



BDN reporter Aislinn Sarnacki sits with her dog, Oreo, at an outlook on the Spring Trail on Penobscot Mountain in Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island recently.

Hike

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and a large parking area will be to the right if you need to pay for a park pass or purchase a trail map. Drive on Park Loop Road for 3 miles. Veer right and continue on Park Loop Road for another 4.4 miles, then turn right into the parking area for Jordan Pond.

Navigate the trails and carriage roads around the pond to reach the trails leading up Penobscot Mountain, which lies just west of the pond.

Information: Rising 1,194 feet above sea level on Maine's scenic Mount Desert Island, Penobscot Mountain is one of many beautiful mountains to hike in Acadia National Park. Because some of its neighbors are more popular — for example, Cadillac Mountain and The Bubbles — Penobscot Mountain is often not too crowded.

The 1.5-mile Penobscot Mountain Trail is just one of a few ways to climb to the summit of the mountain. There is also the 2.2-mile Jordan Cliff Trail, a more technical hike that includes iron rungs and narrow steps, as well as the 1.8-mile Asticou Trail, a more gentle climb that connects to Sargent Mountain South Ridge Trail to the north. In addition, there are a few connector trails. It's wise to bring a trail map so not to get confused.

One way to reach the Penobscot Mountain Trail is to start at Jordan Pond House parking area near the south shore of Jordan Pond, then follow Jordan Pond Path along the edge of the southwest tip of the pond, past Jordan Pond House, to a carriage road. Turn right onto the carriage road and hike north to a three-way intersection — No. 14 on the trail map posted in the parking area — where you will turn left, continuing on carriage roads.

The carriage road will soon cross a beautiful stone bridge, and you'll see a carved cedar post marking Jordan Cliffs Trail on your right. Just beyond that is Spring Trail, also marked with a carved cedar post on the right.

Here the Spring Trail acts as a shortcut to Penobscot Mountain Trail, but it's not for everyone. This short section of the Spring Trail, about 0.3 mile, between the carriage road and Penobscot Mountain Trail is very steep and includes a narrow path along a cliff face — made safer by a wooden railing — as well as a climb up a narrow crevice between rocks. This option isn't suitable for most dogs and young children.

If you do choose to turn right onto Spring Trail, after about 0.3 mile of steep climbing, the trail meets Penobscot Mountain Trail about 1 mile from the summit. Turn right onto Penobscot Mountain Trail to hike to the summit. If you turn left, you'll descend the mountain to the carriage roads.

If you decided against the Spring Trail, simply continue on the carriage road and you'll find the Penobscot Mountain Trail to



A group of signs mark the intersection of the Penobscot Mountain Trail and Spring Trail on Penobscot Mountain in Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island recently.

your right after about 0.6 mile of walking. Turn right onto the trail and start the gradual ascent up the mountain through the forest.

The Penobscot Mountain Trail follows the mountain's long southern ridge, known as Jordan Ridge. After its intersection with the Spring Trail, it leaves the forest behind and continues along the ridge for about 1 mile to the summit. Because the ridge is mostly bald, this hike offers amazing views much of the way.

As you climb, you'll see Jordan Pond to your right (east) and the humps of Parkman and Norumbega mountains to your left (west). And if you pause for a moment and look behind you, the view stretches over Long Pond and Seal Harbor to the glittering Atlantic Ocean and the Cranberry Isles.

The summit of the mountain is marked with a wooden sign lodged in a large pile of rocks — there, the Penobscot Mountain Trail intersects with two other hiking trails.

While hiking in Acadia National Park, be sure to understand and follow park regulations, which

are posted on nps.gov/acad/ and at the park's many visitor centers. Dogs are permitted on most park trails if a leash no longer than 6 feet long. As always, pick up after yourself and your pets, including their waste. Leave cairns — rock piles that mark the trail — as you find them, and try your best to "leave no trace."

All park visitors are required to pay an entrance fee upon entry May through October. Park passes are available at several locations on the island, including park visitor centers. For information about the park, call 288-3338.

Personal note: My friend Heather, who lives in Boston, and I decided to go on a hike to check out the fall foliage in Acadia National Park.

The goal was to get to the top of Penobscot Mountain, a peak I had yet to visit in the park, but I wasn't set on which route we would take. After reading a bit about the Jordan Cliffs Trail, we decided against it because we knew it would be too steep for my dog Oreo, regardless of how much of a rock climber he thinks he is. But we did try

the shortcut of the Spring Trail, which also proved to be steep and challenging.

On the Spring Trail, Oreo failed to climb up the steep rock "steps" in a narrow crevice twice on his own, so I gave him a boost. He made it, but it was a bit nerve-racking. I wouldn't suggest it for most dogs.

Once we reached the Penobscot Mountain Trail, the climb was more gradual, and the views opened right up. The terrain was a mix of brilliant colors. The fall foliage of reds, oranges and yellows seemed to only intensify the hues of the rosy granite, pale green lichen and emerald pines.

The sun fought through the clouds as the morning wore on, but the harsh wind kept up. At the summit, where about 25 other hikers were busy snapping photos (it was Saturday, after all), we took obligatory summit sign photos ducked behind a ledge to regroup and escape the wind, then turned around and hiked back down the mountain.



Thousands of carnivorous pitcher plants grow in the moss of the Orono Bog Boardwalk, accessible from trails in the Rolland F. Perry City Forest in Bangor. The boardwalk will close for the season about six weeks earlier than usual for the next phase of its reconstruction.

Orono Bog Boardwalk closing early

BY AISLINN SARNACKI
BDN STAFF

The Orono Bog Boardwalk will close at the end of the day on Friday, Oct. 16, according to a recent press release. This is six weeks sooner than normal, but it is necessary for the completion of the second phase of the boardwalk reconstruction process.

The mile-long boardwalk can be accessed from trails of the Rolland F. Perry City Forest in Bangor. The closest trailhead is at the end of Tripp Drive, which is located off Stillwater Avenue, 1.6 miles north of the junction of Stillwater Avenue and Hogan Road. Access to the boardwalk is free. During October, it is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dogs are not permitted.

Directly after the boardwalk is closed this season, volunteers will start carefully removing 48 deteriorating wooden sections of the boardwalk, plus three wheelchair turnouts. They will then replace them with new sections made of durable

ble composite material.

Over the last two years, volunteers have worked long hours to replace the first 204 sections of the boardwalk, which has been rapidly deteriorating in recent years. The new composite decking with cladded aluminum siding and stainless steel footings is expected to last many years — much longer than the original wooden decking.

A volunteer staff maintains the boardwalk and provides information and education for visitors, including school and community groups. The facility is jointly managed by the Orono Land Trust, the City of Bangor and the University of Maine. Its operation and maintenance are funded entirely through donations and sales of boardwalk merchandise.

For information about the boardwalk, to volunteer for the reconstruction or to make a contribution to the reconstruction, visit umaine.edu/oronobogwalk, email jim.bird@umit.maine.edu, or call 866-2578.

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