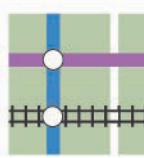


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DECEMBER 22, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: Paul Murphy
From: Tom Crikelair
Subject: 2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey
CC: John Kelly, Stephanie Clement

This memo presents the results of an onboard passenger survey distributed on Island Explorer buses in August of 2025. The analysis includes comparisons with surveys from past years.

The survey form and a transcription of passenger comments are attached as appendices.

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 Methodology and Response
- Section 2 Group Size and Age of Survey Respondents
- Section 3 Passenger Comments and Suggestions
- Section 4 Residency and Overnight Lodging
- Section 5 Trip Purpose
- Section 6 Visitor Travel Modes
- Section 7 Park Entry Permits
- Section 8 Transfer Activity
- Section 9 Parking Locations
- Section 10 Number of Years Utilizing the Island Explorer
- Section 11 Service Evaluation
- Section 12 Crowded Buses
- Section 13 What Helped You Decide?
- Section 14 Multiyear Trends
- Section 15 Comparison of Fall and Summer Survey Results

- Appendix A Survey Form
- Appendix B 2025 Passenger Comments

2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

1. Methodology and Response

The onboard survey was carried out on Tuesday and Wednesday, August 12 and 13, 2025. 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 2025 survey effort. Groups were handed a survey form by a 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 2025, 500 surveys were distributed, and 441 completed surveys were returned, for a response rate of 88.2%.

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 2025 SURVEY AND RIDERSHIP DISTRIBUTION

Route	Survey Respondents	Survey Distribution	Ridership Distribution
Gateway Center	101	18%	17%
Eden Street	91	16%	26%
Sand Beach	79	14%	9%
Loop Road	103	18%	24%
Jordan Pond	78	14%	10%
Northeast Harbor	30	5%	3%
Southwest Harbor	48	8%	3%
Schoodic	0	0%	1%
Trenton	12	2%	3%
Blackwoods	20	4%	2%
Tremont	3	0.5%	0.3%
Total	565	100%	100%

Figure 1 shows bus routes utilized by groups participating in the 2025 survey. The total number of groups is greater than 441 because some groups used more than one route for their trip. Figure 1 also shows the distribution of 2025 summer-season ridership by route.

2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

The survey sample included a lower percentage of Eden Street riders when compared with the actual distribution of ridership by route. 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 2025, the 441 participating groups included a total of 1,185 individuals. The average group size was 2.7.

FIGURE 2 AVERAGE GROUP SIZE

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Surveys	490	532	477	464	451	462	227	464	466	456	441
Average Group	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	3.1	2.2	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.7

Figure 3 shows the distribution of survey groups by group size. Groups of five or more individuals made up 12% of survey respondents during the 2025 summer survey. Groups of five or more made up 15% of survey respondents during the 2024 summer survey and 14% of survey respondents during the 2023 summer survey.

FIGURE 3 SIZE OF PARTICIPATING GROUPS

Group sizes	Summer 2023 Count	Summer 2023 Percent	Summer 2024 Count	Summer 2024 Percent	Summer 2025 Count	Summer 2025 Percent
One	99	21%	73	16%	77	18%
Two	167	36%	206	45%	198	45%
Three	49	11%	37	8%	51	12%
Four	87	19%	69	15%	58	13%
Five	28	6%	37	8%	30	7%
Six	14	3%	14	3%	6	1%
Seven	7	2%	5	1%	11	3%
Eight or more	12	3%	15	3%	6	1%
	463	100%	456	100%	437	100%

2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

In the summer of 2025, 21% of group members were retired adults, 59% were non-retired adults, and 20% were children below the age of 18. In the summer of 2024, 20% of group members were retired adults, 57% were non-retired adults, and 23% 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>	<i>Summer 2024</i>	<i>Summer 2025</i>
Retired Adults	16%	51%	15%	18%	20%	21%
Other Adults	58%	45%	61%	58%	57%	59%
Children	27%	4%	23%	24%	23%	20%

In August of 2025, 27% of participating groups included at least one child. In the 2024 survey, 32% of participating groups included at least one child. In 2023, 34% 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 Connecticut on the Eden Street bus said, “We are so grateful for the Island Explorer.” A visitor from Pennsylvania on the Gateway bus said, “Thank you for making this easy and having such friendly and informative drivers!” A Gateway rider from Maryland said, “Park at the Welcome Center and bus all day!”

A visitor from Massachusetts on the Loop Road bus said, “Thank you so much for providing this service. It has greatly improved the accessibility of areas that have little to no parking. We really appreciate it!”

A New Jersey resident on the Gateway bus said, “This is by far the best shuttle bus system of any of the 15+ National Parks we’ve visited. It has made the Park and area incredibly accessible.”

A Connecticut resident on the Loop Road bus said, “Handicapped accessibility was MUCH appreciated and the drivers and staff were kind, patient, and helpful. Many thanks!”

Survey respondents had special praise for Island Explorer Ambassadors. Ambassadors are Island Explorer employees stationed at busy transit stops to provide guidance and assistance to Islands Explorer passengers.

A visitor from England on the Loop Road bus said, “The Ambassadors are very friendly and organized!” A Loop Road passenger from Michigan said, “Your Ambassadors have been welcoming, knowledgeable, and proactive. This made our visit to the park so much easier.”

2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

A visitor from Florida on the Sand Beach bus said, “Just wanted to say that one of the Ambassadors was very helpful and went out of her way to point us in the right direction.”

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 Indiana on the Gateway bus said, “Thanks, L.L.Bean. This bus made our visit to Bar Harbor so easy and fun.”

A local resident said, “Thank you, L.L.Bean, for your commitment to Acadia National Park and for providing an incredibly beneficial community service.” A visitor from North Yarmouth, Maine on the Northeast Harbor bus wrote, “Thank you very much for supporting this service. We have sailed to MDI for many summers and have used the buses previous years. Boaters really appreciate and use this service.”

A Sand Beach route from Gorham, Maine, said, “We’re loyal L.L.Bean customers because of this commitment to Maine and the outdoors!” A visitor from Washington, DC, on the Southwest Harbor bus said, “L.L.Bean rules! We’re going to stop in Freeport now.”

SUGGESTIONS

Survey respondents used the comment section to make a variety of suggestions for improving Island Explorer service. Many people asked for more frequent service. A visitor from New York said, “Need more Gateway buses for large crowds.” A resident of Gorham, Maine, said, “We love it! Only wish it started earlier in the season and was more frequent to Echo Lake / Southwest Harbor.”

An Arizona resident on the Sand Beach bus said, “Need buses to come more frequently to Narrows Too.” A different Narrows Too camper said, “Buses are great—better than a car! But they don’t run early enough to get to a.m. tours, and they don’t run late enough for dining out. But we managed it and had a great stay.”

A visitor from Georgia asked for “more ways to get back to Southwest Harbor between 2 and 4 pm.” A visitor from Pennsylvania said, “The #7 [Southwest Harbor] route needs more times, especially at dinner time. A 3-hour gap from 4 to 7 is too much.” A Southwest Harbor resident wrote, “I wish the SWH bus ran more frequently, but I understand it’s a long route.”

A Florida resident said, “It would be nice to have more extra buses to handle overload conditions, especially for Routes 4 [Loop Road] and 5 [Jordan Pond].”

A number of people asked for direct service between the Jordan Pond House and the Village Green. Several respondents pointed out that the Island Explorer app shows the Southwest Harbor bus stop in the wrong location.

