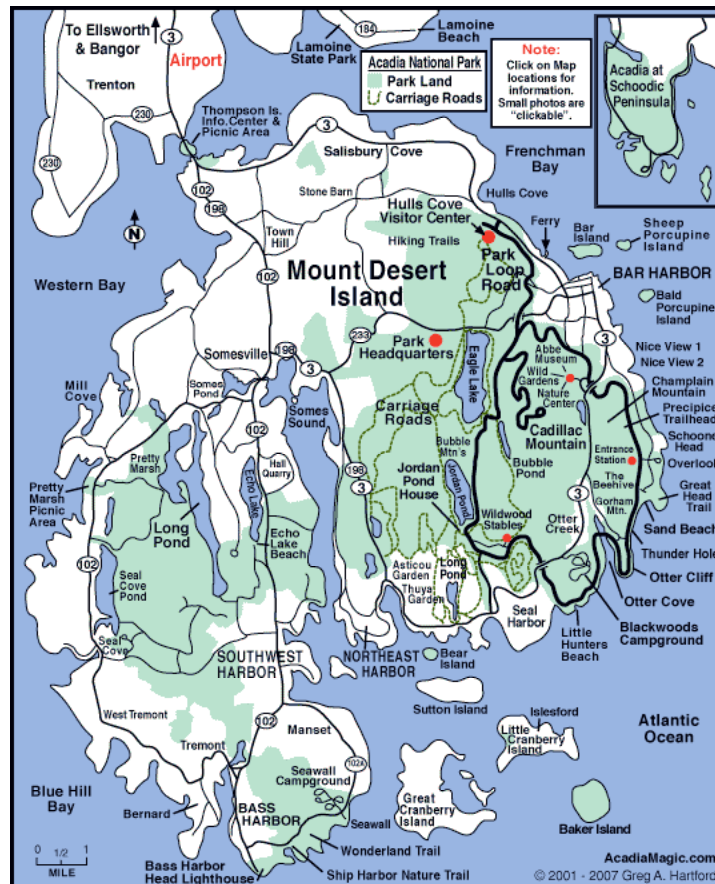


# Proposal for Thai IX 2010 Peace Corps Reunion

**Introduction** We propose that we meet in September or early October, 2010, in Acadia National Park on Mt. Desert, Maine. The park is a magnificent setting, with plenty of outdoor activities (and indoor, if the weather is inclement), and also, with the reunion on the east coast, some of our formerly no-show comrades from the east coast might attend. Beautiful and accessible, Acadia is one of the jewels of the National Park system.



**Reunion site** Acadia National Park features stunning views of mountains, lakes, and sea, reached by the 20-mile Park Loop Road, 45 miles of hard-packed gravel carriage roads, and 125 miles of hiking trails. The island of Mt. Desert lies close to the rocky Maine coast south of Bangor and Ellsworth, and consists of private land with several small towns in addition to the park. (The green areas on the map below show the park land.)



Acadia National Park is located mostly on Mt. Desert Island, although it includes parts of Isle le Haut to the southwest and Schoodic Peninsula to the northeast. The 1500-foot summit of Cadillac Mt. is the highest point, and in fact, is the first bit of North America that the sun hits when it rises. A long fjord (a deep bay with mountains rising on both sides) divides the island into the eastern and western sides. Many of the mountain summits are bare and provide glorious views of the surrounding islands and deeply cut coastline.

**Lodging** Many lodging choices are available in smaller motels and inns in Bar Harbor, and there is a hostel, but a good central spot is the Bar Harbor Inn, located right on the water in Bar Harbor, in walking distance of restaurants, shops, and the free park shuttle bus. (We would likely have our Friday evening cocktail party here.) The Inn is right next to a lovely park overlooking the harbor. The inn has rooms at several price levels, depending on date, location, and bed size. Prices for lodging in Bar Harbor drop after the Columbus day weekend.



**Transportation** The Bangor International Airport, 45 minutes north of Mt. Desert Island; the Bar Harbor Airport, about 5 miles from Bar Harbor; catamaran from Portland, ME or Nova Scotia, bus from Boston or other points west. Transportation on the island: free and accessible propane-powered shuttle bus (7 routes), car, bike, scooter (bikes only on carriage roads).

## Schedule

*Friday evening* Meet at Bar Harbor Inn conference room for drinks and food.

*Saturday morning* Brunch at Jeannie's Breakfast, then driving excursion along 20-mile Park Loop drive, with stops at Sand Beach, Thunder Hole, and a walk along the pink granite slabs along the open ocean. Bring your Golden Eagle park pass\* (you can get one in the park if you don't have one) Picnic lunch at Fabbri Picnic Area. Continue to Otter Cliffs, then along the ocean to Seal Harbor with its sandy beach and

lovely small harbor. Finish up with a trip up the 3.5 mile Cadillac Mt road.

*Saturday late afternoon, depending on time* Go early to the dinner site at Jordan Pond House to walk on the Jordan Pond trail or carriage roads.

