

DOWNEAST REGION

DIRECTIONS

Nearly all access to the headwater lakes and river-side campsites is on gravel logging roads that are generally passable from June to October (but require careful driving and a detailed map).

The put-in for Fifth Machias Lake is off the 42-00-0 Road. To reach Third Machias Lake (a more common put-in and a canoe trip of 51—versus 76—miles), take the Little River Road (which runs north off the Stud Mill Road along the east side of the Machias River). Turn left after 4 miles onto a side road that leads to the boat launch. The upper headwater lakes of the Machias River watershed can also be reached from the village of Grand Lake Stream, via either Fourth Lake Road or the Little River Road. South of the boat access point off Route 9, there are few places to access the river by logging road until Whitneyville.

Lat 45.089221 Lon -67.862831 (Third Machias Lake access point)

CONTACTS

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
Eastern Public Lands Office
106 Hogan Road, Suite 5
Bangor, ME 04401
207-941-4412 www.maine.gov/machiasrivercorridor

Machias Bay Area Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 606
Machias, ME 04654
207-255-4402
www.machiaschamber.org

For travel information about the:
• State go to www.visitmaine.com
• Region go to www.downeastacadia.com

SERVICES & FACILITIES

- Primitive campsites with privies, some with RV camper access
- Trailerable and hand-carry boat launches are highly variable. Use the Online Sortable Boat Launch Listing: www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches



