

# Gulf Hagas Trail Description

## From West Branch Pleasant River Parking Area

Take trail from the parking area for 0.2 mile to the south bank of the river. The route to the Gulf requires a ford of the sometime cool waters for about 150 feet in knee to thigh deep water. **DO NOT ATTEMPT THIS FORD IN HIGH WATER CONDITIONS. USE THE HAY BROOK ACCESS ROUTE.** After fording the stream, proceed another 0.2 miles to a major trail junction where the Appalachian Trail (AT) turns left (white blazes) and the tote road to the Hay Brook parking area turns right.

## From the Hay Brook Parking Area

Take trail from the parking area that follows the old Pleasant River tote road. Cross Hay Brook and follow the road paralleling the West Branch of the Pleasant River. At 0.6 miles, pass Pugwash Pond, a small, glacially formed water body. At 0.7 miles, reach a major trail junction with the Appalachian Trail (AT). Proceed straight ahead on the tote road to reach the Gulf trail.

### SEE MAP POINT 1

**0.0 mile:** At junction of trails on Pleasant River tote road, proceed west along the AT (white blazes), immediately passing through a grove of huge white pines, some 150 years old. This grove is part of the Hermitage owned by the Maine Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. There are no fires or camping allowed. In the next mile, cross several brooks.

**1.0 mile:** Reach Gulf trail junction

### SEE MAP POINT 2

The AT turns right and proceeds uphill northbound toward White Cap Mountain 9.5 miles. The Gulf Hagas loop (blue blazes) proceeds ahead and immediately crosses Gulf Hagas Brook, a tributary of the Pleasant River.

### SEE MAP POINT 3

From this point it is 5.2 miles around the loop. Most people follow the Rim Trail (left) so that they are facing the numerous waterfalls in the Gulf as they ascend along the West Branch of the Pleasant

River (WBPR). Ahead is the continuation of the Pleasant River Road, which will be utilized on the return trip. A prominent bronze plaque is located on a large boulder to signify that the Gulf is on the National Natural Scenic Register.

The remaining trail description assumes the Rim Trail is being followed.

**1.1 miles:** Descending along the Gulf Hagas Brook, pass a series of three spectacular falls. The middle one is called Screw Auger Falls and the lower is located on a 200-yard side trail.

**1.3 miles:** Trail crosses a flat area, then begins a gradual ascent paralleling the WBPR to the south.

**1.7 miles:** Reach side trail leading 0.1 mile to Hammond Street Pitch. This is the deepest point in the Gulf and is over 100 feet to the stream below. Continue on trail ascending more steeply.

**1.9 miles:** At top of ascent, reach trail junction with short-cut trail to Pleasant River Road.

### SEE MAP POINT 4

From this point it is an easy 0.6 mile back to Gulf Hagas Brook and the AT.

**2.0 miles:** Main Rim Trail bears sharp right. Ahead, short side trail leads to an overlook of a beautiful section of the river.

**2.4 miles:** A 250-foot side trail leads to a fine view of the Jaws. The canyon begins to narrow here.

**2.5 miles:** Trail leads over a series of ledges above the Lower Jaws, a narrow protruding slab forming the outline of the Indian Head. Upstream are the Main Jaws. Beyond are a series of short side trails leading to overlooks of the Main and Upper Jaws.

**2.8 miles:** A short side trail leads down to a view of Buttermilk Falls and pool upstream.

### SEE MAP POINT 7

**3.2 miles:** Reach Short Cut Trail to Map Point 6 and Pleasant River Trail.

**3.3 miles:** Come out onto bank of the river with large pool upstream.



**3.7 miles:** Reach a short side trail leading to a rock outcrop with a spectacular view of Billings Falls upstream.

**3.8 miles:** Come out onto rock ledge just above Billings Falls.

**3.85 miles:** Pass Stairs Falls, a series of drops resembling a staircase.

**3.9 miles:** At bend in the river with tree-clad island, reach the Head of the Gulf and the end of the canyon. Trail bears away from the river at this point.

**4.0 miles:** Reach the Pleasant River tote road and turn right (east).

### SEE MAP POINT 8

This tote road is much easier traveling and will allow you to return to Gulf Hagas Brook and the AT much faster than a return over the Rim Trail.

**5.0 miles:** Reach trail junction. To left is the Gulf Hagas Cutoff Trail leading north towards White Cap Mountain. Do not use this if you are heading back to the parking areas.

### SEE MAP POINT 6

**5.6 miles:** Pass short cut trail leading to Buttermilk Falls and Rim Trail. Continue ahead for Gulf Hagas Brook.

### SEE MAP POINT 5

**6.2 miles:** Reach the bank of the Gulf Hagas Brook and junction with the Rim Trail at the large boulder with the bronze plaque.

