

DECEMBER 13, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Paul Murphy
From: Tom Crikelair
Subject: 2023 Island Explorer Passenger Survey
CC: John Kelly, Stephanie Clement, Alayna Bierly

This memo presents the results of an onboard passenger survey distributed on Island Explorer buses in August of 2023. The analysis includes comparisons with surveys from past years.

The report includes two appendices, the survey form and a transcription of passenger comments.

The report is structured as follows:

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Section 2	Group Size and Age of Survey Respondents
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2023 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

1. Methodology and Response

The onboard survey was carried out on Tuesday and Wednesday, August 1 and 2, 2023. Surveys were distributed between 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Island Explorer bus routes that originate at the Bar Harbor Village Green and at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center. The Schoodic route, the Tremont route, and the Bicycle Express were not included in the 2023 survey effort. Groups were handed a survey form by a survey team member as they boarded buses at the two transit hub locations.

Passengers were asked to complete one survey per group. Those who agreed to participate were given a blank form and a pencil. They were asked to place their completed form in a box at the front of the bus as they disembarked. Nearly all groups that were offered a survey agreed to take one. In 2023, 500 surveys were distributed, and 466 completed surveys were returned, for a response rate of 93.2%.

It is important to recognize that the survey examines Island Explorer usage during the daytime only. The distribution of trip purposes and the distribution of riders by route would have been different if the survey had included evening hours. Surveys were not distributed in the evening in part because it would have been difficult for passengers to fill out survey forms on buses in the dark.

Because the survey was carried out during the busiest part of the summer, the percentage of usage by visitors (as opposed to year-round and seasonal residents) may have been somewhat higher than at other times during the season.

FIGURE 1 2023 SURVEY AND RIDERSHIP DISTRIBUTION

<i>Route</i>	<i>Survey Respondents</i>	<i>Survey Distribution</i>	<i>Ridership Distribution</i>
Bar Harbor Road	96	16%	16%
Eden Street	105	17%	23%
Sand Beach	121	20%	10%
Loop Road	124	20%	28%
Jordan Pond	68	11%	9%
Northeast Harbor	24	4%	3%
Southwest Harbor	30	5%	3%
Schoodic	0	0%	2%
Trenton	12	2%	2%
Blackwoods	22	4%	3%
Tremont	2	0.3%	1%
Total	604	100%	100%

Figure 1 shows bus routes utilized by groups participating in the 2023 survey. The total is greater than 466 because some groups used more than one route for their trip. This table also shows the distribution of 2023 ridership by route.

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The survey sample included a lower percentage of Eden Street route riders when compared with the actual distribution of ridership by route for the full summer season. This resulted in part from the fact that survey distribution was limited to daytime hours.

Surveys were distributed at the Bar Harbor Village Green and at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center. This means that survey distribution focused on groups that traveled to, from, or through these two transit hubs. Results would have been different if surveys had been offered to all Island Explorer passengers.

2. Group Size and Age of Survey Respondents

Participants were asked to identify the number of individuals in their party. In 2023, the 466 participating groups included a total of 1,327 individuals. The average group size was 2.8.

FIGURE 2 AVERAGE GROUP SIZE

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Surveys	502	484	490	532	477	464	451	462	227	464	466
Average Group	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	3.1	2.2	2.9	2.8

Figure 3 shows the distribution of survey groups by group size. Groups of five or more individuals made up 14% of survey respondents during the 2023 summer survey. Larger groups made up 14% of survey respondents during the 2022 summer survey, and 18% of survey respondents during the 2018 summer survey.

FIGURE 3 SIZE OF PARTICIPATING GROUPS

Group sizes	Summer 2018 Number	Summer 2018 Percent	Summer 2022 Number	Summer 2022 Percent	Summer 2023 Number	Summer 2023 Percent
One	72	16%	78	17%	99	21%
Two	195	42%	218	45%	167	36%
Three	50	11%	39	8%	49	11%
Four	59	13%	73	16%	87	19%
Five	41	9%	24	5%	28	6%
Six	15	3%	12	3%	14	3%
Seven	10	2%	9	2%	7	2%
Eight or more	19	4%	17	4%	12	3%
	461	100%	464	100%	463	100%

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In the summer of 2023, 18% of group members were retired adults, 58% were non-retired adults, and 24% were children below the age of 18. In the summer of 2022, 15% of group members were retired adults, 61% were non-retired adults, and 23% were children below the age of 18. This compares with 16% retirees, 58% non-retired adults, and 27% children in August of 2018. In the fall of 2019, 51% of group members were retired adults, 45% were non-retired adults, and 4% were children below the age of 18.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING GROUPS

	<i>Summer 2018</i>	<i>Fall 2019</i>	<i>Summer 2022</i>	<i>Summer 2023</i>
Retired Adults	16%	51%	15%	18%
Other Adults	58%	45%	61%	58%
Children	27%	4%	23%	24%

In August of 2023, 34% of participating groups included at least one child. In August of 2022, 31% of participating groups included at least one child. In August of 2018, 36% of participating groups included at least one child. In the fall of 2019, only 4% of participating groups included at least one child.

3. Passenger Comments and Suggestions

Bus riders continue to be very pleased with free Island Explorer bus service. A visitor from Nova Scotia said, “This is an amazing service!” A visitor from Connecticut on the Loop Road bus said, “What a wonderful way to see the park. Extremely relaxing, convenient, and environmentally friendly. We hope this service is offered for years to come.”

A family from West Virginia on the Bar Harbor Road bus said, “We chose our campground because it was a pick-up/drop-off spot. We are doing more things because of not having the headache of driving and finding a safe place to park.” Passengers had nice things to say about Island Explorer employees: “The Visitor Center, Village Green, and bus driver staff are very helpful and friendly.” “Drivers are polite, friendly, and helpful.”

A Bar Harbor resident on the Trenton bus said, “I really appreciate this service! It is very helpful for those that don’t have vehicles or can’t drive themselves. I think this service is improving our community.” A passenger from Florida on the Blackwoods bus said, “As a seasonal worker without a car, I really appreciate the Island Explorer service!”

A passenger on the Sand Beach bus said, “It’s super and we love it! We will recommend it to all of our friends in Quebec!”

A visitor from Massachusetts said, “The bus service is amazing, goes everywhere, friendly drivers, great schedule and island coverage.” A Bar Harbor resident on the Northeast Harbor bus said, “I think the buses are top notch! ALL THE TIME!”

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THANK YOU, L.L.BEAN!

As they have in past years, passengers expressed gratitude to L.L.Bean for the company's contribution to the bus system. A visitor from Germany on the Jordan Pond bus said, "It's an excellent way to protect Acadia and the environment in general. Awesome!" " A family from Pennsylvania said, "Thank you, L.L.Bean! We truly couldn't see the area without the Island Explorer buses!"

A visitor from Missouri said, "It's an excellent way to save and protect both the island and park. Thank you, L.L.Bean, for your pledge." A Bar Harbor resident characterized the L.L.Bean gift to Friends of Acadia as "TRULY UNBELIEVABLE!"

A family from New York on the Loop Road bus said this about the L.L.Bean gift: "It is thoroughly appreciated and encourages me to stop by the Maine store on my way home." A visitor from New Jersey said, "That's a beautiful thing. Maine is amazing!" A visitor from Virginia said, "I think it is a wonderful contribution. The buses are definitely needed."

SUGGESTIONS

Survey respondents used the comment section to make a variety of suggestions for improving Island Explorer service. Passengers asked for:

- Earlier morning service and later evening service.
- Direct service between the Village Green and Jordan Pond House.
- A bus-only lane at the Loop Road fee station.
- Increased Eden Street frequency beginning at 10:00 a.m.
- Electric buses.
- More service between the Village Green and the Hulls Cove Visitor Center.
- Improvements to the Hulls Cove bus stop. ("Lines at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center were a bit confusing.")
- Bus stop signs at trailheads to make it easier to find a bus after hiking.
- More parking at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center.
- Bicycle racks that can accommodate fat tires and longer bikes.
- A bus stop at Bubble Rock.
- A less confusing Route 6: Northeast Harbor timetable.
- More buses to Southwest Harbor.
- More buses to Trenton ("Two hours between runs is excessive.")
- More year-round bus service.

4. Residency and Overnight Lodging

In the 2023 survey, 15% of participating groups said that they are year-round or summer residents of Mount Desert Island. This includes 3% who said they are year-round residents and 12% who said that they are summer residents. The distribution of local residents, summer residents, and visitors for the ten most recent Island Explorer surveys is presented in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4 LOCAL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Year-round	8%	9%	8%	9%	6%	7%	5%	3%	5%	3%
Summer residents	14%	13%	12%	12%	11%	10%	9%	11%	10%	12%
Visitors	78%	78%	81%	79%	83%	84%	87%	86%	85%	85%

Participants were asked to identify their hometown and state. The results are presented in Figure 5. Nineteen percent of groups participating in the 2023 survey live year-round in New England, while 23% live in Mid-Atlantic States.

