

Forever Wild

Newsletter of the Friends of Baxter State Park

Fall 2002 Vol. 1 No. 4

Friends
of
Baxter State Park

President's Column

By Holly Dominie, President

I am struck by two facts. First, that no long-range plan exists for Baxter State Park and, second, that the Park Authority has taken limited interest, if at all, in examining some of the "Wilder Within" ideas that Director Buzz Caverly floated at the Authority's retreat last spring.

I understand the reluctance of the Authority to open a discussion of some of Caverly's "on the edge" ideas. In the closing months of an administration, it is most difficult to embark upon a policy issue that demands fair and open discussion, sound facts, and rigorous policy analysis. Ideas such as closing road segments and limiting the number of day hikers on the most heavily used trails are too thorny and important to engage superficially.

In like manner, Friends of Baxter State Park cannot at this time take any position on these concepts. But we are glad that Caverly began the conversation.

At our annual meeting, members did direct the Board to promote the idea of, and urge the Authority to engage in, long-range planning for the Park – to give these ideas and others their due.

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Protected View. A hiker looks southwest from Sentinel Mountain in the Park across Nesowdnehunk Deadwater and the West Branch of the Penobscot to part of the 41,000 acres recently purchased by The Nature Conservancy.

—Photo by Dave Getchell, Sr.

TNC Buffers West Side of Park

By Karin R. Tilberg

The recent announcement of the Katahdin Forest Project by Great Northern and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is tremendous news for the North Woods and the people of Maine. The Project encompasses over 240,000 acres and buffers Baxter State Park to the west and south.

Approximately 200,000 acres will be protected from development and must meet sustainable forestry standards set forth in a conservation easement administered by TNC. The easement will relieve Baxter Park from the intensifying pressures for shoreline and back-country development. It will also ensure that the nearby forest will be managed for a continuing, renewable and long-term source of forest products so long as the land is managed for forestry.

The centerpiece of the transaction is the 41,000 acres that Great Northern deeded to TNC encompassing the Debsconeag Lakes and Rainbow Lake region. TNC will be managing the area as a wilderness reserve, with no new development, harvesting or motorized uses.

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

**Friends of Baxter State
Park
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Wilder Tomorrow? Kidney Pond, with the cabins hugging the north shore, would become a walk-in campground under the "Wilder Within" concept.

Your Ideas Wanted on 'Wilder Within'

Over the past few months, Park Director Buzz Caverly has discussed his "Wilder Within" proposal that the Park be made "wilder" in order to contend with increasing use. We are seeking members' comments on these ideas so that they can be added to the discussion.

Below are some of the Director's ideas. What do you think of them? Please write us by regular mail or e-mail (torngat@tidewater.net) with your thoughts on one or all of the proposals. Bear in mind that these are ideas, not facts, and that this is the time to talk about them. We will forward your comments to the BSP Authority so that its members and the Advisory Board can hear from Park users. Please respond before Dec. 1, 2002, so we can publish the results in our winter newsletter.

To reduce foot traffic on the Abol and Hunt trails (the latter from Katahdin Stream Campground):

— Set limits on the number of day hikers. Develop a resource protection plan which controls the numbers on these two trails and enforces limitations. Explore a reservation option for day use, free of charge, for

those who plan ahead.

To reduce noise and water pollution:

— Eliminate the use of outboard motors, aircraft and snowmobiles on Webster Lake. Restrict snowmobile use on Lower Togue, already limited to 10 h.p., would be restricted to the inholders on Clark Island.

To reduce the growing pressure of automobiles and to increase the wilderness character of campgrounds:

— Have road access to Kidney Pond end at Foster Field (on the Perimeter Road) or the bridge over Nesowdnehunk Stream, making the campground a walk-in site. Over the years, as the cabins required major repairs, they would be replaced with lean-tos. Under this proposal, Daicey Pond would continue to have vehicle access and facilities for cabin camping.

— Have road access to Roaring Brook Campground end at Windey Pitch, as it did in the 1940's, thus making Roaring Brook (about three miles away) and all points beyond backpacking sites. At present, on any given day, over 300 people hike into Chimney Pond. Many are unprepared,

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Catching Up On Activities For '02 Season

By Jean Hoekwater
Park Naturalist

—Stewart Guay was commissioned as a Baxter State Park Ranger I in June following an 18-week course at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Director Buzz Caverly administered the oath at a ceremony held at Park headquarters.

