

# Bicycles WelcoME

How To Attract People on Bikes to Your Business!



Bicycles WelcoME training generously sponsored by





# About BikeMaine



**BikeMaine promotes bicycling through a week-long tour celebrating Maine people, places, culture and food.**

- Route approximately 350 miles
- Different route each year
- Ridership currently capped at 400
- Event gives back to the local communities that host BikeMaine







## Host Communities:

Sept. 9: Skowhegan

Sept. 10: Pittsfield

Sept. 11: Kingfield

Sept. 12&13: Rangeley

Sept. 14: Hartford

Sept. 15: Farmington





# Maine Tourism

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# Maine's Tourism Market in 2016

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- **35.8 million** tourists
- **\$5.99 billion** in total direct tourism expenditures

*Maine Office of Tourism, 2016*





# Overnight Tourism in Maine in 2016

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- **19 million** overnight tourists
- Contributed **\$4.5 billion** to Maine's economy
- Supported 106,000 jobs

*Maine Office of Tourism, 2016*





# How to Grow Tourism \$\$\$

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- Convert number of daytime visitors to overnight visitors
- Attract new groups of visitors by highlighting new activities





# Bicycling is a Growth Market





# Most Popular Outdoor Activities by Participation Rate, Ages 25+

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1. Running, Jogging and Trail Running: 14.9%
2. Fishing (Fresh, Salt and Fly): 14.6%
3. Hiking: 12.5%
4. **Bicycling (Road, Mountain and BMX)**  
**12.3% of American adults, 26.1 million participants**
5. Camping (Car, Backyard, Backpacking and RV): 11.8%

*Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report*





# **Favorite Adult Activity Based on Frequency of Participation**

1. Running, Jogging and Trail Running  
87.1 average outings per runner
2. **Bicycling (Road, Mountain and BMX)**  
**54.2 average outings per cyclist, 1.4 billion total outings**
3. Fishing
4. Birdwatching
5. Wildlife Viewing





# How Popular is Bicycling in the US?

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More people participate in bicycling than:

- Golf
- Skiing
- Tennis

***. . . Combined***





# Bicycle Industry – New England



New England is home to nearly 2.5 million bicyclists

Bicycling in New England:

- Supports more than 40,000 jobs
- Generates more than \$555 million in taxes
- Produces nearly \$3.1 billion annually in retail sales and services, with \$2.8 billion from bike trip-related expenditures



# Bicycle Tourism in Maine is Increasing!



Coming in  
2018:  
Bold Coast  
Scenic Bikeway







# Bicycle Tourism





# What is Bicycle Tourism?

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Bicycle tourism is a recreational visit, either an overnight or day visit away from home, which involves leisure cycling as a fundamental and significant part of the visit.

Sustrans, *Cycle Tourism*, August 1999





# Who Are Bicycle Tourists?

Just about anyone riding a bike for recreation, whether from 500 -- or 15 -- miles away.





**Q: Why would you want bicycle tourists as customers?**





# A: ***Bicycles Mean Business!***

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# Bicycles Mean Business!

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- Bike travelers spend 20% more per day than average tourist
- Stay longer in an area

Bicycle tourism contributes **\$71 billion** annually to American economy

*Outdoor Recreation Economy Report, 2012*





# Bicycles Mean Business!



Total Economic Impact of BikeMaine to  
Bold Coast region for a week in  
September 2016:

**\$626,000**





# Bicycles Mean Business!



Bicycle tourism in Maine generated \$66 million in 2000, the most recent date that the Maine Office of Tourism undertook a study.