FIGURE 5 YEAR-ROUND RESIDENCE BY REGION

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Mid Atlantic	26%	25%	27%	27%	31%	25%	27%	21%	32%	23%
Maine	14%	17%	11%	15%	12%	13%	15%	6%	8%	6%
Other New England	17%	16%	18%	15%	16%	15%	15%	3%	9%	12%
Midwest	10%	9%	8%	12%	11%	10%	12%	21%	15%	18%
Southeast	11%	11%	12%	12%	12%	17%	12%	21%	15%	17%
West	5%	7%	7%	5%	6%	6%	5%	13%	6%	8%
Canada	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	1%	5%	6%
Other international	12%	10%	11%	8%	8%	6%	8%	14%	9%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Combined New England	31%	33%	29%	30%	28%	27%	30%	9%	17%	17%
Eastern Europe	4%	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%	3%	0%	2%	2%

Survey participants were asked: “What town will you stay in tonight?” In 2023, 68% of bus riders said they planned to stay overnight in Bar Harbor, while 12% were spending the night in other Mount Desert Island towns, 4% were staying in Trenton, and 2% were staying in the Schoodic area. The percentage staying in “other Hancock County towns” was 5%, while 4% stayed elsewhere in Maine. Town-by-town results for the most recent ten surveys are presented in Figure 6.

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FIGURE 6 LOCATION OF OVERNIGHT LODGING

Town	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Bar Harbor	75%	70%	75%	75%	72%	64%	65%	54%	65%	68%
Mount Desert	10%	7%	7%	11%	8%	10%	8%	3%	5%	2%
Southwest Harbor	6%	5%	7%	4%	6%	7%	6%	0.4%	6%	6%
Other Hancock County	2%	8%	3%	4%	8%	4%	6%	2%	4%	5%
Other Maine	2%	4%	3%	2%	2%	4%	4%	1%	7%	4%
Tremont	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	0.4%	1%	4%
Trenton	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Schoodic area	1%	1%	1%	0.2%	0.4%	1%	0%	0.4%	2%	2%
Nova Scotia	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Local Islands	0%	1%	1%	0.8%	0.4%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Cruise ship							4%	36%	0%	0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Local MDI towns	95%	89%	94%	94%	90%	91%	86%	62%	82%	85%

Figure 7 shows distribution of overnight lodging by type of accommodation from 2011 through 2023. In 2023, 24% of Island Explorer groups stayed in campgrounds, while 41% stayed in motels, inns, or B&B's. The percentage staying in short-term rentals was 17%.

During most years, summer-season surveys have been carried out on days when no cruise ships were scheduled. Cruise ship passengers accounted for 35% of survey groups in the fall of 2019, and 4% of survey groups in August of 2018. A single cruise ship was in Bar Harbor on the first day of the 2018 survey.

FIGURE 7 TYPE OF OVERNIGHT LODGING

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Campground	25%	22%	20%	23%	23%	32%	27%	14%	24%	24%
Motel, Inn, B&B	39%	38%	43%	41%	39%	31%	40%	32%	35%	33%
Year-round residence	10%	13%	10%	11%	8%	9%	10%	6%	6%	5%
Summer residence	14%	14%	8%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	10%	11%
Short-term rental	8%	9%	14%	9%	16%	12%	7%	5%	17%	17%
Sailboat or Yacht	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	0%	2%	2%
Cruise Ship	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	35%	0%	0%
Other	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Surveys included the question: "Is your overnight lodging within easy walking distance of the Bar Harbor Village Green?" In August 2023, 32% of participating groups said that their lodging was located within easy walking distance of the Bar Harbor transit hub. During recent years, this number has varied from a low of 26% in 2017 to highs of 39% in 2014 and 37% in 2012.

5. Trip Purpose

Survey respondents were asked to identify the primary purpose of their bus trip. The most popular categories in August of 2022 were “hiking” and “sightseeing,” with 39% and 31% of total responses respectively. “Work” was the next most frequent trip purpose, with 8%. Recreational purposes (hiking, biking, swimming, and boating) were chosen by a combined 46% of survey groups. Percentages for “biking” in 2019, 2022, and 2023 are lower than past years because surveys were not distributed on the Bicycle Express in 2019, 2022, or 2023.

FIGURE 8 TRIP PURPOSE

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Work	12%	13%	10%	10%	10%	8%	7%	9%	10%	8%
Hiking	28%	30%	31%	32%	40%	29%	34%	25%	42%	39%
Biking	15%	11%	18%	11%	10%	10%	7%	1%	3%	2%
Swimming	2%	6%	4%	5%	3%	4%	6%	0%	3%	3%
Boating	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Shopping	5%	4%	6%	7%	4%	6%	6%	5%	7%	5%
Dining	6%	3%	4%	5%	4%	6%	6%	4%	4%	6%
Sightseeing	27%	27%	20%	25%	24%	29%	32%	51%	26%	31%
Other	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	2%	4%	4%	4%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

6. Visitor Travel Modes

In 2023, 52% of visitor groups said they traveled to the region in an automobile without an attached trailer, 16% of visitors arrived in a recreational vehicle or in a car towing a trailer, and 28% arrived in the region on an airplane. Two percent arrived via sailboat or motorboat. Auto travel in 2023 was consistent with past summers. RV arrivals in 2022 and 2023 were down somewhat when compared with responses from 2017 and 2018. Airplane travel in the two most recent years has been higher than amounts reported during the previous eight years.

FIGURE 9 VISITOR TRAVEL MODES

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Car	58%	58%	64%	59%	61%	59%	53%	27%	59%	52%
RV or trailer	17%	16%	10%	16%	17%	21%	20%	14%	14%	16%
Airplane	17%	17%	16%	17%	18%	11%	17%	16%	24%	28%
Sailboat or yacht	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%	5%	3%	0%	2%	2%
Intercity bus	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Tour bus	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Cruise Ship	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	37%	0%	0%
Other	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

7. Park Entry Permits

In the August 2023 survey, 79% of all Island Explorer groups said they purchased an Acadia National Park entry permit. This is a 10% decrease from 2022. These most recent results compare with 84% in August of 2018 and 80% in August of 2015 and 2017.

FIGURE 10 DID YOU PURCHASE A PARK ENTRY PERMIT?

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
YES	61%	66%	67%	70%	70%	70%	74%	80%	80%	84%	77%	89%	79%
NO	39%	34%	33%	30%	30%	30%	26%	20%	20%	16%	23%	11%	21%

Figure 11 shows the percentage of entry permit purchases for various user groups. In 2023, 86% of non-resident visitor groups purchased an entry pass. In 2022, 89% of visitor groups had passes. While only 31% of summer residents had passes, if individuals traveling for work are excluded, 62% of summer residents purchased passes.

In 2023, 90% of groups who said they would visit Acadia National Park on their bus ride had a permit. Fifty-three percent of bus riders who were not traveling to the park had a permit.

FIGURE 11 PERCENT OF USER GROUPS WITH PARK ENTRY PERMITS

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Year-round residents	38%	33%	41%	59%	65%	50%	81%	89%	75%	*note
Summer residents	39%	52%	49%	40%	46%	51%	54%	38%	30%	31%
Visitors	79%	78%	75%	80%	86%	85%	87%	81%	89%	86%
Cruise ship passengers								79%		
Groups visiting ANP on this trip	82%	82%	80%	80%	90%	91%	91%	89%	94%	90%
Groups not visiting ANP on this trip	38%	40%	32%	32%	50%	54%	64%	44%	53%	53%

*The sample size in 2023 was too small to yield a statistically meaningful result.

Figure 12 shows permit ownership by type of lodging. It shows that people staying in summer residences are the least likely to have a permit. As noted above, many of the respondents staying in “summer residences” were seasonal workers.

FIGURE 12 PERCENT WITH PARK PERMITS BY LODGING TYPE

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Campgrounds	85%	83%	83%	84%	88%	92%	91%	74%	89%	89%
Hotels	81%	80%	71%	77%	85%	81%	88%	74%	84%	82%
B & B	77%	83%	78%	84%	90%	89%	73%	100%	96%	91%
Weekly or Airbnb	82%	83%	79%	90%	93%	91%	70%	55%	100%	93%
Summer residence	40%	52%	39%	44%	44%	50%	62%	41%	30%	29%
Year-round residence	53%	41%	46%	64%	77%	56%	93%	100%	77%	*note
Sailboat or yacht	31%	39%	65%	50%	57%	50%	53%		71%	*note

*Sample sizes in 2023 were too small to yield statistically meaningful results.

