



Friends of Baxter State Park

Forever Wild

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BAXTER STATE PARK
WINTER 2010 VOL. 9 NO. 1

President's Column

by Barbara Bentley

As children, we were marched up one mountain after another by our mother, who needed to hike a mountain a week to get through raising four kids. At the top of a mountain, or a fire tower in those days, we'd look for Katahdin. Well, you can imagine everyone's smile when a younger sibling of mine, standing on a hilltop in New Hampshire, raised hand to brow and said, "I think I see Katahdin."

Mountains and views have an attraction for many people. When Zip Kellogg asked what the farthest point from which one could see Katahdin might be, he got an immediate flurry of answers. (See article on p. 3.) You'll see elsewhere in the newsletter (*Looking Back...* p.4, *Our Readers Write...* pp..... 4 & 6, *Opening Day* on p. 9) that the kids follow their grandparents and parents into the parks and up the mountains. FBSP is doing its part by introducing ten Maine teenagers to the Park during the 2nd Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program in August. (See article on p. 2.)

We value and protect what we know and love. And people seem dead set against what they don't know. With each announcement of another piece of land being conserved for future generations, voices are raised in protest. This protest was a constant theme in Ken Burns' film series on the history of our national parks. What struck me was that people who had fought tooth and nail against the formation of a specific park were willing to be interviewed for Burns' film

Continued on p. 2



In October, FBSP Board members and Park staff gathered for productive work sessions on Clark Island on Lower Togue Pond and then enjoyed dinner and a talk by Howard Whitcomb. L to R front: Al Howlett, Milt Wright, Chaitanya York, Denise Clavette, Jensen Bissell, Howard Whitcomb; 2nd row: Barbara Bentley, Peg Mills, Anne Huntington, Dorothy Beeuwkes, Henry Beeuwkes, Jonathan Milne; back: Jym St. Pierre, Ben Woodard, Ken Spalding, Chris Beeuwkes

- Photo by Larry Mead

Friends Expands Agenda for 2010

New Board Members Hard at Work

Board members of Friends of Baxter State Park work hard to put the money contributed by members to best use in support of the Park. They bring to this task a wide array of talents and much time and energy. Board members meet bi-monthly as a group and in committee as needed between Board meetings. In October, at a weekend retreat on Clark Island in Baxter State Park, Board members laid ambitious plans for the future and set goals for increasing FBSP membership numbers and doubling the number of FBSP volunteers in the Park. In addition to members' contributions, funding for FBSP projects in 2010 will come from the Quimby Family Foundation and L. L. Bean, with a federal 80/20 matching grant still pending. Collaboration with Park staff on planning projects has been extremely important and very helpful.

The five new Board members elected at the April 2009 Annual meeting have jumped right into the fray. *Denise*

Clavette, Chair of the Development Committee, oversaw the lengthy grant-writing process for the now-pending Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant for trailwork in the Park and also serves on the Public Relations and Member Activities Committees. *Jonathan Milne* has assumed the coordination of the very successful Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program begun last year by now-retired Board Member Linda McKee; serving on the Development and Member Activities Committees, he oversees the Quimby Family Foundation grant that funds that program. *Jym St. Pierre* brings his vast expertise on wilderness to the Publicity and Policy Committees and keeps us all up to date on happenings in Maine's North Woods. While his business background and non-profit experience benefit the Finance Committee, *Ralph Pope* serves as well on

Continued on p. 3



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Barbara Bentley, President
 Ken Spalding, Vice President
 Howard Whitcomb, Secretary
 Al Howlett, Treasurer
 Chip Ahrens
 Henry Beeuwkes
 Denise Clavette
 Anne Huntington
 Jonathan Milne
 Jym St. Pierre
 Ralph Pope
 Milt Wright
 Chaitanya York

HONORARY DIRECTORS

Eric Baxter
 Dean Bennett
 Buzz Caverly
 Alexandra Conover
 Donn Fendler
 David Getchell, Sr.
 Leon Gorman
 Jon Lund
 Libby Mitchell
 Chellie Pingree
 Kay Rand
 Neil Rolde
 Rupert Baxter White

Newsletter Editor
 Barbara Bentley

Administrative Manager
 Rosemary Hastings

Volunteer Coordinator
 Laurie Rich

PO Box 609
 Union, ME 04862-0609
www.friendsofbaxter.org

Friends of Baxter State Park is an independent citizen group working to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of Baxter State Park, in the spirit of its founder, Governor Percival Baxter.

President's Column *Continued from p. 1*

many years later saying how wrong they had been and how valuable it was to have the land preserved for the enjoyment of this and future generations. "If I had only known then what I know now...."

