Maine

PROFILE:
POPULATION: 1,329,222
MEDIAN INCOME: $46,405
MEDIAN HOME VALUE: $178,600
% W/ BACHELOR’S DEGREE: 17.1%
WALK SCORE:
  Portland: 65/100
  Lewiston: 52/100
  Augusta 78/100
  Biddeford: 46/100

KEY FACTS:
Estimated economic impact of bicycle tourism in Maine is $66.8 million per year, including 1,200 jobs.
— Bicycle Tourism in Maine, “Economic Impact & Marketing Recommendations”

LINKS:
State
  Go Maine Commuter Connections
  Healthy Maine Walks
  Maine DOT Biking & Walking
  Bicycle Coalition of Maine

Regional
  Community Bicycle Center
  Portland Trails
  Portland Green Streets
  Franklin Reclamation Authority
  Down East Sunrise Trail
  Eastern Trail Alliance

Small Towns, Vibrant Economies

Bicycling is good for business in Maine. It is estimated that 2 million people come to Maine each year to enjoy the unique scenery in this largely unspoiled environment. These cyclists annually spend more than $60 million on food, lodging, services and bike supplies while enjoying 1 of the 33 renowned Loop Bike Tours.

As a child, Bill Robinson used to ride his bike out to watch trains rumble slowly by on Maine Central Railroad’s Calais Branch line. Today, Robinson has a new way of greeting traffic through his land: he’s built a cozy, watertight wooden shelter, picnic tables and two campsites next to the former rail line, which was recently reborn as the 85-mile Down East Sunrise Trail. Robinson has already seen a small — but welcome — bump in business from the trail, which opened in September 2010. Robinson and other business owners hope the Sunrise Trail will light up the local economy, which has been lagging for years. "There’s no big industry here," he points out. "A lot of people are self-employed. If visitors come for the trail and buy fishing licenses, groceries, fuel; stay at local motels and cabins; eat seafood; and so forth, it has very good potential to support an economically depressed area. It will benefit everyone.” source

The Down East Sunrise Trail demonstrates how a multi-use rail-trail can provide community recreational and economic benefits. The trail is heavily used by ATV riders, and recreational riders including bicyclists. Many businesses near trail access points report increased business after the opening of the trail. The great benefit is the year-round use of the trail ensuring a steady stream of customers for the businesses.
REPORTS:
Maine DOT Bike/Ped Success Report 2011
Maine DOT Bike/Ped Success Report 2010
Maine DOT Trail Report 2010
Down East Sunrise Trail Getting Heavy Use, News Article 2009
Community Bicycle Center 2011 Annual Report

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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A group of committed volunteers were eager to create more opportunities for walking and biking in the communities along the Androscoggin River. But local town staff were not equipped to lead the project, and there wasn’t enough local money to purchase the land needed for their planned trail network. So, they adopted a new strategy — partnering with a land trust.

The Androscoggin Land Trust works with land owners and communities to provide public access to lands. In some cases, the land remains in the ownership of the private party but is made available for walking, biking and other activities. Typically, public access is secured through an easement on the land. The Land Trust also manages publicly owned lands and leases land, all to provide a benefit to citizens. These strategies have allowed the Androscoggin Land Trust to make more than 8,000 acres of land available to the residents and visitors to the communities they serve along the Androscoggin River.

“For these small villages along the Androscoggin, creating access to natural places to be active is good for the environment, good for the economy and good for the health of those here. It’s a real win-win-win.” — Jonathan LaBonte, Executive Director of the Androscoggin Land Trust

“In Winterport when I was growing up, we rode our bikes around as kids, but you rarely saw adults riding. Now, biking has grown so much in popularity. And there is a huge overlap between cyclists and our farmers market customers!” — Nate Drummond, Six River Farm