hiking are a common activity among those who take overnight trips in Maine. Unsurprisingly, camping is also common on overnight trips. These low-cost activities are the most available to most types of people.

Q9B. At what type of place do you typically stay during an overnight trip? [%Yes]

Figure 10: Utilization of Overnight Stay Locations (n=2,661)

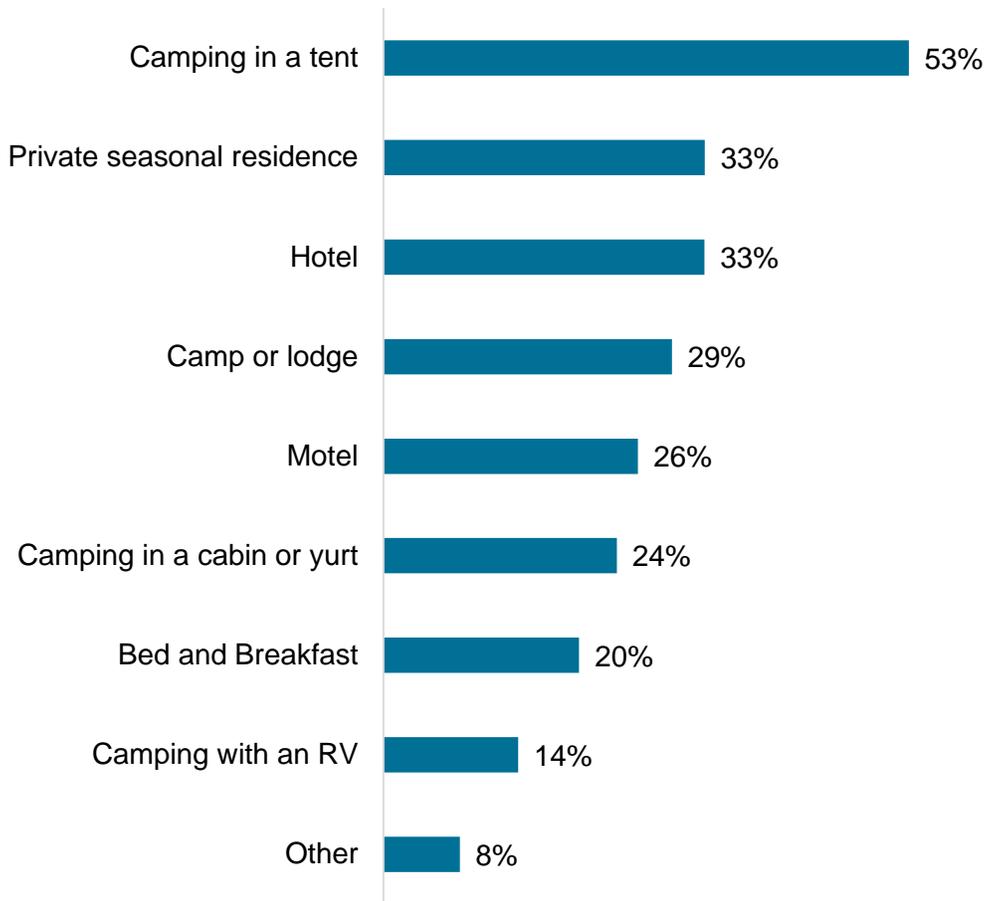


Table 8: Other Overnight Stay Locations (n=208)

Comment	%
Airbnb	26%
Personal property	26%
Vehicle, RV or camper trailer	13%
Boat	13%
Camp site	10%
Rental property (non-Airbnb)	8%
Other	2%
DK-REF	2%

### Summary

When on overnight trips, half (53%) of respondents who take overnight trips said they camp in a tent. One third stay in either a private seasonal residence (33%) or a hotel (33%).

Airbnb and personal residences are also utilized for overnight trips.

### Bottom Line

The majority of overnight recreationists camp in a tent while one third choose to stay in a private seasonal residence or hotel.

Q9C. Are you satisfied with the availability of resources and accommodations for overnight outdoor recreation trips in the state?

Figure 11: Overnight Recreation Resources (n=2,655)

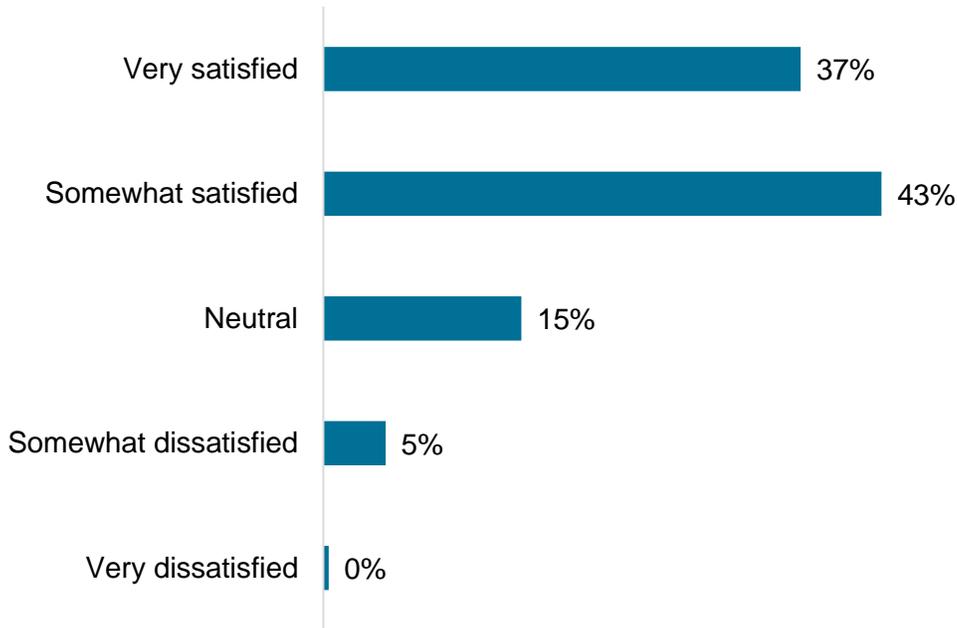


Table 9: Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Overnight Resources (n=131)

Comment	%
Not enough places to stay	27%
Cost prohibitive	27%
Need more cabins and camp site for tents, RVs	25%
Hard to find info on site locations, reserve sites	9%
Listed sites are difficult to find or unmarked on the trail	3%
Other	21%
DK-REF	1%

### Summary

80% of respondents are satisfied with the availability of resources and accommodations for overnight trips in Maine. There are no differences in satisfaction by place of accommodation (Q9B).

Among those dissatisfied, cost (27%) and lack of places to stay (27%) are the drivers of unmet expectations.

### Bottom Line

Maine has been successful in providing a variety of accommodations that meet the differing needs of travelers. Cost and limited places to stay are areas for improvement among the very small percentage of those who weren't satisfied.

**Barriers**

Q10. Have any of the following factors prevented you from participating in outdoor recreation activities in Maine? [% Yes]

Figure 12: Barriers to Participation (n=2,705)



Table 10: Other Barriers to Participation (Most common responses, n=277)

Comment	%
Seasonal conditions – weather, insects	16%
Health or personal barriers	16%
Too expensive, can't afford equipment	13%
Lack of recreation sites, not accessible	11%
Lack of pet-friendly opportunities or facilities	9%
Transportation, no parking at recreation sites	7%
Lack of accommodations	6%
Recreation sites are too crowded	5%
Other	13%
DK-REF	1%

## Summary

44% of respondents said lack of free time is a barrier to participating in outdoor recreation. Slightly fewer (38%) said busy and crowded sites prevent them from participating.

Other barriers to participation include weather and insects (16%), health or personal barriers (16%), and costs of participating (13%).

## Bottom Line

Free time is a limiting factor for many outdoor recreationists. Ensuring more people have access to outdoor recreation near their home and work, where they can participate without much coordination, could help alleviate this issue.

DRAFT

Q11. What would help you participate in more outdoor recreation activities in your community and/or across the state?

Table 11: Improving Participation in Outdoor Recreation (n=2,042)

Comment	%
Need more free time to recreate	20%
More recreation opportunities near me	16%
Advertise, more awareness of recreation opportunities	11%
Lower cost (general)	7%
Organized recreation groups/networks	5%
More accommodations	5%
Website or app with comprehensive list of activities and resources	5%
Lower permit, license, pass fees	5%
Better maintenance of existing facilities, trails	4%
More access to public land	2%
Provide rental or discounted equipment	2%
Greater access (General)	2%
Need guided activities	2%
Transportation to/from recreation site	2%
Less crowding	2%
Better physical condition (general)	2%
Other	6%
DK-REF	8%

### Summary

Among ways to improve participation suggested by respondents, having more free time (20%), more nearby opportunities (16%), and greater advertising and awareness of opportunities (11%) were the most common responses among respondents.

