

SNOWSHOE MAGAZINE FEATURED ARTICLE:

More Maine Snowshoe Trails: Western and Northern Maine

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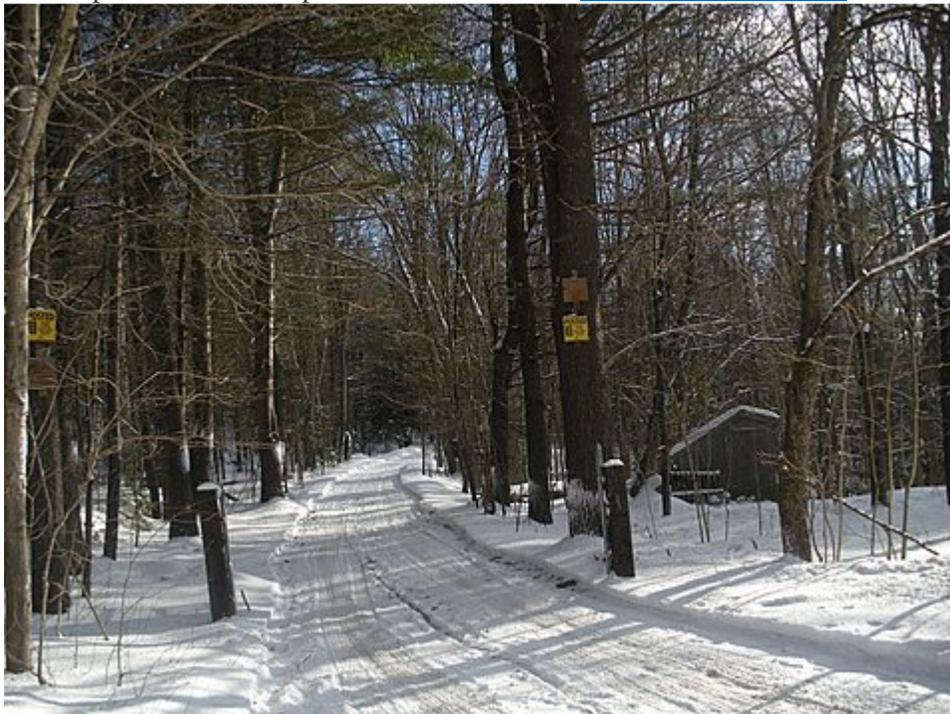
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Published on September 15, 2012

Northern and Western Maine comprise a huge area consisting of lakes, mountains, and streams rivers and of course thousands of miles of forests, including sections of the Appalachian Trail and all the way north to Mount Katahdin located in Baxter State Park. This trail article will detail just five trail systems in these areas, four of them close to the New Hampshire border, and the northern Baxter State Park area because you don't want to miss this awesome place. Notice that each trail system described also includes the names of other trails in that area, because there are so many!

The trails on this list include the Roberts Farm Preserve in Norway, Baxter State Park Loop in Millinocket, Sebago Lake State Park in Casco, Firewarden's Trail in Denmark and Piazza Rock in Plantation.

For maps and more complete information visit www.snowshoes.com



Piazza Rock

South of Rangeley Lake near the tiny town of Plantation this big overhanging rock seems to defy gravity on a short and fairly easy section of the Appalachian Trail. The 3.6 mile loop trail bumps up, though, to the more difficult category because of two steep sections near the beginning and at the end. There are a few bridge crossings and the rock itself is at the end of the trail.

You'll want to check it out. If you venture this far north you can also check out snowshoeing trails at Sugarloaf Ski Resort in Carrabasset Valley and Oquossoc (Bald Mountain Trail) and spend a couple of days before driving south approximately 50 miles to check out several snowshoeing opportunities close to Sebago Lake. Stop in Bethel at Sunday River Cross-Country Ski area on the way south to the Norway area if you want to take in this popular area.



Roberts Farm Preserve

Originally the property of one of Norway Maine's founders, Dudley Pike, this 165-acre preserve became part of the Western Foothills Land Trust in 2007. It sits on Lake Penesseewassee (don't even try to pronounce it) several miles north of Sebago Lake and is open to the public year round. There are actually eleven trails that pass through parts of old field and pastures, along stone walls and through orchards and groves.



Sebago **Lake State Park**

From Norway this is just a 15-mile or so drive and the trail runs along the lakeshore, a river and the sandy beach. If you like to be able to see lakes and streams this six-mile easy trail near Casco is a good choice. The elevation gain is only 20 feet and if you happen to be coming north from the Portland area this park is only 30 miles from there on US 302. The lake does not often freeze completely in winter, so don't plan on venturing out on it.

Firewarden's Trail

In nearby Denmark is a five-mile trail classified as more difficult. It follows an old carriage road, then a Jeep road to the 2,000-foot summit. With the trailhead elevation being 487 feet the altitude gain is minimal but the trail takes about five hours. You will encounter snowmobilers on this trek as well as backcountry skiers, but the view is worth it. You can see the lakes and ponds of Western Maine and all the way to the Presidential Range in New Hampshire. The fire tower is boarded up in winter. Other opportunities in this area include Douglas Mountain in Sebago, Sabattus Mountain in Lovell and the Loon Echo Land Trust near Bridgton.



Baxter State Park Loop

This is a six-mile loop trail in Millinocket that is classified as more difficult and it will take you anywhere from two to six hours depending on which choices you make along the combination of ski trails and the Park Tote Road. Mount Katahdin dominates, standing just under a mile high in this 200,000 acre park and there are about 175 miles of trails within the park.

Much of the park is not that easily accessible in winter, with its forty-six peaks and ridges, so if you want to snowshoe here you start with the Loop and make your choices along the way. Trailhead elevation is 620 feet and elevation gain is minimal. The road itself is open to snowmobilers, who have a posted speed limit of 20 mph. If you don't mind traveling west a bit (approximately 40 miles) you can also try Monument Trail at Abbot Village, Chase Cross-Country Ski Trails near Monson and Sparky Trail and Gulf Hags, both in Greenville. These are all within 20 miles of each other.

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About Sherry Hanson

I live in Maine and enjoy the outdoors, running, biking and kayaking. I have published over 450 articles, taking on anything that interests me these days. Visit my website for more information and a selection of published articles, a few photos, a mention of my poetry.

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