

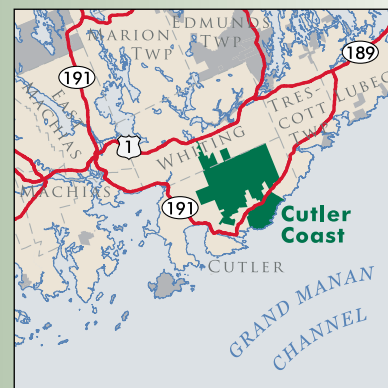
DOWNEAST REGION

DIRECTIONS

In East Machias, turn right onto Route 191 and proceed 16.9 miles (3 miles past Cutler village) to the trailhead and parking area marked by a large blue/white sign.

From Lubec, take Route 189 to Route 191. Turn left and travel 10 miles to the parking area/trailhead (marked by a blue/white sign).

If the parking lot is full, park alongside Route 191 or consider returning at another time.



CONTACTS

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www.machiaschamber.org

For travel information about the state go to www.visitmaine.com
For travel information about the region go to www.downeastacadia.com

SERVICES & FACILITIES

- 20-car parking lot
- 10 miles of hiking trails
- Three primitive campsites at Fairy Head with a pit toilet.
Camping is only allowed at these three sites which are first-come, first-served with no reservations.
- Privy at main trailhead



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(www.hwaters.com)

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(www.community-gis.org)

CUTLER COAST PUBLIC LANDS

GUIDE & MAP

Shorefront hiking and camping along Maine's Bold Coast



www.parksandlands.com



OVERVIEW

Those seeking a taste of wilderness along Maine's coast will enjoy exploring the Cutler Coast Public Lands, a 12,234-acre expanse of blueberry barrens, woodlands and peatlands with 4.5 miles of headlands (interspersed by pocket coves and cobble beaches) overlooking the Bay of Fundy. Hikers can enjoy 10 miles of trails, three remote tent sites and spectacular views from the property's steep cliffs—part of the dramatic “Bold Coast” that extends from Cutler to Lubec.

Cool, damp and windy conditions along the coast tend to stunt tree growth and favor plants that normally would occur in alpine and sub-alpine terrain such as Hooker's iris, bird's eye primrose and baked appleberry. Birders have recorded nearly 200 species on or near the Cutler Coast. According to www.mainebirdingtrail.com, warblers, chickadees, golden-crowned kinglets and six species of owls frequent the woods, while seabirds and ravens nest along shoreline ledges. Offshore, from early summer to early fall, visitors may spot seals, porpoises and occasional humpback, finback, northern right and minke whales.

The lands north of Route 191 have several raised coastal peatlands (also known as bogs or heaths)—a plant community not usually found south of Canada. The bogs support an array of fascinating plants, including some sub-arctic and arctic species (such as Labrador tea) and carnivorous plants (such as pitcher plants and sundew) that draw nourishment from insects—rather than the acidic water and nutrient-poor soils.

The grassland “barrens,” which were traditionally kept open by burning, contain species such as blue joint grass, flat-topped aster, alder and meadowsweet and support bobolinks and savannah sparrows. Due to the presence of bluejoint meadows and other exemplary natural communities such as huckleberry-crowberry bog and maritime spruce-fir-larch forest, Maine designated 5,216 acres of the property as an Ecological Reserve. The Reserve helps to maintain these representative ecosystems in their natural condition and allow for monitoring of ecological changes over time.

PROPERTY HISTORY

The igneous bedrock visible along the Cutler Coast (some of it in hexagonal columns of basalt) was deposited in the Silurian Age, roughly 420 million years ago, through a series of volcanic eruptions and intrusions of magma into existing rock. Much of the coastal land represents a plateau, sitting roughly 220 feet above sea level, that rebounded after the last glacial retreat (about 12,000 years ago).