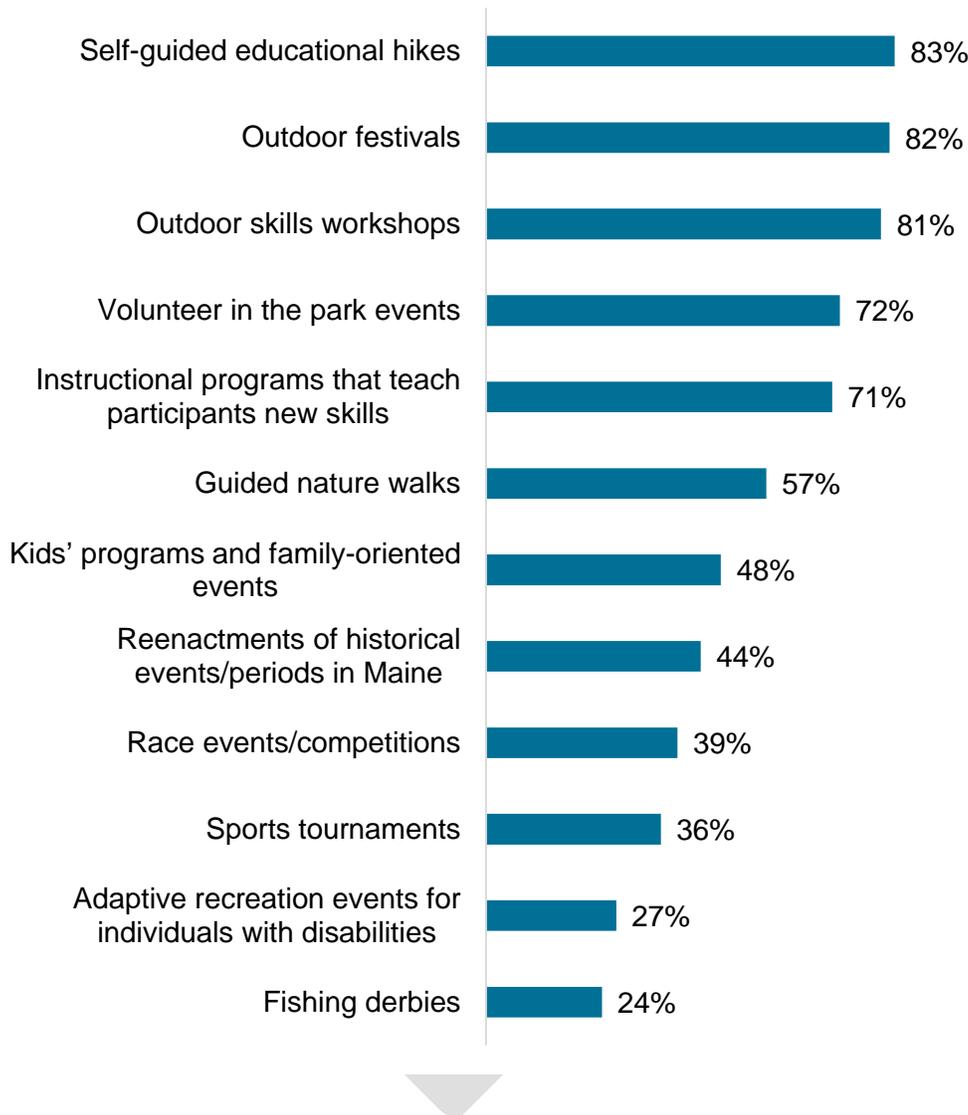
### Bottom Line

More people would be able to recreate if they had more free time, a solution that addresses the previously mentioned barrier of not having time. Advertising existing opportunities and creating new ones in places near where resident’s homes may help draw more people into outdoor recreation.

## Programs and Events

Q12. Please rate how interested you'd be in participating in each of the following types of outdoor recreation events. [% Interested]

Figure 13: Interest in Outdoor Recreation Events (n=2,631)



### Summary

The activities which respondents expressed most frequent interest in are self-guided educational hikes (83%), outdoor festivals (82%), and outdoor skills workshops (81%).

### Bottom Line

There is significant interest in self-guided educational hikes, outdoor festivals, and outdoor skills workshops. Interest in competitive outdoor events is low, suggesting that leisure and exploration activities may be of greater interest.

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Q12. Please rate how interested you'd be in participating in each of the following types of outdoor recreation events. [% Interested by age group]

Table 12: Interest in Activities by Age Group

	24 or younger	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 or older
Self-guided educational hikes	83%	79%	83%	84%	86%	85%
Outdoor festivals	93%	88%	88%	83%	79%	74%
Outdoor skills workshops	86%	85%	85%	85%	78%	70%
Volunteer in the park events	90%	87%	74%	74%	70%	64%
Instructional programs that teach participants new skills	88%	73%	67%	70%	72%	72%
Guided nature walks	57%	45%	51%	52%	62%	70%
Kids' programs and family-oriented events	32%	52%	71%	47%	31%	31%
Reenactments of historical events/periods in Maine	50%	37%	44%	44%	43%	48%
Race events/competitions	63%	60%	53%	44%	28%	13%
Sports tournaments	40%	42%	47%	39%	24%	19%
Adaptive recreation events for individuals with disabilities	38%	28%	24%	26%	23%	30%
Fishing derbies	39%	28%	29%	23%	18%	16%

**Summary**

Different age groups express markedly different levels of interest in various sorts of activities.

**Bottom Line**

By considering which age groups are most interested in a given type of event, organizers can better target information about it. Not that interest in many events declines notably with age. Exceptions to this include self-guided hikes, guided nature walks, reenactments, and events targeted at children and families.

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Q120. What types of outdoor skills you would be interested in learning?

Table 13: Interest in Learning Outdoor Recreation Skills (n=1,700)

Comment	%
Flora/fauna identification, animal tracking	32%
Bush craft and wilderness survival	24%
Paddle sports, kayaking and canoeing	11%
Foraging	8%
Hunting skills and techniques	8%
Angling skills and techniques	7%
Orienteering	7%
Camping, back-country camping	6%
Rock climbing, trad, belaying	6%
Navigation	6%
Hiking/backpacking	5%
Skiing/snowboarding	4%
Land management and conservation	3%
Archery	3%
First aid, EMS	3%
Mountain biking	3%
Sailing	2%
Gardening	2%
Snowshoeing	2%
Other	6%
DK-REF	5%

Summary

Nearly a third (32%) of answering respondents expressed interest in learning flora/fauna identification and animal tracking skills. 24% want to learn more about bush craft and wilderness survival.

Q13. Are there any other outdoor recreation programs or activities that you would like to see offered in Maine?

Table 14: Other Programs (n=1,180)

Comment	%
Outdoor activities - non motorized	20%
Family/kids learning and recreation	9%
Group recreation and skills events	8%
Wilderness survival and orientation	4%
Wildlife and plant-life learning opportunities	4%
Clean-up and maintenance of recreation resources	3%
Hunting and fishing	3%
Maine history, art and culture learning opportunities	3%
Opportunities for seniors and the disabled	3%
Camping and trekking	3%
Outdoor activities - motorized	2%
Mountaineering and rock climbing	1%
Equipment rental programs	1%
Other	6%
DK-REF	37%

### Summary

20% of those providing a response said they would like to see more non-motorized, outdoor activities and programs offered in Maine. 9% advocated for more family and child focused learning opportunities.

### Bottom Line

Interest in other programs and activities is highest for non-motorized varieties. Very few mentioned activities that require motorized equipment.

What they are saying:

*"Activities geared towards getting seniors out and moving. Maine has a lot of older people."*

What they are saying:

*"More education programs on wildlife and habitat conservation for non consumptive uses."*

**Funding of Resources**

Q14. How knowledgeable are you about the funding for public outdoor recreation settings and activities?

Figure 14: Knowledge of Funding for Public Outdoor Recreation (n=2,559)