### SEE MAP POINT 3

Cross the brook and continue ahead (east) on AT toward trail heads. From this point it is 1.7 miles further to the Hay Brook trail head and 1.4 miles further to the West Branch trail head.

## Welcome to Gulf Hagas

Gulf Hagas is part of the Appalachian Trail (AT) corridor owned by the National Park Service. In Maine these lands are managed by the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. In this area, the club cooperates with KI Jo-Mary, Inc. to manage these exceptional natural assets.

We hope you will enjoy your visit to the area. This map and guide are provided to help you safely reach the scenic beauty of the Gulf.

There are some restrictions about which you need to know. There is no overnight camping in the Gulf and no fires are permitted. KI Jo-Mary provides campsites and fire rings nearby for your use.

In planning your trip to the Gulf, make sure to bring a garbage bag to carry out all unused materials or food. There is no place to deposit trash. Water is usually plentiful in the Gulf area, but the Maine Appalachian Trail Club cannot attest to its safety. We recommend that the water be brought from home or treated. Because shortcuts erode the land, please stay on the trail. Take only pictures. Dispose of body wastes in a "cathole" 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 50 feet from the trail and 200 feet from water. If you bring a pet, keep them on a leash and clean up after them.

The AT is marked by white blazes (2" x 6"). All other Gulf trails are marked by blue blazes.

The Gulf and the rest of the AT corridor are bordered on both sides by private lands. All roads and campsites in the area are privately owned and maintained, and there is a reasonable fee for use of both. There are two trail heads for the Gulf Hagas area, one can be accessed from Greenville via the Hedgehog Checkpoint and the other from Brownville Junction via the Katahdin Ironworks (KI) Checkpoint. You can receive directions to the trail heads from either checkpoint. There are parking areas at both trail heads.



## Getting to the Gulf

The trail system to Gulf Hagas utilizes the AT as an approach. This is followed as far as Gulf Hagas Brook, a tributary to the Pleasant River. From this point the Gulf Hagas loop trails, 5.2 miles in length, are followed. Including the AT approach, the entire round trip is 8-9 miles. Although the trail is a valley route, there is considerable rugged climbing along the rim of the Gulf.

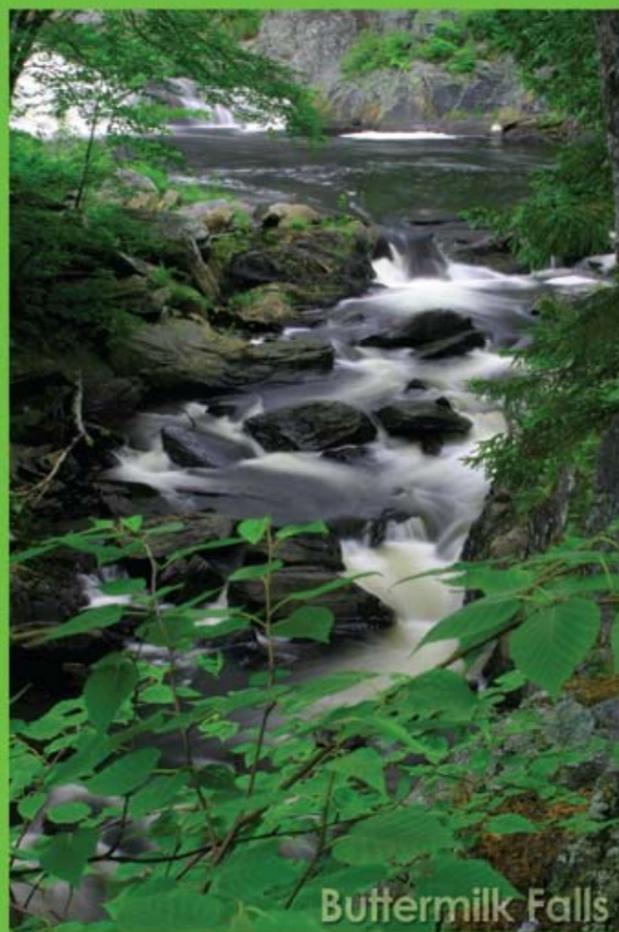
Visitors to the Gulf should not underestimate the exertion required to complete this loop trip.

In the past several years a number of people have become lost, hurt or exhausted because they underestimated the difficulty of the hike. Sturdy footwear (not sandals or sneakers) and appropriate seasonal clothing are strongly recommended. Parties who have young children or are new to the rugged Maine trails need to scale down their planned trip to match their capabilities. The 4-mile trip to Gulf Hagas Brook and Screw Auger Falls is a good excursion for parties with young children, providing an opportunity to see some beautiful country at a leisurely and enjoyable pace.