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Figure 13 shows where bus riders purchased their Park entry permits. Figure 14 shows a breakdown of permit types for Island Explorer bus riders.

FIGURE 13 WHERE DID YOU PURCHASE YOUR PARK ENTRY PERMIT?

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Village Green	41%	37%	39%	34%	33%	30%	33%	44%	0%	0%
Loop Road	9%	11%	8%	9%	7%	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%
Visitor Center	28%	29%	34%	30%	34%	26%	27%	18%	26%	28%
ANP Campground	8%	4%	5%	7%	6%	6%	4%	1%	4%	3%
Online							9%	3%	45%	39%
Other	14%	19%	15%	20%	20%	33%	22%	31%	20%	24%

FIGURE 14 TYPES OF ENTRY PERMITS

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
One-week	65%	46%	51%	42%	55%	50%	57%	30%	55%	51%
Full Season	9%	14%	10%	14%	13%	15%	7%	3%	20%	18%*
Senior Pass	16%	23%	22%	30%	27%	27%	25%	48%	19%	23%
Other	10%	17%	17%	14%	5%	8%	11%	19%	6%	9%

*7% Acadia Annual Pass and 11% Interagency Annual Pass.

8. Transfer Activity

Twenty-seven percent of survey groups said they used more than one bus route to complete their trip. Sixteen percent of all groups transferred to or from the Sand Beach route, while 11% transferred to or from the Bar Harbor Road route and 11% transferred to or from the Loop Road route. Sand Beach transfers accounted for 60% of multi-route trips, Loop Road transfers accounted for 43%, and Bar Harbor Road transfers accounted for 41% of multi-route trips.

The most common transfer pair involved Routes 3 and 4 (Sand Beach and Loop Road), with 23 transfers. The second most common pair was Route 1 and 5 (Bar Harbor Road and Jordan Pond), with 17 transfers. This was followed by Routes 2 and 3 (Eden Street and Sand Beach) with 16 transfers, Routes 1 and 4 (Bar Harbor Road and Loop Road) with 12, and Routes 1 and 3 (Bar Harbor Road and Sand Beach) each with 12.

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MOST COMMON TRANSFER PAIRS

Route Pair	Count	Transfer Locations
Routes 3 & 4	23	Sand Beach or Sieur de Monts
Routes 1 & 5	17	Hulls Cove Visitor Center
Routes 2 & 3	16	Village Green
Routes 1 & 4	12	Hulls Cove Visitor Center
Routes 1 & 3	12	Village Green
Routes 4 & 5	11	Jordan Pond House
Routes 10 & 3	6	Village Green

TRANSFER COUNTS

ROUTES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	Total
1		5	10	10	5	1			1	32
2			10	2	1		1			14
3	2	6		7	2			1	1	19
4	2		16		4	1				23
5	12		8	7						27
6			1	2	1					4
7	2		4	1		1				8
9			1			1	1			3
10	1		5	1			1			8
11							1			1
12							1			1
Total	19	11	55	30	13	4	5	1	2	140

9. Parking Locations

Participants were asked where they parked their cars or recreational vehicles. In August of 2023, 49% were parked at their hotel or campground, 7% were parked at a private residence, and 1% said that someone else was using their vehicle. Nineteen percent said they did not have a car or RV available locally. A combined total of 76% of Island Explorer riders reached an Island Explorer bus stop without using a private vehicle.

The Hulls Cove Visitor Center parking lot was used by 21% of Island Explorer groups participating in the August 2023 survey. People who said they parked their cars on the street or in public parking spaces in Bar Harbor accounted for 2% of groups surveyed in 2023.

FIGURE 15 WHERE IS YOUR CAR NOW?

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
Lodging	51%	50%	54%	54%	53%	48%	57%	32%	52%	49%
Residence	13%	9%	14%	14%	12%	13%	6%	5%	6%	7%
Someone is using it	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
No car	20%	18%	13%	16%	13%	17%	17%	51%	16%	19%
Hulls Cove Visitor Center	5%	6%	5%	5%	13%	13%	13%	8%	18%	21%
Other ANP	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Bar Harbor street or lot	6%	7%	9%	6%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Other towns	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

For groups who parked their cars at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center, 57% said they had local overnight accommodations (MDI towns or Trenton), 35% were staying elsewhere in Hancock County, and 7% had lodging in other Maine towns.

10. Number of Years Utilizing the Island Explorer

Groups were asked how many years they have used the Island Explorer. In August of 2023, 79% were first-year users. Ten percent of Island Explorer groups said they have used the system for five or more years.

FIGURE 16 HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU USED THE ISLAND EXPLORER?

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023
1st year	65%	66%	68%	67%	66%	71%	74%	82%	80%	79%
Two years	12%	6%	8%	7%	11%	7%	7%	6%	5%	8%
3 or 4 years	11%	11%	8%	9%	8%	7%	7%	4%	3%	4%
5 or more	13%	17%	15%	17%	15%	15%	12%	8%	12%	10%

Excluding year-round and summer residents, 84% of visiting groups said that 2023 was their first year using the shuttle service.

11. Service Evaluation

Passengers were asked to evaluate the quality of service provided by the Island Explorer. They were asked to rate the cleanliness of buses and the friendliness and helpfulness of drivers. They were asked whether seats were readily available, whether buses ran on time, if bus schedules were easy to find, and if schedules were easy to understand. Riders were also asked to comment on the frequency of service and whether the right destinations are served. The results of the service evaluation for 2023 are presented in Figure 17.

FIGURE 17: EVALUATION OF SERVICE QUALITY FOR 2023

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Buses are clean	85%	14%	0%	1%
Drivers are friendly and helpful	79%	17%	3%	1%
It is easy to find a seat	53%	29%	14%	4%
Buses are on time	66%	24%	8%	1%
Bus schedules are easy to find	75%	18%	5%	1%
Bus schedules are easy to understand	68%	22%	7%	2%
The frequency of service is convenient	67%	25%	7%	2%
The right destinations are served	77%	21%	2%	0%

The Loop Road route experienced the highest percentage of concerns about seat availability, with 26% of Loop Road groups rating this as “fair” and 15% as “poor.”

12. Crowded Buses

The 2023 survey included two questions about bus capacity and crowding. Passengers were asked:

- Have you been on a bus where you had to stand because seats were filled?
- Have you had to wait for another bus because the bus you wanted was full?

In 2023, 32% of survey groups said they had to stand “once or twice,” 9% said they had to stand “several times,” and 59% said they had not been required to stand. In 2022, 27% said “once or twice,” 5% said “several times,” and 68% said they had not been required to stand.

In 2023, 22% of survey groups said they had been turned away by a full bus “once or twice,” while 2% said this had happened “several times.” In 2022, 11% said they had been turned away by a full bus “once or twice,” and 2% said “several times.”

13. What Helped You Decide?

FIGURE 18: WHAT HELPED YOU DECIDE TO TRY THE ISLAND EXPLORER?

	Count	Percent of groups	Comments
NPS web site	79	18%	The NPS web site was selected by 29% of Sand Beach groups, 21% of Loop Road groups, and 21% of Blackwoods groups.
Hotel or campground web site	85	19%	This was selected by 40% of Trenton groups, 36% of Eden Street groups, and 26% of Bar Harbor Road groups.
IEX web site	61	14%	The Island Explorer web site was chosen by 36% of Blackwoods groups, 27% of Southwest Harbor, and 22% of Northeast Harbor groups.
IEX staff at transit hubs	92	21%	IEX support staff influenced 35% of Jordan Pond groups, 28% of Loop Road groups, 23% of Bar Harbor Road groups, and 21% of Sand Beach groups.
NPS Rangers	55	13%	Park Rangers helped 35% of Loop Road groups and 25% of Jordan Pond groups in their decision to use the service.
Lodging staff	62	14%	Lodging staff helped 33% of Eden Street groups, 20% of Trenton groups, and 18% of Bar Harbor Road groups.
Advice from friends	69	16%	39% of Northeast Harbor groups, 27% of Southwest Harbor groups, and 21% of Blackwoods groups cited advice from friends.
IEX tabloid	89	20%	Twenty percent of Island Explorer groups relied on the printed bus schedule to help make their decision.
Seeing others ride	36	8%	Eight percent of survey groups said they decided to use the shuttles after seeing others ride.
Seeing buses everywhere	59	14%	Fourteen percent cited “seeing buses everywhere.”
We tried driving but couldn’t park	49	11%	Eleven percent of Island Explorer groups said they decided to ride after experiencing parking problems

2023 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

The 2023 survey asked participants to select from a list of eleven factors that might have helped them decide to try the Island Explorer. While the survey did not ask for the “most important” factors, most respondents limited themselves to choosing either one item or a small handful of items from the available list.