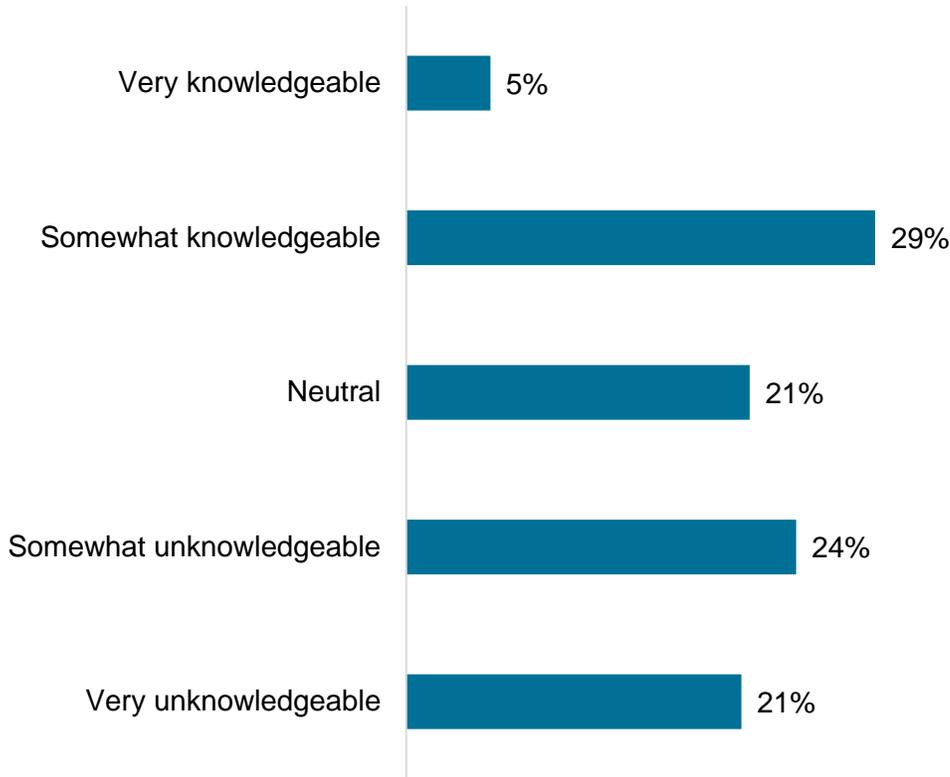


Table 15: Funding Knowledge by Rurality

	% Knowledgeable (very or somewhat)
Isolated Rural	50%
Small Rural	41%
Large Rural	37%
Metro	31%
Unknown	25%

**Summary**

45% of respondents said they felt unknowledgeable about funding for public outdoor recreation. Only 34% felt knowledgeable.

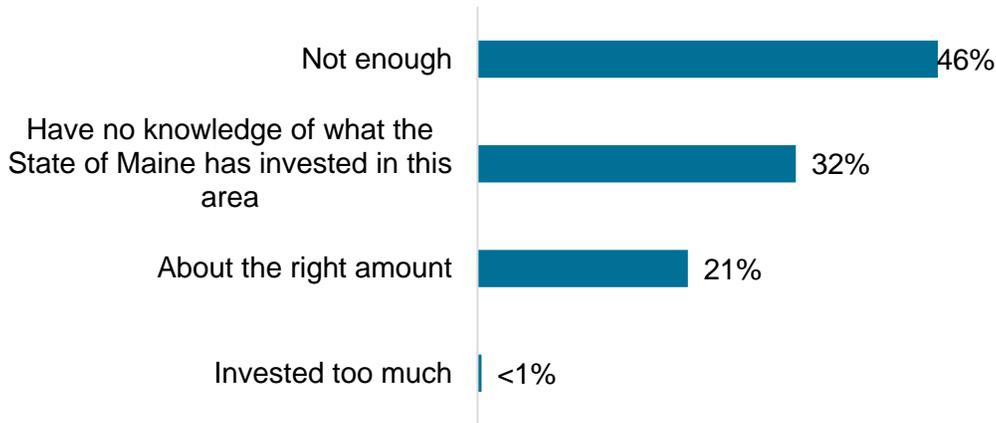
Comparatively, half (50%) of respondents in isolated rural locations said they felt knowledgeable about funding.

**Bottom Line**

Knowledgeability about funding for outdoor recreation is low overall but highest among the most rural respondents. This presents an opportunity to better educate and make transparent the way outdoor recreation is funded in Maine. This may also help people become more aware of the recreational opportunities present in their communities.

Q15. Do you think that Maine has invested enough in public outdoor recreation settings and activities?

Figure 15: Maine Investment in Public Outdoor Recreation Settings and Activities (n=2,554)



Q16A. What are the reasons you say Maine hasn't invested enough?

Table 16: Reasons Investment is too Low (n=1,044)

Comment	%
Need to purchase and preserve more land for public recreation use	25%
Understaffed land and resource management programs	15%
Investment not a political priority, not much funding	15%
People don't know about opportunities, lacking advertisement	11%
Infrastructure is outdated, in disrepair, not meeting demand	11%
Always need more investment	10%
Lack of coordinated investment and resource planning across the state	8%
Some places get more funding than others, unequal distribution of resources	8%
Other	6%
DK-REF	2%

Q16B. Why do you think that Maine has invested enough in public outdoor recreation settings and activities?

Table 17: Reasons Investment is too High (n=9)

Comment	%
Too much government oversight, involvement	44%
Too many under-utilized resources already available	22%
Fees and taxes are too high	22%
Other	11%

## Summary

46% of respondents think Maine has not invested enough into public outdoor recreation.

Among those who want more investment purchasing and preserving more land for public use is the top priority.

While extremely few in number (<1%), those who thought investment was too high said that government oversight and involvement is a problem.

## Bottom Line

A plurality believe that Maine has not invested enough into outdoor recreation, and they think the state should purchase and preserve more land for public use. Very few think Maine has invested too much, while about a third do

not know enough to have an opinion.

**Land Conservation and Acquisition**

Q17. Please rate how much you feel that acquiring land or access to land for public recreational use should be a priority for the State of Maine.

Figure 16: Priority for Acquiring Public Recreation Lands (n=2,531)

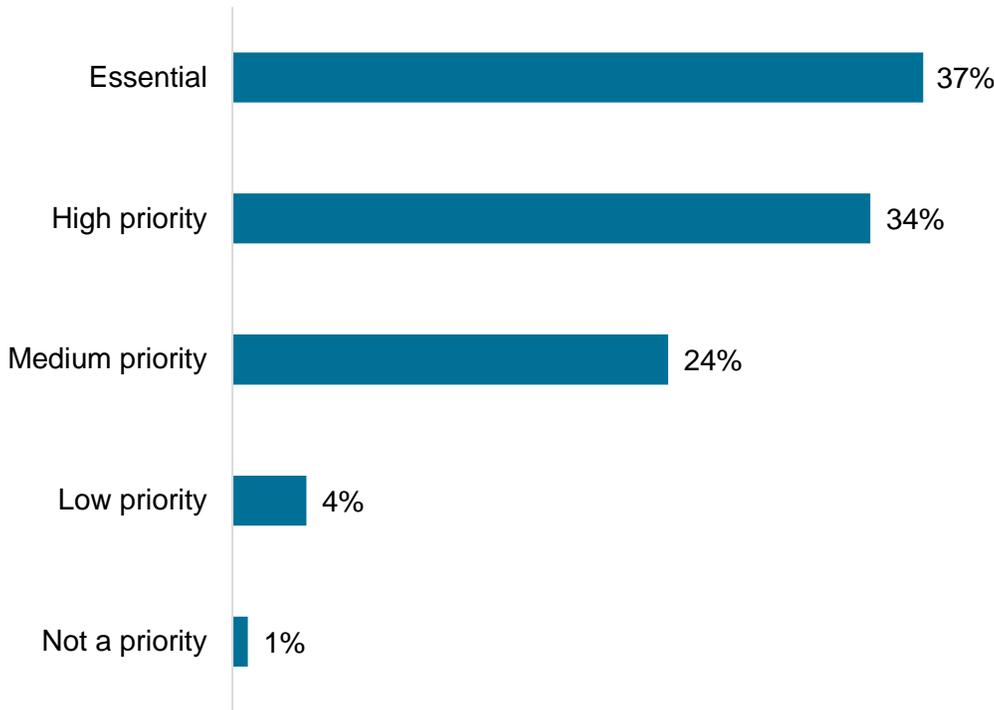
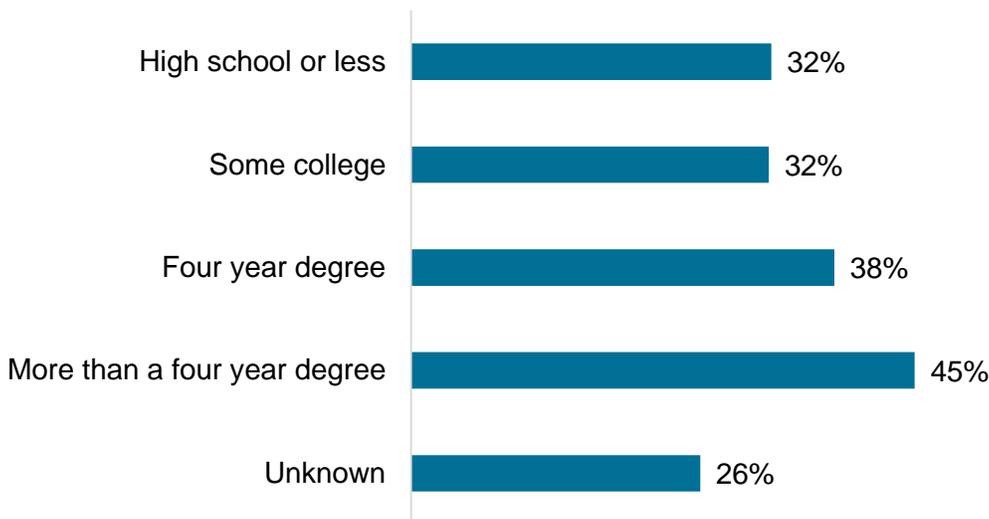


Figure 17: Essential Priority by Education (n=943)



**Summary**

More than a third (37%) of respondents said acquiring land or access to land should be an essential priority of the State of Maine. Only 1% said this should not be a priority.