2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

Other suggestions and requests included:

- Earlier morning service between the Village Green and the Visitor Center.
- Stronger air conditioning.
- Island Explorer service to the summit of Cadillac Mountain.
- A QR code for downloading the Island Explorer app.
- Weekend buses to the Bangor Airport [extending the current Monday through Friday schedule].
- A designated and clearly marked bus stop at Fabri picnic area.
- Loop Road service extended until 8:00 p.m.
- More parking spaces at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center.
- Having the Bar Harbor-to-Ellsworth bus start at the Village Green instead of originating at Kebo Street.
- A bus stop at the Bubbles trailhead.
- Someone to direct traffic at the entrance to the parking lot at Sand Beach “so buses can get through.” (“Yesterday a bus was stuck at Sand Beach for 45 minutes because of cars waiting to park.”)

4. Residency and Overnight Lodging

In the 2025 survey, 14% 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 11% who said that they are summer residents. The distribution of local residents, summer residents, and non-resident visitors for the ten most recent Island Explorer surveys is presented in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4 LOCAL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Year-round	8%	9%	6%	7%	5%	3%	5%	3%	4%	3%
Summer residents	12%	12%	11%	10%	9%	11%	10%	12%	8%	11%
Visitors	81%	79%	83%	84%	87%	86%	85%	85%	88%	86%

Participants were asked to identify their hometown and state. The results are presented in Figure 5. Twenty-five percent of groups participating in the 2025 survey live year-round in New England, while 28% live in Mid-Atlantic States.

For many years, Canadian groups have accounted for between 5% and 6% of summer-season Island Explorer survey groups. In 2025, 1% of survey groups said they were Canadian residents.

2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

FIGURE 5 YEAR-ROUND RESIDENCE BY REGION

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mid Atlantic	27%	27%	31%	25%	27%	21%	32%	23%	25%	28%
Maine	11%	15%	12%	13%	15%	6%	8%	6%	6%	8%
Other New England	18%	15%	16%	15%	15%	3%	9%	12%	16%	16%
Midwest	8%	12%	11%	10%	12%	21%	15%	18%	17%	13%
Southeast	12%	12%	12%	17%	12%	21%	15%	17%	16%	16%
West	7%	5%	6%	6%	5%	13%	6%	8%	8%	7%
Canada	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	1%	5%	6%	5%	1%
Other international	11%	8%	8%	6%	8%	14%	9%	9%	9%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Combined New England	29%	30%	28%	27%	30%	9%	17%	17%	22%	25%
Eastern Europe	3%	3%	1%	2%	3%	0%	2%	2%	2%	1.4%

Survey participants were asked: “What town will you stay in tonight?” In 2025, 71% of bus riders said they planned to stay overnight in Bar Harbor, while 10% were spending the night in other Mount Desert Island towns, 4% were staying in Trenton, and 1% was staying in the Schoodic area. The percentage staying in “other Hancock County towns” was 10%, while 4% stayed elsewhere in Maine. Town-by-town results for the most recent ten surveys are presented in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6 LOCATION OF OVERNIGHT LODGING

Town	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Bar Harbor	75%	75%	72%	64%	65%	54%	65%	68%	69%	71%
Mount Desert	7%	11%	8%	10%	8%	3%	5%	2%	7%	5%
Southwest Harbor	7%	4%	6%	7%	6%	0.4%	6%	6%	5%	4%
Other Hancock County	3%	4%	8%	4%	6%	2%	8%	9%	8%	10%
Other Maine	3%	2%	2%	4%	4%	1%	7%	4%	4%	4%
Tremont	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	0.4%	1%	4%	2%	1%
Trenton	3%	2%	1%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Schoodic area	1%	0.2%	0.4%	1%	0%	0.4%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Nova Scotia	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Local Islands	1%	0.8%	0.4%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Cruise ship					4%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Local MDI towns	94%	94%	90%	91%	86%	62%	82%	85%	88%	86%

Figure 7 shows distribution of overnight lodging by type of accommodation from 2013 through 2025. In 2025, 24% of Island Explorer groups stayed in campgrounds, while 42% stayed in motels, inns, or bed and breakfasts. Short-term rentals and Airbnb's accounted for 16% of survey groups.

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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

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Campground	20%	23%	23%	32%	27%	14%	24%	24%	22%	24%
Motel, Inn, B&B	43%	41%	39%	31%	40%	32%	41%	41%	38%	42%
Year-round residence	10%	11%	8%	9%	10%	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%
Summer residence	8%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	10%	11%	8%	10%
Short-term rental	14%	9%	16%	12%	7%	5%	17%	17%	21%	16%
Sailboat or Yacht	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	0%	2%	2%	4%	2%
Cruise Ship	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	35%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	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 2025, 26% of participating groups said that their lodging was located within easy walking distance of the Bar Harbor Village Green transit hub. During recent years, this number has varied from a low of 26% in 2025 and 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 2025 were “hiking” and “sightseeing,” with 38% and 25% of total responses respectively. “Work” was cited by 9%. Recreational purposes (hiking, biking, swimming, and boating) were chosen by a combined 46% of survey groups. Percentages for “biking” since 2019 are lower than previous years because surveys have not been distributed on the Bicycle Express since 2018.

FIGURE 8 TRIP PURPOSE

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Work	10%	10%	10%	8%	7%	9%	10%	8%	7%	9%
Hiking	31%	32%	40%	29%	34%	25%	42%	39%	40%	38%
Biking	18%	11%	10%	10%	7%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Swimming	4%	5%	3%	4%	6%	0%	3%	3%	1%	4%
Boating	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Shopping	6%	7%	4%	6%	6%	5%	7%	5%	7%	10%
Dining	4%	5%	4%	6%	6%	4%	4%	6%	7%	6%
Sightseeing	20%	25%	24%	29%	32%	51%	26%	31%	27%	25%
Other	5%	5%	4%	6%	2%	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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6. Visitor Travel Modes

In 2025, 49% of visitor groups said they traveled to the region in an automobile without an attached trailer, 15% of visitors arrived in a recreational vehicle or in a car towing a trailer, and 32% arrived in the region on an airplane. Three percent arrived via sailboat or motorboat. Auto travel in 2025 was consistent with levels experienced in past summers. Airplane travel in the four most recent years has been higher than amounts reported earlier.

FIGURE 9 VISITOR TRAVEL MODES

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	<i>Fall 2019</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025
Car	64%	59%	61%	59%	53%	27%	59%	52%	55%	49%
RV or trailer	10%	16%	17%	21%	20%	14%	14%	16%	17%	15%
Airplane	16%	17%	18%	11%	17%	16%	24%	28%	23%	32%
Sailboat or yacht	4%	3%	2%	5%	3%	0%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Intercity bus	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Tour bus	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Cruise Ship	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	37%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

7. Park Entry Permits

In the August 2025 survey, 81% of all Island Explorer groups said they purchased an Acadia National Park entry permit. This is a 1% increase from 2024, a 2% increase from 2023, and a 8% drop from 2022.

FIGURE 10 DID YOU PURCHASE A PARK ENTRY PERMIT?

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	<i>Fall 2019</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025
YES	67%	70%	70%	70%	74%	80%	80%	84%	77%	89%	79%	80%	81%
NO	33%	30%	30%	30%	26%	20%	20%	16%	23%	11%	21%	20%	19%

Figure 11 shows the percentage of entry permit purchases for various user groups. In 2025, 88% of non-resident visitor groups purchased an entry pass. Only 22% of summer residents had passes. If individuals traveling for work are excluded, 35% of summer residents purchased passes.

In 2025, 92% of groups who said they would visit Acadia National Park on their bus ride had a permit. Fifty-four percent of bus riders who were not traveling to the park had a permit.

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FIGURE 11 PERCENT OF USER GROUPS WITH PARK ENTRY PERMITS

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Year-round residents	41%	59%	65%	50%	81%	89%	75%	*note	*note	*note
Summer residents	49%	40%	46%	51%	54%	38%	30%	31%	41%	22%
Visitors	75%	80%	86%	85%	87%	81%	89%	86%	85%	88%
Cruise ship passengers						79%				
Groups visiting ANP on this trip	80%	80%	90%	91%	91%	89%	94%	90%	89%	92%
Groups not visiting ANP on this trip	32%	32%	50%	54%	64%	44%	53%	53%	59%	54%

*Sample sizes were too small to yield meaningful results.