MACHIAS RIVER CORRIDOR PUBLIC LANDS

GUIDE & MAP

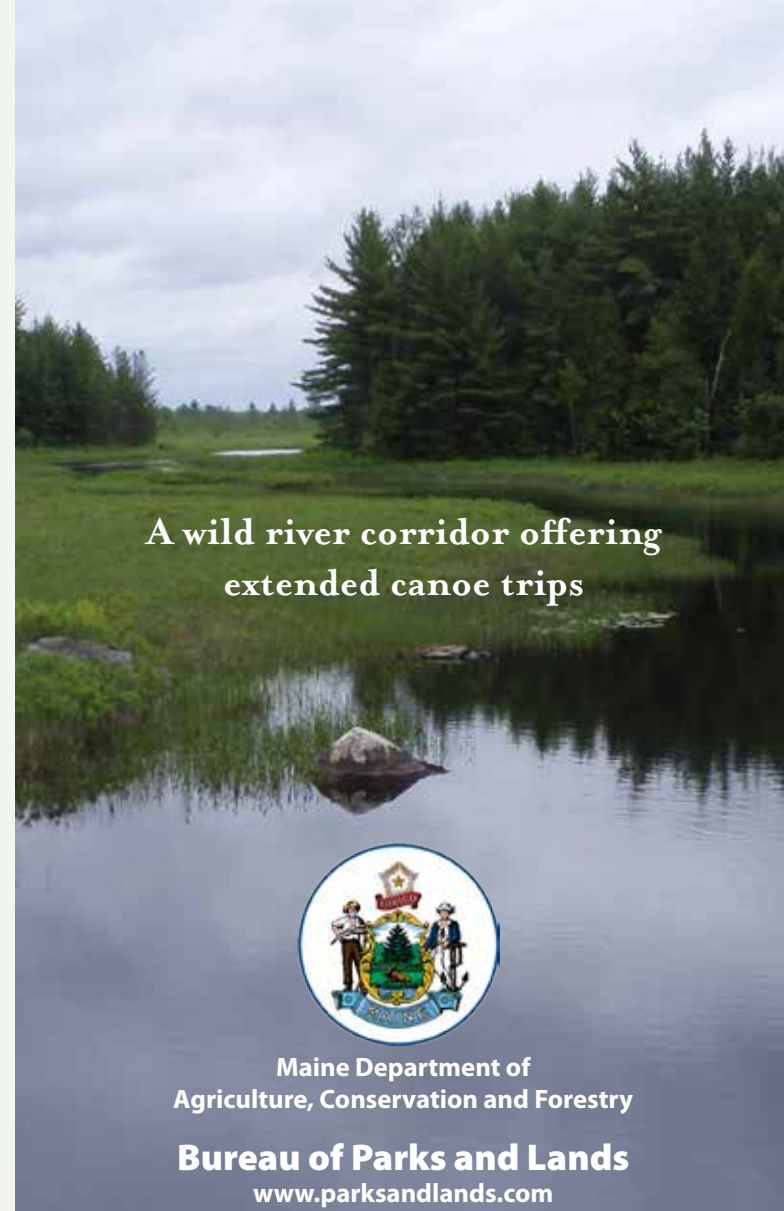


OVERVIEW

The Machias River, one of Maine's wildest and most cherished waterways, flows for 76 miles from Fifth Machias Lake to tidewater in downtown Machias. The State oversees stewardship and recreational use along its nearly unbroken shoreline, thanks to a remarkable effort that has protected more than 60,000 acres in the Machias River watershed—the country's largest, self-sustaining wild Atlantic salmon run. This landscape-scale conservation project, which spanned more than a decade, successfully preserved 252 miles of river and shore frontage from development and subdivision, while ensuring the region's working forests contribution to the local economy. Recreational access is guaranteed for all time, helping to maintain a scenic and popular backcountry canoe route (considered by paddlers to be more accessible than the St. John and less heavily traveled than the Allagash).

The State owns 14,000 acres outright and holds the remaining lands under conservation easements that prevent development and greatly restrict timber cutting in a 1,000-foot corridor on both sides of the river's mainstem and major tributaries. Many minor tributaries and other headwaters are completely protected through conservation ownership—either in the State's Duck Lake Public Lands (west of Fourth Machias Lake) or in the 33,724-acre Farm Cove Community Forest that Downeast Lakes Land Trust owns and manages (along Wabassus, Pocumcus and West Grand Lakes). The State holds additional easements in the upper watershed, ensuring that 88 percent of the land base cannot be subdivided and developed—a critical factor in preserving the river's high water quality.

Conservation efforts along the Machias may help stabilize Maine's Atlantic salmon population (which has fallen precipitously since the 1980s). Among the state's eight wild Atlantic salmon rivers, the Machias contains the greatest amount of juvenile-rearing habitat and has the highest estimated smolt production. The river system also supports a rich array of wading birds, waterfowl, neotropical migrants and grassland species. In 2006, the American Bird Conservancy identified this Downeast Lakes region of Maine as a Globally Important Bird Area, noting the occurrence of at least 180 species of birds, including 23 warblers.



A wild river corridor offering extended canoe trips



Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands
www.parksandlands.com

PROPERTY HISTORY

The river's name derives from a Passamaquoddy Indian word meaning "bad little falls," which refers to a steep stretch of falls in downtown Machias—marking the river's transition to tidewater. The Machias River was a major travel route for the Passamaquoddy ("People of the Dawn"), who spent winters hunting and trapping in the north woods, and migrated each spring to the coast to gather plants and shellfish. Along the shores of Machias Bay, petroglyphs that date back 3,000 years—depicting animals and tribespeople—testify to the significance of this area.

Following the arrival of European settlers in the late 1700s, the Machias River was used for transporting timber from the North Woods to coastal saw mills. At the height of the lumbering boom, the Town of Machias had 20 sawmills processing lumber and exporting wood products.

In June 1775, the British armed schooner *HMS Margarett* arrived in Machias escorting the sloops *Polly* and *Unity* to collect lumber from the river's sawmills for building British barracks back in Boston. Residents needed to trade lumber for critical supplies from the British but did not want to betray the American cause. Forty town residents seized the two sloops and successfully captured the *Margarett* in what became the first naval battle of the American Revolution.

While timber is still a valuable resource harvested through much of the river's watershed, the log drives ended by 1970 and the last logging dams removed in 1974, restoring the river to its free-flowing condition and improving navigability for recreational users and Atlantic salmon. Efforts to sustain this recreational resource, rich wildlife habitat, and the surrounding productive forests began in the 1990s and culminated in 2008 with the completion of the third phase of the Machias River Project.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC LANDS

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) actively manages its public lands units to achieve multiple sustainable benefits: resource protection, public recreation, wildlife habitat, and marketable forest products (revenues from which help fund public land management). The Bureau employs scientifically based practices to achieve exemplary forest management fostering the health and viability of the landscape ecosystems. BPL's forest practices are green-certified by two independent auditors: the Forest Stewardship Council™ and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative™.