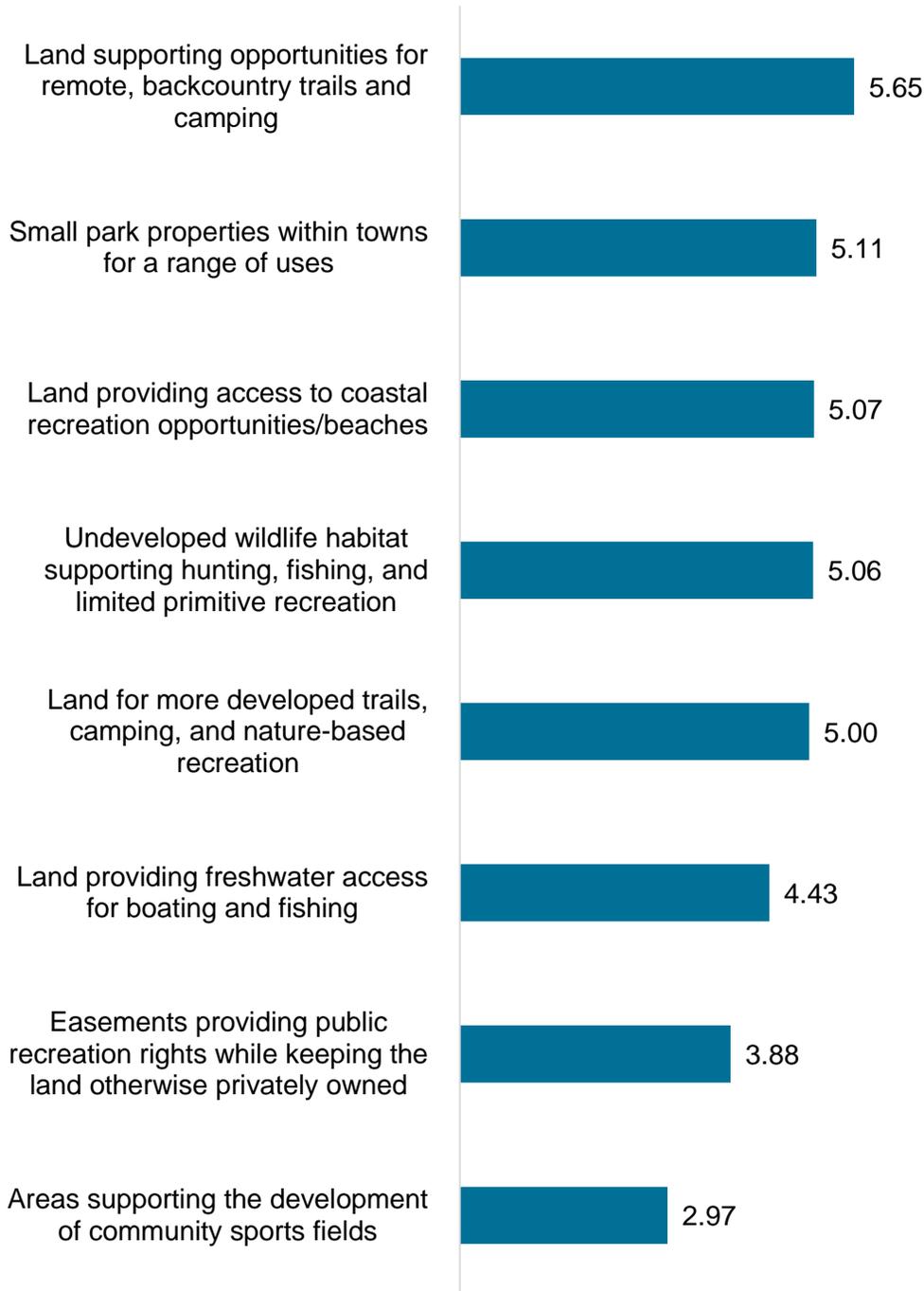
Those with an advanced degree were most likely to prioritize land acquisition as essential.

**Bottom Line**

Acquiring land for public recreational use is overwhelmingly considered to be a priority for Maine among respondents, especially among those with higher educational attainment. Despite this, a minority of individuals feel knowledgeable about how Maine currently funds and purchases land for outdoor recreation.

Q18. What types of land should be conserved? [Score – Ranked 1 (least important) to 5 (most important)]

Figure 18: Types of Land That Should Be Conserved (n=2,557)



**Summary**

Land supporting opportunities for remote, backcountry trails and camping scored the highest among respondents, at 5.56 (out of 8) when asked to rank which types of land they feel the state should prioritize for conservation.

**Bottom Line**

Respondents want a diverse array of lands preserved for the activities they engage in, including lands supporting trails and camping, community parks, beaches and wildlife habitats

Q180. What other types of land should be conserved?

Table 18: Other Programs (n=1,119)

Comment	%
Animal habitat, wildlife corridors	14%
Forested land, wilderness	12%
Dedicated recreation land	10%
Coastal waters, beaches	10%
Agrarian lands	9%
Inland waters	9%
Wetlands	8%
Undeveloped lands facing developer pressure	7%
Historical and cultural sites	6%
Sensitive or fragile habitat	4%
All types of land	4%
Mountain regions	1%
Other	8%
DK-REF	15%

### Summary

When considering other types of land, 14% of those providing a response said animal habitat and wildlife corridors ought to be conserved. Similar numbers said forested land (12%), recreation space (10%), and coastal land (10%) should be conserved too.

DRAFT

**Knowledge and Motivation**

Q19. How knowledgeable are you about the outdoor recreation opportunities available in Maine?

Figure 19: Knowledge of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in Maine (n=2,398)

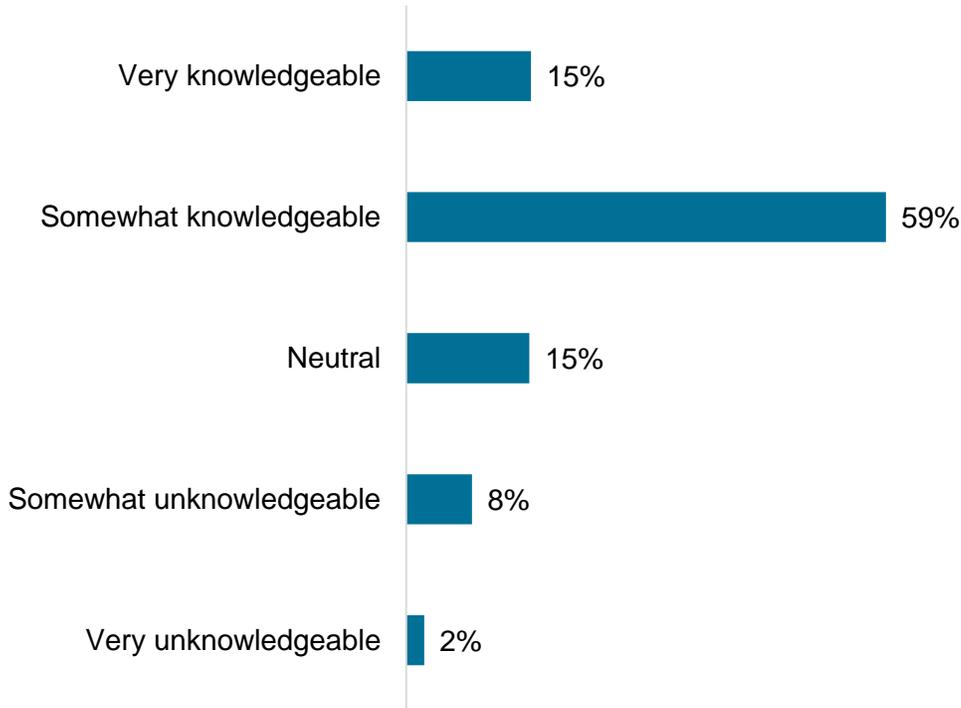


Table 19: Opportunity Knowledge by Rurality

	% Knowledgeable (very or somewhat)
Isolated Rural	87%
Small Rural	77%
Large Rural	77%
Metro	72%
Unknown	67%

**Summary**

Nearly three quarters (74%) of respondents said they are knowledgeable about outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine.

The most rural respondents are felt more knowledgeable about Maine’s recreation opportunities than more urban respondents.

**Bottom Line**

Most respondents feel there is more to know about opportunities to recreate outdoors in Maine.

Consistent with their perspective of available resources, rural respondents felt most knowledgeable about Maine’s recreation opportunities.