Figure 12 shows permit ownership by type of lodging. It shows that people staying in summer residences have been the least likely to have a permit. More than half of the respondents staying in “summer residences” were seasonal workers.

FIGURE 12 PERCENT WITH PARK PERMITS BY LODGING TYPE

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Campgrounds	83%	84%	88%	92%	91%	74%	89%	89%	86%	91%
Hotels	71%	77%	85%	81%	88%	74%	84%	82%	83%	88%
Inn or B&B	78%	84%	90%	89%	73%	100%	96%	91%	86%	85%
Weekly or Airbnb	79%	90%	93%	91%	70%	55%	100%	93%	95%	88%
Summer residence	39%	44%	44%	50%	62%	41%	30%	29%	47%	29%
Year-round residence	46%	64%	77%	56%	93%	100%	77%	*note	*note	*note
Sailboat or yacht	65%	50%	57%	50%	53%		71%	*note	*note	*note

*Sample sizes in 2023, 2024, and 2025 were too small to yield meaningful results.

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?

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Village Green	39%	34%	33%	30%	33%	44%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Loop Road	8%	9%	7%	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%	6%	4%
Visitor Center	34%	30%	34%	26%	27%	18%	26%	28%	22%	23%
ANP Campground	5%	7%	6%	6%	4%	1%	4%	3%	2%	2%
Online					9%	3%	45%	39%	46%	46%
Other	15%	20%	20%	33%	22%	31%	20%	24%	24%	24%

FIGURE 14 TYPES OF ENTRY PERMITS

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	Fall 2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
One-week	51%	42%	55%	50%	57%	30%	55%	51%	46%	55%
Full Season	10%	14%	13%	15%	7%	3%	20%	18%	20%	13%*
Senior Pass	22%	30%	27%	27%	25%	48%	19%	23%	24%	25%
Other	17%	14%	5%	8%	11%	19%	6%	9%	10%	7%

*In 2025, 5% were Acadia Annual Passes and 8% were Interagency Annual Passes.

8. Transfer Activity

Twenty-six percent of survey groups said they used more than one bus route to complete their trip. Fifteen percent of all groups transferred to or from the Sand Beach route, 15% transferred to or from the Loop Road route, and 12% transferred to or from the Jordan Pond route. Eleven percent of groups transferred to or from the Gateway route.

The most common transfer pair involved Routes 3 and 4 (Sand Beach and Loop Road), with 26 transfers. The second most common pair was Route 1 and 5 (Gateway and Jordan Pond), with 18 transfers. This was followed by Routes 1 and 3 (Gateway and Sand Beach) with 18 transfers, Routes 1 and 4 (Gateway and Loop Road) with 17, and routes 4 and 5 (Loop Road and Jordan Pond) with 16.

MOST COMMON TRANSFER PAIRS

Route Pair	Count	Transfer Locations
Routes 3 & 4	26	Sand Beach or Sieur de Monts
Routes 1 & 5	18	Hulls Cove Visitor Center
Routes 4 & 5	16	Jordan Pond House
Routes 1 & 3	18	Village Green
Routes 1 & 4	10	Hulls Cove Visitor Center

TRANSFER COUNTS: COMBINED TOTALS

ROUTES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	Total
1		1	7	7	5	1	3				24
2	2		5			1	1		2		11
3	2	3		12	1	1			2		21
4	3	4	14		7	1			3		32
5	13	1	11	9		1	1		1		37
6	2				1		1		1		5
7	2	1	2						1		6
8											0
9			1	1	1	1	2		1		7
10			3	2							5
11			1			2					3
Total	24	9	37	24	10	5	7	0	11	0	127

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9. Parking Locations

Participants were asked where they parked their cars or recreational vehicles. In August of 2025, 54% were parked at their hotel or campground, 4% 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 77% 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 19% of August 2025 survey groups. 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 2025.

FIGURE 15 WHERE IS YOUR CAR NOW?

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	<i>Fall 2019</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025
Lodging	54%	54%	53%	48%	57%	32%	52%	49%	49%	54%
Residence	14%	14%	12%	13%	6%	5%	6%	7%	6%	4%
Someone is using it	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
No car	13%	16%	13%	17%	17%	51%	16%	19%	16%	19%
Hulls Cove Visitor Center	5%	5%	13%	13%	13%	8%	18%	21%	21%	19%
Other ANP	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Bar Harbor street or lot	9%	6%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Other towns	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

For groups who parked their cars at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center, 63% said they had local overnight accommodations (MDI towns or Trenton), 32% were staying elsewhere in Hancock County, and 5% 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 2025, 80% 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?

	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	<i>Fall 2019</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025
1st year	68%	67%	66%	71%	74%	82%	80%	79%	75%	80%
Two years	8%	7%	11%	7%	7%	6%	5%	8%	8%	5%
3 or 4 years	8%	9%	8%	7%	7%	4%	3%	4%	5%	6%
5 or more	15%	17%	15%	15%	12%	8%	12%	10%	12%	10%

Excluding year-round and summer residents, 84% of visiting groups said that 2025 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 2025 are presented in Figure 17.

FIGURE 17: EVALUATION OF SERVICE QUALITY FOR 2025

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Buses are clean	92%	7%	1%	0%
Drivers are friendly and helpful	92%	7%	1%	0%
It is easy to find a seat	69%	21%	9%	1%
Buses are on time	69%	19%	10%	2%
Bus schedules are easy to find	80%	16%	4%	0%
Bus schedules are easy to understand	71%	22%	5%	1%
The frequency of service is convenient	65%	24%	10%	1%
The right destinations are served	75%	22%	3%	0%

Seat availability was of greatest concern on the Loop Road, Jordan Pond, and Blackwoods routes. On the Loop Road, 19% rated seat availability as “fair” and 1% as “poor.” On the Jordan Pond route, 16% of groups said seat availability was “fair” and 0% said “poor.” On Blackwoods, 14% said “fair” and 7% said “poor.”

12. Crowded Buses

Three recent surveys included 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 2025, only 65% of survey respondents answered this question. Of those who did respond, 37% of survey groups said they had to stand “once or twice,” 12% said they had to stand “several times,” and 51% said they had not been required to stand.

FIGURE 18: HAVE YOU BEEN REQUIRED TO STAND?

	2023	2024	2025
No	59%	62%	51%
Once or twice	32%	27%	37%
Several times	9%	11%	12%

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In 2025, 62% of survey respondents answered the question about waiting for another bus. Of those who did, 20% said they had been turned away by a full bus “once or twice,” 4% said this had happened “several times,” and 76% said they had not been turned away.

FIGURE 19: HAVE YOU BEEN REQUIRED TO WAIT FOR ANOTHER BUS?

	2023	2024	2025
No	87%	76%	76%
Once or twice	11%	22%	20%
Several times	2%	2%	4%

13. What Helped You Decide?

The 2025 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.

FIGURE 20: WHAT HELPED YOU DECIDE TO TRY THE ISLAND EXPLORER?

	Count	Percent of groups	Comments
NPS web site	80	20%	The NPS web site was selected by 36% of Blackwoods groups, 29% of Loop Road groups, and 28% of Sand Beach groups.
Hotel or campground web site	84	21%	Lodging web site was selected by 38% of Eden Street groups and 35% of Gateway Center groups.
IEX web site	69	17%	The Island Explorer web site was chosen by 36% of Northeast Harbor and 34% of Southwest Harbor groups.
IEX staff at transit hubs	85	21%	IEX support staff influenced 34% of Loop Road groups and 30% of Jordan Pond groups.
NPS Rangers	39	10%	Park Rangers helped 21% of Blackwoods groups, 16% of Jordan Pond, 14% of Loop Road, and 14% of Trenton.
Lodging staff	60	15%	Lodging staff helped 43% of Trenton groups and 32% of Eden Street groups.
Advice from friends	65	16%	23% of Northeast Harbor groups, 21% of Southwest Harbor groups, and 21%

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			of Gateway Center groups cited advice from friends.
IEX tabloid	75	19%	Nineteen percent of Island Explorer groups utilized the printed bus schedule to help make their decision. This was true for 32% of groups on the Southwest Harbor route.
Seeing others ride	40	10%	Ten percent of survey groups said they decided to use the shuttles after seeing others ride.
Seeing buses everywhere	70	18%	Eighteen percent cited “seeing buses everywhere.”
We tried driving but couldn’t park	48	12%	On the Gateway Center route, 19% of survey groups said they switched to the bus after experiencing difficulty finding places to park.