Source: Advocacy Advance, *Bicycles Mean Business*, p. 6





# Bicycle Tourists in Maine

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MOT Study 2014:

**2.3 million**





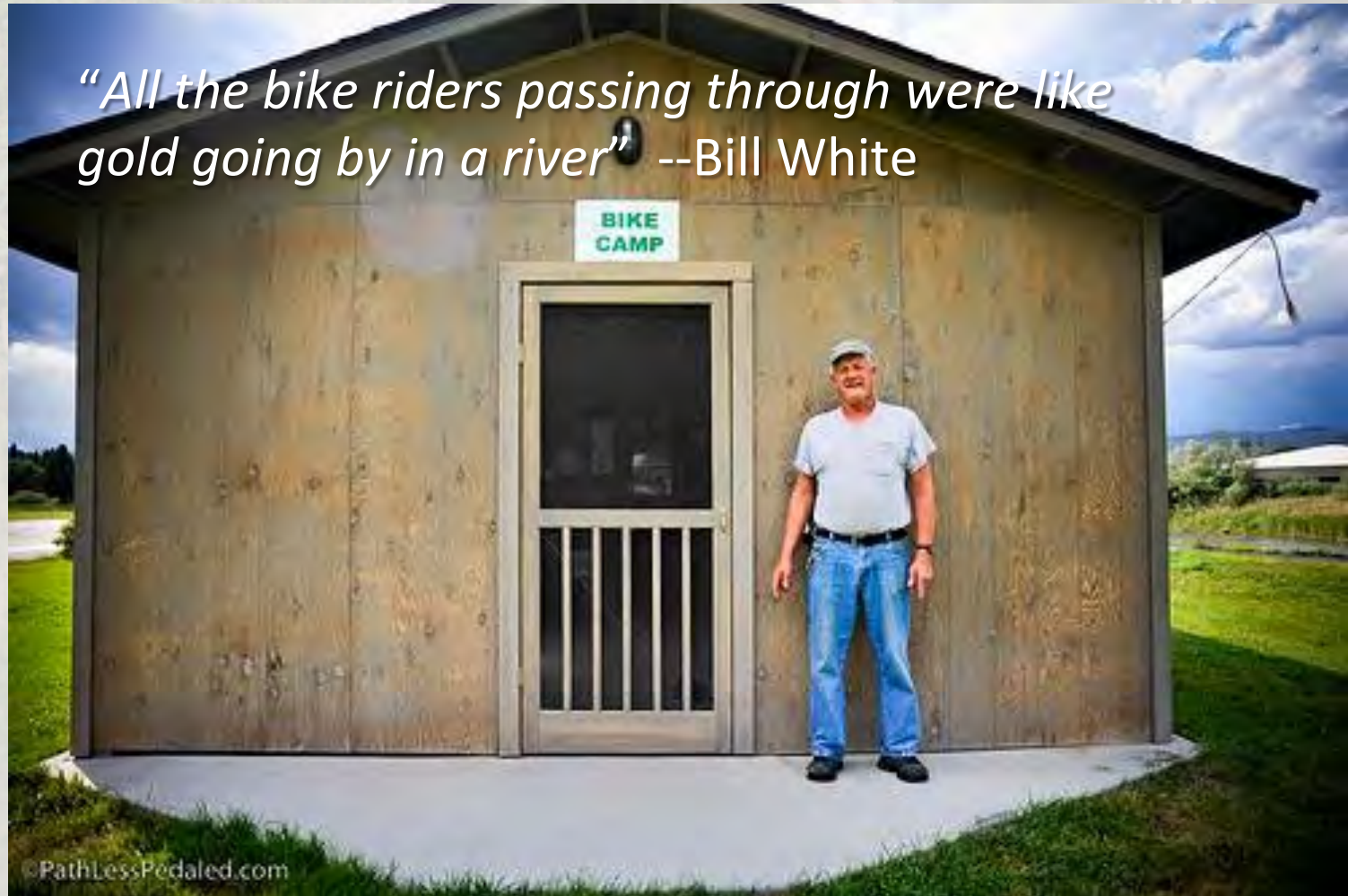
# Bicycles Mean Business!