An archaeological excavation in 1984 turned up stone tools and fire-cracked rocks, evidence that Native Americans used this coastline for centuries. European explorers first arrived around 1605, followed by settlers around 1785. The settlers, while few in number, harvested much of the region's valuable timber and erected a sawmill. Major fires in 1851 and 1854 created the extensive grassland “barrens” that dominate the property's northern portion today. Following the fires, the mill was replaced by a dairy farm and—in 1881—a short-lived cheese factory. The stonewalls and cellar holes still evident on the land date back to this brief agrarian period.

Portions of the land were cut over for spruce/fir pulp by the Pejepscot Paper Company (using horses). Subsequent timber companies did extensive salvage harvesting in the 1980s following an outbreak of spruce budworm. A second introduced insect, the balsam wooly adelgid, is wreaking further damage on conifers.

The State of Maine acquired the coastal portion of the Cutler Coast Public Lands in 1989, thanks to The Conservation Fund and the Land for Maine's Future Program. In 1997, the preserve quintupled in size when The Conservation Fund/Richard King Mellon Foundation and Maine Coast Heritage Trust generously donated to the State a 9,485-acre tract of forests and grasslands on the north side of Route 191, and the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands purchased an additional 570 acres.

VISITOR RULES

Stay on the trail at all times to protect fragile ecosystems.

Open fires are prohibited: cook only on self-contained stoves.

Cut no live vegetation.

Carry out all trash.

- Keep pets under control at all times and on a leash (less than 4 feet) at campsites.
- Camp only at the three designated sites by Fairy Head. Camping stays on public lands are limited to 14 days in any 45-day period.
- Although hunting is permitted, do not discharge weapons within 300 feet of any posted trail or developed area or carry loaded firearms on hiking trails or near campsites.
- ATVs are permitted on the lands north of Route 191 but may only go on roads and trails posted as open.
- 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

The coastal portion of the property has hiking trips from 3-10 miles. Wear sturdy footwear and take care near cliffs, particularly in damp and slippery conditions. The estimated trail times assume a leisurely pace in good conditions with brief stops.

Coastal Trail to Ocean (2.8-mile roundtrip, allow 2 hours) A forested path that runs through a cedar swamp and maritime spruce-fir forest before reaching a promontory overlooking the ocean. This is the easiest trail segment: the remainder is moderately difficult.

Black Point Brook Loop (5.5-mile roundtrip, allow 4-5 hours) Wooded trails and rocky cliffside hiking lead to a small cobble beach at Black Point Cove (accessible via a log ladder). The return route, via the Inland Trail, is somewhat rocky but over fairly gentle terrain.

Fairy Head Loop Trail (9.2-mile roundtrip, allow 6-7 hours) This trail provides the most extensive shorefront hiking with 3.8 miles along the water. At Fairy Head, the trail turns inland through open meadows and forest, passing by a freshwater grass marsh and a large beaver pond.

On the forested northern portion of the property, across Rt. 191, there are 19.5 miles of shared-use roads and designated ATV trails, many of them maintained by the East Stream Trail Riders ATV Club. A portion of this system passes through the Ecological Reserve: please remain on the trail to protect the Reserve grasslands and fragile peatbog ecosystems.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cliff tops are often undercut and can be dangerous (particularly in wet conditions). Stay on the trail and supervise children closely.

The three permitted campsites are 4-5 miles from the parking lot. Carry in food, water and camp stoves (campfires are prohibited).

On Maine's public lands, some timber harvesting is done to generate revenues for property stewardship. Potential harvest areas at Cutler lie north of Route 191 and are clearly signed if active.

WHEN TO VISIT

The Cutler Coast lands are open year-round but take extra care in wet or icy conditions. The summer months offer the best likelihood of spotting whales offshore and birdwatching opportunities are excellent from spring through fall. Mosquitoes and black flies are thickest in late May through early July. Wild blueberries ripen in late July and early August.

NEARBY DESTINATIONS

The Cutler Coast Public Lands lie within 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:

Quoddy Head State Park in Lubec has a photogenic lighthouse and scenic waterfront trails along the easternmost point of land the U.S.

Rocky Lake Public Lands offers 10,000 acres well suited to canoeing fishing and backcountry camping.

Cobscook Bay State Park in Edmunds provides waterfront camping and a good base for exploring easternmost Maine.

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

