

is associated with the corridor."

Some parts of the trail, like the scenic National Seaside State Park section of Route 20 that runs from Lake Umbagog to the Canadian border, are already existing, and are just being put through the state process along the route, such as the struggling mill town of Hingham, Lovell, Waterville, and Skowhegan, which recently opened up 1,000 acres of the region.

"The corridor eliminates differences, not just between states and countries, but between cities like Waterville and Skowhegan."

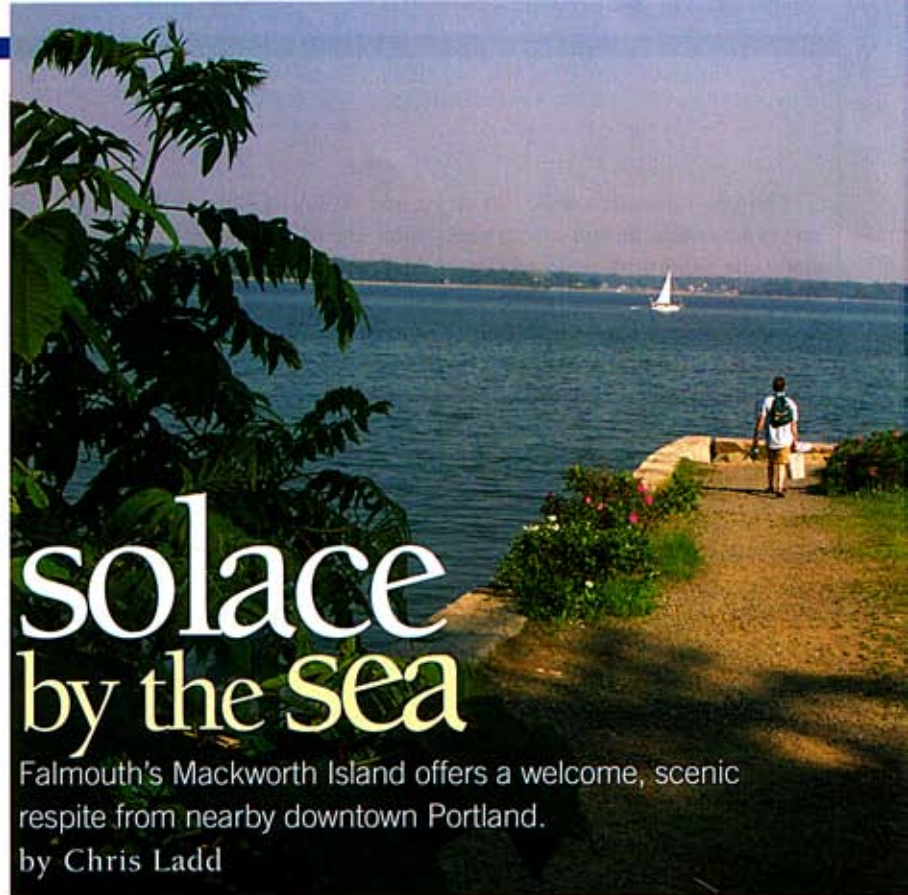
—Andy Paul, president of the Kennebec Chamber of Commerce

state, too. "One of the motivations of the corridor was to create a sense of unity in the state," Adams says. "It was just about history, but heritage—economic, cultural, recreational. If that means that pieces of the corridor aren't green and scenic any longer because people are making a living out of them, that's part of the story."

Using Adams' point of view, it's easy to see the scenic interest—and even beauty—in what some would say are the less scenic spots along the route. Waterville's central downtown makes for an inviting stroll to and out of restaurants and antique shops. In Hingham, tourists don't just see the city's new downtown park. On the opposite bank stands Old Fort Wadsworth, where the oldest wooden military building in America, since 1794, still stands. A handsome 19th-century barn creates a memorable sight along the roadside to road 204/205. The wooden sign on Old Fort Wadsworth, separated into a busy commercial strip in Waterville, stands at the gate of a pleasure park where the Sebasticook River meets the Kennebec. And Waterville's rugged mills, perched less than a mile apart on the bank, still command awe.