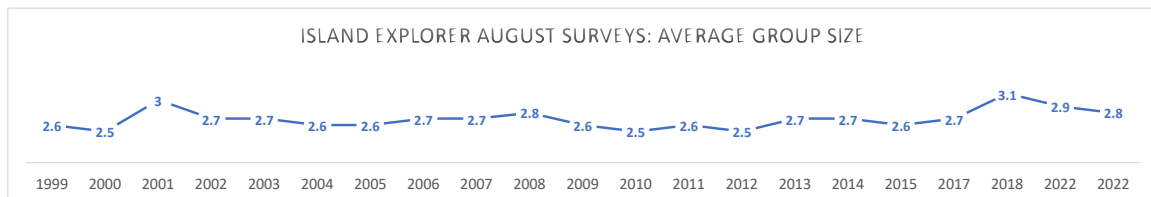
Most of the items were selected by between 14% and 18% of survey respondents. The most popular was “Help from Island Explorer staff at the Village Green, Visitor Center, or Jordan Pond House,” selected by 21% of survey groups. This was followed by “Island Explorer printed schedule,” with 20%, “Hotel or campground web site” with 19%, and “NPS web site,” with 19%.

14. Multiyear Trends

In the years since the service was first introduced in 1999, Island Explorer passengers have participated in twenty-one surveys. This section presents multiyear responses to selected survey questions. It addresses summer surveys only. The 2021 fall survey is addressed separately in the closing section of this report.

GROUP SIZE

Over the course of 24 years, average group size for Island Explorer survey participants has varied from a low of 2.5 to a high of 3.1.

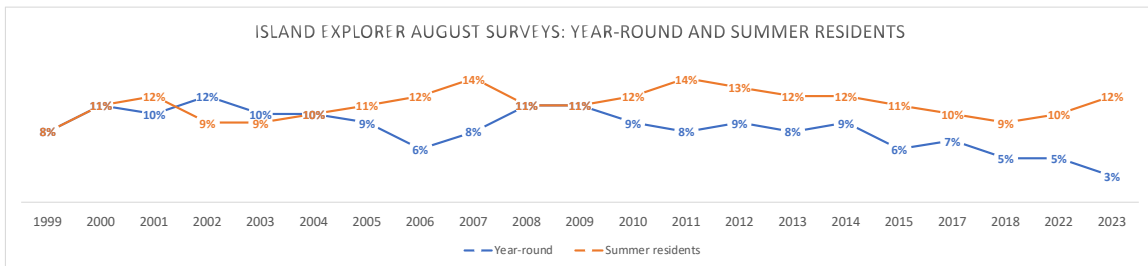


2023 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

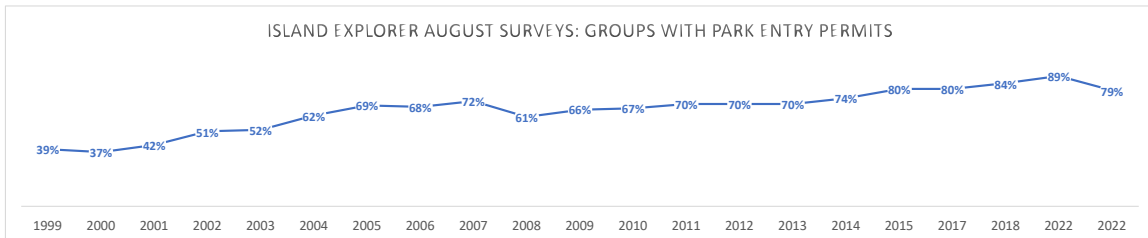
YEAR-ROUND AND SUMMER RESIDENTS

Between 2000 and 2004, between 8% and 12% of Island Explorer survey groups were year-round residents. From 2005 to 2022, year-round residents accounted for between 5% and 7% of survey groups. In 2023, only 3% of survey groups said they were year-round residents.

Between 9% and 14% of surveys have been completed by summer residents, including seasonal workers. The combined total of year-round and summer residents has varied between 14% and 22%.

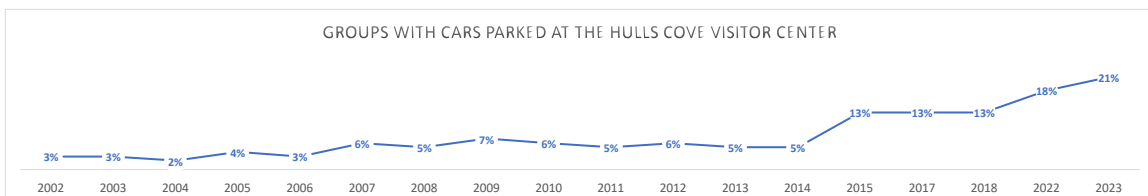


PARK ENTRY PERMITS



The percentage of groups with park entry permits has increased steadily over the years. Despite this long-term increase, the percentage of all groups with entry permits dropped 10 percentage points in 2023, from 89% in 2022 to 79% in 2023.

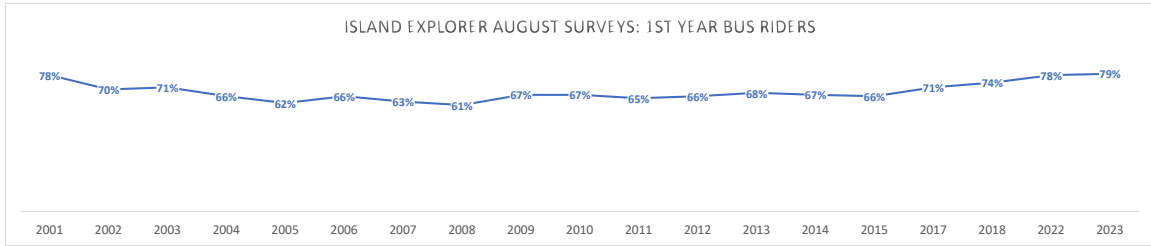
PARKING AT THE HULLS COVE VISITOR CENTER



The percentage of survey groups who parked their cars at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center has increased significantly in recent years.

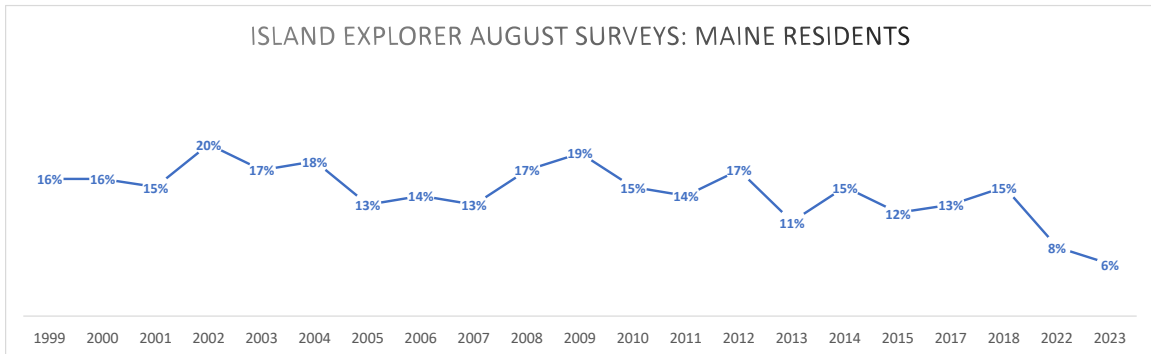
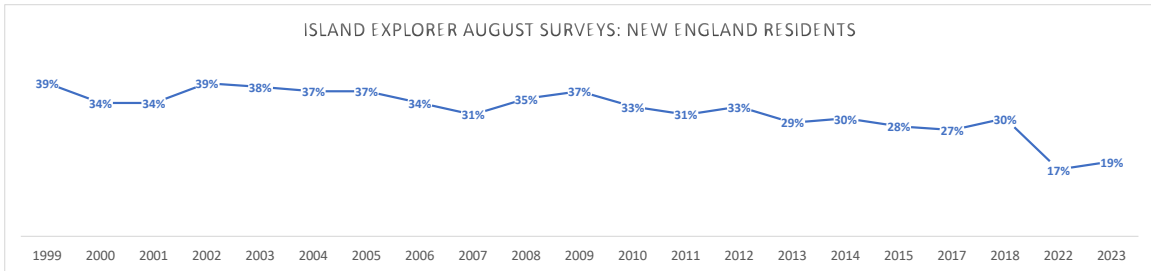
2023 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

FIRST-YEAR BUS RIDERS



In the most recent eight years, the percentage of first-time users has increased from two-thirds to 79%. If year-round and seasonal residents are excluded, 84% of survey groups in 2023 were first-year users

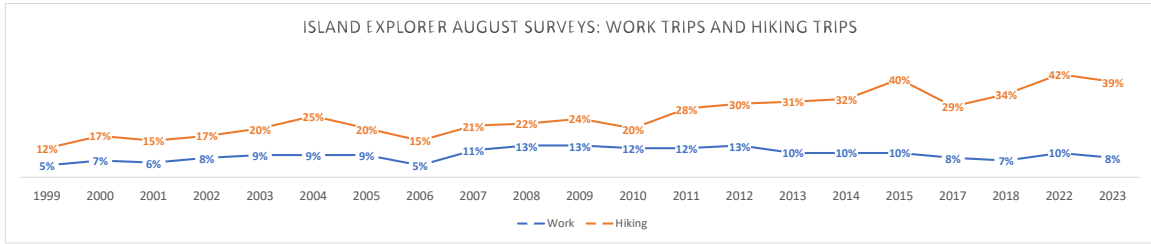
NEW ENGLAND AND MAINE RESIDENTS



There has been a multi-year decrease in the percentage of survey groups who live in of New England states. In the past two years, there has also been a substantial drop in the percentage who live in Maine.

