

Maine Story Ideas and News for 2023

OUTDOOR CAPITAL OF THE EAST

New visitor center at [Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument](#) will tell the story of the region through the eyes of Native Americans. The center is now under construction and slated to open spring of 2024 is named “Tekəqəpimk” from the Penobscot Indian language meaning “as far as one can see.”

[DoryWoman Rowing](#), is offering special themed rows. These unique experiences include a sunset oyster row, a yoga row and more. Trips are led by an experienced Maine Guide and use a traditional-style wooden dory in Belfast Bay.

Bucksaw Express is the name of the new high-speed quad that will service Sugarloaf’s planned [West Mountain expansion](#). Sugarloaf began construction on the 450-acre expansion in mid-January, and it is expected to open to skiers in February 2024. The quad will span 6,574 feet with a vertical rise of 1,433 feet. The lift will move 2,400 skiers per hour up West Mountain with a ride time of seven minutes. The project will include a dozen new alpine trails covering roughly 120 acres, increasing Sugarloaf’s total skiable acreage by nearly 10 percent.

The Skowhegan River Park (also known as [Run of River](#)) will redevelop an industrial downtown river corridor into an accessible outdoor recreation asset with an expanded trail network and enhanced whitewater activities. The river park will not only benefit community members through improved river access and free recreation opportunities, but it will also bolster the regional economy by attracting visitors, businesses, and new residents.

[Saddleback](#) in Rangeley unveiled lift-serviced mountain biking. The Bike Park also includes the South Branch Bike trails. The Saddleback Bike Shop offers a full fleet of rentals, bike accessories, service and repairs. Saddleback joins [Mt. Abram](#) for lift-serviced biking. Saddleback is also in the midst of building its new Mid Mountain Lodge, which is planned to be finished in 2023. The lodge is located in Bicknell’s thrush habitat and the resort is working with the Maine Audubon Society to protect the birds’ habitat.

[Popham Beach State Park](#) unveiled new accessibility upgrades last August. The park now has a 350-foot, blue mobility pathway made of recycled plastic and polyester that runs down the beach. It provides easier access to the beach for those with limited mobility as well as wheelchair users and people with baby strollers and wheeled coolers.

[Old Orchard Beach](#) is offering free beach wheelchairs on a first-come, first-serve basis. The ten specialized wheelchairs are available to check out at beachside hotels and the Old Orchard Beach Recreation Office.

The [Nature Conservancy](#) has acquired approximately 13,500 acres of forested land north of Tunk Mountain in Hancock County. The land, which will continue to be open for birding, hunting and fishing, abuts an existing preserve to the north of Tunk Mountain and the northwest corner of the state’s Donnell Pond Public Land. The acquisition will expand The Nature Conservancy’s 9,700-acre Spring River Preserve, increasing the size to about 23,500 acres.

Maine's Dark Skies

A National Monument, A Dark Sky Sanctuary

The [Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument](#) is known for its hiking, paddling and all-around epic outdoor recreation. And now, [The International Dark-Sky Association](#), the world's recognized authority on combatting light pollution, has designated the monument as an [International Dark Sky Sanctuary](#). Only 13 exist throughout the entire world. And in the United States, there's only one east of the Mississippi. This region of Maine will also be in the path of totality during the [2024 solar eclipse](#).

CULTURAL NEWS

The new [Downeast Maine National Heritage Area](#) is the first such area in the state, a designation which means that the region is now considered a nationally significant landscape. It designates all of Hancock and Washington counties as an area with national importance, qualifying the counties for additional federal investment and helping to drive economic activity to the rural Maine region. The U.S. Congressional bill specifically recognizes the contributions of Downeast Maine's agriculture industry – including wild blueberry growers – as well as the impacts of heritage fishing and forestry.

Renowned boatbuilder, Lyman-Morse unveiled a 44,000 square-foot mixed-use marina redevelopment project on Camden's inner harbor. This new modern working waterfront has been entirely rebuilt to offer beautiful new spaces for residents and visitors. [Lyman-Morse Camden](#) is a year-round destination to dine, shop, sightsee, work, and more. In addition to yacht services, marina amenities include [Salt Wharf](#) restaurant, [Barren's Restaurant & Distillery](#) featuring locally distilled spirits along with casual cuisine in both an outdoor courtyard and an indoor restaurant/tasting room, and the [Crew Quarters at Lyman-Morse](#), boutique ocean-view accommodations.

[Creative Portland](#) has launched a new cultural app to increase access to the arts through a user-friendly mobile application. Free to download, the app promotes the cultural life of Portland and some artistic highlights throughout the state. The app will also give users access to Augmented Reality (AR) experiences through their phones.