In the end, no promoters hope the corridor will be more than a well-paved road. If Adams sees it as a series of scenes, Andy Paul, president of the corridor commission, thinks of it as a long story stitching the French and English cultures together. "The corridor eliminates differences, not just between states and countries, but between cities like Waterville and Skowhegan," says Paul. "Even state city concepts matter for them and us. This is more inclusive—it's all in."

Join the fun! Write to a reader of M&T, Orono, the magazine of the Appalachian Mountain Club.



solace by the sea

Falmouth's Mackworth Island offers a welcome, scenic respite from nearby downtown Portland.

by Chris Ladd

FROM A SUBURBAN FALMOUTH SIDE STREET LINED WITH PICKET FENCES stretches a thin causeway that leads to a small guardhouse with picture windows and a gate like that of a tollbooth. Beyond the gate and behind a modest parking lot sits an island where visitors heave sticks from shore while their dogs play in the cool Atlantic, parents watch children climb up and down the rocky shoreline, and 20-something athletic types jog laps around the hard-packed perimeter trail. This is Mackworth Island.

Mick Rogers, the state park manager responsible for Mackworth's trails, visits two or three times a week to check up on the one-and-a-quarter-mile trail that winds around the 100-acre island, and often pauses on the island's stone pier to catch some of the breeze from Casco Bay. "You can drive out to it, so it's easy to get to," he says. "It's easy access from Portland; a nice place to go, so people can get away from the city." (The island is just 10 minutes from Portland's busy downtown.) "Plus," Rogers adds, "the lot only holds 22 cars, so it's never too crowded."

Thanks to Mackworth's location at the mouth of the Presumpscot River and the edge of Falmouth, postcard-worthy views abound: Portland's nearby Eastern Promenade; the Calendar Islands, which sit just offshore; and 19th-century Fort Gorges on the end of Hog Island Ledge, Spring Point Ledge Light, and Portland Head Light, all seen to the south. Visitors can easily enjoy all these views, thanks to Mackworth's half-dozen benches and the sun-splotted perimeter trail, which meanders along the water's edge.

In addition to the views, the trail also features a variety of interesting stops marked by rough, wooden stakes painted with yellow numbers. The numbers on the stakes—there are 14 of them—match listings in a small trail brochure available at the gatehouse. Some highlight local plant and animal life. Others tell of Mackworth's historical development and reflect on its importance. Number nine, a little more than halfway around the island, sits next to a small side trail that ducks

PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT: CHRIS LADD; JOHN SNYDER



WATCH THE WORLD: The stone pier on Mackworth Island is a great place to sit, toss in a fishing line, and enjoy the view of the Calendar Islands.

and formidable, littered with broken oyster shells that crunch beneath tennis shoes, and covered in tidal silt thirsty enough to swallow a sandal from an unsuspecting foot. Hidden coves with sandy pocket beaches hide around corners, and waves, gentled by the bay, slap the sides of massive rocks carpeted with slippery seaweed and hungry snails.

From the main path, multiple offshoot trails head toward the water, some announced by signs with green block letters and arrows—and some not. Rogers is working to

inland through a bed of pine needles and a high, church-like canopy.

Under a stand of pines, a thick, neat stone wall runs a 50-foot circle around a few trees, a couple of grave-stones, and a bronze marker cemented into a considerable boulder. "The State of Maine by legislative Act Chapter 1 Laws of 1943," the plaque proclaims in shiny, gold letters, "accepted the gift of Mackworth Island and covenanted to maintain forever this burial place of my dogs with the stone wall and the boulder with the bronze marker thereon erected to their memory." The marker is signed, simply, "Percival P. Baxter." This is Governor Baxter's pet cemetery; he gave Mackworth Island to the state in 1946.

"We're incredibly fortunate that Governor Baxter had the foresight to leave the island undeveloped and give it to the state," says Steve Spencer, an outdoor specialist for the Maine Department of Conservation who managed the island before Rogers.