—New Trail Crew quarters at Abol Field will be ready for occupancy in 2003. The quarters are next to the Trail Crew supervisor's living quarters and their tool shop.

—The *Guide to Katahdin and Baxter State Park* by Stephen Clark is undergoing revisions this fall for a re-issue in the spring of 2003.

—Maine Forest Service and Baxter Park staff detected and suppressed eight forest fires, ranging in size from a tenth to a quarter of an acre within the Park this season.

—The first Class III day of the fall

Your Views Sought

(Continued from page 2)

from going barefoot to wearing sandals, and without other proper gear. Their ignorance of the difficulties of such a hike results in unreasonable impact on the Chimney Pond Campground. A big problem at Chimney is disposal of human waste. Present facilities can handle the 50 or so campers, but day visitors, using the johns both when they come in and again when they go out, place a huge strain on the system. The extra three miles of walking from Windey Pitch might serve to reduce the number of day users at Chimney Pond.

—Close the Perimeter Road from Trout Brook Crossing southwest to Camp Phoenix (approximately 10 to 12 miles). This would eliminate transient and thrufare traffic using the Tote Road, which then would become an access road to trailheads and facilities, as intended by Governor Baxter



Dam Gone. This September '02 photo shows bank restoration at Katahdin Stream Campground following the removal of the dam. The smooth sand and gravel bars in the middle of the photo, deposited in the pond over the years, will probably disappear as soon as freshets scour the site.

was Sept. 13, only three days after record breaking heat. Ice and snow on Knife Edge forced closure of that

popular trail, which was opened the next day after conditions had improved.

TNC Preserve

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The eight Debsconeag Lakes are gems in a crown that connects Baxter State Park to the north and the state-owned Nahmakanta Lake Unit to the southwest. One of the most scenic stretches of the Appalachian Trail winds along Nahmakanta Stream and Lake, past the northern Debsconeags and Rainbow Lake and on to Mount Katahdin.

This region showcases the wildness of Maine's North Woods. It is one of the last remaining tracts of older growth forest in northern Maine. Wood harvesting has been kept to a minimum for decades across much of the area, allowing a lush and diverse mature forest to flourish. Rare plants such as purple clematis, fragrant cliff fern and northern woodsia thrive here. Bald eagle pairs nest in century-old trees and its abundant array of remote ponds, rivers and streams is extremely rich in native aquatic life.

This project is a momentous achievement and one that ensures the long-lasting beauty and naturalness of a spectacular region adjacent to Baxter State Park. For more information contact The Nature Conservancy at 729-5181 or the Northern Forest Alliance at 430-0126.

President's Column

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The Board cannot think of an issue more important. Pressures mount each season. The intensity, at certain times and in certain locations, appears to tax Governor Baxter's vision.

For this reason, FoBSP:

- Asks members to comment on
- Caverly's ideas and pose their own (see article on page 2); and
- Urges you to query gubernatorial candidates to find out how they will approach the issue of long-range planning and the kind of candidates they will seek in filling Authority positions.

Membership Committee Seeks Willing Workers

Here is an opportunity to help expand one of our most important committees, which has operated to date with only two persons.

John Neff, past president of Friends of BSP and present chair of the Membership Committee, would like to invite three or four of our members to join him and Membership Manager Barbara Bentley in this effort.

The primary task of the committee is membership recruitment so that we will continue to grow as an

organization. It is anticipated that the committee will meet two or three times a year in the central part of the state.

For further information and to express interest, Friends of contact John Neff, 39 Butters Hill Terrace, Winthrop ME 04364. Phone is 207-377-2064. E-mail jheneff@aol.com.

A Walk in the Park

By Albert Howlett

Seven of us spent a wonderful weekend in Baxter State Park Aug. 9-11, an outing sponsored by Friends of BSP. We hiked and we swam. We watched moose feed and children

play; and we pored over maps old and new. Some hiked to Hamlin Peak while others tackled South Turner. There were shorter walks to Chimney Pond, to Katahdin Lake and to exquisite Little Abol Falls. Raphael, the child among us, set a world record for scaling giant boulders; some of us old men went skinny dipping.

(Just as we went to press, we received word of the death of Frank Emerson, one of the "old men" referred to in the previous sentence. His friend, David Alexander, said Frank was a wonderful person and very enthusiastic about the Park.)

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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

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