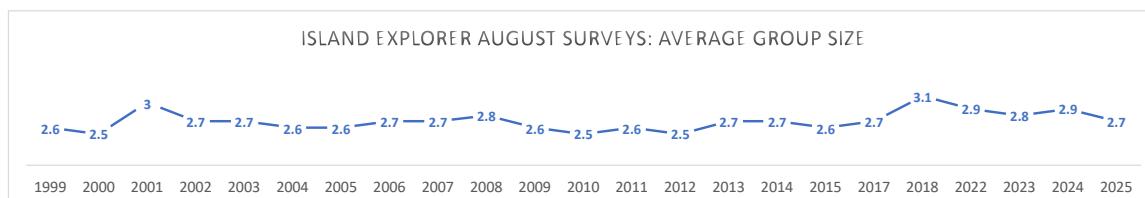
Most of the factors were chosen by between 15% and 20% of survey respondents. The two most popular were “Island Explorer staff at transit hubs” and “Hotel or campground web site.” Both items were selected by 21% of survey groups. This was followed by “NPS web site” with 20%, and “Island Explorer printed schedule” with 19%. “We tried driving but couldn’t park” was selected by 12% of all groups, and by 19% of groups on the Gateway route.

14. Multiyear Trends

In the years since the service was first introduced in 1999, the Island Explorer has administered twenty-four passenger 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 27 years, average group size for Island Explorer survey participants has varied from a low of 2.5 to a high of 3.1.

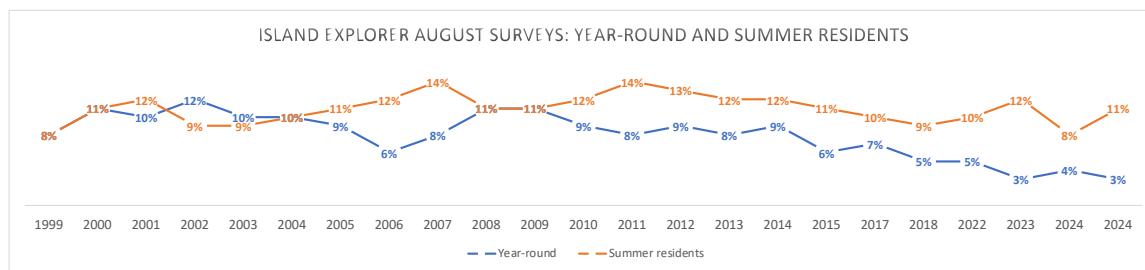


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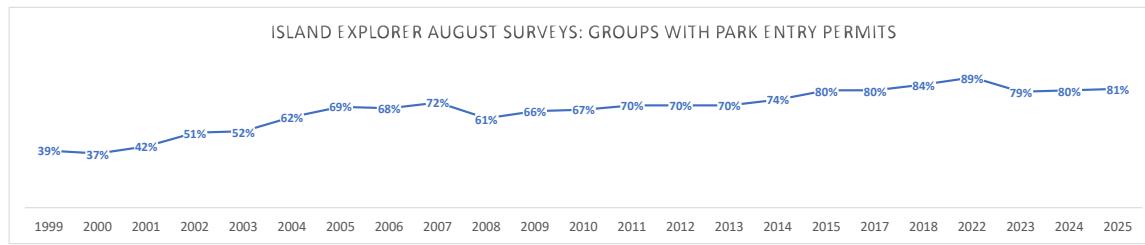
YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS AND SUMMER RESIDENTS

From 2000 to 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 and 2024, 3% and 4% of survey groups said they were year-round residents. In 2025, 3% of survey groups were year-round residents.

Between 8% 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 11% and 22%.



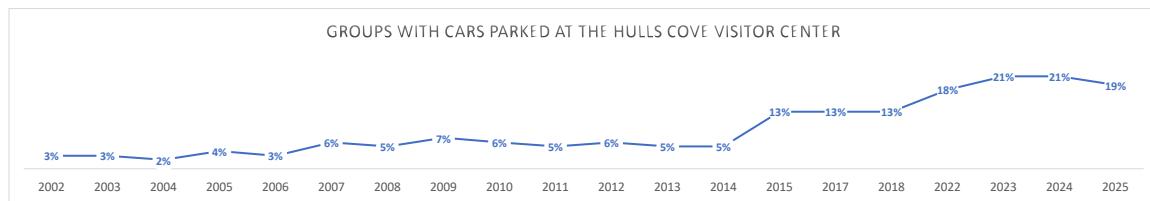
PARK ENTRY PERMITS



The percentage of groups with park entry permits increased steadily from 1999 to 2022. Despite this long-term increase, the percentage of all groups with entry permits decreased by 8 percentage points between 2022 and 2025, from 89% in 2022 to 81% in 2025.

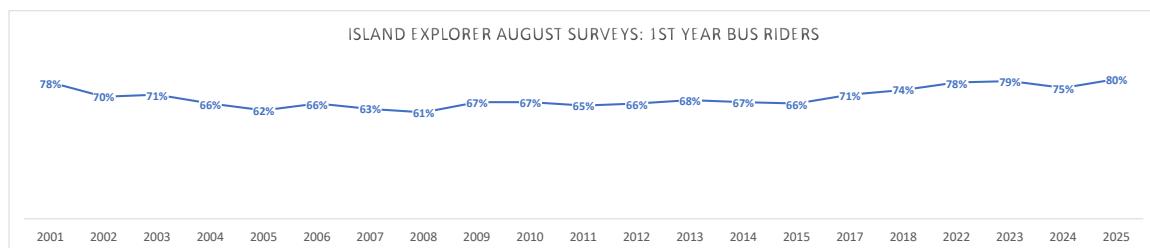
2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

PARKING AT THE HULLS COVE VISITOR CENTER



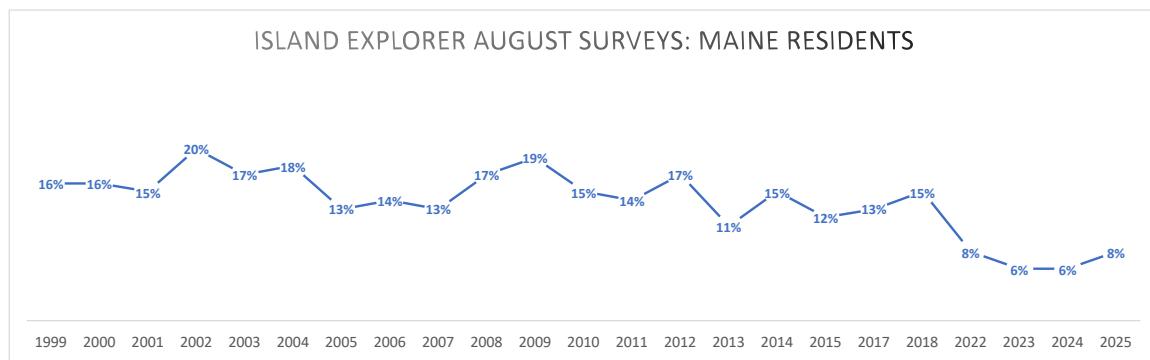
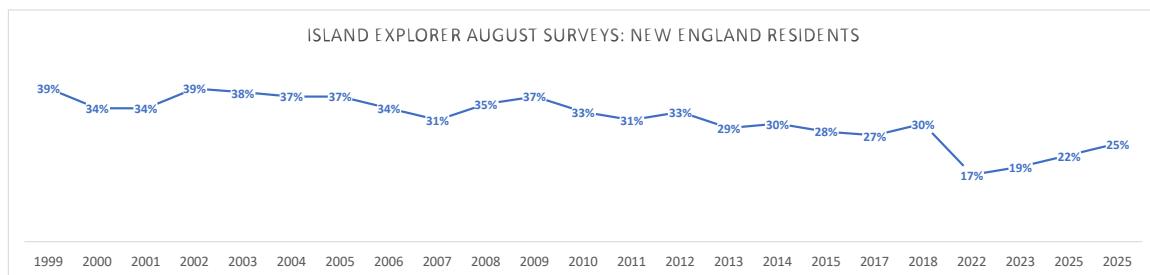
The percentage of survey groups who parked their cars at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center has increased significantly in recent years.

