THE HEARTBEAT OF MAINE'S GREAT OUTDOORS

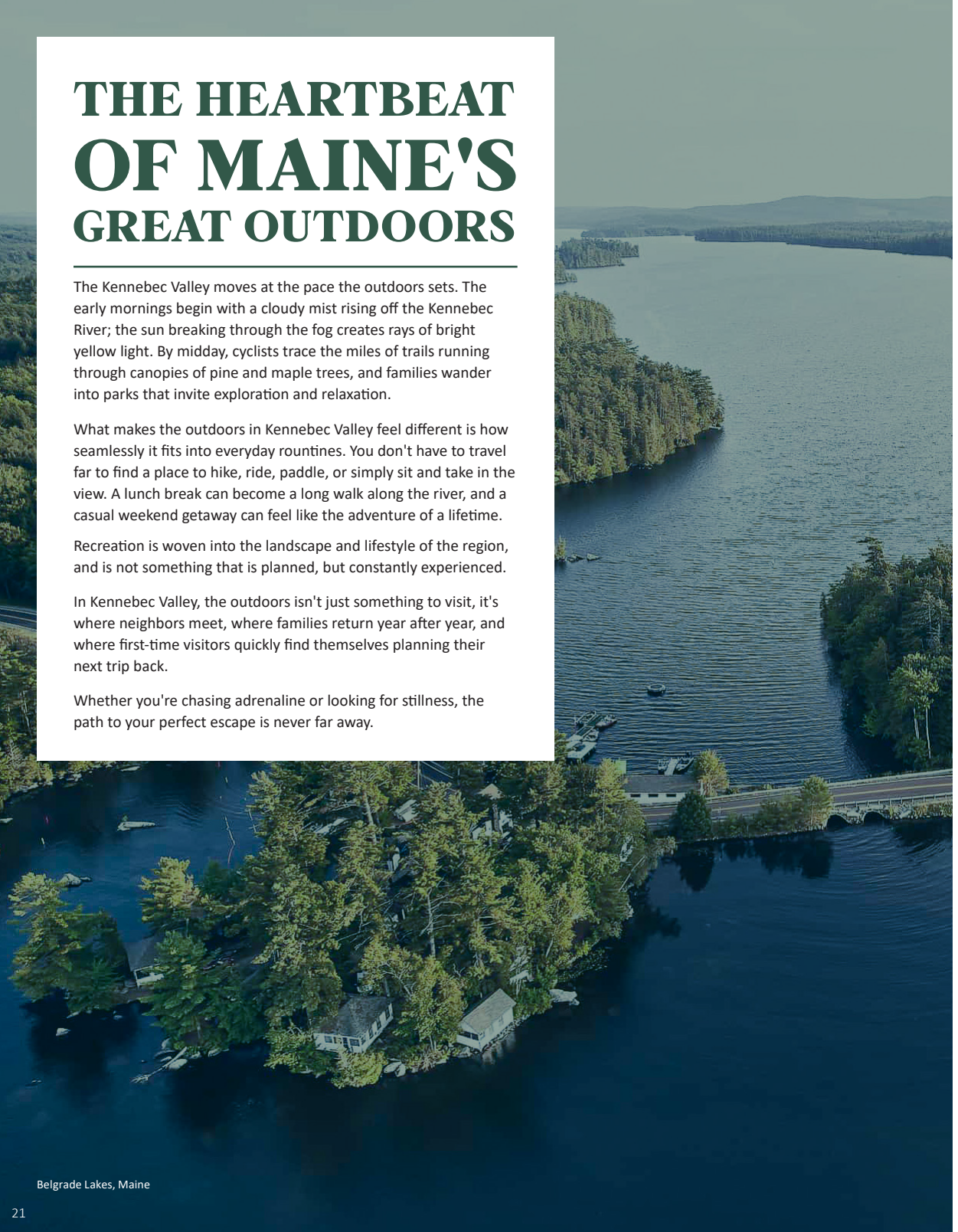
The Kennebec Valley moves at the pace the outdoors sets. The early mornings begin with a cloudy mist rising off the Kennebec River; the sun breaking through the fog creates rays of bright yellow light. By midday, cyclists trace the miles of trails running through canopies of pine and maple trees, and families wander into parks that invite exploration and relaxation.

What makes the outdoors in Kennebec Valley feel different is how seamlessly it fits into everyday rountines. You don't have to travel far to find a place to hike, ride, paddle, or simply sit and take in the view. A lunch break can become a long walk along the river, and a casual weekend getaway can feel like the adventure of a lifetime.

Recreation is woven into the landscape and lifestyle of the region, and is not something that is planned, but constantly experienced.

