

*JULY, 21, 2022*

*By Rick Smith*

I am writing in appreciation of all those who have built, maintained, and provided access to Acadia National Park's magnificent Carriage Roads and handicap-accessible trails.

I lived my formative years here on Mount Desert Island, attending local schools, and experienced the joys of this wonderworld: boating, lobstering, swimming, hiking, biking, golfing and exploring its mountains, valleys and lakes.

I graduated from MDI High in 1971 and set out for college and an adventurous 38-year career in forest investment management out of Boston, Mass. I returned each year to reinvigorate my spirit through the magic of this place that I have always called home.

As a child, I knew I would spend my golden years on MDI provided I had achieved the financial freedom to leave for warmer waters and more daylight in winters. In 2015, we officially retired to our home on Latty Cove in West Tremont.

In 2012 I miraculously survived a devastating stroke that left my left side significantly compromised with pain and reduced mobility. Since then, I have worked 24/7 to regain my abilities to hike, bike, sail, golf and enjoy the magic of MDI.

In 2019, my dear friend, Ed Wood, who lives with the challenges of Parkinson's, introduced me to his e-trike. Soon I was able to join him pedaling the Carriage Roads. Together with our equally challenged chum, George Woolley, and our amazingly capable buddies, Dave Edson and Art Worster as safety-riders, we formed our riding group, the 'Tremonsters.'

In early spring, we often ride the Park Loop Road, and when the Carriage Roads open, we pedal these trails of Nirvana. This activity gives us great exercise and calms my pain while helping my mobility and proprioception. My wife and therapists say that this is my most effective therapy – physically, mentally and spiritually. I agree.

Acadia National Park and our Carriage Roads, with their spectacular viewscapes, are national treasures. I want to recognize the achievement of JD Rockefeller, who designed and built these carriageways, the generosity of all who donated the land and the vision of land donor descendants who insisted on their restoration in the 1970s. We also want to thank the Friends of Acadia and the ANP crews and volunteers who lovingly nurture this amazing system of roads for all to enjoy.

I am forever grateful for the help of my friends in introducing me to e-triking on the Carriage Roads. As a show of our appreciation, the 'Tremonsters' have founded the MDI Wheelers. Our mission is to provide Carriage Road experiences on specialized e-trikes to persons unable to walk or pedal this astonishing treasure.

The Portland Wheelers have helped us tremendously in getting started. We plan to be fully operational with three e-trikes, sufficient pilots, safety riders and other volunteers for the 2023

season. In the meantime, if you see us pedaling our pilot rig or simply cruising on the carriage paths, please give us a smile and a shoutout.

*Rick Smith lives in Seal Cove.*