



1-Minute Hike: Green Lake trails

Difficulty: Easy-moderate. The trail network consists of a 1.35-mile main trail called the Hastings Trail, as well as a short side trail to the hatchery. Both trails travel through a mixed forest over relatively even terrain.

How to get there: The Green Lake Nature Trails are located at the Green Lake National Fish Hatchery on Route 180 (Mariaville Road) in Ellsworth, approximately 4.2 miles from where Route 180 intersects with Route 1A at the entrance of Boggy Brook Business Park in Ellsworth.

Information: Ghost towns, glaciers and freshwater ecosystems are three topics you'll learn about while walking the Green Lake Nature Trails in Ellsworth. Just under 2 miles in total length, these walking trails travel through the quiet forest surrounding Green Lake National Fish Hatchery and visit the shore of the Green Lake. Along the way, a few informational displays help visitors interpret the landscape.



AISLINN SARNACKI

The trail network has been under construction for about four years and is almost completed, according to Fred Trasko, a fisheries biologist at the hatchery. The public is welcome to walk the trails, but the official opening won't be held until next spring — probably in June, because the hatchery will be busy stocking Atlantic salmon in early spring, Trasko said.

A trail map is posted at the trailhead, which is on the right side of the hatchery road, just before the gate. Visitors are welcome to drive down the hatchery road, but Trasko advises trail users to park outside the gate because it is closed and locked at 4 p.m. each day — and on occasion earlier.

The trail network currently consists of just two trails: the main trail, called the Hastings Trail, and a side trail that leads to the hatchery. As of October, the trails were marked with small, green, diamond-shaped signs posted to trees, as well as flagging tape. These trail markers will be improved before the grand opening next spring, Trasko said.

The Hastings Trail starts behind the trailhead kiosk and travels through the woods south of the hatchery for about 1.35 miles to reach the southeast shore of Green Lake, where it ends at a granite memorial bench for Ed Hastings, after whom the trail is named. An environmental scientist, Ed Hastings was an officer of the nonprofit Friends of Green

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JOHN HOLYOKE | BDN

Mack Atwood, 5, of Orland shows off the brook trout he caught at a youth fishing day at Bangor Municipal Golf Course recently, while his father, Anthony Atwood, checks out the fish.

Let's go outside

Youth days help kids relish hunting, fishing

BY JOHN HOLYOKE
BDN STAFF

As a chilly October rain fell Sunday morning, Wes Ashe took time out from cheering on an assembled group of children and glanced up Bangor Municipal Golf Course's sloping second fairway.

The day was nearly miserable — the kind of day that might convince even veteran outdoor enthusiasts that they'd be better off staying inside — but what Ashe saw made him grin.

A parade of children, most of them carrying fishing rods, tromped down the hill toward a waiting water hazard that had recently been stocked with brook trout.

Ashe, a fisheries biologist for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, had teamed up with Bangor Muni assistant pro Rob Jarvis to arrange for a Youth Fishing Day on the course, in a small pond that typically doesn't hold fish.

"I was positive that my sister and my wife, my mother and my father, my niece and nephew would come," Ashe said, admitting he suspected the weather might reduce participation. "But [plenty of others are] coming down the second fairway pretty good."

The DIF&W often sponsors programs designed to provide outdoor opportunities for youngsters, and Sunday's fishing event was one example of that kind of programming. A day earlier, the popular Youth Deer Day was held in Maine, allowing junior hunters a day of their own one week in advance of the traditional season opener.

An hour into the three-hour outing, more than 75 people ringed the pond, and several hooked one of the 150 fish that had been delivered earlier in the week.

Among the successful anglers was 5-year-old Mack Edward Atwood of Orland, who was fishing with his dad, Anthony Atwood.

The fish was a hefty 15-inch brook trout, but Mack — like good fishermen everywhere — knew exactly what to say. Essentially: You should have seen the one that got away.

"On the first cast I had a bigger fish than this one," Mack said as he posed for a photo and the trout squirmed to get out of his tiny hand.

Nearby, Anthony Atwood laughed. It seemed he'd taught his son well.



JOHN HOLYOKE | BDN

Kelly Lapointe of Brewer and his son, Keegan, stop at Bob's Kozy Korner Store in Orrington to get a warm drink during Youth Deer Day.

"It's a tradition in the family to go fishing all the time, and it's fun to bring him out and give him something to do," Anthony Atwood said. "He has to convince me to go sometimes ... it don't take nothing to convince him to go fishing."

Anthony Atwood, like many parents taking part in the fishing event and Youth Deer Day, said providing kids with an alternative to modern recreational activities is important.

"Nowadays, it's all about games and being inside," he said. "[This is] awesome. The more kids involved in fishing, the better."

Fishing was only part of the allure for 11-year-old Connor Seymour of Glenburn and Bangor, who was fishing with his stepfather, Alan Martin.