While the amount of conserved land in Maine is up from 6% in 2003 to nearly 17.8% today, 95% of Maine is still privately owned! Of the 3.3 million acres of conserved land, only about 1.3 million acres are protected permanently as public reserved lands and as state and national parks or through easements on private land which guarantee public access for recreation. That's about 1 acre per person in Maine. Attendance in state parks was up nearly 8% in 2009, and Baxter State Park saw an increase as well. (See *Update from the Park* on p. 8.) To me that spells increased pressure on all our parks, Baxter State Park included. Maine bills itself as Vacationland. Protecting the resource while providing increased access by the public is a constant balancing act, and we are particularly proud of the way all those involved with running Baxter State Park rise to that challenge!

Our membership numbers are up, 548 as of today! Although membership renewal notices aren't due to go out until March 1st, some folks have already renewed for 2010. When it comes time to renew, please bear in mind that your membership contributions directly fund projects in the Park, as well as leverage additional funding, for preservation of this unique wilderness area that belongs to all the people of Maine. Thank you!

How to Contact Us
Rosemary Hastings, Admin. Manager
 28 Serenity Lane, Hope, ME 04847
 207-785-2641
rosehast@tidewater.net

Barbara Bentley, President
 546 Hatchet Mt. Rd, Hope, ME 04847
 207-763-3014 or 207-542-5207
barbarabentley@tidewater.net

Laurie Rich, Volunteer Coordinator
 207-862-6580 or 207-249-5023
friendsofbaxtervolunteer@gmail.com

SAVE the DATE

Friends of Baxter State Park
ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, April 24, 2010

Pine Tree State Arboretum
in Augusta

Early Bird Walk
Poetry
"Above the Treeline" Topics
Update from the Park
Yummy Lunch
Much More

ATTENTION
Maine High School Students
– Enjoy 8 nights in the Park
on Us!

Don't miss out on the opportunity to participate in the 2010 Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program (MYWLP) sponsored by the Friends of Baxter State Park and funded by the Quimby Family Foundation! We all began our Baxter State Park experience through an association with someone who had been to the Park before us or a tale told to us about Mount Katahdin or the wildlife there. Some began as children, others as adults, but all with the same result – we couldn't get enough of the Baxter State Park wilderness experience.

It is that very experience that the FBSP wants to provide **at no cost** to ten (10) Maine high school sophomores and juniors on August 7-15, 2010. Participants get to hike, canoe, camp in the interior of the Park, and learn more about Maine's premier wilderness area from resource professionals and artists.

The key is to act quickly and complete the MYWLP application located at www.friendsofbaxter.org **The deadline is February 15, 2010.** The application is very easy to fill out and can be emailed directly to the program coordinator at the following address: Jonathan Milne at maineoutdoors@gmail.com.

CORRECTION: In the preceding two issues of this newsletter *Forever Wild*, the Volume Number should have been "8", not "9." Our apologies.
 – Editor



Fishermen are familiar with this view of Katahdin seen from the Cribwork on the W. Branch of the Penobscot. – Photo © Bill Bentley

Katahdin From A Distance, But How Far?

Because a hobby of mine for nearly 40 years has been to explore Maine's many nooks and crannies and because I've seen Katahdin from many a mountain top, road, lake, pond, river, and tower, I've often wondered what would likely be the farthest point from which one could, with confidence, identify Maine's highest mountain.

We all have those nagging things that plague us, and this was one of mine — not earth-shattering, not of major consequence, not likely to change the course of history, nevertheless having a sense of wonder rarely does one harm — this question/problem was of the nagging ilk.

So eventually I decided to bother someone else about my problem and chose my friend Barbara Bentley, President of FBSP (believing that Katahdin lovers everywhere must have this problem). She very kindly put the question out

to a variety of FBSP people who themselves kindly suggested such candidates as Mars Hill, Route 9 in Wesley, Chick Hill, Quaggy Joe, Cadillac, the Penobscot Narrows Bridge, Mount Carleton in New Brunswick, and Mount Washington, among others. I welcomed all their suggestions, but the Mount Washington one was troublesome. So I decided to: a) ask the Mt. Washington proponent how much confidence was associated with this report and b) email the Mount Washington Observatory for an opinion. Bottom line after some discussion and consideration: not likely.

Having seen Katahdin myself from Cadillac on a very clear day and knowing that it is farther (approximately 113 miles) than all other answers I got to my question, I guess I'm sticking with it for the time being. But I'm not content because I know that Augusta and Rangeley

are roughly the same distance away from Katahdin (not to mention Canadian possibilities). But what about the sight lines from other high or even low places? What might be blocking Katahdin from view from some high or low hill at any of these or other places? From where might there be an unobstructed view... farther than Cadillac?