Q20. How do you typically seek out information about outdoor recreation opportunities and destinations in Maine? [% Yes]

Figure 20: Sources of Outdoor Recreation Information (n=2,403)

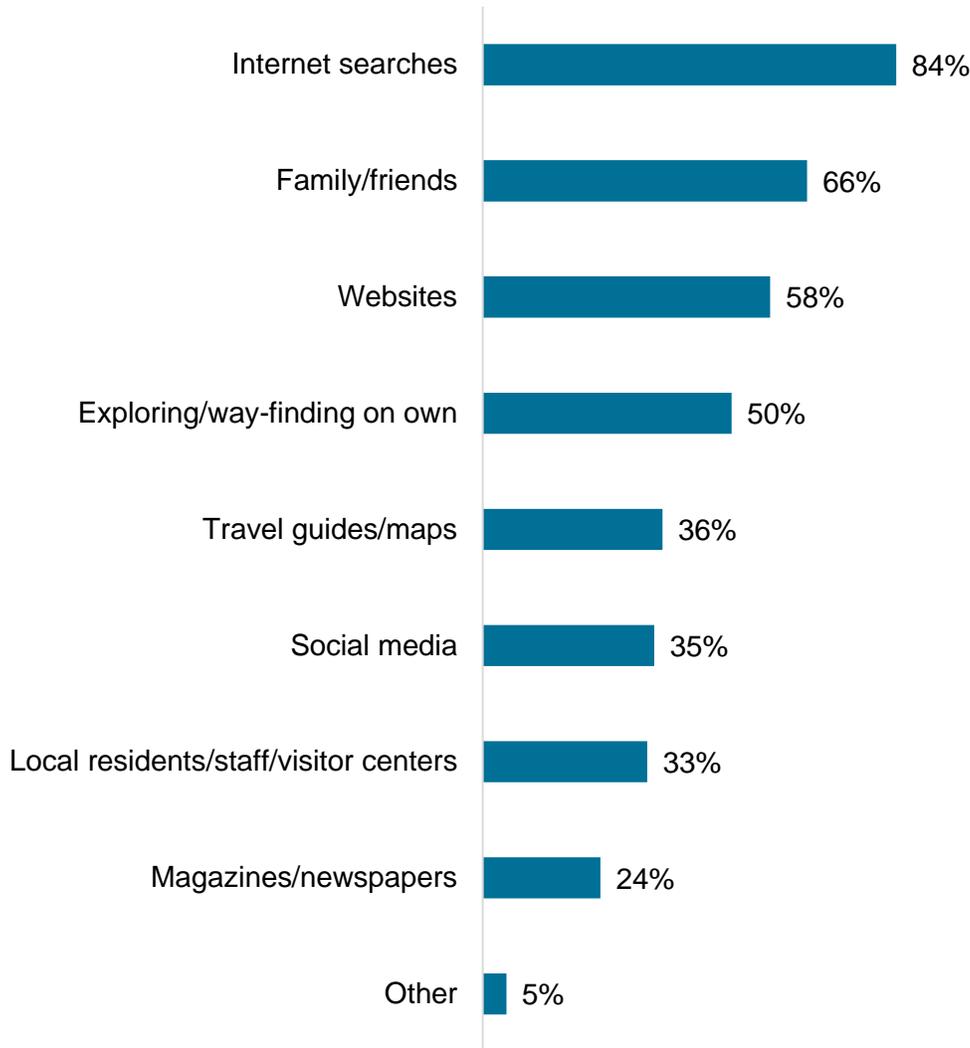


Table 20: Information Sources by Age

	Magazines/newspapers (n=574)	Social media (n=835)
24 or younger	5%	36%
25 to 34	17%	50%
35 to 44	17%	48%
45 to 54	20%	39%
55 to 64	28%	23%
65 or older	37%	16%
Unknown	5%	7%

### Summary

84% of respondents utilize internet searches to find outdoor recreation information. Less than a quarter (24%) use magazines and newspapers.

Half (50%) of respondents using social media are between the ages 25 to 34 while over a third (37%) of those referencing use print materials like magazines and newspapers are 65 and older.

### Bottom Line

Despite an increase in internet usage, information about recreation activities still needs to be put out on multiple channels to reach largest possible audience. Younger recreators are more likely to utilize internet resources, especially social media, and older populations rely more consistently on printed materials.

Q20A. How do you typically seek out information about outdoor recreation opportunities and destinations in Maine? - Other (Specify)

Table 18: Other Outdoor Recreation Information Sources (n=114)

Comment	%
Travel guides/maps	19%
Local residents/staff/visitors	18%
Recreation clubs/groups	16%
Websites	11%
Magazines/newspapers	9%
Mobile apps	7%
Books	6%
Exploring/wayfinding on own	5%
Social media	4%
Family/friends	2%
Internet searches	2%
Other	5%
DK-REF	3%

Q20B. Which websites do you use to find information about outdoor recreation opportunities and destinations in Maine?

Table 21: Websites Referenced for Outdoor Recreation Information (n=1,106)

Comment	%
Maine.gov, State websites	38%
Basic search engine (Google, Yahoo, Bing)	30%
Municipal or recreation resource website	18%
Maine Trail Finder	14%
Social media or activity networking site	10%
Land trust websites	8%
Depends on the activity	5%
All Trails	4%
More than one site	3%
AMC	3%
Maine IFW	3%
Visit Maine	0%
Other	9%
DK-REF	3%

## Summary

Among other outdoor recreation information sources, travel guides and maps were mentioned by 19% of those providing a response.

38% of those who reference websites said they visit Maine.gov or other state-sponsored pages. 30% rely on basic search engine browsing to find outdoor recreation information.

Q21. If you could learn more about what to do outdoors, where to go, or how to do it, what would you like to learn?

Table 22: Outdoor Recreation Topics of Interest (n=1,524)

Comment	%
Locations of recreation activities	21%
Available/accessible activities	21%
Learn to do a specific activity	16%
Internet, websites and mobile apps	12%
More information about outdoor recreation (general)	8%
Social media, email lists	2%
Local and interest-specific businesses	2%
Books/maps	2%
Content magazines, newspapers	1%
Friends and family	0%
Other	3%
DK-REF	19%

**Summary**

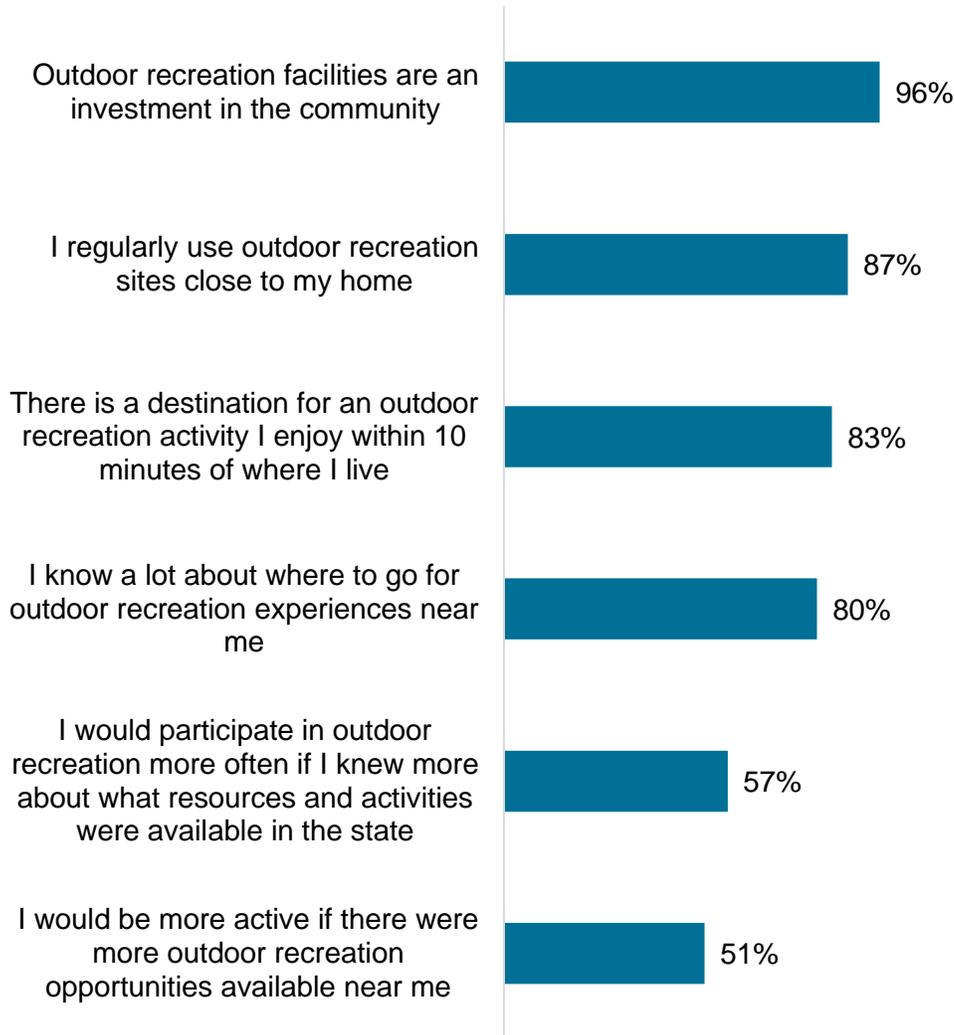
Similar numbers of respondents said they wanted to learn more about the locations of recreation activities (21%) and activities available/accessible to them (21%).