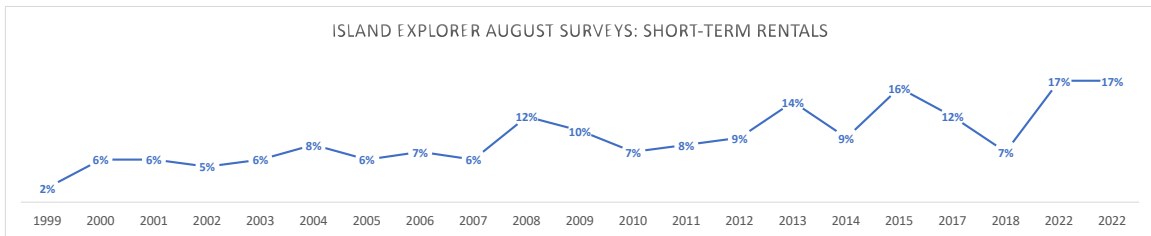
2023 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

TRIP PURPOSE: WORK AND HIKING



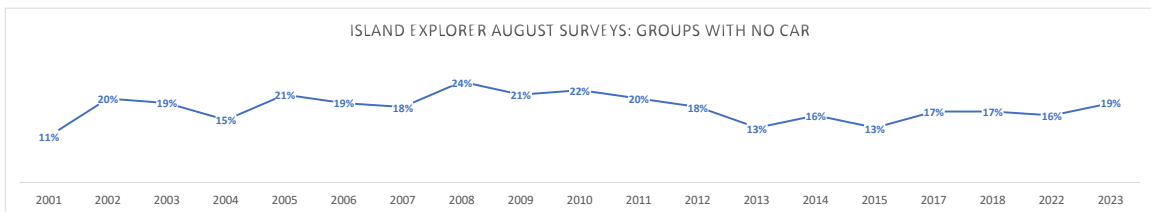
In recent years, the percentage of work trips has varied between 7% and 13%. The percentage of groups who identified “hiking” as the “primary purpose” of their bus ride has increased from 12% in 1999 to 39% in 2023.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS



There has been an upward trend in the percentage of groups who stay overnight in short-term rentals.

GROUPS WITHOUT CARS



The percentage of groups without an available car has varied from 11% in 2001 to 24% in 2008. In the 2023 survey, 19% of all groups said they had no car, while 89% of respondents traveling to or from work had no car. If work travel is excluded, 12% of survey groups said they had no car.

15. Comparison of Fall and Summer Survey Results

The Island Explorer typically surveys passengers during the first week of August. In 2021 the survey was carried out in October. This section summarizes some of the key differences between fall and summer survey responses.

- The 2021 fall survey shows that large numbers of cruise ship passengers take advantage of Island Explorer buses in the fall. Cruise ship passengers accounted for 35% of October 2019 survey responses.
- Groups in the fall are smaller, with more retirees and fewer children.
- Year-round residents make up a smaller percentage of bus riders in the fall.
- Fall riders live farther away, with fewer Maine residents and fewer groups from other New England states.
- Visitors with overnight lodging in October are less likely to be staying at campgrounds or on sailboats.
- Fall bus riders are more likely to choose “sightseeing” as their trip purpose.
- Hiking remains a popular fall trip purpose, while few fall riders use the bus to go biking, swimming, or boating.
- Fall bus riders are more likely to have National Park senior citizen passes (48% in October 2019 versus 25% in August 2018 and 19% in August 2022).
- The fall has a higher percentage of bus riders who have no local car (51% in the fall of 2019 versus 17% in August 2018 and 16% in August 2022). People without cars include cruise ship passengers, tour bus travelers, and seasonal workers.
- Ninety-one percent of cruise ship groups said they were first-time Island Explorer users.

Island Explorer Passenger Survey 2023

PLEASE FILL OUT ONLY ONE SURVEY PER FAMILY OR GROUP

1. DATE _____

2. TIME _____

How many are in your party?

Retired adults _____

Other adults _____

Children (under 18) _____

6. WHAT ROUTE ARE YOU ON NOW? (Please check only one)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Eden Street | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Sand Beach | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Loop Road | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Bar Harbor Road |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Northeast Harbor | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) Southwest Harbor | <input type="checkbox"/> (8) Schoodic | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Jordan Pond |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Blackwoods | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Tremont | | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Trenton |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle Express |

7. WILL THIS RIDE INVOLVE MORE THAN ONE ROUTE? YES No

8. If yes, please check the other routes used for this ride.

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Eden Street | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Sand Beach | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Loop Road | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Bar Harbor Road |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Northeast Harbor | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) Southwest Harbor | <input type="checkbox"/> (8) Schoodic | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Jordan Pond |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Blackwoods | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Tremont | | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Trenton |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle Express |

9. What is the PRIMARY purpose of this bus trip? (Please check only one) To or from:

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Work | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Biking | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Swimming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Boating | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) Dining | <input type="checkbox"/> (8) Sightseeing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Other _____ | | | |

10. Are you a year-round MDI or Schoodic resident? Yes No

11. Are you a summer resident of MDI or Schoodic? Yes No

12. What town will you stay in tonight? _____

13. Are you staying at
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) Campground----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (2) Hotel or Motel ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (3) Inn or Bed & Breakfast----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (4) Weekly rental or AirBnB ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (5) Summer residence----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (6) Year-round residence ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (7) Sailboat or motorboat ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (8) Other _____ | |

14. Can you easily walk from your lodging to the Bar Harbor Village Green? Yes No

15. What is your home town and state? _____

16. If you are not an MDI or Schoodic resident, how did you travel to the region?

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) Car or truck without trailer ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | (6) Commercial airplane ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (2) Car or truck with trailer ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | (7) Private airplane ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (3) Recreational vehicle----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | (8) Tour bus ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (4) Sailboat or motorboat ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | (9) Intercity bus ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (5) Cruise Ship ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | (10) Other _____ | |

17. On this bus ride will you visit Acadia National Park? Yes No

18. Have you purchased a National Park entry permit for your group? Yes No

19. If yes, where did you purchase your permit? (1) Online (2) Loop Road Fee Station
 (3) Hulls Cove Visitor Center (4) ANP Campground (5) Other _____

20. What type of entry permit do you have? (1) One-week (2) Acadia Annual Pass
 (3) Interagency Annual Pass (4) Senior Pass (5) Other _____

Thank you for completing both sides!

Island Explorer Passenger Survey 2023

21. If you have a car or RV available locally, where is this vehicle parked now?

- (1) No local car or RV
 (2) Hotel, campground, B&B
 (3) Someone else is using it
 (4) Private residence
 (5) Other (where?) _____

22. How many years have you used the Island Explorer?

- This year only
 2 years
 3 - 4 years
 5 or more years

23. How many days have you used the Island Explorer this season?

- This is our first day
 2 or 3 days
 4 or 5 days
 more than 5 days

24. Have you been on a bus where you had to stand because seats were filled?

- No
 Once or twice
 Several times

25. Have you had to wait for another bus because the bus you wanted was full?

- No
 Once or twice
 Several times

HOW ARE WE DOING?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
26. Buses are clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Drivers are friendly and helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. It is easy to find a seat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Buses are on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Bus schedules are easy to find	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Bus schedules are easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. The frequency of service is convenient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. The right destinations are served	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

34. What helped you decide to try the Island Explorer? (Check all that apply)

- NPS web site
 Hotel or campground web site
 Island Explorer web site
 Help from Island Explorer staff at the Village Green, Visitor Center, or Jordan Pond House
 Advice from Park rangers
 Advice from lodging staff
 Advice from friends
 Island Explorer printed schedule
 Watching others use the service
 Seeing the buses everywhere
 We tried driving first, but couldn't park

35. Do you have any comments about the Island Explorer, or suggestions for improving the service? Comments and suggestions will be posted at www.exploreacadia.com

36. L.L.Bean has pledged over \$4 million to Friends of Acadia for the Island Explorer to help protect Acadia National Park. Do you have any comments about L.L.Bean's contribution?