Even if I don't yet have an answer with which I'm entirely comfortable, I must say that the process of finding one has been interesting. It has prompted conversations with mountain lovers and historical societies and has acquainted me with various mountain panoramas (e.g. 19th and 20th century drawings and www.heywhatsthat.com) If you have thoughts on this (including other candidates!), I'd welcome them!

– Zip Kellogg, Portland,

ME

Friends Expands Agenda

Continued from p. 1

the Member Activities Committee and is at work inventorying plants in alpine areas of the Park. *Milt Wright* is Chair of the Member Activities Committee, which encompasses a very broad array of activities including the various programs and projects we support in the Park, and he serves on the Development committee.

Board members are eligible to serve two consecutive three-year terms before term limits oblige them to step down for at least one year. At the FBSP Annual Meeting in April this year, we will fill three positions on the Board. The majority of our "work force" will still be hard at work. Members serve on a number of committees, and we hope others will join them. All are encouraged to sign up for volunteer opportunities in the Park this year. The more Friends, the merrier; and the more we'll accomplish.

Éric Leuenberger heads up Katahdin with Pamola in background.

– Photo courtesy of Éric Leuenberger

Our Readers Write...

Snowmobile shuttles...

Bonjour, Madame. We've met two years ago on Chimney Pond as you were taking pictures on a beautiful winter day. Baxter in winter is kind of a classic for me. I saw that snowmobiles



went to Chimney Pond. Since I'm planning to go in March, I was wondering if a shuttle service might be available? I know that snowmobiles are not allowed in the Park. They can go from the parking lot to the junction with the Togue Pond Road. There is another junction on Roaring Brook Road up 10 miles where a sign is indicating a shelter on the right side. Apparently it was used by snowmobilers. Do you know if it is possible to have a ride to that point? If not, could you give me a contact to go at least to the gate?

– Éric Leuenberger, Quebec, Canada
In response:

Snowmobiles are permitted on the Park's Tote Road from Togue Pond gate to Matagamon gate. Snowmobiles used anywhere else in the Park are for administrative purposes only, including those that go to Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps from Avalanche Field on the Roaring Brook

Continued on p. 6

Looking Back ... Katahdin Energizes Young Climber

It was a beautiful late August day, perfect for my nine-year old son's first climb to the summit of Katahdin. He and I, along with his older sister and several of her friends, climbed from Roaring Brook Campground to Chimney Pond in very good time, arriving in the mid-morning. I had high hopes that the climb to the summit from there would go just as well.

Upon reaching the edge of Chimney Pond, Eric took one look at the precipitous granite walls of the Great Basin and made the quick decision that he did not intend to go one step further. Having determined ahead of time that I was not going to force him to tackle such a climb, especially on his first try, I told the girls to go ahead, assuring them that we would wait there for their return. The plan had been to climb the Cathedral Trail so they began their climb along that trail.

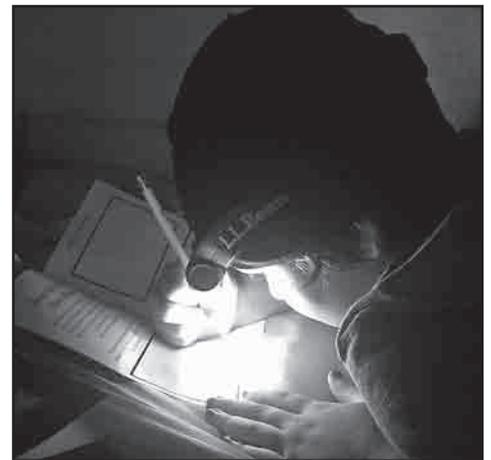
After a time of leisure at the pond, I gingerly suggested that, if he were willing, we might climb to the first "cathedral" and have our lunch there. The Cathedral Trail consists of three massive rock nobs that have been referred to as "cathedrals" through the years. I told him of the beautiful view from that spot – well worth the effort. Grudgingly he agreed, and we began our slow plodding march through the woods to the base of the ridge. That is where the trail turns and begins its steep ascent up giant granite boulders. "We will never reach the first cathedral," I thought. "It was going to be too much for him."

