

# Acadia National Park undergoing \$2 million in upgrades

By [Aislinn Sarnacki](#), [BDN Staff](#) May 22, 2014



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Atlantic Landscaping employees Inior Soto (left) and Steve Timbs install pavers at the Echo Lake bus stop and turning area in Acadia National Park.



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The Echo Lake bus stop is one of nine in Acadia National Park that will be improved for this season.

Visitors to Acadia National Park may notice less roadway and parking lot congestion, among other improvements, thanks to recent construction projects costing a total of \$2 million.

“We’re trying to make [the park] better for visitors in general,” said Clay Gilley, facility manager at the famous park, located on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula. “The projects will improve visitor safety, comfort and access to resources.”

Three main projects are underway:

— Sun and rain shelters, a pavillion and a barn for carriages are being added to the Wildwood Stables, which provides a variety of horse-drawn carriage rides throughout the park. The goal is to make waiting for rides more comfortable for visitors, Gilley said. The project, funded by park franchise fees, will cost \$400,000. It will be completed before the stables open on May 24 for the season.

— The parking lot at Jordan Pond House is being redesigned to be more efficient so that 100 additional vehicles will be able to fit. This will reduce the number of vehicles parked along the side of the park road. Federal funding of \$400,000 will pay for the project, which is expected to be completed by June 23.

— Nine Island Explorer bus stops are being added at some of the most congested and heavily used areas of the park: parking areas for Acadia Mountain, Bubble Pond, Bubble Rock, Parkman Mountain, Sand Beach, Thunder Hole, Echo Lake, Cadillac Mountain’s North Ridge Trail and the Visitor Center. The project will cost \$1.2 million in federal funding and is scheduled to be completed by May 23, though the eight Island Explorer buses don’t start running until June 23.

“This will allow people to take the bus to these venues versus trying to drive and finding there are no parking spots,” Gilley said. “At many of those places, the bus could not safely stop, so it wouldn’t stop.”

In addition, the National Park Service at Acadia National Park has planned construction projects to start in August. The plan is to develop a bicycle path and bury utility lines across the Frazer Creek Causeway in the park’s Schoodic District, as well as repair and reinforce seven granite motor road bridges in the park.

“What happens with these granite bridges is the water leaks through the open seams and washes the cement out of the mortar,” Gilley explained. “Then you’re just left with sand.”

“Basically, we’re putting new raincoats on top of the bridges,” he added.

The bicycle path and bridge work will cost between \$1 million and \$5 million, said Gilley, and will be funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and an anonymous donor. The bridge work may cause lane restrictions and detours.