FIRST-YEAR BUS RIDERS



In the most recent ten years, the percentage of first-time users has increased from 66% to 80%. If year-round and seasonal residents are excluded, 84% of survey groups in 2025 were first-year users.

NEW ENGLAND AND MAINE RESIDENTS



2025 Island Explorer Passenger Survey

The percentage of survey groups who live in New England states and the percentage who live in Maine decreased significantly between 2018 and 2022. There has been some recovery in both sets of numbers in the most recent three years, but both remain well below their peaks.

TRIP PURPOSE: WORK AND HIKING



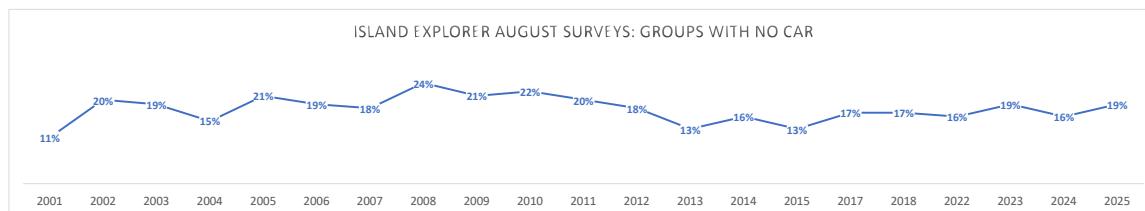
In recent years, the percentage of work trips has varied between 7% and 13%. The percentage of groups who identified “hiking” as the “primary purpose” of their bus ride has increased from 12% in 1999 to 40% in 2024 and 38% in 2025.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS



There has been an upward trend in the percentage of groups who stay overnight in short-term rentals, with the highest percentage occurring in 2024.

GROUPS WITHOUT CARS



The percentage of groups without an available car has varied from 11% in 2001 to 24% in 2008. In the 2025 survey, 19% of all groups said they had no car. Many of the respondents traveling to or from work had no car (83%). If work travel is excluded, 13% of 2025 survey groups said they had no car.

15. Comparison of Fall and Summer Survey Results

The Island Explorer typically surveys passengers during the first two weeks of August. In 2019 the survey was carried out in October. This section summarizes some of the key differences between fall and summer survey responses.

- The 2019 fall survey suggests that large numbers of cruise ship passengers have taken 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.

IEX survey 2025_1

Island Explorer Passenger Survey 2025

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) Gateway Center
<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) Gateway Center
<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 2025

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

27. Drivers are friendly and helpful

28. It is easy to find a seat

29. Buses are on time

30. Bus schedules are easy to find

31. Bus schedules are easy to understand

32. The frequency of service is convenient

33. The right destinations are served

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 2025 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?

<i>Rt.</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>L.L.Bean</i>
1	NC	It's great to have a free service that goes to the key locations. Only suggestion might be to start the 20-minute schedule for Village Green to Visitor Center earlier.	Thank you!
1	ME: Ellsworth	The bus stop at the Gateway Center needs cooling, i.e. overhead fan. Better signs telling you where the bus stop is at Gateway Center.	Wonderful!!! Thank you!!!
1	NJ	We would love a stop by Bubbles trail parking lot.	Thank you! We love riding the Island Explorer!
1	FL	Bus drivers were all very friendly and eager to provide recommendations. I would highly encourage those hiking in Acadia to use this service since it comes to many trails as well.	They're doing a great job!
1	NJ	This is by far the best shuttle bus system of any of the 15+ National Parks we've visited. It has made the park and area incredibly accessible.	Helping maintain and keep accessible such an amazing jewel certainly earns the brand a lot of respect and appreciation.
1	NY	Bring back the Jordan Pond bus from the Village Green. Also, it is very helpful when there are workers here to organize the lines. Often times when there is not, it is chaotic (mainly with Eden Street bus at night).	Thanks.
1	ME: Bar Harbor	More options NEH, SWH and Loop. More service Ellsworth year round. Like the new Gateway Center--every 20 minutes. This is how the loop should be.	Excellent addition to the park!
1	NY	Wait time was very long from Village Green to get back to campground. Need more Gateway buses for large crowds. Buses are warm and stuffy waiting for AC to come on while waiting for bus to leave.	
1	Nova Scotia	AC could use a refresh--it was often hot.	Thank you! This is an amazing service.
1	NY	Way hot on bus while waiting to leave. No beer service available (haha) Can't really complain about free bus service though!	Thanks!
1	NH	Include maps of Bar Harbor on the bus or direct to Visitor Center where town maps are.	Thank you. We buy L.L.Bean.
1	FL		Thank you, L.L.Bean. It is a very useful service and we are thankful for it!

Island Explorer 2025 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

1	NH	Great service. Nice to avoid town parking.	
1	MA	The web site took a moment to navigate. However, we love using the shuttle service and we are glad it is available. The drivers have all been so kind and helpful.	Thank you, L.L.Bean! We love you!
1	CT	A great job -- don't change a thing.	Thank you, L.L.Bean.
1	MD	I love that you allow dogs!!! AC could be a bit stronger, but I think it's extra hot.	Bravo!
1	CT	Great convenience.	Thank you.
1	IN	Great service.	Very good.
1	ME: Millinocket		Thank you all for making this possible for us to ride.
1	MA	The service is very convenient for the traveler. Like my family.	Thank you so much for the contribution.
1	NH	All good--very convenient.	Good use of funds.
1	NY	Increase fleet and more buses on routes during busy season!	Their flagship store does not need to be open 24 hours. Send those employees to drive buses ASAP.
1	CA	The app doesn't always reflect bus service, so hard to plan on when to be at the stop. Printed schedule not always accurate. Most bus ambassadors are helpful (though not all). Global warming is a drag, but thank you for not idling the bus to keep A/C on!	Fantastic! L.L.Bean is great! Really appreciate the bus service in the park, as parking is tough. Also love that the bus reduces park traffic.
1	ME: Belfast	Thank you for offering this for free, it is appreciated.	Thank you! We need all the help we can get to protect our National Park!
1	NJ	This is our last ride.	I would choose an L.L.Bean product because of their donation to excellence.
1		Good job. Great service.	
1	MN	Airconditioning was too weak.	Thanks!
1	TX		Good for them.
1	ME: Standish	Thought the schedule was confusing, but we got around OK with help from the people working at the stops and the bus drivers.	They are very generous.
1	ME: Yarmouth	Excellent service.	Thank you.
1	NC	I think this is a wonderful service. We enjoyed using the bus.	
1	PA	More frequent service to Jordan Pond area.	I love it!
1	DE		Thank you for this service.
1	NJ	Great feature to have on the Island!	
1	NC	Love this service!	Thank you!