In Kennebec Valley, the outdoors isn't just something to visit, it's where neighbors meet, where families return year after year, and where first-time visitors quickly find themselves planning their next trip back.

Whether you're chasing adrenaline or looking for stillness, the path to your perfect escape is never far away.



Belgrade Lakes, Maine

LIFE ON THE WATER

In Kennebec Valley, the rivers and surrounding lakes define the outdoor experience. The river invites thrill seekers looking for energetic speedboat rides, and the lakes welcome paddlers looking for a slower way to explore the region. Life on the water takes shape in small moments along the shoreline and in days where plans are led by the current.

Learn more on page 23.

AMONG THE TREES

Wooded trails that feel otherworldly and conserved parks and forests create the ideal environment to step away and connect with the natural landscape. The terrain shifts with the seasons, offering new reasons to explore with each visit. Among the trees, a short stretch for fresh air can be just as rewarding as a full day spent following trails deep into the woods.

Learn more on page 25.

WAYS TO UNWIND

Enjoying the region's vast outdoors doesn't always need to be high-energy, and sometimes the best days involve settling in and being present with your surroundings. In those quieter moments, your connection to the region can feel the strongest. Early tee times and evenings camping under the stars offer ways to unwind for those who like to take aventures at a slower pace.

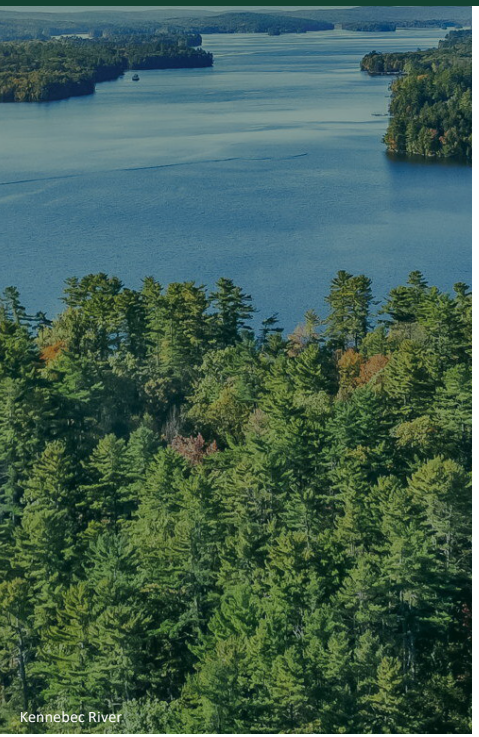
Learn more on page 27.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Find important information regarding State Parks and resources on fishing licenses, fishing season dates, and species regulations below.

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
(207) 287-8000
maine.gov/ifw

Bureau of Parks and Lands & Reservations
(207) 287-3821
campwithme.com


Kennebec River

WINDING RIVERS AND ENDLESS LAKES

BOATING, KAYAKING & CANOEING

With more than 30 lakes and winding rivers, the lower Kennebec Valley is built for spending time on the water. From fast currents to open lakes, there's space to paddle, boat, or drift for hours.

Set out on the river from **boat launches** in **Augusta, Hallowell, Gardiner,** and **Richmond**. Go early morning kayaking on **Lovejoy Pond**, or enjoy the calm waters at smaller destinations like **Woodbury Pond.**

FISHING

With clear waters that are home to prized catches like largemouth bass, brown trout, splake, and landlocked salmon, the experience is as much about what's on the line as it is about the setting.

Catch a largemouth bass at **Great Pond**, a top-rated bass fishing lake in Belgrade; find landlocked salmon at **Echo Lake** in Mount Vernon; or discover colorful rainbow trout at **Long Pond** in Belgrade.

SWIMMING

Warm summer days call for clear waters, sandy beaches and going for a swim as a refreshing break from the heat. It's a familiar part of the season here, with lakeside gatherings with friends and cool dips on hot summer afternoons.

Find locals at popular destinations including the **Damariscotta Lake State Park**, known for its sandy beach and easy access; the **Belgrade Lakes**, a classic summer experience; or **Norcross Point Park** and other public beaches across the region.

Ladie's Delight Lighthouse, Manchester

Echo Lake, Fayette

ICE SKATING

As winter settles over the region, lakes and ponds transform and familiar summer scenes give way to frozen, icy landscapes. Gliding across the ice, figure skaters, pond hockey teams, and wind skaters bring new life to the water.

Frozen stretches of **Cobboseecontee Lake** are known for pick-up games and open skating, while quieter spots like **Togus Pond** offer a more relaxed setting to lace up and skate.