Suddenly I saw a change in Eric's

whole demeanor. He began to climb easily from one boulder to another shouting back how neat it was. Needless to say, he reached the first cathedral outcropping first while I was still trying breathlessly to match his quickened pace. After a brief lunch and a look at the magnificent view, he turned to me and said, "We're going to the top, aren't we?" And so we did. Something had happened, and his energy never diminished the rest of the day. We reached the summit not long after the girls and enjoyed a second lunch with several AT thru hikers who had just finished their long journey from Georgia. It was a great day. I will never forget how the granite boulders of the Cathedral Ridge energized a young nine-year old lad to "reach the top." – *John Neff, Author of Katahdin: An Historic Journey, can be contacted at jhneff@fairpoint.net*



Anne McKee has summited Katahdin five times in five years, once arriving at the summit from Russell Pond via the Northwest Basin before descending to Roaring Brook.
– Photo © Walt McKee



Kate McKee studies for the Junior Ranger badge by headlight. She was later presented her badge by Ranger Rich Elliot. A growing number of young campers are enjoying the challenge of this educational program. Information on how to participate is available from any campground Ranger, at the Visitor Center or Park HQ. – Photo © Walt McKee



Katahdin looms large when viewed from Katahdin Lake in the winter.

– Photo © Bill Bentley

Pitching in and Stepping Out

Laurie Rich,
FBSP Volunteer Coordinator

207-862-6580 hm
207-249-5023 cell

friendsofbaxtervolunteers@gmail.com



Are you a VIP?

There is snow on the ground and temperatures are hovering at freezing, but my thoughts are on the coming of Spring and waiting to be a VIP. So what is a VIP?

A VIP is a Volunteer In the Park. This year, to make volunteering easier and more enjoyable, we have selected specific weekends for scheduled projects. The projects vary greatly and include painting, mowing, boundary marking, carpentry, and trail maintenance. Starting in June, the second weekend of each month will be the VIP weekend. There will be a FBSP representative for each weekend acting as the contact with the Park to coordinate the weekend's activities. We will have a work-day planned with a potluck lunch/barbecue. The Park will provide the tools and supplies we need for each of the projects.

So what do you need to do to be a VIP?

- Send a 2010 Baxter State Park Volunteer Form to the Park to be kept on file.

- Let Friends know what weekends (2nd weekend of each month June-October) you are available. (See *How to Contact Us* on p. 2.)

- Identify what type of projects you like to do, keeping in mind that a project has many facets – you may not be able to wield the hammer, but you might be able to hold the board or hand the nails.

Friends of Baxter State Park is also sending four chainsaw crews to the Park, tentatively scheduled for the last two weekends in May and the second weekend in June. We are looking for a total of four crews of four people each. Each crew has a certified sawyer with first aid qualifications plus three (3) others willing to help carry equipment, remove brush, and trim the trail.

The Park has many trail projects already on its own schedule. (See article to the right on this page.) For more information about the BSP trail projects, go to *Volunteer Trail Projects for Summer 2010* on the Volunteer Page of the BSP website at www.baxterstateparkauthority.com and contact Paul Sannicandro directly to sign up.

Looking forward to seeing you as a Friends of Baxter State Park VIP on the second weekend of each month! And we encourage you to bring a friend to volunteer in the Park.

BSP Trail Supervisor Looks for Trail Friends

BSP Trail Supervisor Paul Sannicandro has defined four (4) projects available for BSP Trail Friends volunteers during the summer of 2010. See descriptions below. On these restoration and construction projects, some of which are highly technical, volunteers will work with BSP trail crews. **Interested volunteers should contact Paul directly** in the next few weeks. Leave a phone message at 207-723-9616, fax messages to 207-723-6381, or e-mail messages to Paul.Sannicandro@maine.gov Check the Park website www.baxterstateparkauthority.com for more details on the four projects listed below as well as updates on other trail maintenance projects.

BSP Trail Project #1: National Trails Day – Trail Stewards Training on South Turner Mt. Trail

June 5, 2010 (Rain date June 6, 2010)

Must be able to hike a total of 4 miles (round trip) with a daypack. This hike is steep. We will gain 1600 feet of elevation on an ascent over 1.5 miles.

Challenge Level = Moderate

BSP Trail Team #2: Mixed Bag of Projects – Traveler Mt. Loop, Pogy Notch, and South Branch Mt. Trails

June 13 - 17, 2010

This project will require the lifting and handling of heavy loads. Hiking/working on the Traveler Mt. Loop will require a demanding hike of 10.6 miles.

Challenge Level = Moderate to Difficult

BSP Trail Team # 3 Alpine Trail Reconstruction – Saddle Trail

Four Dates:

(1) July 11 - 15 (2) July 19 - 23 (3) July 25 - 29 (4) August 2 - 6

All participants must be in very good physical condition and be able to climb Katahdin four (4) days in a row. There is room for four (4) volunteers for each set of dates.