Island Explorer 2025 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

1	MD		This is a wonderful convenience for traveling around Acadia and Bar Harbor.
1	ME: Damariscotta-Foxcroft	Fire Janet Mills. Fire Susan Collins.	Never ban access to the park like Nova Scotia has just done with their public parks! Infringement on Freedom Rights!
1	ME: Gorham	We love it! Only wish it started earlier in the season and was more frequent to Echo Lake / Southwest Harbor.	We love Maine and Bean's commitment to Maine.
1	FL	Use more social media.	You are exceptional. Thank you.
1	MD	Park at Welcome Center and bus all day!	
1	NJ	Great service. Helps keep roads clear. Don't have to worry about parking!	Thank you, L.L.Bean!
1	IN	We loved this bus system. Easy to use, helpful drivers, no long waits.	Thanks L.L.Bean. This bus made our visit to Bar Harbor so easy and fun.
1	MA	Not enough experience using it yet to judge. Lack of info and resources available.	
1	CT		Thank you!
1	PA	Thank you for making this easy and having such friendly and informative drivers!	Thank you, L.L.Bean, for investing!
1	NC	Very convenient.	Thanks.
1	PA	Sometimes drivers give different answers to questions, but friendly and free service.	L.L.Bean great outfitter and benefactor to home state.
1	ME: Caribou	Thank you for providing this great service. We greatly appreciate your drivers.	Thanks, L.L.Bean!
2	MA	A great service!	Very generous of them.
2	Jamaica	Some of them are not nice.	
2	Jamaica	Drivers keep changing bus stops.	
2	Quebec	All excellent.	Great, nice contribution. Thank you.
2	CT	We are so grateful for the Island Explorer. It has made our trips to Bar Harbor much easier every year. Have people/groups scan their tickets to get on the bus. It may help with overcrowding and bring more \$\$ in for ya'll. Since I'm sure not everyone follows the rules.	Thank you!
2	DC		Great investment.
2	MA	We used the bus a half dozen times in the past four days. It was on time every day but today, when it was 20 minutes late. The bus needs to service Cadillac Mountain.	They are awesome!

Island Explorer 2025 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

2	CT	We came one summer before the shuttles were running. It made a big difference. Now we always schedule our annual trip when we can use this convenient service!	Thank you! When I tell people about visiting Bar Harbor / Acadia, I always tell them about the convenience and ease of using the shuttle.
2	TX		Thanks!
2	MI	Very good!	
2	WI	It is good and there is a lot of room.	
2	FL		Awesome!
2	NY	Excellent option.	Great company.
2	Slovakia	Buses are often late and I've been to work late several times and earlier bus is way too early to take.	
2	Jamaica		Great contribution to the community.
2	LA	Thank you! Very convenient so we don't have to drive.	
2	RI		Thank you!
2	CO	Thank you!!	
2	Palestine	Wish it stayed year-round. Wish fall schedule didn't start so early! Fall should be October.	
2	Mexico	It's amazing what you do! Thanks!	Thanks L.L.Bean!
2		The service is wonderful. There are many helpful staff members! It also helps with congestion in town.	L.L.Bean is a good company for helping Acadia thrive, and I don't mind their branding on buses.
2	Jamaica	Should stop at local grocery stores.	
2	Jamaica	It would be nice to have stops at local grocery stores.	
2	IL	Buses more often due to # of people.	
2	MA	You helped my Nana with her wheelchair.	Cool!
2	NJ		Awesome. Thank you!
2	UT	Amazing.	Love.
2	LA		Thanks.
2	FL	Clearer instructions on how to switch buses to get to other routes.	Thank you, L.L.Bean!
2	OH	Great free service--makes it very convenient.	Fantastic to support the area.
2	UK	Really valuable service to visitors and the community.	That's fantastic.
2		Nice service.	Good for them.
2	MN		We think it's great! Thank you!!
2	Costa Rica	Can you be a year-round service?	

Island Explorer 2025 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

2	MI	We loved the service! Easy to use. Love that it is donation based. Only overcrowded at last call.	WOW! We used this service 10+ times on our 4-day vacation. We had a rental car but using the bus eliminated paying for parking and allowed us to have a good time without worrying about getting home!
2	IL	It is a helpful and saves us from parking issues.	Very nice.
3	Brazil	Would be nice to run the AC while waiting for the bus to leave.	So grateful.
3	DC		Keep doing it!
3	MA	Have a stop from North Ridge go to the Village Green.	
3	NJ	You should make the survey available online or by QR code. Also, stronger air conditioning for folks in the back or when the bus is packed.	Good to know, thank you.
3	PA	Excellent service. Yesterday a bus was stuck at Sand Beach for 45 minutes because of cars waiting to park. Possibly have someone directing traffic there so buses can get through?	Fantastic. Very grateful.
3	NY	We are having an excellent experience. Thank you.	
3	VA	Great system. We like that someone is on the Village Green to assist.	Wow--I had no idea. Just one more reason to shop there.
3	NY		Thank you!
3	PA	We wouldn't purchase the park pass next time as everything is accessible by bus. We've hiked every day!	
3	NY	A QR code to download app.	
3	NC	More places to go to get picked up. Not many convenient pickup spots outside of the park.	
3	NY	Excellent, reliable service. Thank you!	Great work! Thank you!
3	PA	More parking please. Available earlier in the morning.	Thanks!
3	MA	After witnessing how hard parking would be, I love that this option exists! Stress free.	We love L.L.Bean.
3	MA	AC on all buses. Ability to open windows. Island Explorer is key to keeping Bar Harbor and Acadia the most wonderful place to vacation!	Thank you, L.L.Bean!

Island Explorer 2025 Onboard Survey – Passenger Comments

3	AZ	Have buses at transfer spots wait till all buses get there. We missed our transfer because our bus was late and the connection had taken off. Also need buses to come more frequently to Narrows Too. Also, at the Visitor Center, cars were parked in the bus lane and nobody asked them to move. People couldn't get on or off the bus safely. You had monitors there--make sure they keep cars out of the bus lane!	Thanks, L.L.Bean!
3	CT	Make the map easier to understand and better AC please.	
3	CA	Gateway Center to Village Green takes a very long time with all the stops. To encourage people to park there, you could have some direct buses from Gateway to Hulls Cove.	Much appreciated! Buses make this trip much more accessible and less stressful.
3	LA	Direct Jordan Pond route.	Awesome!
3	MA	Was a little confusing when a bus left early, but so nice that someone explained that another one was coming because it's busy.	Wow!
3	ME: Gorham	Love it! Especially the bus back to town from Sand Beach. The later campground bus is request only to the Visitor Center. How do we ask for a pickup at the Visitor Center?	We're loyal L.L.Bean customers because of this commitment to Maine and the outdoors! We now come later in the year to Acadia so we can ride the bus. (We used to come in early June.)
3	MA	It is always great when there is live tracking of bus locations. I suggest better crowd control with clear lines to wait in.	This is what they should be doing. Companies use a lot of natural resources. They should help our environment like that.
3	FL		Awesome--Thanks.
3	FL		Fantastic!
3	MD	Air conditioning on buses would be great.	We love L.L.Bean. Thank you!
3	WI	Weekend shuttles to the airport would be great.	They're a great company, IMO.
3	NY	Drivers are very helpful This has made our trip much easier. Thanks!	Very thankful. Using my L.L.Bean pack right now! Great company!
3	NY		Wonderful & noble effort!
3	MI		Thank you!
3	NJ	We use to avoid Hulls Cove VC--that was better.	Excellent!
3	MA	Thank you for sharing this extraordinary service to see this magnificent area of coastal ME!	Thank you, L.L.Bean. You have my loyalty going forward.
3	PA		Thank you!