Thank you for completing both sides!

Island Explorer 2023 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

Do you have any comments or suggestions for improving the Island Explorer?
 L.L.Bean has pledged over \$4 million to Friends of Acadia for the Island Explorer to help protect Acadia National Park. Do you have any comments about L.L.Bean’s contribution?

1	NH	The staff at the Village Green are super helpful.	Amazing!
1	NH	Keep up the good work. We appreciate you all!	Awesome!
1	MA	What a great way to reduce traffic in the area! It's working! Thank you. It even helps the campgrounds reduce their traffic in and out as well. A win-win for everyone.	Awesome. Thank you!
1	VA	Very pleasant. Accommodating.	Beneficial to all.
1		Great service!	Great company!
1	FL		Great job! We appreciate the bus service. It would be very difficult at best to see Bar Harbor or Acadia without it!!
1	Switzerland	Connections to Bar Harbor town could be optimized.	Great, I hope L.L.Bean continues doing it.
1	KS	Direct service to Jordan Pond. Better signage and directions for destinations.	Great!
1	FL	Lines at Hulls Cove Visitor Center were a bit confusing.	Greatly appreciate L.L.Bean's contribution! Employees are AWESOME! Equipment is nice and clean.
1	WV	This is a wonderful service. We chose our campground because it was a pick up/drop off spot. We are doing more things because of not having the headache of driving and finding a safe place to park. Too bad that all national parks don't have this great transportation option.	How awesome! Thank you, L.L.Bean!
1	VA		I think it is a wonderful contribution. The buses are definitely needed.
1			It's great!
1	WI	The Island Explorer was a nice ride so that you don't have to find or pay for parking.	It's nice that L.L.Bean company gave a lot of money to Friends of Acadia.
1	MI	Great service.	Love it!
1	NY	Hippie daughter wants us to stop driving everywhere. That's why we love her. The "special" bus route is very helpful and flexible. But it is hard to fill these out on a traveling bus. Haha.	Makes me want to shop at L.L.Bean.
1	FL	Super convenient to get around Bar Harbor and all of Acadia. Without the shuttle, our trip would have been much more stressful!	So thankful for L.L.Bean!

Island Explorer 2023 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

1	MI		Thank you, L.L.Bean!!
1	RI		Thank you, L.L.Bean!!! We appreciate you helping keep New England beautiful.
1	NY	It's been a great experience!	Thank you!
1	NH	Makes traveling to town / sightseeing very convenient.	Thank you!
1	CT	More buses after 3 pm.	Thank you!
1		The Visitor Center, Village Green, and bus driver staff are very helpful and friendly.	Thank you!
1	TX	Very clean, super easy to find a seat, and a convenient service to use when coming into the park!	Thank you!
1	OH		Thank you!
1	MO		Thank you!!! We love the park and Bar Harbor! Very clean and people are kind.
1	IL		That's nice.
1	CT		That's wonderful! We purchase clothing from them and our kayak.
1	MO	The lunch schedule creates a backlog mess. We had to wait while several buses that should have been our bus were rerouted right at our pickup site, forcing us to wait over an hour even though we should have been picked up.	This is a much appreciated service L.L.Bean has offered.
1	NY	We waited 40 minutes at Echo Lake Beach for the bus. We called to see if it was coming. Customer service did not help. But otherwise we really enjoyed the convenience of the shuttle.	Well used.
1	NY	Air conditioning didn't work on bus. Very hot.	
1	Quebec	All good!	
1	ME: Lincoln	Bus 1 to Bar Harbor campgrounds and Hadley's Point: Heater is on, no AC. Needs to be pulled out for service.	
1	Quebec	Dog friendly is nice! Very nice! (the dog says)	
1	ME: Bar Harbor	Excellent.	
1	PA	Great service.	
1	NY	It's the best.	
1	PA	Less access for private vehicles, expand Island Explorer fleet, increase the variety of stops.	
1	CT	Need a bus lane at the gate for tickets near Sand Beach.	
1	ME: Bar Harbor	You're the best.	
2	FL		Don't stop.

Island Explorer 2023 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

2	Bulgaria		Don't stop.
2	GA		Excellent choice!
2	ME: Manchester	This is our first year using the service. We couldn't be happier about it. Great service with great staff!	Fantastic contribution - shows that L.L.Bean cares about its Maine communities.
2	IL	More frequent. Split #2 into two routes.	Give less to Trump and more to the parks!
2	KY	We waited 20 minutes to get on the bus at the hotel. Never saw a schedule. Driver never spoke.	Good job! Great service!
2	FL	Excellent, convenient service. #2 bus could do with more frequent service from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Great community service!
2	RI	This is an excellent service. It's one reason why we plan on coming back.	It's great.
2	CO	Great way to get around! So much better than driving!	It's nice to see local businesses giving back.
2	MA	I think this is a beautiful bus ride. The bus driver is delightful.	It's very nice of L.L.Bean to get us free bus rides.
2	OH	Wish routes started earlier and ended later. We had to drive to SWH one afternoon so we could come home after 8 from lighthouse/Ship Harbor hiking area.	It's wonderful.
2	NC	Great service! Save the planet.	Love L.L.Bean, great to see them give to the outdoors.
2	ND	Very helpful.	Love L.L.Bean.
2	ME: Bar Harbor	Slow down between Cadillac Gate and Jordon Pond.	Much appreciated.
2	NJ	Just got here - new to this. Like all so far.	Nice.
2	SC	This morning @ Regency, we watched the bus drive past @7:55 am on Highway 3. Watching in the Altec APP (MyStop) the bus then made stops @ Acadia Inn and Village Green before returning to the Regency @ 8:15. Three families who had whale watching tours @ 8:30 were late!	Supportive, in favor.
2	Germany	Please less AC. Perfect entering in front of hotel-don't stop!	Thank you for keeping cars out of the park!
2	SC		Thank you for making Bar Harbor an enjoyable easy place to explore.
2	MO	Great service, I'd highly recommend.	Thank you, L.L.Bean.
2	FL	Jordan Pond from the Village Green. Enjoy buses to two towns, SWH & NEH and especially Jordan Pond.	Thank you, thank you. Love the buses.
2	PA	Everyone is so nice, helpful, and just awesome. We always feel safe on the Explorer.	Thank you!
2	Quebec		Thank you!
2	ME: Biddeford		Thank you!

Island Explorer 2023 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

2	MI		Thank you!
2	Croatia		Thank you!
2	GA		Thank you! We shop at L.L.Bean often and more because of their support for ANP and the bus.
2	Nova Scotia	This is an amazing service!	Thank you!!
2	IL	Great service. Don't have to bother with the car.	Thank you.
2	MN		Thank you.
2	CO		Thank you. Appreciate it!
2	CO		Thank you. Excellent service.
2	PA	Very helpful.	Thanks!
2	MN		Thanks!
2	FL	I think it's wonderful.	That's great! I buy L.L.Bean too!
2	Jamaica	It is a very efficient information app to use.	They are doing absolutely great jobs for Bar Harbor residents, guests, everyone. Keep up the good work.
2	VA	Awesome service! Thank you!	This is awesome! We will continue to shop L.L.Bean!
2	DE	Very convenient. Thank you.	Very grateful. L.L.Bean MC holder and shopper.
2	MD	We visit Bar Harbor/Acadia every other year with our family. We love the ease and availability to get to the park and Bar Harbor. Makes our visit more fun and less stressful.	Wonderful investment that serves the community ensuring the highest use and access for visitors and residents.
2	PA	Great service. Drivers helpful, some with great humor.	Wonderful. I love L.L.Bean products. Thank you, L.L.Bean!!
2	CA	Sometimes it did not come every 15 minutes on Eden 2 when it should have.	Yay!
2	Turkey	Bus hours may end later at night.	
2	IL	Electric buses.	
2	Hungary	I like it.	
2	Bulgaria	If the bus is running late it should be posted! Once I had to wait 30 minutes in the sun and two of the buses didn't show up! 7:15 am is perfect for me.	
2	Turkey	Offer rides until 12:00 a.m.	
2	MA	This is a wonderful bus. Thank you so much!	
2	IL	This option is great. Hope you will convert to electric soon.	
2	MN	Very helpful.	
2	MO	Wonderful service. Thank you!	
3	VA	Sometimes a bus will arrive five minutes after another number bus just left and won't be back for two hours.	Amazing!