# Bicycle Tourists

*"All the bike riders passing through were like gold going by in a river"* --Bill White



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYPL0EjY-u8>





# Demographics of Bicycle Tourists

- Older
- More affluent
- More likely to stay in smaller towns
- More likely to support locally-owned businesses



Source: Pew Charitable Trust, Stateline, November 15, 2015





# Characteristics of a Bicycle Tourist



**They look for authentic experiences: nature, history & culture**

Source: AdventureCycling





# Characteristics of a Bicycle Tourist

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Crave healthy  
and abundant  
food options,  
especially local  
in-season  
ingredients



Source: AdventureCycling





# Characteristics of a Bicycle Tourist



**They enjoy interacting with locals**

Source: AdventureCycling





# Characteristics of a Bicycle Tourist

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**If they have fun, they tell their friends!**

Source: AdventureCycling





# What Do Bike Tourists Look for in a Route ?

Bicycle tourists choose possible destinations based on three broad characteristics:

1. The actual ride
2. Availability of support services
3. Interesting things to do and see along the way





# 1. The Ride

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- A tour from 3 to 7 days long
- Riding between 30 and 50 miles per day (family groups tend toward the lower end, solo riders/small groups favor greater distances)
- Bicycle-friendly roads with low traffic volume and speed
- Physical challenge varying from easy to moderate (although some do prefer very challenging routes)





## 2. Support and Services

- Clear, detailed maps and route descriptions
- Well marked/signed routes
- Convenient places to stay (preferences can range from campgrounds to higher end hotels)
- Readily-available options for food, from restaurants to snack bars to farm stands
- Services with a “bicycle-friendly” orientation





# 3. Sights Along the Way

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For bicycle tourists, it is all about the journey.

Important attributes of a route:

- Scenery
- Rural areas
- Historic sites, museums and parks
- Cultural opportunities
- Authentic experiences
- Opportunities to interact with local people

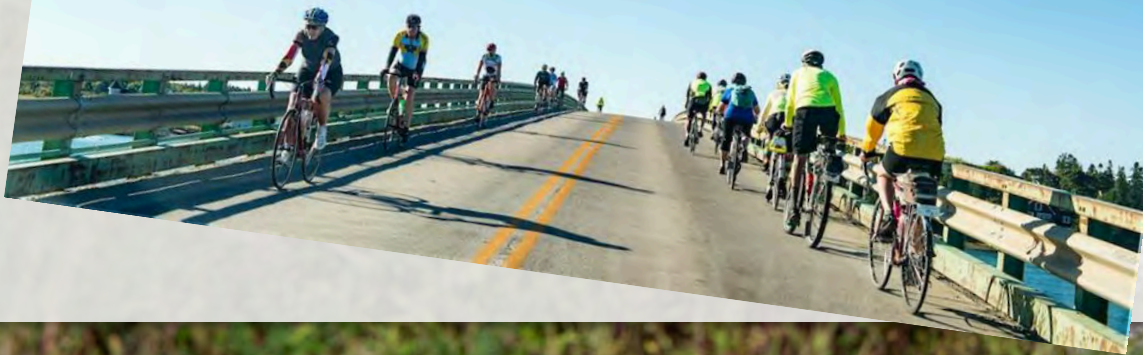




# Bicyclists on the Road

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- Bikes, by law, are to follow vehicular rules of the road.
- Bikes have a right to the center of travel lanes in many instances.
- Two abreast is not automatically illegal.





# What do Bicycle Tourists Want When They Get Off the Bike?

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- A friendly attitude
- Food
- Water. Coffee. Beer.
- A bathroom
- Directions, maps
- Maybe some bike tools
- Knowing their bike is safe





# Bicycles WelcoME

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## Making Your Business a Bicycle WelcoME Business





# Becoming a Bicycle WelcoME Business

## Have a good attitude.

- Be happy and helpful
- Share your love of where you live
- Know some cool places nearby to eat, stay or visit.





