



2025

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Down East
Sunrise Trail**
Maine



Down East Sunrise Trail

Maine

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The 87.8-mile Down East Sunrise Trail passes through the woods, marshlands, and coastal villages of southern Maine. It takes its name from its location in Down East Maine, dubbed by early mariners for being “downwind” from more western ports such as Boston. Also, it’s one of the first trails to experience sunrise in the United States. ATV riders are the most frequent trail users and maintain the crushed stone and gravel trail surface.

About the Route

The Down East Sunrise Trail leaves off from its northern endpoint at Ayers Junction Road near Pembroke. The trail’s northernmost leg heads mostly southwest through

forestland for 29 miles toward the coastal village of Machias, the site of the first naval battle of the American Revolution. Along the way, trail users can visit the East Machias Aquatic Research Center at 13 Willow Street, where trail users can find native fish from local rivers and hatchery tanks filled with Atlantic salmon. Food and lodging are available in the village on the Machias River.

Leaving Machias, the trail crosses many bridges over coastal rivers as it heads west. In 3.5 miles, the trail crosses the Machias River on a trestle, one of 28 bridges on the trail. The next 12 miles cross a remote landscape from Whitneyville to Columbia Falls, which offers drive-ins and cafés. After Harrington, the trail runs alongside US 1 on the way into Cherryfield, which calls itself the Wild Blueberry Capital of the World. Sandy soil and fog contribute to bountiful blueberry crops.

Crossing the Narraguagus River on the way out of Cherryfield, the trail begins another lonely section for 15 miles to the 150-acre Schoodic Bog at the foot of scenic Schoodic Mountain. Trail users will find insect-eating plants and turtles here, as well as beavers. Nearby, North End Road leads to a public beach and camping at the Donnell Pond Public Reserved Land. Refreshments are available about 5 miles past Schoodic Bog in Franklin. Watch for deer and other wildlife on the final 12 miles to Ellsworth, where restaurants and groceries are available. The rail yard for the Downeast Scenic Railroad excursion train is about 0.3 miles north of the trailhead.

Connections

In Ellsworth, trail users can continue on the nearby [Ellsworth Rail Trail](#).

The Down East Sunrise Trail is part of the developing East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile route between Florida and Maine.



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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Down East Sunrise Trail

Maine

States: Maine

Counties: Hancock, Washington

Length: 87.8 miles

Trail end points: Ayers Junction Rd.
(Pembroke) to 395 State St. (Ellsworth)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone, Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: ATV, Horseback

Riding, Mountain

Biking, Snowmobiling, Walking, Cross Country

Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

The Down East Sunrise Trail runs between Ayers Junction Rd. (Pembroke) and 395 State St. (Ellsworth), where parking is available.

Parking is also available at:

- 2 Kilton Ln. (Machias)

Please see [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



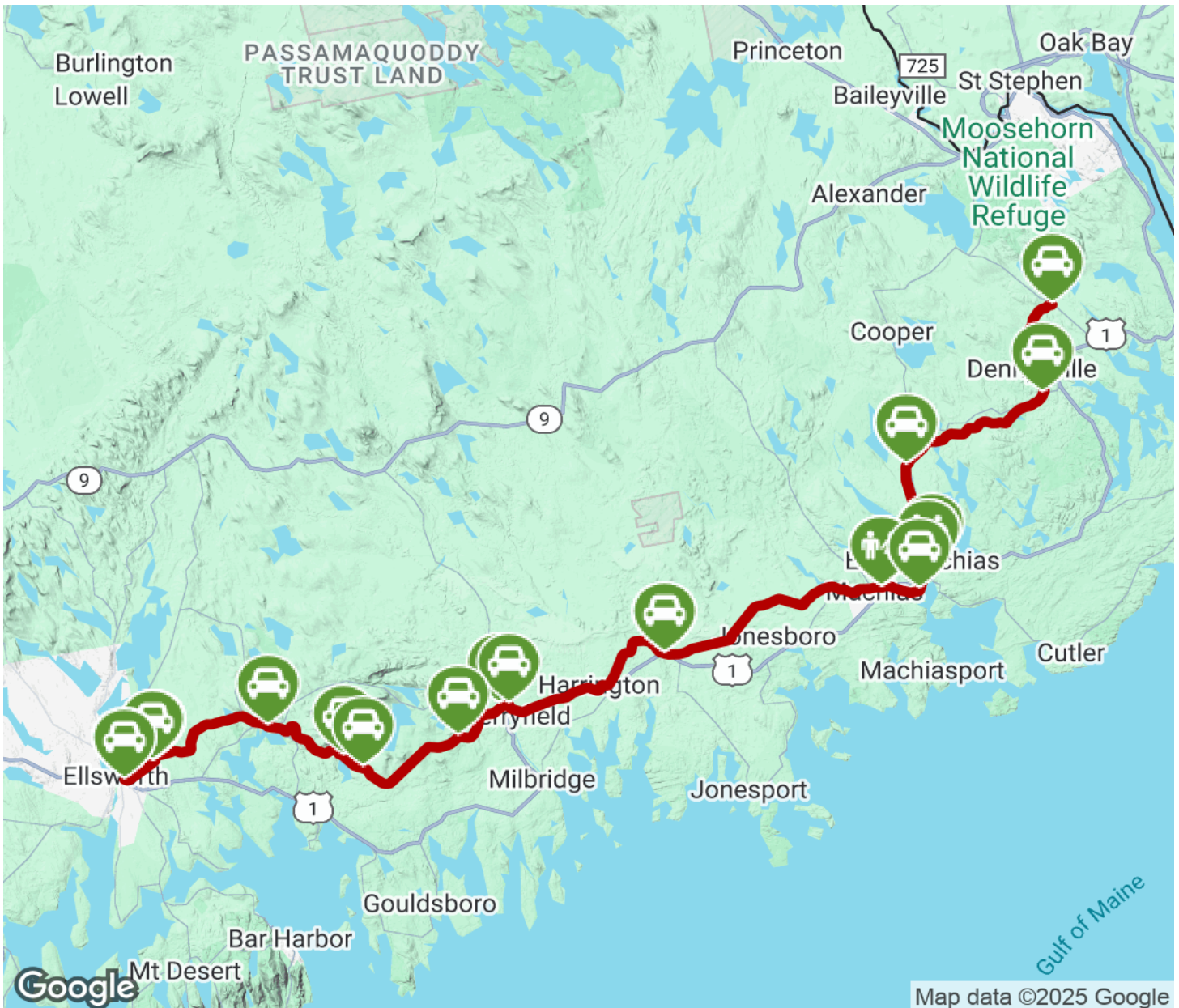
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Down East Sunrise Trail

Maine



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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