Challenge Level = Most Difficult

BSP Trail Team # 5 Hunt Trail – Erosion Control

Labor Day Weekend, September 1 - 8, 2010 (Wednesday to Wednesday)

The work site is approximately 1.5 miles from the trailhead of the Hunt Trail at Katahdin Stream Campground. The duration of this project is eight (8) days due to organization and set up time for the rigging system. There is room for twelve (12) volunteers.

Challenge Level = Moderate / Difficult



The Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) does much technical trail work in BSP each year. In 2009, Friends funded two weeks of trailwork by an enthusiastic 7-person team, six of whom are shown above at the end of the year end celebration. L to R: Anna Germundson, Assistant Team Leader Evan Spark-DePass, Team Leader Andrea Bachynsky, Brian Chadwick, Adam Kran, and Michael Petrick.

– Photo courtesy Jo Hersom of MCC

Our Readers Write...

Continued from p. 3

access road. Campers can arrange privately with local outfitters to be taken to the Togue Pond gate by snowmobile and then proceed on skis or snowshoes up the Roaring Brook Road to destinations within the Park. – Editor

Day Use Parking Concerns...

Please find enclosed a copy of the letter I wrote to Baxter State Park head office regarding their 2010 day use parking reservation program. Please read it, and supply the Park head office with your suggestions. Katahdin is a mountain of stunning beauty and a meeting ground for all outdoors enthusiasts. It is great to see people come together for a common interest and thru hikers of the Appalachian trails like returning to Katahdin. I have met the nicest and most interesting people from across America (United States and Canada) on my hikes. It would be sad if any State or National park would start to favor the access to mostly local people.

– Christian J. Chiasson and hiker friends supporting this letter

Dieppe, New Brunswick, Canada

In response:

The letter to the Park included a list of helpful suggestions to insure fairness in the proposed day use parking reservation system and applauded the Park's efforts to preserve the resource by limiting access. – Editor

Friends does a great job...

My brother David sent me a copy of your newsletter – you are doing a great job for the Park. Sorry that the enclosed check is not more, but some ancestors basically gave everything away (to their credit.) Again, thank you for all your dedicated work.

– Peter F. Moyer, Jackson, Wyoming P. S.

My Uncle Percy taught me how to fish when I was a little boy. Some of the “catches” have been large (see enclosed), but he also taught me to catch-and-release.

Editor's note: Moyer landed an estimated world-record 210 lb. tarpon off the coast of FL, but released it rather than kill it for the record.

Girl Scout Troop visits Park...

Thanks for all you do. I am interested in being on your team. A native of Caribou and fan of the Park and Katahdin, I am sending you some pictures and a report of our trip last weekend. Girl Scout



BSP Park Interpretive Specialist (center) meets with enthusiastic members of Girl Scout Troop 1921 on their trip to the Park. – Photo courtesy of Karen Soderberg

Troop 1921 of Machigonne neighborhood of Portland spent a wonderful weekend in Baxter State Park. We camped at Pamola in nearby Natarawi and then hiked a small bit of the AT near Daicey Pond and over to Big Niagara. Suffice it to say, we'll be back! Warm thanks to Ranger Marcia Williamson for meeting us around our campfire in the rain. Need service minded and nature loving volunteers? Contact us at anytime care of our co-leaders, Karen Soderberg Hinchliffe and Clara Porter at kshstrat@maine.rr.com

– Karen Soderberg, Portland, ME

Katahdin Lake visit...

When the project for including Katahdin Lake in Baxter State Park was first mentioned in the Friends' newsletter, I found the arguments, and the photographs, most convincing. And this summer, talking to people who have been active in getting the project financed and in planning for the future, I was impressed by how much work and effort have gone into it. But, as a convincing argument for the project and an explanation for all

this effort, nothing beats a hike like the one my husband and I took along the trail to the lake on a perfect August day, on our latest trip to the Park. The trail itself, with its “corduroy” sections, gave a sense of the forest's history. We had tantalizing glimpses of the lake before arriving at the picnic area, with its amazing view of Katahdin, although stopping to admire it meant that bug repellent became necessary. But the views got even better when we took to the water in a Park canoe, exploring lazily and finding little beaches here and there. At the same time, we got a better sense of the region's geography, for example, just by seeing East Turner Mountain clearly for the first time. We walked back in the late afternoon sun, stopping to pump water at the bridge near the junction of Sandy Stream and Roaring Brook, and wondered how long it might take us to

Continued on p. 7



Forest Hart's miniature bronze sculpture “Reclining Moose” (shown above) went to lucky FBSP member Kent Tableman of Veazie, ME. The winning number was drawn by Seán McGibbon, age 6, shown at the right with Marsha Donahue in North Light Gallery, Millinocket. Proceeds went to the Jerry Pond Project.