No-harvest zones are regularly established to buffer sensitive natural resources and recreational areas in addition to the Bureau's ecological reserve system.

VISITOR RULES

- Kindle fires only in authorized campsites with fire rings and cut no live vegetation.
- Carry out all trash.
- Although hunting is permitted, do not discharge weapons within 300 feet of any picnic area, camping area, parking area, posted trail or other developed area. Loaded firearms are not permitted at campsites or on hiking trails.
- Bureau of Parks and Lands staff may take custody of any personal property left unattended for more than 3 days (unless advance written permission is given).

TRAILS - ON THE WATERWAY

The 76-mile canoe trip (with Class I-III whitewater, appropriate for experienced paddlers) begins at Fifth Machias Lake and reaches tidewater in Machias. The upper reaches of the river, between the five lakes, are narrow and have some stretches of rapids. The trip requires a minimum of six days to do in entirety, but can be split into two three-day trips (paddling the five lakes in the headwaters in one trip and the lower river on a second trip). Less experienced paddlers should engage a guide.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Moose, bear and other large animals are abundant.

- Observe from a safe distance; do not flush wildlife.
- Drive slowly on area roads, particularly at times of low light.
- Food must be securely stowed when camping.
- Tents must be kept free of food and food odors.

Cell phone's should not be counted on in an emergency as coverage is spotty to non-existent. Have a back-up plan in place.

Logging trucks frequent area roads. Watch out for them and:

- Pull over and stop for trucks regardless of which direction they're headed as they have the right of way.
- Avoid roads that are too narrow for two vehicles.
- Do not block side roads or stop in a spot with poor visibility.
- Be prepared for rugged gravel roads (dusty, washouts): travel slowly and carry a spare tire.

Trailerable and hand-carry boat launches are highly variable.

- Online sortable listing: www.maine.gov/dacf/boatlaunches

Eurasian Milfoil is an aquatic invasive.

- Clean all watercraft before they are launched and after retrieval. FMI: www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/

WHEN TO VISIT

- Paddlers travel the Machias River in May or early June (when water levels are adequate most years). The upper lakes can be paddled throughout the summer given moderate rainfall. Be prepared for black flies and mosquitoes in May and June.
- Fishermen and guides visit the long popular Fifth through First Machias Lakes, particularly during the spring run-off.
- Campers and ATV riders enjoy the corridor all summer,
- Hunters arrive in October and November.
- During the winter roads along the corridor are unplowed so only accessed by snowmobiles.

NEARBY DESTINATIONS

The Machias River runs through the heart of the Downeast-Acadia Region (www.downeastacadia.com) that encompasses Hancock and Washington Counties and represents the easternmost corner of the United States. Nearby destinations include:

- **Farm Cove Community Forest:** owned and managed by Downeast Lakes Land Trust, is a 33,000 acre expanse of conserved woodlands surrounding eight entire lakes west of Grand Lake Stream.
- **Rocky Lake Public Lands** offers 10,000 acres well suited to canoeing, fishing, and backcountry camping.
- **Roque Bluffs State Park** has a long pebble beach, hiking trails, picnic tables, playground and freshwater pond.
- **Duck Lake Public Lands** west of Grand Lake Stream encompasses 29,000 acres of woods and lakefront offering backcountry camping and fishing.

For additional hiking opportunities, see the *Cobscook Trails* guide available at area stores and from Downeast Coastal Conservancy (207-255-4500 or www.downeastcoastalconservancy.org).

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The Nature Conservancy, Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission, and Downeast Lakes Land Trust were key partners in achieving this ambitious conservation project, and passing protective easements to the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands for long-term stewardship. Major funders of the easement purchase included The Conservation Fund, Federal Forest Legacy Program, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and Land for Maine's Future Program. Other project partners included the Machias River Watershed Council, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Quoddy Regional Land Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, International Paper Company and Project Share. This brochure was made possible in part by funding assistance through the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program, administered by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