Island Explorer 2023 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

3	NC	Love it! Does it run on gas or electric? Hoping it's electric or hybrid.	Awesome! Definitely cuts down on traffic. Love to park our car and not have to worry about driving.
3	NY	Island Explorer employee was very helpful and friendly.	Awesome!!
3	TX	Add bus schedule to app. WI-FI service on the bus to check other routes on app. Route placard in place of one of the L.L.Bean placards just to see all the routes. Would have been great knowing that I didn't need a park pass if I used the bus to enter the park since no one checked bus riders.	But system out to Bass Harbor (rode yesterday) was a pleasant surprise -- would not have taken if we'd have had to pay. Thanks L.L.Bean for offsetting the ride costs.
3	Quebec	It's nice and convenient for tourists who don't want to use cars or RV's to get around.	Cool.
3	CO	Wonderful service to provide for travelers. Very easy and convenient to use. Love that everything, including the park and buses, are dog friendly.	Excellent way to promote the brand and give back to the community and environment.
3	VA	A few more stops at Welcome Center back to Village Green.	Fantastic.
3	Quebec		Good.
3	SC		Great job!
3	NY		Great partnership. Wonderful service.
3	PA		Great that L.L.Bean supports NPS. Will buy L.L.Bean products.
3	OH		It is a great thing.
3	ME: Bangor	More explanation of the process for beginners would be helpful. But our hotel staff was knowledgeable.	It's great!
3	PA	Clearer markings for routes / times within the park. It can be confusing coming off a trail to find / recognize bus pick-up.	Keep it coming, L.L.Bean! GREAT INVESTMENT!
3	NY	Noticed the ads online when planning our vacation -- wanted to reduce our carbon footprint if only a little -- one less car in the park!	Kudos to L.L.Bean. Thank you to them and Island Explorer.
3	Quebec	Excellent service.	Lots of individual cars. Lots of traffic, not good for nature.
3	MA	Excellent! Thank you!	Love L.L.Bean! Thank you!
3	NY	It's our first ride but really appreciate the option due to lack of parking at Jordan Pond we experienced yesterday. It is also allowing us to do a one-way hike today instead of an out-and-back.	Much appreciated!

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3	KS	I've loved it. This is more a request, not speaking to a deficiency. We rented a car for one evening so that we could do some sort of sunset activity. With the bus schedule, you have to go do final outings at like 4 to catch rides in at 6. A couple more evening routes would be awesome.	Our thanks. L.L.Bean's support makes me more likely to buy their products.
3	FL		Really appreciate it!! Very helpful & accessible to everyone, helps the environment and keeps parking open.
3	NJ	Improvement in bus stop location signage along the roads in the park.	Thank you for helping to provide this service.
3	IA		Thank you for your donation to keep parks open.
3	NH	Thank you very much!	Thank you very much!
3	PA		Thank you, L.L.Bean
3	MI	List best stops for attractions (e.g. Thunder Hole, stop for Gorham Mountain loop). List minor stops in addition to major stops. Run later, even if reduced frequency. Fix the pre-recorded announcements	Thank you!
3	PA	More parking at Visitor Center.	Thank you!
3	MA	Thank you for the Island Explorer which provided so many more opportunities during our stay in Acadia!	Thank you!
3	MI	Thank you!	Thank you!
3	WI		Thank you!
3	MA		Thank you!
3	NJ		Thank you! Essential service for us.
3	PA	Difficult juggling, but well done!	Thank you! What a wonderful charitable cause!
3	NJ	Map looks like a newspaper. It should be easily seen as a schedule.	Thank you.
3	VA	Very happy to have this convenient bus service to reach hiking trails in Acadia so we don't have to drive and park a car in the National Park. Very friendly drivers.	Thank you. Great service.
3	WI		Thanks to L.L.Bean. Excellent corporate responsibility. We really enjoyed this service.
3	MA	Great service, especially in busy season -- saves us from driving and trying to find parking.	That's fantastic -- thank you!
3	TX	Natural gas bus.	They are wonderful. Wish I didn't see so much on political climate change. If you feel that way, go to natural gas buses.

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3	OH	This is such a wonderful service to provide for visitors (and locals)! I just said to my husband this morning how amazing it is to have this available... and at no charge!!! Buses are super clean and drivers have been wonderful!	They should be commended for such a generous contribution. And this will definitely motivate us to support their company.
3	TN		Very impressed. They are invested in maintaining accessibility and maintenance of the park, which seems aligned with their customers' values.
3	NY	Might be nice to have an earlier one in the morning to meet the Eden one. A later one from Echo Lake would be good and maybe one to the ferry to Cranberry Isles as we struggled to park there. No complaints though. Love this service.	Very thankful to L.L.Bean. Great way to give back locally and definitely makes me feel good about shopping there. I would imagine the cost is even more than \$4 million, so if they can spare any more, please do!
3	MD		Very useful.
3	TN	Very convenient. Staff is very helpful.	We think it's great!
3	NY	Love this!! 100% recommend!	Well, the company is worth over a billion dollars, so 4 millions doesn't seem like so much.
3	UK	Fantastic service and brilliant offer for tourists.	
3	Ontario	Fun tour.	
3	MA	Good services. People are good and friendly.	
3	MA	If the bus is filled to capacity, why does the driver have to wait for the scheduled departure?	
3	Quebec	It's super and we love it! We will recommend it to all of our friends in Quebec!	
3	PA	More parking areas for bus pick up.	
3		More parking at Visitor Center.	
3	NY	Perhaps an earlier bus to get to the trails earlier in the morning.	
3	NY	Thank you for being dog friendly.	
4	ME: Mount Desert	Service to Pretty Marsh would be nice! Explore adjustable bike racks for different bike types. Correct schedule heading for #11 bus.	
4	MD	1Kudos to L.L.Bean.	Kudos to L.L.Bean.
4	NC	Have bus schedule papers offered at every ANP campground. (Due to infrequency of cell phone service, we could not access on our phones.) Or display a map at all bus stops (considering limited reception to use digital version.)	Awesome!
4	AR		Awesome!

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4	VA	Great service!	Good for them!
4	NJ	It's great considering how crowded the park is now. Schedule was confusing, but we understand it now.	Good job. You rock.
4	NJ		Great!
4	OH		Great!! Amazing shuttle buses!
4	PA	You should not pack the bus!	Great.
4	Ontario		How fantastic!
4	MA		I think it's awesome! It's such a beautiful park!
4	NY		It is thoroughly appreciated and encourages me to stop by the Maine store on my way home.
4	MA	Awesome possum!	It makes us happy to buy L.L.Bean products. Great equipment, packs, and clothes.
4	WA	More frequent buses would encourage people to use the service more, especially during peak times of day.	It's a wonderful service, but people may not use it if it isn't convenient enough.
4	Quebec	Great Idea! Less cars in the park.	Keep going with your donation, folks!
4	CA	Great service although visitor parking is a nightmare if you get here late.	Kudos to L.L.Bean.
4	ME: W. Baldwin	Bus scheduling seemed confusing? BUT, so much more convenient to JUST use the bus. Thank you, we've appreciated it.	Less cars, better for environment in the park.
4	Israel	Friendly drivers. Not enough buses.	Many thanks!!!
4	MA		Many thanks.
4	PA		Neat.
4	MD		Nice.
4	MA	More buses. Manual or electronic signs to indicate full buses. Tally clickers for drivers to keep track of available seats.	Thanks!
4	IN		Thank you for your contribution. It makes me think even more favorably of your company. I really like your products.
4	MA	Service is excellent/	Thank you very much!
4	UT		Thank you, L.L.Bean!
4	CT	What a wonderful way to see the park! Extremely relaxing, convenient, and environmentally friendly. We hope this service is offered for years to come.	Thank you, L.L.Bean! It is nice to see a local company supporting its community.
4	VA	Thanks for making it free! Suggestions: audible information while on the bus.	Thank you, L.L.Bean!!
4	NC		Thank you!
4	TX		Thank you!
4	NC		Thank you!