– Photos by Barbara Bentley



Those Fragile Alpine Zones . . .

It sometimes seems that alpine zones can't be mentioned without the word fragile. So what's the big deal? The organisms that live above treeline are among the hardiest on earth. They're either the same species that live on the arctic tundra or are at least first cousins to those cold weather pioneers. The lichens that enjoy great diversity in our alpine zones are so hardy that they're likely to be the first colonizers after a nuclear blast. Lichens get all their nutrition from atmospheric deposition; and when the going gets tough, they have the ability to shut down almost completely and wait for better times. And think of the plant life above treeline. The hardy cold-adapted conifer species growing there adopt a horizontal growth form to stay out of the wind and ice, and do very nicely wherever they can find the slightest bit of lee behind a rock. The flowering plants are dominated by the heath family, those durable nutrient-acquisition specialists that are among the few plants that can survive nutrient poor conditions at any altitude. Alpine spore plants, including mosses, liverworts, club mosses, and ferns, flourish in this extreme environment with their low and frequently cushion-like growth form that helps them, and a few of their flowering plant allies, stay out of the wind, conserve moisture, and retain heat.

So what's with this ever-present fragile tag? As it turns out, plenty. Even with their exceptional evolutionary adaptations, the flora above treeline is still pretty much living life on the edge. Conditions are so cold, cloudy, windy, and icy that acquiring enough nutrients to ramp up their photosynthetic mechanism and actually add mass is extremely difficult. The result is very slow growth led by lichens, those legendary laggards that can be thousands of years old yet

only inches across. The bonsai-like conifers (krumholz) are also very slow growing, representing a unique form of old-growth forest. The alpine summit communities are actually remnant arctic ecosystems connecting us ecologically to the time when much of North America was re-colonizing in the wake of a glacial retreat that began 14,000 years ago. Our present alpine zones comprise a tundra system that retreated upslope in the wake of this glacial retreat until they reached their current restricted range on the summits of a few of our highest peaks. They are literally and figuratively poised at the edge of a great precipice.

Park employees have long understood the dangers of hiker impact above treeline. Unwary hikers can do damage by collecting, direct trampling, compacting soil, and unwittingly introducing invasives to the high terrain. Park staff have been working since the earliest days of the Park to minimize this hiker impact through various means such as managing the numbers of hikers, hardening trails, providing alpine stewards, and educating hikers and rangers about the vulnerabilities of the alpine ecosystem.

Global climate change adds a new and serious concern to the mix. What climate change will do to these small remnant ecosystems is unclear. It seems likely that climate change will bring warmer temperatures more hospitable to the boreal forests that are always poised

to engulf the alpine flora. However, some models suggest the possibility of increased storminess bringing more ice, less sun, and shorter growing seasons possibly expanding the alpine zones. Good baseline data is critical to understanding change.

In order to gather that all-important baseline data, Baxter State Park participates in a program of the Appalachian Mountain Club called Mountain Watch, a volunteer program monitoring alpine plant communities throughout the alpine peaks of the Northeast. This program gathers information on the dates on which certain plants bloom, make fruit, and disperse seeds. In The Park, the alpine plants monitored are alpine bilberry, Bigelow's sedge, diapensia, mountain cranberry, and Labrador tea. Years of data from many volunteers and many peaks can provide important baseline data to understand what changes are taking place, and you can be part of this important effort.

If you hike above treeline, can commit to attending an orientation program, can find time for at least two plant surveys each year, and don't mind filling out the straightforward survey forms, you can help gather valuable information. For more information on the Mountain Watch program, please visit amc.org, and for information on volunteering in Baxter State Park, please check baxterstateparkauthority.com. Also, for notification of the date for the BSP Mountain Watch orientation program this spring, please send an email to Jean Hoekwater at Jean.Hoekwater@maine.gov.

– Ralph Pope, Author of

Lichens Above Treeline: A Hikers Guide to Alpine Zone Lichens of the Northeastern United States, a BSP Mountain Watch volunteer, and a Board Member of FBSP.

Our Readers Write...

Continued from p. 6

walk back along the brook to our campsite, as people may have done long ago when they travelled towards Katahdin from the east. But we sensibly went on to the parking lot. There, watching a small group prepare for an overnight trip to the lake area, we felt a pang of envy and began to talk about what we would do when we next returned. In the meantime, we would like to say a very warm "thank you to all!" all those who have been involved in the Katahdin Lake project.

– Jane Macaulay and Marcel Moussette
Quebec City, PQ, Canada



A BSP hiker can visit many a family of target lichens along the trail. This one lives on the trail to Grand Falls.