**Bottom Line**

Individuals were most interested in learning about where they could go and what they could do to enjoy the activities they already participate in.

Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [% Agree]

Figure 21: Attitudes About Outdoor Recreation (n=2,322)



### Summary

96% of respondents said they agree that outdoor recreation facilities are an investment in the community. Half (51%) said they would be more active if more opportunities were available nearby.

Respondents age 34 or younger agreed more often that having knowledge and greater availability of opportunities or resources would allow them to participate more often.

### Bottom Line

Respondents feel that outdoor recreation benefits themselves and their communities and work to participate in it regularly. There is an opportunity to increase participation among younger populations by improving awareness of resources and activities.

Table 23: Attitudes About Outdoor Recreation by Age [% Agree]

	I would be more active if there were more outdoor recreation opportunities available near me (n=1,173)	I would participate in outdoor recreation more often if I knew more about what resources and activities were available in the state (n=1,308)
24 or younger	74%	71%
25 to 34	70%	68%
35 to 44	54%	67%
45 to 54	51%	58%
55 to 64	44%	47%
65 or older	43%	50%
Unknown	49%	44%

## What They Are Saying

*"I think Maine does a good job of maintaining lands. I find land trusts, preserves, groups of private citizens are doing a superb job of obtaining and maintaining precious tracts of land."*

*"Outdoor recreation is one of the key branding pieces for why people love to visit, live, and work in Maine. Investments in outdoor recreation also promote healthy active lifestyles and active choices. It is a "no-brainer" that we want to make sure our state facilities are top-notch, well-staffed, and have the latest resources visitors expect. This is part of what will keep people coming to Maine to live, visit, and work."*

*"I would like to see more effort to make the roads safer for people who ride bicycles and for people who walk. I believe these efforts would improve the health of the people of Maine. Roads should be for all types of transportation, not just for cars and trucks. Some people have to walk, some like to walk, and some need to walk for their health. Let's make it safer and easier for them."*

*"It would be nice to have more events throughout the State. I'd love to see more Mainers trying new things in the outdoors. It seems like a lot of newer outdoor sports (mountain biking, climbing, whitewater sports) are geared for out-of-staters and more traditional sports (hunting, snowmobiling, fishing) and exclusive to Mainers. It would be great to get Mainers to learn these new sports."*

*"We're very fortunate to live in a state with so many opportunities for outdoor recreation. These opportunities should be more publicized, and every effort should be made to preserve these opportunities for future generations."*

*"I love living in Maine because of all the outdoor recreational opportunities. There truly is something for everyone."*

*"Less is more. It is a difficult balance between access and preservation - too many people ruins the experience for everyone, including wildlife, but not enough access and people and community suffer and support for conservation dwindles. I think the biggest thing to avoid is one size fits nine approaches or rules like every parcel purchased with LMF or other public money MUST include hunting or recreation or trails etc. I think some places should be free from some activities. The national seashore at Assateague, for example allows all activities on some parts of the island, and no activities on other parts, and some or restricted activities on the rest. I think that is a good approach."*

*"Transportation is really important to help folks get to recreation areas, but also needs to be managed to minimize impact at popular areas. In addition to investing in bike and pedestrian infrastructure to help people access recreation without a car, I'd like to see more bus lines in rural areas enabling folks to reach recreation without driving. Or, helping groups organize charter buses, similar to what you see in winter to get folks up to ski areas."*

*"Like many others, I am an aging Mainer, increasingly physically limited, especially in mobility. I haven't seen this addressed anywhere, but really feel it should be. I'd love to stay at some the Maine Huts facilities, but hiking/skiing in would be impossible for me now."*

*"People should be educated about the economic value of outdoor recreation and active tourism in our state and about the mental/physical health benefits. It isn't a luxury to set aside places for outdoor recreation, it is essential."*

**Demographic Characteristics**

Residence

	%
Full time Maine resident	67%
Part time Maine resident	2%
Not a resident	2%
Unknown	29%

Age

	%
24 or younger	1%
25 to 34	7%
35 to 44	17%
45 to 54	15%
55 to 64	14%
65 or older	13%
Unknown	33%

Gender

	%
Male	25%
Female	41%
Other	0%
Prefer not to answer	2%
Unknown	31%

Primary Race

	%
African American	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%
Hispanic	0%
Native American	0%
White	63%
Other/Mixed race	2%
Unknown	34%

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

CDC Guideline for Physical Activity [300 minutes/week]

	<b>%</b>
Meets guideline	21%
Does not meet guideline	46%
Unknown	33%

Education

	<b>%</b>
High school or less	3%
Some college	13%
Four-year degree	29%
More than a four-year degree	24%
Unknown	32%

How many people currently live in your household

	<b>%</b>
1	7%
2	29%
3	11%
4	15%
5	4%
6	1%
7	0%
8	0%
10 or more	0%
Unknown	32%

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

How many people in your household are under the age of 18?

	<b>%</b>
0	39%
1	10%
2	15%
3	3%
4	1%
5	0%
6	0%
9	0%
20	0%
Unknown	32%

**Household Income**

	<b>%</b>
Less than \$20,000	2%
\$20,000-\$34,999	5%
\$35,000-\$49,999	6%
\$50,000-\$74,999	12%
\$75,000-\$99,999	13%
\$100,000-\$124,999	11%
\$125,000 or Greater	14%
Unknown	36%

## Appendix I. Survey Instrument

### Introduction

#### Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Survey

Thank you for your interest in this survey. It is intended to gather information on outdoor recreation activity and perceptions important to Maine. The results will be used to inform development of the upcoming State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Please consider that the definition of “outdoor recreation” for purposes of the survey is broad and includes any outdoor activity engaged in for pleasure. This can range from sitting on a bench in a neighborhood park to playing softball on a municipal field to deer-hunting on private land and everything in between.

The answers you provide will remain confidential and reported in combined form only. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete, depending on your answers.

If you have any questions about the Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, please contact Rex Turner, at the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, at (207) 287-4920, [Rex.Turner@maine.gov](mailto:Rex.Turner@maine.gov). If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the study director, Patrick Madden, at (207) 767-6440 ext. 101, [pmadden@marketdecisions.com](mailto:pmadden@marketdecisions.com)

### Use and Interest in Activities

*People recreate in a variety of different activities in Maine. We would like to know what types of activities you participate in and what types of settings you like to visit in Maine.*

1. What types of outdoor recreation activities do you most enjoy doing? (List up to 5)

[open-ended]

2. Which of the following outdoor recreation/conservation sites have you visited in Maine within the past three years? (Please select all that apply)
  - Acadia National Park
  - Baxter State Park
  - Farms and other agricultural sites that are open to the public for visitation
  - Wildlife Management Areas, managed by Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
  - Town/City parks and open spaces
  - Local outdoor sports and recreation spaces
  - Maine Public Lands (e.g., Bigelow Preserve, Deboullie, Donnell Pond, etc.)
  - Maine State Parks and State Historic Sites
  - Private forest land open for recreation
  - Properties owned by land trusts
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuges
  - Water Trails (e.g., Maine Island Trail, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Allagash Wilderness Waterway, etc).
  - White Mountain National Forest
  - None of the above

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

3. Please rank the following as reasons that you participate in outdoor recreation in Maine?  
(Please drag and drop options or select dropdown)
- To exercise/ be physically active
  - To reduce stress/feel better mentally
  - To experience excitement/adventure
  - To be with family or friends
  - To be closer to/experience nature
  - To do something else (specify)
4. How often do you participate in the following in Maine?
- Visiting outdoor recreation sites in or near your community
  - Taking day-trips or outings to destinations outside your community
  - Overnight trips of a night or more
- Daily *[ELIMINATE FOR OVERNIGHT]*
  - Every few days
  - Weekly
  - Every few weeks
  - Monthly
  - A few times a year
  - Once a year
  - Every few years
  - Never
5. *[FOR EACH SELECTED]* Please share with whom you typically participate in the following:  
*[show list from Q4]* (select all that apply)
- By yourself
  - Spouse/partner
  - Children
  - Other family
  - Friends
  - An organized group
  - Someone else (specify)
6. How satisfied are you with the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities?
- a. In your community
  - b. In Maine
- Very satisfied
  - Somewhat satisfied
  - Neutral
  - Somewhat dissatisfied
  - Very dissatisfied
7. What types of outdoor recreation opportunities are most lacking in the state?

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

[open-ended]

8. Have you done any of the following within the last five years? (Select all that apply)

- Purchased a Maine hunting license
- Purchased a Maine fishing license
- Registered a boat in Maine
- Registered an ATV in Maine
- Registered a snowmobile in Maine
- Camped at a Maine state Park
- None of the above

9. [FOR OVERNIGHT TRIPS] When taking overnight trips in Maine for outdoor recreation:

a. What types of activities do you typically do?

