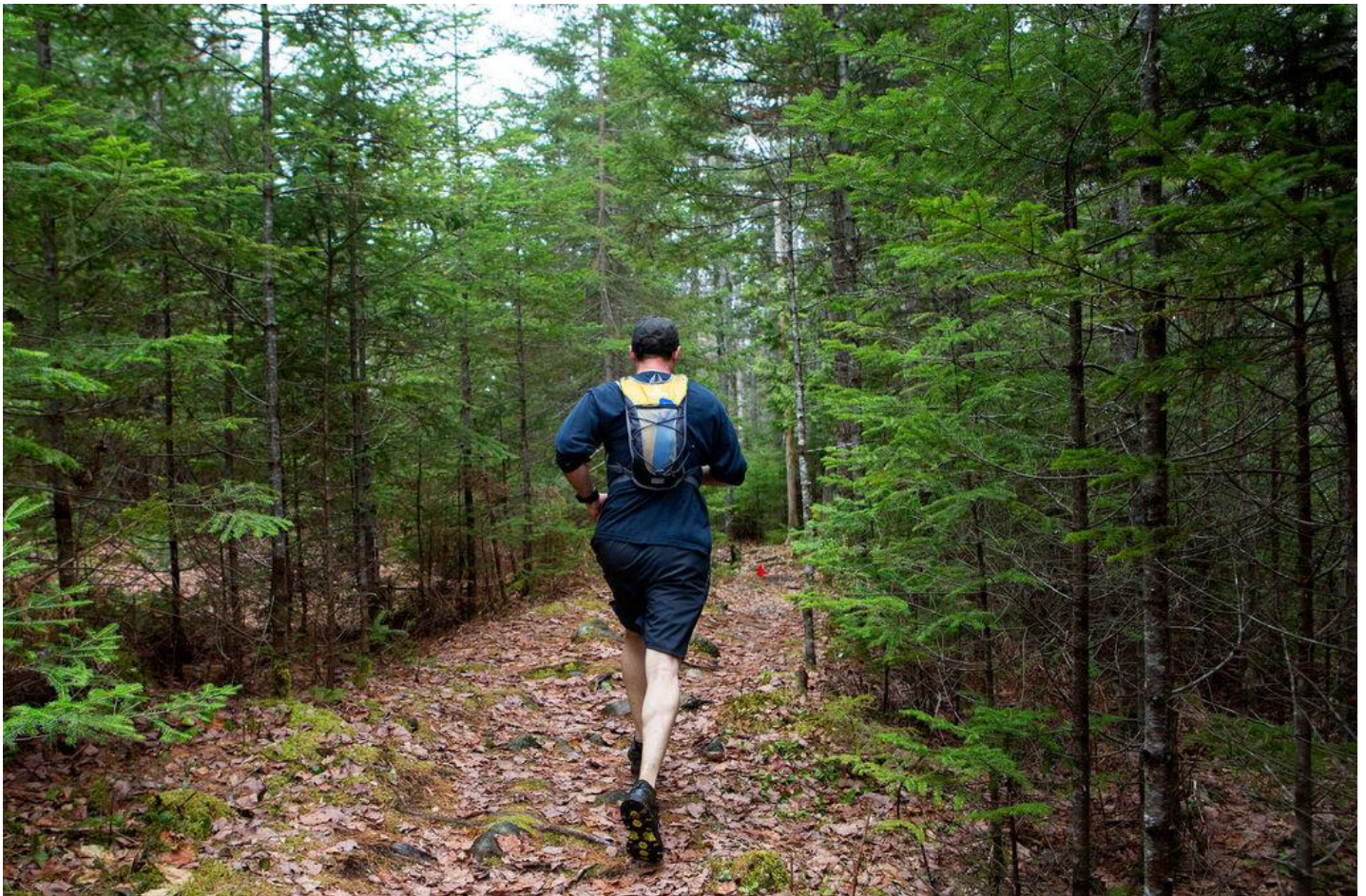


National recognition well deserved for Bangor's city forest

by The BDN Editorial Board

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A runner follows the path during the annual Epic Sports' Rabbit Run race through the Bangor city forest in April 2017. Credit: Ashley L. Conti / BDN

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Residents of the Bangor area likely know that the Rolland F. Perry City Forest is a four-season recreational gem in our backyard.

The nearly 600-acre forest, roughly bounded by Kittredge Road, Stillwater Avenue and the Veazie Railroad Bed, is home to miles of trails that are great for, depending on the season, walking, running, biking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. It also connects with trails that continue on to other conserved land in Bangor and Orono. Deer, moose, bear and ornery owls are among the wildlife that live in the forest.

The trails in the city forest are now getting some national attention. They were included among the 15 best running trails in America. The list, put together by Men's Health, includes trails across the country — from Washington to North Carolina, and up to Maine and New Hampshire.

The trails in the Bangor city forest were listed as the 12th best in the U.S.

"Excited for your next run? ... all runners know one truth of the road: Not all trails are created equal. And we're not just talking about gravel quality or the shady wonder of trees. We're talking boggle-your-mind spectacles, major technical bragging rights, and fascinating histories that make trails worth planning a trip around," the magazine teased in a recent post.

"Maine. Glorious, wild Maine," Men's Health gushed about the Bangor trails, which do manage to feel fairly remote despite being located in Maine's third most populous city. "This forest boasts nine stellar trails encompassed within 680+ acres of wildlife habitats (home to ever-elusive black bears, white-tailed deer, coyotes, and more) and forest. With ample trail options depending on your level and/or desired intensity, run along peat moss or packed gravel in one of the most phenomenal nooks of the Pine Tree State."

Denizens of the forest know that it is great for a lot more than running. With miles of wide trails, almost like roads, the forest offers space for leisurely bike rides, runs and walks in the spring, summer and fall. For the more adventurous, less manicured trails snake through the woods. These are great for mountain biking, running and walking. In the winter, these trails offer diverse terrain for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The forest can also be a great place for your dog, but keep in mind that dogs must be leashed on most, but not all, trails.

Men's Health also praised the Orono Bog Boardwalk, which borders the city forest. It called the boardwalk "one of our personal favorite cool-down spots, a

roughly one-mile easy trail that goes through the wide reaches of an ancient bog.” While the bog is home to many cool plants that aren’t easy to find elsewhere in Maine, the boardwalk’s stringent rules do not allow running, bikes, shouting or dogs. It is only for walking and wheelchairs and is open seasonally.

The national recognition for the Bangor city forest is a reminder that there are many scenic, historic and generally cool spots for a variety of year-round outdoor activities that are far from Maine’s coast, its foremost tourism draw. Lily Bay State Park on Moosehead Lake, Bigelow Preserve and the Down East Sunrise Trail, which stretches from Ellsworth to nearly Calais, come to mind. There are, of course, hundreds — perhaps even thousands — of other spots that are worth a visit.

Source: <https://bangordailynews.com/2021/07/07/opinion/editorials/national-recognition-well-deserved-for-bangors-city-forest/>