– Photo © Bill Bentley



Update from the Park

by BSP Park Director Jensen Bissell

The fall of 2009 and the winter of 2010 have been a very busy period in terms of Park policy and administration. We have been working hard at instituting effective hiring plans for several important year-round Park positions. After a 3-month process, we announced the hiring of Isaac Needell (L photo) and Mike Winslow (R photo) as Baxter State Park Ranger I's. Isaac and Mike are now at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in Vassalboro, working through the Basic Law Enforcement Training Program, and must successfully complete the program to continue their careers as BSP Ranger I's. We're looking forward to the program's graduation date of May 21, 2010. We have also been working on the hiring process for a Park Carpenter and are close to completing that hire. Lastly, we have completed the first stages of the hiring plan for a Forester I to work with Carol Re-

delshiemer in the Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA), and we hope to have a new Forester on board by mid-April. With two Park Rangers at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, we knew we would be short-handed in the Park this winter so we hired long-time Russell Pond Ranger Greg Hamer to work as an Alpine Ranger out of Chimney Pond for the winter months. Greg is doing his usual great job, and it has been great to have him up at Chimney.

Park summer use for 2009 recorded 59,861 people entering the Park. This reflects an increase of about 4,400 over 2008 figures. Our revenues for the summer for camping were also up about 4.5%. Good news in difficult times. 2010 summer reservations now include the switch from person-based to site-based pricing for camping facilities in the Park. The pricing change is not expected to generate more camping fee income for the Park in 2010 (as-

suming the same number of people), but the change makes our fee structure much easier to understand and the site-based pricing strips away a few layers of administration and complexity in the collection of fees by staff during the summer months.

On January 19th, the Park conducted its annual opening day process. About 61 Maine residents and 10 non-residents successfully secured 89 reservations and increased the Park's coffers by about \$30,000. In recent years, the opening day event has become a nice reunion of old friends and an enjoyable exercise for Park staff. The limits on reservations available on opening day ensure that no more than 1 or 2% of the Park's total summer capacity is reserved, leaving plenty of opportunity for those who prefer to use the rolling reservation system.

As the season has progressed, winter users of the Park have enthusiastically accepted the revisions in the winter-use policies. Winter use is significantly up over 2009 so far, and we are looking forward to a great February and March.

As spring approaches, we are planning for the rollout of the Park's Day Use Parking Reservation System (DUPR). This program will begin in late April and extend through the summer hiking season. Information on the program is posted on the Park's website. Along with the DUPR system, we are working to upgrade and remodel our website. We have posted the first draft of a new look on our homepage, and we will be refining this approach and continuing the theme through the rest of the website. Many reading this will recognize the banner as the Lou Mucci work *Katahdin from Foster Field*. Many thanks to Barbara Bentley and the Friends of Baxter State Park for providing this painting to the Park for this use.

Lastly, the Park has been working through an extensive revision to the rules

Continued on p. 9



A view of Pamola Ice Cliffs is enough for most while only a few feel compelled to climb them. Climbers can see revised winter regulations on the BSP Park website.
 – Photo © Bill Bentley

Continued from p. 8

and regulations as well as a number of policy initiatives regarding the maintenance and long-term administration of the Park's 212 miles of hiking trails. We hope to complete this work this spring as a first step in our upcoming management planning.

I hope you have found this abbreviated update on our winter work informative. On behalf of Park staff, thanks to the Friends of Baxter for all the help you have provided the Park, and we look forward to seeing you this summer or maybe even this winter.

Need reservations?

Go to the Baxter State Park website at baxterstateparkauthority.com Under Camping and Reservations, click on CAMPSITE AVAILABILITY to plan your trip. Then call or write Park HQ's.

Check on up-to-date trail conditions by calling the newly established Hiker Info Line at 207-723-4636.

Day use parking reservations will go into effect in the Spring of 2010.

Opening Day at Park HQ

For a hardy few, camping overnight in line to make reservations on Opening Day at BSP Headquarters is a festive tradition. L to R in the photo below, Phil Jacobs, Pete Churchill (seated), Gary Biandouveres, and Omar Khudari sport their winter overnight gear. Betsy Merriam (at bottom right) joined the line at 4 AM to make reservations for her 70-year-old brother, who will travel from Australia to climb Katahdin with his 7-year-old grandson, the age at which he himself first climbed the mountain.

— Photos © Barbara Bentley



Bike, Backpack, and Hiking Boots

On my recent visit to New England, I must say a major highlight of my trip was spending eight days and nights hiking in Baxter State Park.