On the accompanying map, diamond shaped MAP POINTS are keyed to the following trail description. As you hike the trail system, you will see diamond shaped, numbered signs which match the map points in the trail description.

## The Gulf Hagas area

\$700



Buttermilk Falls

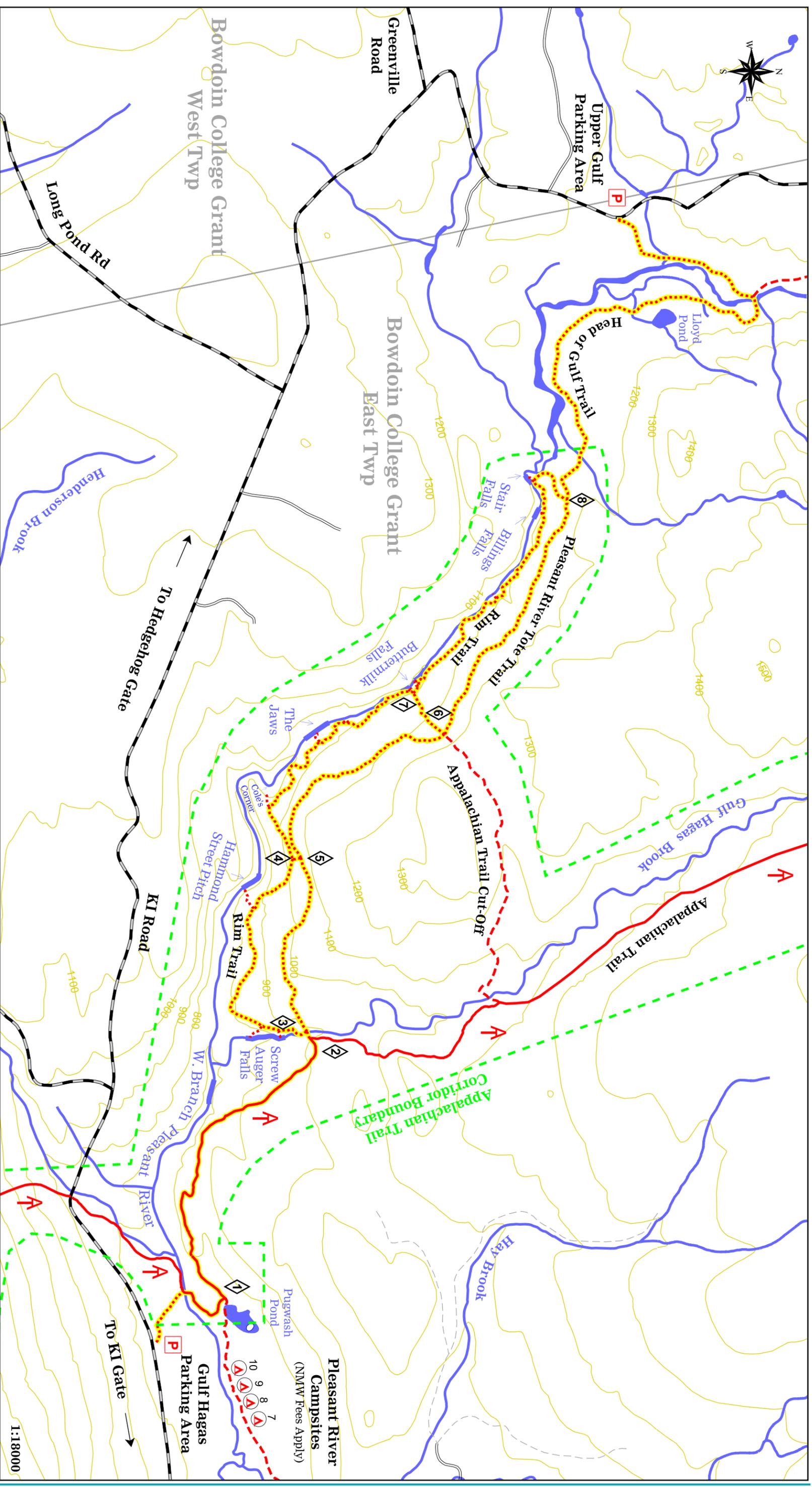
Managed by the

**Maine Appalachian Trail Club**

in cooperation with

**Katahdin Ironworks Jo-Mary, Inc.**





# The Gulf Hahas Area



North Maine Woods Inc.

**Gulf Hahas**

- Campsite
- Parking
- Gulf Trail Info

**Roads**

- Primary
- Secondary
- Impassable

**Hiking Trails**

- Appalachian Trail
- NMW Trail
- Gulf Trail

**Scale:** 1:18000