# Have a Good Attitude

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**Train Your Staff About What it Means to Provide Good Customer Service**

**Welcome ME Training** — provide your staff with free on-line customer service training offered by the Maine Office of Tourism

**<http://umaine.edu/centro/welcome-me-quality-service-training-home/>**





# Be a Rest Stop

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- Set out a bench or chairs for riders to rest
- Allow riders to use rest room, or be prepared to tell them where is the nearest public facility
- Allow riders to refill water bottles
- Have granola bars or trail mix for sale
- Have place for riders to recharge cell phones





# Have some basic tools on hand

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- A decent bicycle floor pump
- Tire levers
- Assorted wrenches: Box/open end, hex, adjustable
- Channel lock-type pliers
- Lube—Tri-flow recommended
- Spare bike tubes
- Patch kit

More Advanced: Bike stand, bench, truing stand, spoke wrench





# Be prepared to give directions

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- Have and conspicuously display maps
- Know the answers to bicyclists' likely questions
- Have info on side trips, bike loops, and other POI in area





# Have maps or directions to share

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- What are the cool places near you? Are they easy to find?
- Having maps to sell, give away, or to just go over is often appreciated by riders in unfamiliar territory.
- Know about local riders' favorite routes





# Know Local Places to Bike

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- Get suggested routes from local bike shops
- Bicycle Coalition of Maine's website: [bikemaine.org](http://bikemaine.org)
- Maine Office of Tourism website: [visitmaine.com](http://visitmaine.com)
- Local Chamber of Commerce or town website (and if they don't have suggested local bike routes, ask that they post some)





# Encourage Riders to Explore

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Make it easy for riders to leave bike

- Have a bike rack
- Lend a bike lock
- Offer safe storage for luggage and helmet





# Restaurants Can...

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- Post menu outside so cyclists can easily see it
- Offer vegetarian and heart healthy menu options
- Include hearty meals, such as a “bicyclist breakfast”
- Offer easily carried snacks such as energy bars and dried fruit
- Provide order delivery to nearby bicyclist campground and other lodging facilities





# Retailers Can...

- Offer shipping services
- If selling cards, sell postage stamps and accept outgoing mail
- Carry small, place-specific mementoes of your community, such as a patch or decal
- Have business cards with the business website address available so that riders can order purchases once they are home
- Offer cyclist discounts





# Lodging Establishments Can...

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- Permit one-night stays, at least for cyclists
- Show interest in the bicyclist's journey
- Provide secure, indoor parking space for bikes or allow guests to take their bikes to their rooms
- Have laundry facilities on site or nearby
- Have menus for and directions to restaurants





# Lodging Establishments Can...

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- Have computers for email/internet access
- Offer cold beverages/snacks on arrival
- Provide outdoor space for working on bicycles, including water source for cleaning bike
- Accept resupply packages mailed ahead by bicyclists
- Offer shuttle service to local restaurants





# Lodging Establishments Can...

- Allow multi-day parking for those who arrive by car to begin overnight bike trip
- Offer bike rentals yourself or through another business





# All Businesses Can...

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- Be a “bike ambassador”
- Collaborate with neighboring businesses on shared facilities such as bike racks, lockers, or restrooms
- Be an advocate for making your entire community more bike friendly





# What Can YOU Do?

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- Think about and address the needs of your bicycling customers
- The steps you take will vary with the nature of your business
- Proceed incrementally
- Train your staff





# Help to Make the Town Bike Friendly

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Shift your perspective and look at the town through the eyes of a bicycle tourist

- Can you find a restaurant? Bathroom? Points of interest?
- Do you feel safe?
- Do you feel welcomed?
- What barriers do you encounter?





# Welcome Bicyclists

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Post signs saying “Bicyclists Welcome”

Post informational signs

- How far to next town?
- Where to go to get detailed info about town?
- Where are services located?
- Make sure street signs are at all road crossings
- Post “you are here” maps in key locations around community





# Provide Safe Access

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- Keep roadsides clear of broken glass and debris
- Post signs alerting motorists to likely presence of bicyclists





# Don't Hide the Amenities

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- Make water and public restrooms easy to find
- Have places where bicyclists can sit and relax out of the sun or rain
- Compile a list of places where showers are available or there is water access for swimming





# Missing a Basic Service in Town?

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Be Creative!

- Convert church basement into bike dorm (Spoke ' Hostel in Mitchell, Oregon)
- Build a Bike Camp (Twin Bridges, Montana)
- Encourage townspeople to participate in Warm Showers, Airbnb, Couchsurfers





# BicyclesWELCOME

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