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3	OH		Probably a very small amount for them.
3	FL	No comment on improvement. The Island Explorer system seems convenient and efficient. Just wanted to say that one of the ambassadors was very helpful and went out of her way to point us in the right direction.	
3	MD		Fantastic.
4	GA	Great way to visit the Park. Great drivers and attendants.	Great thing to do.
4	MA	We loved riding the Island Explorer! Thank you!	
4	PA		That's great!
4	NY		Very nice.
4	NY		Thanks!
4	NY		Thanks!
4	CT	Handicapped accessibility was MUCH appreciated and the drivers and staff were kind, patient, and helpful. Many thanks!	Glad our many shopping dollars go to support the NPS and Acadia!
4	IA		Thanks, bros.
4	VT	More buses.	Awesome sauce!
4		Really liked that the buses are handicapped accessible.	Please continue the contribution.
4	NC	The bus schedule is confusing in terms of routes and times. The person who answered the phone told me all buses stop at 6:00 p.m., but the schedule says 10:00 p.m., so I got stranded.	More corporations should pledge to protect the parks.
4	MI	Keep up the great work!!	
4	MA		Thank you!
4		Schedule to be extended to 8:00 p.m.	
4	NY	We are just starting out, so don't know enough to ask questions, except is there a bus from Bar Harbor to the Hulls Cove VC?	Thanks, L.L.Bean. We appreciate the ride! (I do use your credit card and frequent your stores.)
4	MA	Thank you so much for providing this service. It has greatly improved the trip and accessibility of areas that have little to no parking. We really appreciate it!	Thank you, L.L.Bean for all you do for Acadia / Maine and other areas.
4	CA	Too crowded and no parking for a van.	L.L.Bean rocks!
4	MA		Yay!
4	NY	Fabri bus stop sign isn't found (wasn't visible for us).	
4	MA		Nice!
4	Netherlands	Buses first.	
4	NJ	It has been overly helpful while at ANP!	Love to see the support for ANP!

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4	MS		Great service. We appreciate L.L.Bean.
4	MI	Getting this info during booking of campsites or shortly before reservation dates would be helpful in planning our days. I don't remember getting an email about it.	
4	NC	Bus drivers are really nice and helpful. It wasn't clear from the website that the Gateway Center is open for parking. Many hikers came out at Bubbles Nubble trailhead thinking there was a bus stop and there was not.	Thank you, L.L.Bean for helping us see this beautiful park!
4	FL	More buses.	
4	CA	Even more service. I live in NYC. I love public transit, nature, and I don't have a car. Your free bus system is perfect--every national park should have it. And the ride from Bangor!	Rare good corporation moment? But on a serious note, that's great. MORE TRANSIT IN THE US!
4	NY		Thanks!
4	WI	Really great service.	That's an incredible commitment!
4	ME: Freeport		Love it.
4	PA	The buses funnel people to the most crowded places. We'd have happily gone further from the crowded spots if we hadn't had to wrangle multiple transfers. Also, hard to get back to Bar Harbor.	Thank you! Great to see a local commitment to Maine.
4	GA	Cold beer would be nice.	\$40 million would be even better.
4	FL		Thank you!
4	NH		Very much appreciated.
4	MA	More parking at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center.	Fantastic!
4	MA	This is an excellent service--so appreciated.	Thank you!
4	England	The ambassadors are very friendly and organized!	Thank you!
4	MI	Your ambassadors have been welcoming, knowledgeable, and proactive. This made our visit to the park so much easier.	Thank you! Hope you inspire more corporate partners to make this happen at other National Parks.
4	ME: Falmouth	Driver for Park Loop Road was incredible.	
4	CT	Absolutely wonderful service, incredible experience. Our bus driver was wonderful, kind, and knowledgeable.	It is so important to support the parks, thank you L.L.Bean.
4	OH	Thank you for the shuttle service.	Thanks for sharing!!
4	IA	Good job! Thank you for great service!	Keep up the good work! Private funding is now much more essential to protect public resources.

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5	AZ	Would love an earlier start in the morning.	Thank you, L.L.Bean!
5	DE	We would have avoided driving to the Visitor Center if there was a stop on Route 3 near our rental (off Crooked Hill Road). We didn't feel safe to walk on Route 3 to the park.	Thanks, L.L.Bean!
5	NH	Very convenient and friendly. Perfect way for my family of five and a dog to get around the park. Thank you!	
5	TX	I think the schedule is confusing. I always have to ask for clarity.	Thank you!
5	NJ		Great.
5	CA		Thank you!!
5	VA		Thank you.
5	NC	Your staff member at the Visitor Center was so helpful.	
5	MA	Free pamphlet containing bus routes / hiking trails / times.	
5	MI		Thank you, L.L.Bean!
5	NC	Love the buses and the Ambassadors, so helpful!	Great! Especially with so much being cut these days.
5	MA		Good job, L.L.Bean!
5	IL	It's been great. Thank you!	We are grateful for their contribution.
5	SC	MDI needs to discourage / limit cars and trucks and increase the number of buses to prevent overcrowding of buses and roads. Everything can then stay on schedule.	Excellent company and thank you! Get more companies to help pay for more buses!
5	ME: Veazie		Keep it up!
5	NY	Our first time--so far so good! Stronger A/C on the bus would be appreciated--especially when so full.	That's amazing! Maybe I'll buy that jacket to support the cause.
5	NY	We struggled to get a shuttle back from the trailhead for South Ridge--needing to walk two miles to the carriage road stop--which we had difficulty finding. The Loop route should stop near the Blackwoods Campground.	Thank you, L.L.Bean. It would be great if these buses were electric to protect the park.
5	NY		Awesome company!
5	NJ	Island Explorer staff are helpful and friendly. Expanding parking options would help alleviate traffic. Need stronger A/C.	We appreciate L.L.Bean's commitment to Acadia.

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5	VA	It's great, we love it. Maybe extend last times for buses in the peak park season. The handrails from the ceiling could be lower so that short people can reach them.	It is such efforts that make us happy to buy merchandise from L.L.Bean every year!
5	NJ	Shuttle to some sites from Green would take weight off Visitor Center.	Continue.
5	MA	Great service. Availability for bikes appreciated.	
5	MD	It's a great service that allows easy access to the park.	Nice!
5	PA	Would love to see buses run on a clean fuel. But obviously cost is an issue.	Awesome! Makes me want to support L.L.Bean even more.
5	NJ	Very kind and nice.	Thank you!
5	CT	Earlier start? 9:00 am for Jordan Pond is a bit late.	Amazing partner to help keep park clean and lessen crowding.
5	CT	The staff members have all been very friendly and helpful. I mentioned one maintenance issue with the bus to the driver.	It is a great way to keep the park accessible and convenient.
5	PA	Very friendly and helpful staff.	Awesome.
5	NC	Bus wound up being pretty crowded by the time we left. It felt like we were just wasting time waiting for the bus to pack in.	Thanks, L.L.Bean.
5	SC	GREAT. Maybe a better paper map. Internet not so great.	Fantastic. Thank you.
5	MA	The NPS should close the park for the cars and there should be only buses allowed like in Zion National Park!!!	
5	VA		Wonderful.
5	MA		Thanks!!
5	NJ		I like hot dogs.
6	OH		Thank you!
6	IL	Keep up the good work!!	Thank you, L.L.Bean!!
6	ME: Bar Harbor	Thank you for this service! If the Island Explorer wasn't available, then I couldn't get to work on my own!	
6	ME: Kittery Point	It's a wonderful service you provide to tourists. System is elaborate and frankly a little complex, even for folks like us who rely on public transportation daily.	Thank you, L.L.Bean.
6	ME: Rockland	Amazing! Free! Wow! Such a great thing for Acadia and also MDI.	Very generous! Acadia National Park is a gem. Bus greatly increases accessibility.
6		More buses in the evening would be great. Still you guys are doing a wonderful job.	
6	IA	Buses were off schedule (3. Sand Beach) but have otherwise been a great service.	