Left least developed of all, perhaps, is the island's shoreline, at once rocky

shore up some of the side trails with stairways (three are new this year) that are carved from stone or made from railroad ties cut in short lengths and staked into place on the steep embankment. The need for the stairways is evident on some of the side trails, a few of which are little more than deep, eroded gashes carved by rubber soles and rainfall.

Rogers plans to install two more stairways before the end of fall, using federal grant money and Maine Conservation Corp workers. "Then we're going to try to cover the side trails up with brush and put signs up for people to use the [new] stairs down to the shore," he says. It's hard to blame people for their haste, trampling directly from the island's marked trail to its incredibly scenic shoreline, but Rogers's work will both preserve and protect the shoreland entrances and make those areas accessible to all—not just to those who are willing to clamber down a rooty chute to the shore.

Chris Ladd is a freelance writer based in Wayne.

trip tips

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

to visit Mackworth Island

WHO SHOULD GO: The main perimeter trail is smooth enough even for wheelchair access, despite a few roots. Couples can easily walk side-by-side on the wide trails, and children can build houses for "fairies" from sticks, bark, and other natural materials at Mackworth Community Village, a play spot near the end of the trail. Dog lovers frequent the island to take advantage of the scenery and the ocean, but should bring a leash.

WHEN TO GO: Early. Mackworth is open year-round, but when the island's 22 parking spaces fill up, cars must either wait for a spot to open, or turn around and go home. In the summer and early fall, plan on arriving before 11 a.m. on weekdays, or before 9 a.m. on the weekend. Or come in late afternoon. The island is open every day from sunrise to sunset.

WHAT TO DO: Ask the guard at the gatehouse for a self-guiding trail brochure on the way in. The 20-page booklet contains a map of the island, information on animal and plant life, historical information, and some trivia. (Did you know that 14 Irish settlers are buried in Baxter's pet cemetery?) It's not uncommon to see amateur fishermen trying their luck from the island's stone pier, or kayaks pulled up onshore. In the winter, the trail is open for great cross-country skiing amid the same jaw-dropping scenery.

HOW TO GET THERE: **From the north:** Follow I-95 south, and continue as it becomes I-295 south. Get off at exit 10 and turn left onto Bucknam Road, then right onto Rte. 1 south. Follow the blue signs for "Baxter State School for the Deaf" (also on the island). Turn left onto Andrews Avenue and continue over the causeway and onto the island. **From the south:** From I-95 north, take exit 6A onto I-295 north. Get off at exit 9 and onto Rte. 1 north. Go over the causeway and take a sharp right onto Andrews Avenue, following blue signs for "Baxter State School for the Deaf." Continue over causeway and onto the island.

WHERE TO EAT/STAY: **Portland's Public Market**, just off Congress Street on Preble Street, is a quick drive from the island and is a great spot to grab a picnic lunch from local vendors. Head south on Rte. 1 and follow signs for the market. The Portland area also hosts many great hotels and B&Bs, including the Portland Regency on Milk Street and The Percy Inn on Pine Street.

WHOM TO CALL: **The Maine Bureau of Public Lands** has information about the island, as well as copies of the trail brochure. (207-287-3061)



WELCOME TO MACKWORTH ISLAND
COMMUNITY VILLAGE

YOU MAY BUILD HOUSES SMALL AND HIDDEN FOR THE FAIRIES,
BUT PLEASE DO NOT USE LIVING OR ARTIFICIAL MATERIALS.

THE BEST MATERIALS ARE FOUND IN THE LANDSCAPE
OF THE VILLAGE ITSELF, BUT IF YOU CHOSE TO BRING
IN NATURAL MATERIALS, PLEASE RETURN WITH THOSE
THAT YOU DIDN'T USE.

THANK YOU FOR TREATING THE ISLAND WITH CARE AND
RESPECT. THIS HELPS KEEP THE FAIRIES COMING BACK!