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4	QUEBEC		Thank you!
4	MI	Great bus ride, easy to find the correct bus.	Thanks for preserving Acadia's beauty!
4	CT	Awesome.	Thanks, L.L.Bean.
4	PA	More buses.	Thanks!
4	TX	Need more frequent buses on popular routes during high traffic times, especially the Loop road, maybe every 15-20 minutes.	Thanks!
4	PA	Excellent.	Thanks.
4	VA	More parking at Hulls Cove Visitor Center would help.	Thanks.
4	MA	Bus left earlier than schedule said, but that was ok for us!	That is great!
4	MI	More frequent buses.	They contributed a lot of money. Thank you!
4	NH		Way to go, L.L.Bean!!
4	KS	More assistants at locations (stops). Many assistants at Visitors Center which was helpful. Too few or none at some of the other stops on the Loop Road during our visit to Acadia.	We are supporters (consumers of L.L.Bean products and merchandise). We appreciate their corporate generosity.
4	NY	Updated bike racks to accommodate fatter tires and bigger wheels (i.e. 29 inches). The gravel roads are great for bigger tires, so it will be well-loved.	We love L.L.Bean's commitment!
4	NY		We love L.L.Bean's products. Thank you.
4	CA		Wonderful! More companies should do this at other national parks.
4	TX	Update schedule. Loop 4 stops at Thunder Hole but it's not on the schedule. Mics for buses.	Wonderful! Thank you for helping to protect our environment and our parks!
4	MA	Uncomfortable with dogs onboard.	Yay!
4	VA	A couple more stops on Route4, like Bubble Rock and other trailheads.	
4	MI	Survey is too long.	
4	VT	Thanks.	
5	NY		Awesome!
5	FL	What a wonderful service! Truly enhances our stay at MDI.	Awesome! Makes me even more of a dedicated customer!
5	NJ	Very good.	Great!
5	MS	Update schedule.	Great.
5	IN		It was a good decision.
5	Germany	The drivers go out of their way to help us reach our destinations.	It's an excellent way to protect Acadia and the environment in general. Awesome!

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5	NE	As a first time visitor, it took a while to figure out the bus interchanges to go to my chosen places.	Make it \$8 million at the least. Or add a zero.
5	MD	Had to wait another half hour for #1 bus. Several times. The second and third buses were also full. More #1 buses would be useful and would make sense.	Nice job!
5	NJ	Confetti cannons!!	Pretty awesome! Would be huge if they went to NPF too!
5	MD		Thank you, L.L.Bean.
5	DC		Thank you!
5	ME: Hallowell	Having more bus-only roads to reduce congestion. Drivers are polite, friendly, and helpful.	Thank you!!
5	PA		Thank you!!
5	NJ	Add more buses.	That's a beautiful thing. Maine is amazing.
5	NH	The buses are mostly on time. Had to wait one hour once. Heavy traffic.	That's awesome!
5	MO	Parking near Jordan Pond House is a nightmare. You should do a better job advertising that these shuttles are free and easy to use. I didn't see any signs for that along the road.	Think that's great!
5	WI		This is awesome!
5	IL		Thumbs up.
5	MA	Perhaps make it a bit easier to get to the Village Green from Jordan Pond.	Very generous and much appreciated.
5	OH		We will support them in future purchases.
5	VA	You are doing an excellent job! Thank you.	You are doing an excellent job! Thank you.
5	NY	30 passenger cap? Many standing.	
5	TX	Better online information on how to use the bus system.	
5	VA	Make it \$8 million at the least. Or add a zero.	
5	France	More buses.	
5	NY	More frequent service at peak times. Survey question 14 should ask for distance; I'm four miles away from the Village Green, an easy walk for me, but not for all.	
5	VA	You are doing an excellent job! Thank you.	
6	FL	Drivers and staff are so helpful and patient.	A huge thank you!

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6	ME: Bar Harbor	Get rid of the L.L.Bean name on buses, schedules, bus stop signs, and especially eliminate the very long L.L.Bean blurb on the printed schedules--otherwise I am very happy with the Island Explorer.	Advertising for L.L.Bean (its name is advertising!) Is very obnoxious--way too much! The many contributors to the bus system should be prominently acknowledged, with percentages of their contribution to the system specified. L.L.Bean seems to have purchased advertising for themselves.
6	ME		Appreciate it. Fewer cars and more buses. Ban cars in BH.
6	NC	Excellent service. Ambassadors are very helpful. Schedule is very easy to understand except NE Harbor schedule. Bus drivers very friendly, especially NE Harbor on this trip.	Excellent. Huge support to the Park. It is pristine and so many people enjoy it. Friends of Acadia does an excellent job. Thank you, L.L.Bean.
6	PA	Not sure if this is possible, but a bus from and to the airport could be really great; although I do recognize that the Downeast bus also does do that!	I love it!~ Thank goodness for companies who have good hearts like them.
6	MO	Route 6 driver very nice and helpful with helping to understand schedule. Need an easier to read and understand bus schedule. For someone new to the Island it is not easy to understand. I rode the bus round trip from NEH to NEH - not arriving to where I wanted to go.	It's an excellent way to save and protect both the island and park. Thank you, L.L.Bean, for your pledge.
6	PA	This is a great service, but sometimes later connections are missed because of buses being late.	Thank you L.L.Bean! We truly couldn't see the area without the Island Explorer buses!
6	PA	Love - love the service. Reduces stress -- just leave car at house and go. Drivers and staff are very friendly and helpful. Ce can safely gaze at the scenery while on the bus and meet people from all over the world.	Thank you! We shop at L.L.Bean often and more because of their support for ANP and the bus.
6	Netherlands	Bus map is confusing with too many colors in a small area. Bus drivers are very friendly but could give better advice about which lines to take / where to stop.	Thank you. Great service.
6	ME: Bar Harbor	I have used the bus only twice. I am happy with the service.	That's very nice of them. Thank you, L.L.Bean.
6	FL	Add a route to / from the Bangor Airport.	They are awesome!
6	ME: East Millinocket	WIFI on the bus. Better AC.	They are awesome.
6	ME: Bar Harbor	It would be nice to have a longer / year round bus season. This could open up job opportunities as well as create a more sustainable community. I believe residents would be willing to pay.	This is great!

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6	ME: Bar Harbor	I think the buses are top notch! ALL THE TIME!	TRULY UNBELIEVABLE!
6	MA	The bus service is amazing, goes everywhere, friendly drivers, great schedule and island coverage.	Very generous, thank you, L.L.Bean!
6	DC	Outstanding service for visitors. Thank you.	
7	OH	We found all staff courteous and helpful. (We had a great time with "Bob" the driver!) Thank you all for caring so much. We appreciate you all!	Great for L.L.Bean! They have their priorities straight and they are good to their employees.
7	FL	More buses to SW Harbor.	Great!
7	ME: SWH		I think it's awesome they did that.
7	SD	The bus service is very good. However you need more buses to go to Trenton. Two hours between runs is excessive.	It's great. We supported L.L.Bean for their contribution by visiting the outlet shop in Ellsworth.
7	SC	Charge more for parking in Bar Harbor to get people to use IE. Subsidize IE with the increase in revenue. Also ease traffic.	Super!
7	ME: Portland	We hate to fight the traffic. This is vacation.	Thank you.
7	TX		Thank you.
7			Thank you.
7	ME: Burlington		Thank you.
7	PA		That is a great cause and very useful to the community and tourists.
7	MA		That's nothing for them.
7	Croatia		They are awesome!
7		Clarity of how to access or depart bus along the route. This is a wonderful service.	This is a big reason I faithfully support L.L.Bean.
7	TX	Perfect in every way!	We thank them!
7	ME: Mount Desert	Its helpful to get to work.	
7	FL	Please consider bike racks with longer wheel base for newer gravel bikes.	
9	ME: Bar Harbor	I really appreciate this service! It is very helpful for those that don't have vehicles, or can't drive themselves. I think this service is improving our community.	I am not very familiar with L.L.Bean, so I don't have a comment for that question.
9	MA	Love dog friendly. Add to the tabloid where you can park for free (e.g. MDIHS, ferry terminal).	Love L.L.Bean. Have an L.L.Bean card to suggest stopping at Freeport on the way home.

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10	CT	Extend service to include earlier and later times to/from so visitors can get to early departure boat tours (etc.) and later evening entertainment. I'm volunteering at Blackwoods and have no other means of travel.	Awesome!
10	PA	A bit more frequent.	Great.
10	VT	More bike racks.	I am happy to hear that.
10	VA	More consistency among drivers as to policy on unpublished stops. Some drivers weren't as flexible. One driver was snarky about the #4 back Blackwoods Campground stop.	I think it's wonderful that they support the bus. Clipboards would be helpful for survey. Thank you.
10	PA	So much easier & stress-free way to get around Acadia!	Super grateful for this service & the ability it gives people to see the beauty of Acadia.
10	ME		Thank you to L.L.Bean!
10	WI	Your map is hard to understand. The colors are too closely matched.	Thank you!
10	IN		That's wonderful!
10	CT	This greatly simplified our trip and the stress of getting to unfamiliar places.	Very nice of them.
10	FL	As a seasonal worker without a car, I really appreciate the Island Explorer service!	
	OH	All staff are super helpful!	Thank you, L.L.Bean!!
	NY	Thank you for the service. Staff are very helpful!!	