ICE FISHING

When winter locks the region's waters in place, anglers head out onto the ice, setting up shacks and drilling holes in search of cold-weather catches.

Upper Narrows Pond in Winthrop boasts a large population of landlocked salmon, **Jamies Pond** in Manchester has fast action and early season trout fishing, and **McGrath Pond** in Belgrade is known for its easy, close to shore ice fishing.

SMELTING

Smelt fishing is a quintessential Maine winter experience, with anglers gathering in small ice shacks and wooden camps to fish for the small, silvery fish by lantern light late at night.

Once the **Kennebec River** freezes over you'll find smelting camps lining the riverbanks of **Dresden, Gardiner, Pittston,** and **Randolph**, drawing anglers looking to experience one of Maine's most recognizable cold-weather pastimes.

WATER ACTIVITIES FOR EVERY SEASON

Smelt Fishing Camps, Kennebec River

DID YOU KNOW?

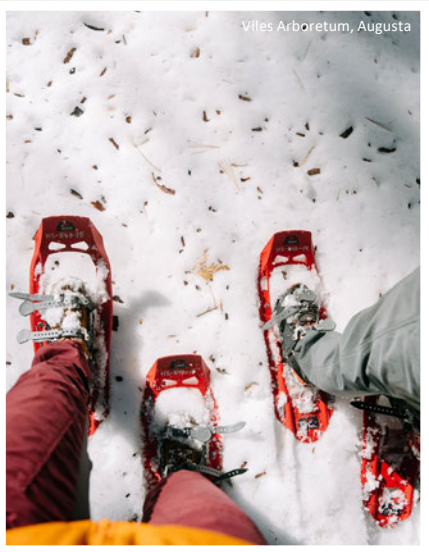
Rivers, lakes, and ponds cover about **64.9 square miles** of the lower Kennebec Valley, accounting for **roughly 9%** of the region's total area!

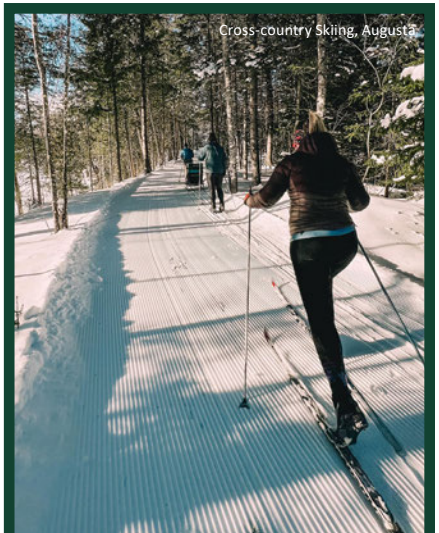
U.S. Census Bureau. 2024 Gazatteer Files.

ADVENTURES AMONG THE PINE TREES

Kennebec County, Maine

© Alex Noguera


Viles Arboretum, Augusta


Cross-country Skiing, Augusta

SNOWSHOEING

After the leaves fall from the trees, fresh snow blankets the forest, transforming the trails and forest paths into new terrain to be explored.

Dating back thousands of years as a mode of travel to make hunting in the deep winter snow easier, snowshoeing is now a popular winter activity for people of all ages to explore Kennebec Valley's winter wonderlands.

Popular locations in the region for snowshoeing include **Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead** in Hallowell and **Viles Arboretum** in Augusta.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Groomed trails and quiet backcountry routes welcome cross-country skiers to enjoy the region's hillside trails and wooded paths at a quicker pace.

The region's parks and trail systems are equipped for both short and long loops that lead deep into the wilderness.

Popular areas for cross-country skiing include **Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area** and **Readfield Town Forest**.

WALKING & HIKING

Getting outside on foot is one of the simplest ways to experience the Kennebec Valley. Our trails support everything from easy walks to pass the time to challenging all-day hikes.

Swan Island has trails ideal for a relaxing walk, and the **Mount Pisgah Conservation Area** features longer, more challenging trails.

HUNTING

Our region's forests support hunting everything from large game like moose and deer to smaller game like grouse and rabbits.

For information on hunting licenses and seasons, visit **maine.gov/ifw/hunting-trapping**.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Experience the outdoors on a whole new level with mountain biking trails that will take you through steep inclines and exciting descents.

Popular spots include the **Hallowell Reservoir** in Hallowell and the **Bond Brook Trails** in Augusta, both featuring well-maintained terrains.

