

Forever Wild

Newsletter of the Friends of Baxter State Park

Summer 2002 Vol. 1 No. 3

Friends
of
Baxter State Park

President's Column

By Holly Dominie, President

As I write my first column as president, I ponder what makes me and countless others complicate our lives with yet another volunteer effort.

For me the answer is simple—Baxter the man. Governor Percival Baxter's tenacious commitment to the public good, his deep-rooted connection to the land, and his vision and relentless quest on behalf of the mountain draw me like a magnet. Despite his personality "quirks," Baxter is one of my all-time heroes, ranking right up there with Rachel Carson, Gifford Pinchot, and Benton McKaye.

I first encountered the man's public legacy while growing up in the Portland area with place names such as *Baxter Boulevard* and *Baxter's Woods*. And then later I learned more about Baxter as Governor as I worked in state government and compared him with other chief executives.

Now I and other members of Friends will learn more about Baxter's instructions for the Park through the volunteer work of Dr. Howard Whitman of Georgetown. Dr. Whitman is compiling and

(Continued on page 2)



Family Team. Holly Dominie, new president of the Friends of Baxter State Park, is flanked by son Will and husband David at the National Trails Day work session at the Park. She takes over from Founding President John Neff. Other officers elected at the Annual Meeting were Howard Lake, vice president; Don Hudson, treasurer; and Joanne McPhee, secretary.

Views Differ on Park Expansion

Panelists at our Annual Meeting April 27 raised important issues about the possible benefits and drawbacks of further land preservation or conservation in the vicinity of Baxter State Park. The Board planned the forum because public debate about a North Woods Park has spurred some interest in expansion of Baxter Park.

Park Director Buzz Caverly said the Park is willing and able to purchase or accept gifts of land from willing sellers. But he cautioned that a management plan and stewardship fund should accompany any addition to safeguard the existing trust fund. Expansion could increase unauthorized trails, pressure to allow exceptions to Park rules, and problems for adjoining landowners. A buffer zone outside the Park would have fewer ill effects than would creating additional recreation facilities and roads inside the Park, he said.

Matt Polstein, Millinocket Town Councilor and President of New England Outdoor Whitewater Center, reminded the audience that the Millinocket economy has been shaken by changes in the forest products

(Continued on page 4)

Friends Briefed on Through-Hikers and Dam Removal During Tour

By Charlie Jacobi

Seven board members toured the southern part of the Park with Director Buzz Caverly on May 31 to obtain a first-hand look at several ongoing issues.

Our first stop was at Abol Bridge where we talked about management of the ever-increasing number of long-distance hikers entering the Park on the Appalachian Trail. The Park recently constructed a new, more direct trail over the Blueberry Ledges to the Tote Road near Katahdin Stream Campground. Near the Tote Road, several lean-tos and tent platforms have been built for use by long-distance hikers only.

An entrance kiosk will also be built on Park land at the new trailhead near Abol Bridge. The Maine Appalachian Trail Club will staff the kiosk with a ridgerunner to

educate hikers and manage the traffic flow in the late summer and fall. These actions are expected to take some of the hiking and camping pressure off the Daicey Pond area.

We disembarked next at Katahdin Stream Campground for a close look at the deteriorating wooden dam there. The Civilian Conservation Corps built this dam in the 1930's for recreation purposes, and sediment has been removed regularly with heavy equipment to maintain it as a pond. The dam has been replaced three times in the past 40 years, and a fourth replacement is expected to be costly.

Park staff fear that a big storm may wash the dam out, scattering debris for several miles downstream, making clean-up difficult, if not impossible. Removal of the dam will enhance wilderness values by restoring the

natural stream flow regime and reestablishing the passage of fish and other aquatic organisms in both directions. Dam removal is planned for this fall.

The field trip took us as far north as Camp Phoenix, and we had the opportunity to discuss Director Caverly's "wilderness within" ideas for Park roads and campgrounds in some depth.

The board looks forward to discussing these intriguing ideas internally over the next several months to determine what our role will be with them. The board also plans to take a field trip with the Director this fall in the northern part of the Park. We expect to learn about more park issues on this trip, and we hope to hear a few more stories from Buzz's long personal relationship with the Park.



A lumbermen's woods camp at Ledge Falls on Sourdnahunk Stream c. 1892. Such camps were used mainly in winter as can be seen by the heavy wool clothing worn by the crew or drying overhead. The pile of wood is to feed the big cast iron box stove that added its powerful heat to that of the crowd of men well stoked with baked beans. From Baxter State Park and the Allagash River by Frank H. Sleeper. 128 pages, \$19.99. Published by Arcadia Publishing, 224 State St., Portsmouth NH 03801.

Historic-Photo Book Tests One's Knowledge of Area

Fresh off the press and set to join the huge bibliography of Mt. Katahdin is *Baxter State Park and the Allagash River* by Frank Sleeper, a book of old and often

historic photos taken in and around the mountain over the past 125 years or so. The book is one of the Images of America series issued by Arcadia Publishing of Portsmouth NH.

Lovers of Baxter State Park will find many of the photos fascinating in that they portray life in the region as it was before Percival Baxter created his park and the Federal Government delineated the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. The contrasts between the working and recreational habits in a wild country of a century ago and those of today are huge—about the only things unchanged are the mountains.

The success of an historic-photo book without text is dependent on knowledgeable and informative captions accompanying each picture. Often, the photo comes to the author lacking any information at all, and it is his or her task to find some facts that will educate the viewer. This isn't always easy, as can be seen by several examples in this book. But rather than point out some of the obvious mistakes, we will let the readers match wits with the author. Fortunately, the photos alone are worth the \$20 price of the book.

—Reviewed by David Getchell, Sr.

Views Differ On Park Expansion

(Continued from page 1)

industry. It is in transition to a mixed timber and recreation gateway. Local folks are cautious about change; some are frustrated because the Park doesn't stimulate local business—they don't think any more land needs to be protected. Some live near the Park on purpose and like the way it is managed. Most are indifferent.

Jack McPhee, Maine guide and owner of Macanamac Camps

northwest of Baxter, postulated that expansion would have positive effects on the Park's natural resources. Letting the surrounding forest mature and function as a buffer would protect water quality and wildlife ranges for martin and bear. He said that the Katahdin Lake area has special resource values, and suggested that another attempt be made to answer definitively whether caribou can survive in Northern Maine.

Charlie Jacobi, a resource specialist with Acadia National Park, observed that Baxter is now a "closed system" where access and

user conflicts are more easily managed. Adding land with recreation facilities and infrastructure would make management more difficult and costly.

He urged the Park to create a long-term vision, looking out 50 years or more, considering how expansion will enhance wilderness values or create problems.

The audience encouraged the Board to work with the local community, corporate landowners, and the Park toward a long-term vision, as well as a resource inventory for the land surrounding the Park.

Friends of Baxter State Park
PO Box 1442
Bangor ME 04402-1442

We're looking for new Friends!

Do you know someone who might be interested in the Friends of Baxter State Park? Their membership will add another voice supporting Governor Baxter's wilderness.

I'd like to be a Friend. Sign me up!

Name

Street

City and State

Zip Code

_____ \$1,000
_____ \$500
_____ \$250
_____ \$100
_____ \$50
_____ \$30
_____ \$25

Governor Baxter Society
Katahdin Club
Knife Edger
Hamlin Peaker
Sponsor
Family
Individual

Please make checks payable to
Friends of Baxter State Park