[open-ended]

b. At what type of place do you typically stay during an overnight trip? (Select all that apply)

- Camping in a tent
- Camping with an RV
- Camping in a cabin or a yurt
- Camp or lodge
- Private seasonal residence (lake house, etc.)
- Motel
- Bed and Breakfast
- Hotel
- Somewhere else (specify)

c. Are you satisfied with the availability of resources and accommodations for overnight outdoor recreation trips in the state?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

d. IF NOT SATISFIED: Why are you not satisfied with the availability of resources and accommodations for overnight outdoor recreation trips in the state?

[open-ended]

**Barriers**

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

10. Have any of the following factors prevented you from participating in outdoor recreation activities in Maine? (Select all that apply)

- Concern about personal safety at recreation sites /in the outdoors
- Cost of outdoor recreation activities too high
- Don't know how to do activities I like or lack skills
- Don't know where to find information about available activities/sites
- Lack of equipment/gear
- Lack of facilities that meet my physical needs (specify what resource/activity)
- Lack of facilities/opportunities near my home
- Lack of time
- Lack of transportation
- Lack someone to participate with in activity
- Not interested in outdoor recreation
- Sites too busy/crowded
- Something else (specify)
- None of the above

11. What would help you participate in more outdoor recreation activities in your community and/or across the state?

[open-ended]

**Programs/Events**

12. Please rate how interested you'd be in participating in each of the following types of outdoor recreation event and program opportunities? (select all that apply).

- Instructional programs that teach participants new skills (animal tracking, bird or plant identification, navigation, etc.)
- Guided nature walks
- Kids' programs and family-oriented events (arts and crafts, family camping, etc.)
- Adaptive recreation events for individuals with disabilities
- Fishing derbies
- Reenactments of historical events/periods in Maine
- Self-guided educational hikes (with educational signs and brochures)
- "Volunteer in the park" events (park cleanup, trail repairs, etc.)
- Race events/competitions
- Outdoor festivals
- Sports tournaments (softball, soccer, etc.)
- Outdoor skills workshops (learning opportunities) [specify what types of outdoor skills you would be interested in learning]

13. Are there any other outdoor recreation programs or activities that you would like to see offered in Maine?

**Funding of Resources**

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

14. How knowledgeable are you about the funding for public outdoor recreation settings and activities?

- Very knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Neutral
- Somewhat unknowledgeable
- Very unknowledgeable

15. Do you think that Maine has invested enough in public outdoor recreation settings and activities?

- Invested too much
- About the right amount
- Not enough
- Have no knowledge of what the State of Maine has invested in this area

16. [If Too Much or Not Enough, ask:] What are the reasons you think that Maine has not invested the right amount in public outdoor recreation settings and activities?

[open-ended]

**Land Conservation/Acquisition**

17. Please rate how much you feel that acquiring land or access to land for public recreational use should be a priority for the State of Maine.

- Essential
- High priority
- Medium priority
- Low priority
- Not a priority

18. [IF LOW PRIORITY OR GREATER] What types of land should be conserved? (Please rank your top choices)

- Land supporting opportunities for remote, backcountry (wilderness type) trails and camping
- Undeveloped wildlife habitat supporting hunting, fishing, and limited primitive recreation
- Areas supporting the development of community sports fields
- Small park properties within towns, near neighborhoods, suitable for a range of uses including but not limited to playgrounds, paths, benches, and open space
- Land providing freshwater access for boating and fishing
- Land providing access to coastal recreation opportunities/beaches
- Easements providing public recreation rights while keeping the land otherwise privately owned
- Land for more developed trails, camping, and nature-based recreation
- Something else (specify)

**Knowledge and Motivation**

19. How knowledgeable are you about the outdoor recreation opportunities available in Maine?

- Very knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Neutral
- Somewhat unknowledgeable
- Very unknowledgeable

20. How do you typically seek out information about outdoor recreation opportunities and destinations in Maine?

- Exploring/way-finding on own
- Family/friends
- Internet searches
- Local residents/staff/visitor centers
- Magazines/newspapers
- Social media
- Travel guides/maps
- Websites (specify)
- Mobile apps
- Somewhere else (specify)

21. If you could learn more about what to do outdoors, where to go, or how to do it, what would you like to learn?

[open-ended]

22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I regularly use outdoor recreation sites close to my home
  - There is a destination for an outdoor recreation activity I enjoy within 10 minutes of where I live
  - Outdoor recreation facilities are investments benefitting my community
  - I know a lot about where to go for outdoor recreation experiences near me
  - I would be more active if there were more outdoor recreation opportunities available near me
  - I would participate in outdoor recreation more often if I knew more about what resources and activities were available in the state
- 
- Strongly agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Neutral
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Strongly disagree

23. Do you have any final comments about outdoor recreation in Maine?

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

[open-ended]

**Demographics**

24. What is your current Maine residential status?

- Full time resident of the State of Maine
- Seasonal resident of the State of Maine (At least 6 months of the year)
- Seasonal resident of the State of Maine (Less than 6 months of the year)
- Not a resident of the State of Maine

25. If you are a resident of the United States, please enter the 5-digit zip code for where you currently live.

26. If you are a resident of a foreign country, please write the name of the country where you live.

[enter zip code]

27. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

28. What is your age?

[enter years]

29. In a typical week, on how many days do you do at least moderate-intensity sports, fitness or recreational activities?

Moderate activity causes small increases in breathing or heart rate and is done for at least 10 minutes continuously.

ENTER NUMBER DAYS:

30. How much time do you spend doing at least moderate-intensity sports, fitness or recreation activities on a typical day that you do these activities?

ENTER NUMBER MINUTES:

29. How many people currently live in your household?

[enter number]

30. [IF > 1] How many people in your household are under the age of 18?

[enter number]

**2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

31. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School or GED
- Some College
- Two Year College Degree (Associates)
- Four-Year College Degree (BA, BS)
- Master's Degree
- Professional Degree (MD, MJ, etc.)
- Doctoral Degree

32. Please indicate your approximate household annual income?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$34,999
- \$35,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$124,999
- \$125,000 or Greater

33. What is your race?

- African-American
- Asian-Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- Native American
- White
- Other (specify)

**Appendix II. Introduction Email**

**SUBJECT:** Maine Outdoor Recreation Survey

**BODY:**

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands is interested in hearing about the types of outdoor activities you participate in and your thoughts about outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine. Your participation in this survey is very important as the results will be used to help develop the state's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

To participate in the survey, please click on the link below or copy and paste it into your browser:

[www.research.net/r/MaineSCORP](http://www.research.net/r/MaineSCORP)

The answers you provide in the survey will remain confidential and reported in combined form only. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete, depending on your answers.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your time, you do not have to complete it again.

If you have any questions about the Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, please contact Rex Turner, at the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, at (207) 287-4920, [Rex.Turner@maine.gov](mailto:Rex.Turner@maine.gov). If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the study director, Patrick Madden, at (207) 767-6440 ext. 101, [pmadden@marketdecisions.com](mailto:pmadden@marketdecisions.com)

Thank you for your help in making Maine a great place to live and play.

## **Appendix C: Wetland Component**

### **Introduction**

Maine has an abundance and diversity of wetlands that is four times larger than the other five New England States combined. However, an estimated 20% of Maine's wetlands were lost due to human endeavors between the years 1780 and 1980.<sup>1</sup> Wetlands, valuable not only for their beauty and recreation opportunities, also perform several critically important functions including, but not limited to, water storage, shoreline erosion control and water quality improvement. They are the source of timber resources highly valuable to Maine's forest products industry, and perhaps most important, wetlands provide habitat vital to fish and wildlife, including rare and endangered species.

Since passage of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs) have been required to address the acquisition of wetlands with stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars. Specifically, federal SCORP guidelines require the inclusion of a wetlands priority component consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. At a minimum this component must:

- *be consistent with the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan (NWPCP) prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service;*
- *provide evidence of consultation with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources;*
- *and contain a listing of those wetland types that should receive priority for acquisition.*

### **Wetland Conservation Planning**

The **Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986** affirmed that both federal-side and stateside LWCF money could be used to acquire wetlands. It required the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a **National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan (NWPCP)** that would specify the types of wetlands and interests in wetlands that should be given priority for acquisition with LWCF dollars so that efforts would focus on the country's more important, scarce, and vulnerable wetlands. Wetland acquisitions by states with stateside LWCF dollars must be consistent with a SCORP that is consistent with the plan.

The NWPCP was prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and published in 1989. To be eligible for purchase with LWCF dollars, a wetland must meet the following minimum criteria specified in the plan:

1. The wetland site must include predominantly (50% or more) wetland types that are rare or declining in an ecoregion.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dahl, Thomas E., (1990). Wetlands losses in the United States 1780's to 1980's. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C., <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/othrdata/wetloss/wetloss.htm> (Version 16JUL97).

### 2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

2. The wetland must be threatened with loss or degradation. A site would be considered threatened if more than 10% of its values and functions are likely to be destroyed or adversely affected by direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts over the next 10 years considering the array of possible threats to the site and the level of threat afforded by existing regulations and owners' intentions. Obvious threats include draining and filling, building development, mining, transportation projects, vegetation removal, etc.

