



## News Release

### Baxter State Park to expand recreational access June 15

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Following guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state public health officials, Baxter State Park plans to increase recreational access June 15. Baxter State Park continues to follow guidance from the state of Maine in the plan “Restarting Maine’s Economy” to enact these changes.

Beginning June 15, Baxter State Park will open Togue Pond and Matagamon gates from 6am - 8pm daily for vehicle access on the park’s Tote Road. This includes:

- On the north end, from Matagamon to McManus Brook (just north of Nesowadnehunk Campground), and the Scientific Forest Management Area
- On the south end, Togue Gate to Abol Hill, including Abol Pond and Togue Pond Beach

This will provide access to more than 60 miles of trail within 5 miles of the Tote Road, fishing access to more than 25 ponds and 7 streams, and several picnic and day use areas. As is typical of this time of year, travel above treeline remains prohibited to protect sensitive alpine plant communities as spring arrives in high elevation areas. Trails above treeline, including those on Katahdin and Traveler, are tentatively set to open July 1.

Beginning July 1, Baxter State Park intends to open for most camping opportunities and hiking above treeline

- Bunkhouses will not be available in 2020: affected reservations holders will be contacted and offered transfers, credits, or refunds free of charge
- Roadwork projects on the Tote and Roaring Brook Roads will restrict travel in these areas. Baxter State Park is pursuing several road improvement projects to enhance stream habitat connectivity and infrastructure resilience to stronger storms associated with climate change. Please visit <https://baxterstatepark.org> for more information on road closures.

All visitors entering Maine from out of state are subject to a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Please see <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/> for details. Vehicle fees for non-Maine residents will be required and can be purchased online at <https://reservation.baxterstatepark.org/reserve>.

The state of Maine strongly encourages people to wear face coverings in addition to maintaining physical distancing of six feet. The public should avoid high-risk recreational activities. Visitors are encouraged to follow CDC guidelines to reduce transmission of COVID-19.

Baxter State Park continues to work closely with the state of Maine and CDC guidelines to make operations as safe as possible for staff and visitors. “We recognize that connecting with the natural world is an important salve in this time of anxiety, and we look forward to partnering with the public to make this a safe season,” said Park Director Eben Sypitkowski.

As with other risks inherent in visiting a wilderness park, COVID-19 poses some risks that cannot be mitigated by Park staff. All Park visitors must remain vigilant and take responsibility for their own safety. Baxter State Park will continue to monitor the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Maine and re-evaluate operations as necessary throughout the season.

Fullfilling Governor Percival Baxter’s vision, Baxter State Park is a unique state park independent of other state parks and campgrounds. The Baxter State Park Director works with the Baxter State Park Authority (comprised of the state’s Attorney General, the Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Director of the Maine Forest Service) to manage and operate the park. The July 1 campground openings in Baxter State Park ensures that the Park can properly train staff and numerous volunteers, in order to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all who visit or work at Baxter State Park.

On June 1, several trails impacted by the 45-acre Abol fire on May 21 will reopen for public access. This includes the Appalachian Trail (as far as Katahdin Stream Campground), as well as the Foss and Knowlton, Blueberry Ledges, Abol Pond, and Abol Stream trails. Visitors are encouraged to use extra caution in this area, where some hazards may still be present.