Seymour hunts and fishes with his father, a merchant marine. He showed up to fish 20 minutes before the event was scheduled to start and was pleased to see

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Savoring the start of deer season

On Saturday morning, many Mainers will pack up their trucks before first light — double-checking to assure themselves that they've got all the essentials, of course — and set course for their favorite patch of woods.

Others are more fortunate and will simply amble out their back door and disappear into their own personal forest, where they'll spend at least part of the day waiting for a burly buck to walk past.

We call it "opening day," and deer hunters around the state will observe this de facto holiday in traditional style.

But let's be clear on one thing: Opening day this is not — not really, at least.

Archery hunters have been hunting for weeks now, you see. And those who don't see the word

"Maine" stamped on their driver's licenses will have to wait until Monday to head afield. And, heck, our junior hunters were out looking for deer a week ago.

So if you're going to get really picky, Saturday is Mainer's only opening day — we can debate the merits of not allowing out-of-staters a chance to hunt at a future date — for firearms hunters.

Call it what you will. My buddies and I — Mainers with rifles, every one of us — call it opening day. And a special day it is.

Not that we ever have much luck filling our tags on opening day, of course.

Not that we don't have plenty of fun in spite of that.

For much of the year, we're tied to our desks, you see. Or to the school or sports activities of our kids and stepkids. I'm the lucky one in our group — I write about outdoors matters and can legitimately tell my boss that a trip to a fly fishing river is simply another day at the remote office. The BDN Grand Lake Stream Bureau, if you please.

But for others, these days are a true rarity: We block out the time, make plans to meet at predetermined spots and get to spend quality time with buddies we don't get to see nearly often enough.

Or, we get to spend time without them.

That's the thing about deer hunting: Even though we meet up in the morning, we then hike to our own favorite spots, where we'll sit or still hunt for hours — alone.

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JOHN HOLYOKE

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How safe are Maine woods during hunting season?

BY AISLINN SARNACKI
BDN STAFF

For children across the nation, Oct. 31 means donning costumes and hitting the streets to celebrate Halloween. But for thousands of residents here in Maine, that date means something important: the opening day of firearm season for hunting deer, the most sought after game species in the state.

Under a canopy of bright foliage, people of all ages and agendas will be sharing Maine's great outdoors, and many of them will be carrying guns. For others, though, there's still plenty of hiking, biking and birdwatching to be done — sometimes in the same woods where hunters roam. This begs the question: Is it really safe out there?

According to Maine hunting and outdoor recreation experts, the answer is yes. Based on recent statistics, the Maine woods is safer than ever before for hunters and nonhunters alike.

"Your chances of going out and getting injured during hunting season are much less than if you were to go skiing," Michael Sawyer, recreational vehicle and safety coordinator for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, said. "Hunting is one of the safest sports there is."



COURTESY OF DEREK RUNNELLS

In 2013, more than 218,000 hunting licenses were issued in the state of Maine, more than 24,000 deer were killed and tagged and just four hunting incidents were reported, according to the DIF&W.

In these reports, an "incident" is defined as an event in which a person was injured with a firearm, bow or crossbow and needed professional medical attention. Of the four incidents in 2014, three of

them were self-inflicted wounds and one was the shooting of a fellow hunter who reportedly was in the shooter's line of fire.

"By in large, hunters are out there complying with safety laws and do a good job respecting other people," Maine Game Warden Jim Fahey said. "You tend to hear about the instances when they don't, when one hunter makes a poor decision, and then all hunt-

ers get painted by the same brush."

Today, Maine hunters have a whole book full of rules and regulations to adhere to. It's called the Maine Hunting and Trapping Laws and Rules guidebook, and it's updated annually with new laws and hunting season dates.

But hunting wasn't always such a safe sport in Maine.

BDN reporter Aislinn Sarnacki and her dog, Oreo, both wearing hunter orange, stand on a granite beach of Partridge Pond in Amherst Mountains Community Forest in Amherst in 2013.

Making the woods safer

Today Maine only sees a handful of hunting accidents each year, but back in the 1950s and '60s hunting injuries and fatalities were a lot more common. Statistics collected by the DIF&W mark 1952 as a particularly bad year, with an all time high of 70 hunting-related shootings, 19 of which were fatalities.

Since then, the number of these incidents has decreased, especially over the past few decades. This trend coincides with the enactment of several state hunting and trapping regulations meant to bolster safety and sportsmanship in the Maine woods.

"There are a number of safety laws we enforce," Fahey said. "One is the mandatory hunter orange requirement."

The "hunter orange law" requires all hunters using firearms or crossbows during the open firearm season on deer to wear two articles of hunter orange clothing: one being a hat, the other covering a major portion of the torso. A version of this law was first enacted in 1973 in Maine and has been expanded and refined several times since.

Also known as "blaze orange," hunter orange is startlingly bright and seems to glow. If you

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