The [Wyeth Foundation for American Art](#) has announced that 7,000 works by Andrew Wyeth will be made accessible for exhibition, scholarship and loans through a partnership between the Brandywine River Museum of Art in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania and the [Farnsworth Art Museum](#) in Rockland, Maine. The foundation was established in 2002 and only 15 percent of these artworks have been previously exhibited. In 2023, the Farnsworth Art Museum will celebrate their 75th anniversary.

[The Oceanarium](#) in Bar Harbor has reopened after a five-year hiatus with upgraded exhibits and a refurbished interior. The three buildings include a visitor's center and gift shop, a former lobster hatchery hosting marine-related exhibits and an Aquaria building with indoor tanks of live sea creatures from the Gulf of Maine.

GASTRONOMY HIGHLIGHTS

[Nezinscot Farm](#) in Turner was named the Northeast Regional winner of the "American Classics" category by the James Beard Foundation. Known as the state's first organic dairy farm, Nezinscot Farm is family run and includes the farm, cafe, bakery, fromagerie, and charcuterie business.

Manhattan chefs Colin Wyatt and Daniel Gorlas have teamed up with Portland Prentice Hospitality Group for the newly opened restaurant, [Twelve](#), located on the Portland waterfront in the old Portland Company industrial complex, which is going through a massive renovation as [Portland Foreside](#) – Portland's newest neighborhood. Twelve and another Portland restaurant, [Leeward](#), were name to New York Time's [Restaurant List for 2022](#).

In Portland's Old Port, [The Henry](#) will be a traditional American public house and tavern that aims to continue the legacy of the historic building that formerly housed Bull Feeney's. It is the latest venture of the [Miranda Group](#) which has a diverse portfolio of successful establishments in Portland.

[Hey Sailor!](#) is a new elevated gastropub in Searsport, in the MidCoast region. It is a restaurant, local art gallery and bar with a menu featuring vibrant and creative selections.

In Biddeford, a Czech-style brewery and tank pub called [Sacred Profane](#) has just opened on Washington Street. Specializing in using traditional Czech methods and equipment to brew its lagers, the restaurant serves fare like curry wieners, pork schnitzel, and poutine. Also in Biddeford, the new [Fish and Whistle](#) serves up Maine-caught seafood in a casual neighborhood café.

[Rococo Ice Cream](#) in Kennebunk, known for its ice cream flavors with local and international flair, is upgrading to a new location that will include a scoop shop and dessert bar at the Shipyard Shops center in the Lower Village of Kennebunk. The new location will include expanded offerings, with a dessert bar featuring ice cream cocktails and gourmet treats.

NEW LODGING

[AWOL](#) is a new group of luxury cabins in a wooded landscape in picturesque Kennebunkport, just a short walk to the harbor and downtown. AWOL features rooms and suites in the main building and a range of cabin accommodations.

[The Longfellow Hotel](#) is opening in summer 2023 and will be a five-story, ground-up building located in Portland's historic West End neighborhood. The lobby has a communal lounge with casual seating and an intimate bar, handcrafted by local millworkers. The property has 48 rooms and several have French balconies or bay windows.

[The Wanderer](#), a newly restored and reimagined 17-cottage compound, opened in Kennebunk. Featuring a lounge pool, complimentary breakfast "treat bags" and classic cruiser bikes for guests to use, it's also located near some of Maine's best beaches. The property is owned by Atlantic Hospitality, which also transformed The Claremont in Southwest Harbor and Salt Cottages in Bar Harbor.

[Fortland](#) is a new island glamping experience off the coast of Portland. Located within the Civil War Fort Scammel on House Island in Casco Bay, there are three yurts and four canvas-walled tents available, outfitted with cozy beds, cooking supplies and elegant furniture.

[York Beach Surf Club](#) was opened in York by the descendants of 1960s local surfing legend Sonny Perkins. The former motel has been reimagined as a world-class resort experience, while paying homage to the original 1960s surf club that Perkins began there. Overlooking Long Sand Beach, the resort has 42 guest rooms and 10 bungalows, heated saltwater pool with a pool bar, coffee shop, coastal-inspired eatery, and raw oyster and cocktail bar.

[Bluebird Ocean Point Inn](#) is a newly renovated and redesigned coastal Maine summer getaway in the idyllic town of Boothbay Harbor. The eighth hotel to join the growing portfolio of [Bluebird by Lark](#) properties and the first Bluebird by Lark property in Maine, the inn offers cottages, rooms and suites suitable for families and couples alike. The inn's 61 rooms reflect a modern take on New England cottage design, while the onsite dining offers sweeping views and locally sourced seafood.

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