3. The wetland site must offer documented public values in at least two of the following areas: wildlife, commercial and sport fisheries, surface and groundwater quality and quantity and flood control, outdoor recreation, and other values, such as rare/unusual species or features, educational/research value, or historical/archaeological features.

#### **Beginning with Habitat Program – A Wetlands Conservation Framework**

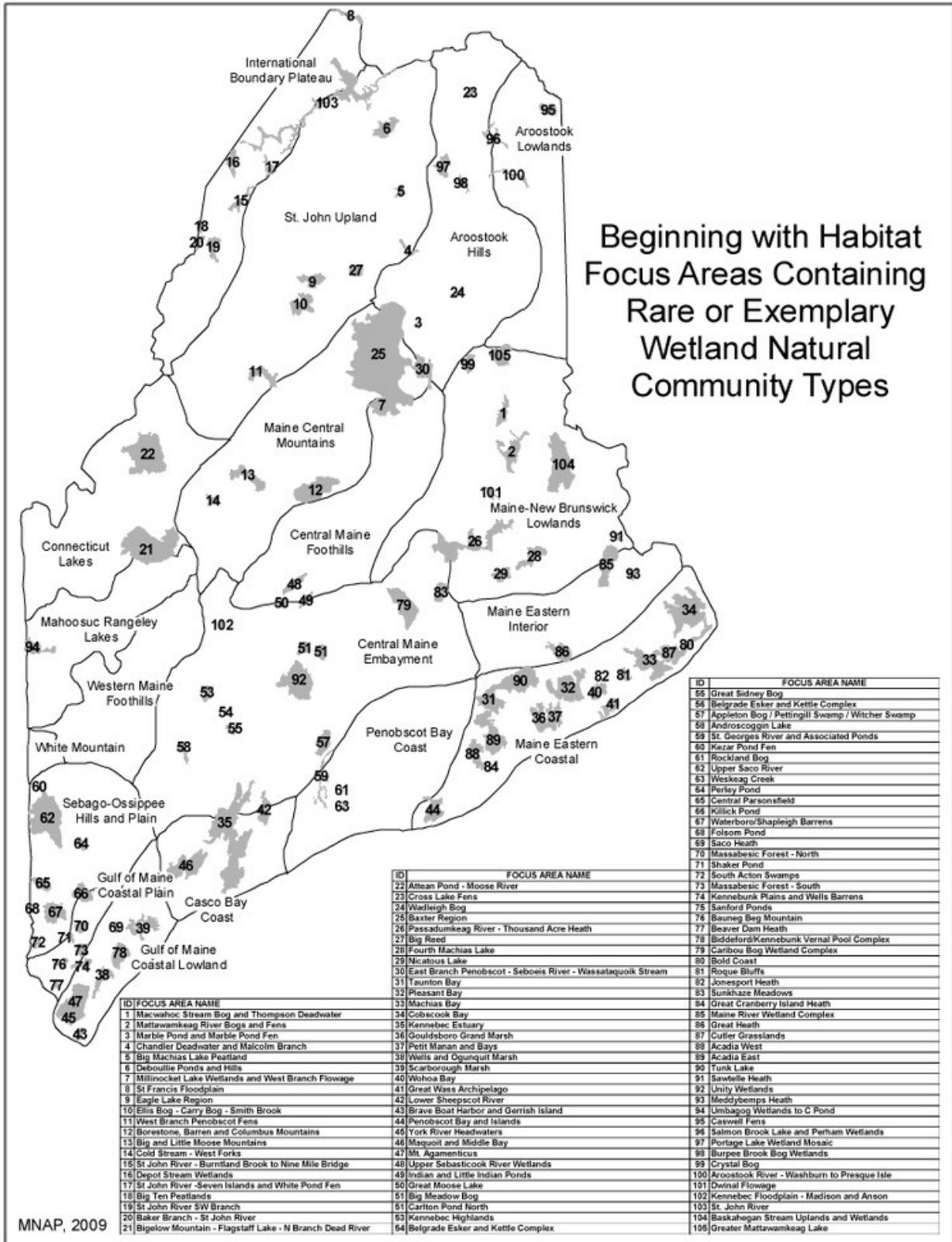
*Beginning with Habitat* is a habitat-based landscape approach to assist wildlife and plant conservation. Its goal is to maintain the habitat of native plants and animal species currently breeding in Maine by providing each town with a collection of maps and information explaining various habitats of statewide and national significance found there. This data is coupled with suggestions that can be implemented at the local level to advance conservation planning that better balances future growth and ecological services over the long term. It is a collaborative program of federal, state and local agencies and non-governmental organizations staffed by Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.

After reviewing high value plant and animal habitats – of which wetlands are key components - and undeveloped habitat blocks, biologists from the Maine Department of Conservation Natural Areas Program and Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife identified areas meriting special attention - including acquisition. These Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance are built around the locations of rare plants, animals, natural communities, high quality common natural communities, significant wildlife habitats, and their intersection with large blocks of undeveloped habitat, and are designed to bring attention to areas with concentrations plant and animal habitats values. *Beginning with Habitat* Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance are recommending a foundation for resource protection and open space planning for additional protection efforts by towns, local land trusts and other agencies and organizations.

This approach which also includes important wetlands, has been designated statewide. A map of focus areas of statewide significance with rare or exemplary wetland natural community types and lists of *Beginning with Habitat* Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance are shared in this appendix document.

2020-2025 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Figure 1: Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas with Rare or Exemplary Wetland Types (Source: Maine Natural Areas Program, 2009)



MNAP, 2009

## Recommendations

Beginning with Habitat (BwH) has become a leading force in the identification of focus areas for conservation and may be best positioned to guide any potential wetland acquisitions associated with LWCF funds. **Given BwH's planning role regarding both wetlands of statewide significance and wetlands with more local importance, it is recommended that BwH guidance, especially in the form of focus areas identified as having rare or exemplary wetland natural community types (see Figure 1), take priority for wetland acquisition.**

### Qualification Note: NWPCP Standards

As mentioned before, the following conditions (1-3) must be met to use the Land and Water Conservation Fund to purchase wetlands. Listed below each condition are details indicating wetland characteristics and/or locations meeting the condition.

#### 1. rare or declining wetland types:

- Wetlands supporting habitat for rare (S1-S3) natural community types

#### 2. wetlands threatened with loss or degradation:

- coastal marshes and undeveloped low-lying uplands in southern and mid-coast areas where population increases and second home construction is placing pressure on these areas and limited undeveloped lands remain for climate change induced inland migration of these wetland types;
- headwater streams, and seeps in the coastal plain;
- vernal pool complexes and small isolated habitat stepping stone wetlands in southern Maine that support rare herpetiles;
- large peatlands, if peat mining becomes prevalent in Maine;
- coastal intertidal areas in regions of high population growth;
- critical edge habitat in coastal and other wetlands; and

**3. high value and/or function wetlands, determined by on-site analysis.** particular attention should be given to the following in Maine:

- high value and multi-value wetlands;
- habitats for rare and endangered plant and/or animal species;
- habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animals, and rare and exemplary natural communities in the state and for which there are inadequate representatives under protected status;
- exemplary occurrences of common wetland types that are not receiving adequate protection;
- habitats of state significance for fishery and wildlife resources, and that may satisfy the goals and guidelines of international treaties such as the North American Migratory Waterfowl Plan;
- wetlands with important hydrological functions of state or regional significance; and
- Recreationally and/or culturally significant wetlands, such as those with educational potential, scenic attributes, hunting and fishing values, and those that can sustainably accommodate high visitor use.

**Maine Natural Areas Program Rare and Exemplary Wetland Natural Community Types in Maine**

- S1 Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (five or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the State of Maine.
- S2 Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6-20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- S3 Rare in Maine (20-100 occurrences).
- S4 Apparently secure in Maine.
- S5 Demonstrably secure in Maine.

Alder Floodplain	S4
Bog Moss Lawn	S4
Bulrush Bed	S4
Cedar - Spruce Seepage Forest	S4
Mixed Graminoid - Forb Saltmarsh	S4
Mixed Tall Sedge Fen	S4
Mountain Holly - Alder Woodland Fen	S4
Northern White Cedar Swamp	S4
Northern White Cedar Woodland Fen	S4
Red Maple - Sensitive Fern Swamp	S4
Red Maple Wooded Fen	S4
Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bog	S4
Spruce - Fir - Cinnamon Fern Forest	S4
Spruce - Larch Wooded Bog	S4
Sweetgale Mixed Shrub Fen	S4
Tussock Sedge Meadow	S4
Alder Shrub Thicket	S5
Cattail Marsh	S5
Mixed Graminoid - Shrub Marsh	S5
Pickerelweed - Macrophyte Aquatic Bed	S5
Pipewort - Water Lobelia Aquatic Bed	S5
Water-lily - Macrophyte Aquatic Bed	S5