

April 1, 2023

My address is 224 Great Cove Road in Roque Bluffs, which is 6 miles to Route 1 in Machias and 3 miles to Roque Bluffs State Park. I write from the perspective of an automobile driver, a pedestrian, and a bicycle rider.

1. As a driver – I have encountered both pedestrians and bicycle riders on the roads that connect Route 1 to Roque Bluffs State Park. Because there is essentially no shoulder on any of these connector roads (Great Cove Road, Roque Bluffs Road, Kennebec Road, or Shoppee Point Road) the non-motorized users are put at risk especially when the vehicular traffic is heavy. One terrifying experience occurred when I encountered two people walking side-by-side with one on the shoulder and the other on the road. An oncoming car with bright headlights made it extremely difficult to see the walkers. I saw them at the last second and braked hard to avoid hitting anyone. If there had been a shoulder, pedestrians would have a safe place to walk without being in the road. The same lack of shoulders also puts bicyclists at great risk. This is a lovely area to walk and cycle in when it can be done safely. This is especially true for bike riders headed to and from the state park since the distance from Route 1 in Machias and Route 1 in Jonesboro makes for an ideal loop ride.
2. As a pedestrian -- I routinely walk my dog on these same roads, and I find I need to leave the narrow road shoulder and go into the snow or mud to feel safe when vehicles approach this is especially

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true when cars are approaching from both directions. A paved shoulder would make walking along these roads much safer and more enjoyable. With an eye to improving personal physical fitness and the reduction of automobile traffic, walking would likely be encouraged if it could be done safely.

3. As a bicyclist – I routinely ride a bicycle along the roads that connect Route 1 to Roque Bluffs State Park and to the Sunrise Trail in Machias. Even though the traffic on Route 1 can be heavy at times, there is a wide, paved shoulder that allows for safe cycling. However, the roads from Route 1 to the state park make riding a bicycle dangerous. If there were a paved shoulder along the connector roads to Roque Bluffs State Park like the shoulder along Route 1, this fantastic state park would be far more accessible, which would allow more people to take advantage of the resource with low-energy transportation. With the growing popularity of electric bikes, a shoulder along these roads would likely be a boon to this form of travel.

My examples are centered around Roque Bluffs State Park because this is where I live. However, there are many other state resources that would be more accessible for residents and tourists alike if there were paved shoulders. The growing number of traffic accidents involving both pedestrians and cyclists makes this a priority bill to pass.