

March 4, 2005

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22 State House Station  
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Dear Members of the Baxter State Park Authority:

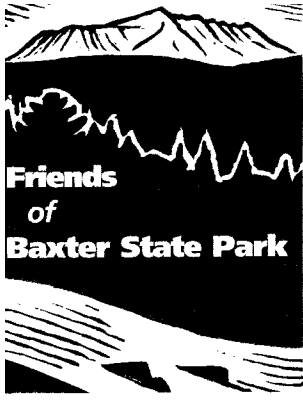
The Friends of Baxter State Park has been discussing two issues confronting the Park that have a real and direct bearing on the Park's wilderness values and the public perceptions of them. One is the proposed timber harvest along the "Legal Mile" section of the Park tote road between Trout Brook Crossing and Wadleigh Brook. The other is administrative use of snowmobiles within the Park. We would like to share our thoughts with you.

**Timber Harvest Along the Legal Mile:**

We understand that a timber harvest is planned along the Legal Mile in 2005. The northern edge of the tote road along the Legal Mile serves as the boundary between the SFMA and the wilderness area of the park, and thus wilderness visitors here have direct contact with the SFMA. While we agree that the Park has the right, and perhaps even a mandate, to harvest the southern sections of the SMFA, we think it will be a mistake to harvest up to or too close to the tote road.

A harvest at this location might be viewed as a means of advancing the SFMA goal to educate Park users about scientific forest practices, but it may well turn into a public relations problem, even considering the limited visitor traffic. We presume most hikers to the SFMA know what the SFMA is, but most visitors in this road corridor have an expectation of wilderness, and probably have little understanding of it. The educational value of the SFMA will be most effective when received by people who choose to visit the SFMA and, as a consequence, are aware of, and will be receptive to, what they will be experiencing. It is difficult to effectively communicate to the average Park visitor the complex nature of the SMFA and forest management practices.

Along the Legal Mile visitors may be sightseeing by auto, fishing, picnicking,



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birdwatching, or simply exploring Trout Brook. All of this activity is but a very short distance from the proposed harvest where it is closest to the tote road. It strikes us that the wilderness experience of these Park visitors will be adversely affected by the sights and sounds of a harvest at the tote road.

We fear that the impact of a harvest so close to the part of the Park that Governor Baxter designated for preservation in its natural and wild state will be offensive to Park users, may be easily misunderstood, and will diminish its wilderness values. We ask you to consider the use of a reasonable buffer zone adjacent to the tote road where no harvesting will occur. We think such a buffer is good management, is sensitive to the competing goals and values of wilderness and forestry, and would be asked of any corporate landowner in similar circumstances.

#### Administrative Snowmobile Use:

The Friends has been concerned about the impact of recreational snowmobile use on the wilderness values of the park and is continuing to formulate a policy on this for your consideration. Administrative use of snowmobiles is part of this picture, and we know you share our concern about such use.

We understand that the Park is heavily dependent on its snowmobile fleet for winter patrol, access, and logistical support for winter and summer. We also realize that there are few acceptable alternatives to snowmobiles for many of the tasks assigned to them. Helicopters have been lacking for logistical support and those that are available are expensive.

We would like to offer our assistance in identifying alternatives to administrative snowmobile use, especially logistical support, and ways to reduce such use to the minimum necessary to manage the Park. We would be glad to play an active role in any solution, and would even consider raising funds to assist the Park in using helicopters for meeting major logistical needs of Chimney Pond and Russell Pond. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you.

As always, thank you for listening. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Charles Jacoby  
President, Friends of Baxter State Park