After weeks of planning, I found myself cycling from the sandy shores of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, to the mountains of Piscataquis County, Maine. After I bought supplies in Millinocket, my road bike looked more like a pack-horse than a bicycle. As I climbed the steep hills approaching the Park, views of Katahdin reminded me of why I had peddled all those miles. Reaching the loose gravel of the Park Tote Road, I knew my rear tire didn't stand a chance. After two flat tires, a broken shifter cable, a thunderstorm, and six miles of pushing my bike, I made it to Katahdin Stream Campground.

Early the following morning, I left my bicycle and began my eight-day loop through the diverse wilderness of the Park. Beginning with a challenging and extremely rewarding climb of Doubletop Mountain, I ended my first day of hiking at Nesowadnehunk Field.

With moments of complete solitude, being truly alone with only my thoughts and the beauty that surrounded me, the long and winding Wassataquoik Lake Trail offered a magnificent route to the Russell Pond backcountry. As I headed north on the Pogy Notch Trail, a large bull moose running through the bushes reminded me that I wasn't the only one using the trail. With a side trip to Howe Brook, I ad-



Andrew MacDougall traveled by bike to hike 85 miles in BSP.

— Photo © Andrew MacDougall

mired the clear waters that ran down the rocks of peaceful waterfalls.

After spending a day hiking and paddling at South Branch Pond, I returned south to Russell Pond. Waking early, I continued south onto the secluded Northwest Basin Trail. The silence of early dawn was broken by the rushing water of Wassataquoik Stream. As I climbed above the tree-line and onto the Northwest Plateau, I stood in complete awe of the beauty that surrounded me. The solitude and contentment of that moment have proven to be unforgettable.

On my final day of hiking, I climbed up the Great Basin from Roaring Brook, summited Katahdin, then descended the Hunt Trail completing my loop at Katahdin Stream Campground.

Over the 86 miles of hiking, no two miles were alike. The rangers proved helpful, and fellow hikers were pleasant to talk to. The natural beauty and crowdless trails offered moments and lifelong lessons I will never forget. Baxter State Park was the perfect setting to end my two months of traveling that started from my home in Beaver Bank, Nova Scotia. I always look forward to returning.

— Andrew MacDougall,
Beaver Bank, Nova Scotia, Canada



Friends of Baxter State Park
P.O. Box 609
Union, ME 04862-0609

We're looking for new Friends!

_____ \$1,000	Governor Baxter Society
_____ \$ 500	Katahdin Club
_____ \$ 250	Knife Edger
_____ \$ 100	Hamlin Peaker
_____ \$ 50	Sponsor
_____ \$ 30	Family
_____ \$ 25	Individual

Please make checks payable to Friends of Baxter State Park. Dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Send to

**Friends of Baxter State Park,
P.O. Box 609, Union, ME 04862-0609**

Friends Website: www.friendsofbaxter.org

Thank you!

FBSP Outings in 2010

Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps - dates of your choice

Ski 11 miles and enjoy the backcountry in wood-heated cabins with fabulous fare served in main lodge. To make a reservation, contact Manager Holly Hamilton directly on the web at www.katahdinlakewildernesscamps.com or call 207-837-1599.

Warm Winter Weekend - March 25, 26, & 27 (3 nights)

Twin Pine Camps, Millinocket Lake - Drive to your cabin and take day trips of your choice - ski, snowshoe, snowsled, or hike. Enjoy meals prepared by the group in large cabin or cook your own. For more information about the camps, go to New England Outdoor Center (NEOC) website. To make a reservation, contact NEOC and tell them you are part of the FBSP group. www.neo.com or 1-800-766-7238

Camping Opportunities:

South Branch Pond - July 8, 9, 10 (3 nights) - 3 lean-tos

Pack your gear and provisions and join other Friends at SB for a visit to BSP Mt. Chase lot and the Scientific Forest Management Area on Friday. Hike, fish, canoe on your own or with group. Contact Barbara Bentley to reserve lean-to space.

Chimney Pond - September 3, 4, & 5 (3 nights) - 2 lean-tos

Pack your gear and provisions and join other Friends at CP for a chance to enjoy fall on the mountain. Summer or winter conditions could prevail. Exciting time to be in the Park. Contact Barbara Bentley to reserve lean-to space.

See *How to Contact Us* on p. 2 of newsletter.



October sunrise finds snow on Katahdin, seen from Clark Island on Lower Togue Pond. – Photo © Jym St. Pierre

Friends offers SCHOLARSHIPS to Members

- Want to clear blowdowns early in the season? Chainsaw certification scholarships are available for training on April 17 & 18 in Bradford or October 2 & 3 in Windham.
- Want to take kids camping in the Park? *Leave No Trace (LNT)* training scholarships are available to teachers and Scout leaders for June 23 & 24 in the Park.