POPULAR PARKS & TRAILS

Bond Brook Recreation Area
Tall Pines Way, Augusta
augustatrails.org

Damariscotta Lake State Park
8 State Park Road, Jefferson
(207) 549-7600

Gardiner Landing
33 Maine Avenue, Gardiner
(207) 582-4200

Granite City Park
94 Water Street, Hallowell
(207) 623-4021

Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area
Jamies Pond Road, Farmingdale
(207) 623-4021 | (207) 623-1894

Kennebec River Rail Trail
krrt.org

Mount Pisgah Conservation Area Trails
Mount Pisgah Road, Winthrop
tklt.org/pisgah

Swan Island
7 Swan Island Landing, Richmond
(207) 287-5322

University of Maine at Augusta Outdoor Fitness Trails
46 University Drive, Augusta
uma.edu/trails

Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead
2 Litchfield Road, Hallowell
vaughanhomestead.org

Viles Arboretum
153 Hospital Street, Augusta
vilesarboretum.org

RELAX & UNWIND

GOLFING

The Kennebec Valley is home to multiple 9-hole and 18-hole golf courses, each with its own unique layout, terrain, and clubhouse communities. Traditional country club settings boast on-site dining and fairways that stretch the countryside, and public courses offer multiple 18-hole layouts and spectular panoramic views of the region.

Augusta Country Club
19 Hammonds Grove, Manchester
augustacountryclub.org

Natanis Golf Course
735 Webber Pond Road, Vassalboro
natanisgc.com

The Meadows Golf Club & Doolin's Pub
495 Huntington Hill Road, Litchfield
themeadowsgolfclub.com

Western View Golf, Pub & Events
130 Bolton Road Hill Road, Augusta
westernviewgolfandpub.com

Jellystone Park Androscoggin Lake

Augusta Country Club, Manchester

CAMPING

Camping in Kennebec Valley centers around time outdoors and the simple, fun moments that come with it. Days can be spent swimming, exploring nearby trails, and relaxing lakeside.

After a long day, kick back and relax by the campfire with s'mores while sharing stories and playing board games. Fall asleep to the sounds of the wild and a crisp breeze in the air.

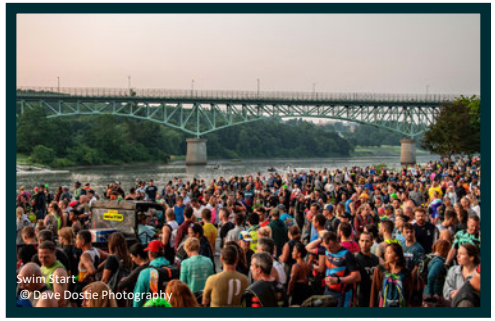
Popular campgrounds include the **Augusta West Kampground & RV Sales** in Winthrop and **Jellystone Park Androscoggin Lake** in North Monmouth.

Western View Golf, Pub & Events, Augusta

IRONMAN 70.3 MAINE

Since 2022, Augusta has served as the host city for IRONMAN 70.3 Maine, welcoming approximately 5,500 athletes and visitors each year for one of the region's most recognizable events. Leading up to the race, the presence of athletes and spectators is felt as the spirit of the region comes to life.

Starting days before the race, local businesses are busy helping new and returning faces on the lookout for products, services, and artisan goods that are unique to Kennebec Valley. The community celebrates the arrival of athletes and visitors the Friday before race day with a big welcome party on the riverfront in downtown Augusta including a fireworks show over the Kennebec River.


Swim Start
© Dave Dostie Photography

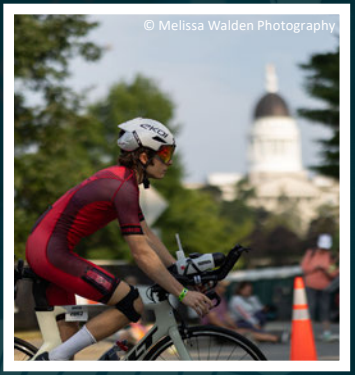
On race day, the city comes to life as the streets are lined with crowds of spectators, family, and supporters cheering loudly for the thousands of participants taking on this challenge. Starting early in the morning, athletes can be spotted kicking downstream in the river, biking through rural communities, and running through crowds of people holding signs and cheering them on.

IRONMAN 70.3 Maine continues to grow Kennebec Valley's visibility as a premiere destination for outdoor recreation, generating a sustainable tourism impact that benefits the local economy and community.

IRONMAN 70.3 IS BACK JULY 24-26, 2026!
Scan the QR code to learn more!

IRONMAN 70.3 MAINE AUGUSTA

© Dave Dostie Photography


© Melissa Walden Photography

© Lauren Turcotte Seavey

THE COURSE

This world-class triathlon challenges competitors with a 1.2-mile swim in the Kennebec River, a 56-mile bike ride through the scenic hills of the region, and a 13.1-mile run along the picturesque Kennebec River Rail Trail.