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6	PA	This is GREAT! Super convenient and I don't have to think about parking. Route 1 has a gap in service between 8:00 a.m. and 9:20 a.m. Please try to increase service then.	Fantastic!
6	Jamaica	Continue with the awesome service.	
6	ME: North Yarmouth	We are very appreciative of the buses. It allows us to see more of the Island, especially because we come by boat and don't have a car.	Thank you very much for supporting this service. We have sailed to MDI for many summers and have used the buses previous years. Boaters really appreciate and use this service.
6	FL		Thank you!!
6	FL	The service is very convenient and was essential for my transportation during my stay. It was extremely helpful that I could also flag down buses as my cottage was a 25-minute walk from the bus stop.	Thank you!!
6	FL	I think it is perfect, too bad I heard about it on my last day here. But when I come back I will definitely be using it. Thanks.	I don't have enough info.
6	ME: Mount Desert	I really like the service and look forward to it each year. It would be so good if it was able to be available year-round on a very limited basis.	Thank you, L.L.Bean, for your commitment to Acadia National Park. For providing an incredibly beneficial community service--Island Explorer bus is free of charge!
6	TX	Appreciate the convenience and the service to cut down on car traffic. Drivers are friendly. Glad that dogs are allowed to ride.	Big thank you!
6	NH	Don't allow dogs on buses--allergic. We boat into Northeast Harbor--would appreciate the restoration of the route from NEH to Jordan Pond to Village Green.	Thank you, L.L.Bean. It's the major reason we continue to shop at L.L.Bean for the whole family.
6	NM	Maybe just more buses to service every half hour. And longer service hours.	I fully support their contribution.
6	India	Excellent.	In 1998 I bought an LLB shirt. It is still good. I may buy another.
6	NY	Some way keep the buses cooler. They have been very hot.	
6	ME: Mount Desert	I wish it could be year-round, especially from Seal Harbor, Northeast Harbor, Southwest Harbor, and a regular bus to Ellsworth--to visit Mardens, TJ Maxx/Hannaford, Walmart, and downtown Ellsworth.	Thank goodness for L.L.Bean.
6	NY	Awesome that it's free!	Probably couldn't do this for free without it. Likely good for Bean marketing, too.
7	FL	Very convenient.	Very generous.

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7	IL	Excellent.	Fantastic!
7	NY		Thank you!
7	WI		Love L.L.Bean.
7	OH	Very easy as a single person but maybe harder to use in a group. Still easier than driving.	Thanks, Mr. L.L.Bean, sir. I love you.
7	ME: Bar Harbor	1) I believe that each area that has an ambassador should have a two-way radio. Example, Sand Beach has them but Gateway and Jordan Pond House do not. Gateway might have one or two ambassadors there, leaving the ambassadors hanging and not knowing why a bus is late or has been pulled for another route. 2) I think some routes are set up perfectly while others should have additional stops added to help keep cars out of the park and off the island--like stops at Ship Harbor and Wonderland.	L.L.Bean is amazing in general, but especially for what they have done for cutting down on cars not only in the park but on the island with these buses and the money to ensure their success.
7	United Kingdom	We thoroughly enjoyed our experience on this bus. Thanks!	
7	NH		Thank you! I love L.L.Bean.
7	DC	Amazing service. Makes visiting without a car or with an RV so easy!	L.L.Bean rules! We're going to stop in Freeport now.
7	FL	SWH stop in wrong location on bus locator app. Shows bus stop at the Post Office.	Thank you, L.L.Bean. This is a great public service.
7	FL	It would be nice to have more extra buses to handle overload conditions, especially for #s 4 & 5. Service otherwise excellent! Island Explorer staff are great representatives of the bus system--courteous, knowledgeable, remarkably patient, and a pleasure to get to know! Year after year!	Fantastic! Amazingly generous! Here's hoping that more visitors to Acadia will use the Island Explorer thanks to this grant.
7	ME: Mount Desert	Love this service. I can't believe how kind all the drivers are, consistently.	Gotta love local support.
7	NC	Really awesome! Definitely inspired to come back for a vacation because of this service!	Pure awesomeness. (It will definitely cause me to prefer their products when given the choice.)
7	Albania	In general they are awesome. My only issue (maybe this is not where I should address it), but I need a service to Ellsworth from the Village Green, where we take the bus also for Southwest Harbor, because it is hard for me and my friends to go to the station where it is now.	Thank you so much!!!

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7	NY	Thank you!	
7	VA	More frequent buses on the same schedule.	Thank you!!
7	GA	Overall, so lovely--thank you! The dot on the app map for SW Harbor is off. More ways to get back to SW Harbor between 2 and 4 pm. (It took us 3 hours from Jordan Pond at 1:45p. With a toddler.)	This has made this trip affordable for us! Thanks!
7	PA	The #7 route needs more times, especially at dinner time. A 3-hour gap from 4 to 7 is too much.	Thanks for supporting.
7	ME: SWH	I wish the SWH bus ran more frequently, but I understand it's a long route.	I support L.L.Bean.
7	CT	Having more shuttles serving the popular locations would be great, especially during the summer season.	Way to go, L.L.Bean! We got our shoes and backpacks from you.
7	MI	This was very convenient. Park your car early in the AM and bus around the park the rest of the day.	Thank you! We'll continue to support you too.
7	ME: SWH		You are doing awesome!!!
7	OH	Bus was already behind schedule and driver added four extra stops for people.	
7	FL	Great service.	Thank you, L.L.Bean.
7	PA	Great form of free transportation without fighting for parking!!	I like their boots.
7	TX	One of the stops wasn't on the website. Was a little confusing.	
7	ME: Southwest Harbor	Thank you.	Thank you.
7	NJ	It's the best! Thank you for providing this amazing service. We recommend it to all our friends.	Thank you, L.L.Bean. Your contribution is a part of Acadia's legacy!
9	NY	Your ambassadors were very helpful.	
9	NJ	Service is great! Thank you for offering it!	Wonderful! Thank you so much! We love L.L.Bean stores!
9	IL		Fantastic!! Money well spent!
9	OH	We are staying at Narrows Too campground. The buses are great--better than a car! The only hitch is they don't run frequently enough to get a.m. tours. And they don't run late enough for dining out. But we managed it and had a great stay.	Greatly appreciated--Thank you, L.L.Bean! I also put a contribution in the fare box on our last trip! \$ saver for sure! Helps family budget. Makes Bar Harbor a little more affordable!
9	FL	Thank you.	Thank you.
10	MA	It's a great service!	Awesome!
10	NY	Print bus schedule and have it posted around town on kiosks and on Acadia web site.	We love L.L.Bean!

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10	PA	Bus drivers are helpful and give great tourist tips.	Love the fact that L.L.Bean commits to the natural environment.
10	IA	Electronic signs with live updates (include "full")	That was nice of it!
10	NJ	I wish they had more buses as they tend to fill up quickly and cause longer wait times.	Can they contribute more to the organization?
10	NY	Love the service! Hard to get from Eden Street line to Jordan Pond.	Thank you!
10	VT		Thank you, L.L.Bean.
10	England	I've always found it an excellent service. Hopeful for a stop before the Green if staying at the other end of Bar Harbor to the Green. Staff are amazing, helpful, friendly, knowledgeable. A shuttle pickup at Wonderland and Ship Harbor.	I'm sure more people could donate, even \$1 a trip.
10	ME: Bar Harbor		Thank you!
10	TX	Service and stops and times are hard to figure out online. Once I got a printed timetable at the Village Green it made complete sense.	
10	NH	Thank you! Great service.	Thank you!
10	OH	Awesome staff.	Sweet!
10	TN	Great service.	L.L.Bean is great for that. They make nice gear.
		We appreciate the USB chargers! Some are broken though.	It's cool that they do that.
		You guys are doing amazing.	That's amazing, L.L.Bean!!
		It couldn't be better.	
			Commendable!
		Faster please. I like to go at least 100 mph. It helps my vertigo. I suggest using plutonium gas. I've spoken with many passengers who agree it would be better for the bus to stop at my house.	