*Saturday evening dinner* Jordan Pond House

*Sunday morning* Breakfast at Jordan's Restaurant or Fish House Grill on the harbor dock

*Sunday afternoon* choice of activities

1. Nature cruise, whale watch, or mail boat excursion to the Cranberry Islands
2. Excursion to the western side of the island: Somesville (first settled village), then Southwest Harbor for lunch and views of a working harbor, and on to the Bass Harbor lighthouse. For less driving time and more exercise, hike up Flying Mt for a view of all the little islands, or Acadia Mt for a more challenging hike.
3. Visit the small Abbe Museum of Native Americans at the Sieur de Monts spring (the predecessor of the larger museum in Bar Harbor) and the Wild Gardens of Acadia, then walk along the Hemlock trail and out into the marsh area or hike up Dorr Mt to admire the magnificent stone steps and view of Frenchmen's Bay.
4. Seaside time: Compass Harbor, Sand Beach, or (depending on tides) the bar out to Bar Island
5. Seal Harbor-Northeast Harbor excursion: stop at Little Long Pond for an easy walk through meadow to the boathouse, then stop at Asticou Terraces and Thuya Garden, and the Asticou Azalea Gardens (Japanese garden)
6. Hike or bike on the carriage roads
7. Play golf

*Sunday evening* Traditional lobster bake



**Activities for longer stays** Mt. Desert is a marvelous place for hiking, bike riding, canoeing, kayaking, etc. It is also very accessible if you are more limited physically. The miles of hard-packed dirt carriage roads have some flat routes (Eagle Lake, for example), and the free Island Express shuttle makes it easy to get from one place to another. The highest mountain, Cadillac Mt., even has a road to the top. A few of the tourist sites like Thunder Hole and the summit of Cadillac Mt. have asphalt paths so you aren't completely limited by the rocky terrain.

The Park Loop Drive takes you past steep cliffs, a sandy beach, stretches of pink granite cut by weathered basalt intrusions, forested hills, and glacial lakes. You can see a lot just from the car, but trails and unpaved carriage roads extend the range of your experience of the park. Hiking guides offer descriptions of difficulty. Mountains Flying Mt to 1500 for lowest mountains lakes and ocean.



for sale in the bookshops the hikes and their range from 284 feet for Cadillac, but even the have gorgeous views of the

You can also go out on boats: nature cruises, sailing boats for a sunset cruise, whale watching, or if you want to explore further, take the three-hour catamaran trip on The Cat to Nova Scotia (runs three or four times a week depending on the week). Or take mail boats out to nearby islands.

Like birdwatching? Mt Desert has 270 species, plus many that stop on their migrations. Southwest Harbor has the Wendell Gilley bird carving museum.

Want to putter around the seaside? When the tide is low, you can walk across the bar (yes, the bar of Bar Harbor) to one of the Porcupine Islands. Compass Harbor is also an easy walk that goes down to a sand-and-rocks beach right near Bar Harbor.

If we have wet weather, there is still plenty to do. All of the towns have book- stores, art galleries and shops with high-quality crafts, and the island has several excellent museums related to the history and science of the area: the Abbe Museum of Native American Heritage, various historical societies like the Bar Harbor Historical Society, the Mt. Desert Oceanarium with its lobster hatchery, lobster museum, and marsh tour, and the Maine Granite Museum in Somesville.

## History of the island and the park

The history of Mt. Desert Island as a tourist destination is intertwined with the history of the origin and development of Acadia National Park. The island was the home of native Americans first, then was settled by French missionaries, and later occupations included fishing, lumbering, quarrying, shipbuilding, and farming. In the nineteenth century, before the modern tourist industry existed, rusticators came up by boat and later by train from Boston and New York to enjoy the fresh air, views, and opportunity for outdoor exercise, staying in rooming houses run by the locals.

Gradually, fancier hotels were built and the wealthiest vacationers, among them John D. Rockefeller, built their own “cottages” on a grand scale. Well known conservationists and natural historians joined with wealthy land owners to press for establishment of the park in 1916. The park has grown by purchase and donations of land, including 11,000 acres from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Part of the attraction of the park is the extensive network of hiking trails and carriage roads, many built by the CCC in the 1930s. Magnificent stonework on bridges and along trails attest to the skills of the local quarrymen and stone masons.

\*Note The Golden Eagle national park pass has been replaced by the much wordier *America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass– Senior Pass*. It costs \$10, good for your lifetime, and is available at most national parks and recreation sites (list at [http://www.us-parks.com/npp\\_faq.html](http://www.us-parks.com/npp_faq.html) (see #10). The pass doesn't seem to be available by mail. The old Golden Eagle passes are still honored. The pass covers pass holder + 3 adults in one car.

## More information

Lodging (search for hotels, motels, bed&breakfasts on this site)

[http://www.barharborinfo.com/where\\_to\\_stay/hotel/](http://www.barharborinfo.com/where_to_stay/hotel/)

Acadia National Park Information Guide

<http://www.acadia.national-park.com/info.htm>

National Park service site

<http://www.nps.gov/acad/index.htm>

Acadia Magic (info and great photos)

[http://www.acdiamagic.com/acadia\\_national\\_park.html](http://www.acdiamagic.com/acadia_national_park.html)

Geology

<http://www.state.me.us/doc/nrimc/mgs/explore/bedrock/acadia/content.s.htm>

Descriptions of some of the many trail hikes, with photos:

[http://www.saltairinn.com/gallery.php?g2\\_itemId=11](http://www.saltairinn.com/gallery.php?g2_itemId=11)

The Cat (catamaran to Nova Scotia and Portland)

<http://www.catferry.com/>

Birdwatching

<http://www.nps.gov/acad/planyourvisit/birdwatching.htm>

Museums

<http://www.abbemuseum.org/index.php>

<http://www.barharborhistorical.org/>

<http://www.theoceanarium.com/barharbor.html>

NYTimes article about boat trips to the islands (note prices are for 1994)

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9500E0DB1630F937A2575BC0A962958260&sec=travel&spon=&pagewanted=all>