

Friends  
of  
Baxter State Park

## Update

by John Neff, President

What a special privilege it is to be writing this column for the first edition of the newsletter for the Friends of Baxter State Park. Your Board of Directors has worked very hard to get to this point, and we look forward now to being in regular contact with our membership through this newsletter. Let me share with you some of the activities which we have been working on.

(1) The mailing of nearly 5,000 letters in January caps our first big membership campaign, which has included the preparation of a slide show to take on the road, completion of a booth so we can now be present at shows, expos, and festivals, and the preparation of media and publicity materials. We will now be "out there." Look for us.

(2) We have hired a part-time Membership Manager to coordinate and manage all matters pertaining to membership.

(3) We are attending all meetings of the BSP Authority and Advisory Committee so we can be well informed and participate when helpful.

(4) We are regularly discussing issues that are or may come up that are of concern to us in

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# Forever Wild

Newsletter of the Friends of Baxter State Park

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*New Boulder Dam. We usually think of a beaver dam as a low pile of sticks and mud across a small stream. By contrast, this huge structure, in places more than six feet high and a hundred yards long, is located a few hundred yards up Katahdin Stream from the West Branch of the Penobscot — an impressive dam by any measure, animal or human.*

## Board Sets 2002 Issues Agenda

Having carefully established the Friends organization over the past two years, the Board is now eager to engage in the important business of supporting Governor Baxter's vision for the Park.

After consulting with Park Director Buzz Caverly, the Board recently set its policy agenda for the upcoming year. We will concentrate on three major areas of investigation. These are:

- pros and cons of Park acceptance of additional lands and/or funds for land purchase,
- Park facilities requiring removal, replacement, and rejuvenation, and
- scientific research in the Park.

This slate is subject to adjustment should an unanticipated issue arise in the legislature or elsewhere.

### Park Acceptance of Additional Lands/Funds

At the annual meeting on April 27, a panel of invited guests including Buzz, will explore the Park's policy on accepting additional lands or gifts of money for acquisition. Because public debate on a potential national park has spurred some interest in expansion of Baxter as an alternative, the Board wants to be ready to inform people about the pros and cons of further land preservation in the vicinity of the Park.

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## Cold Winds and Snow Greet 'Reservationists' on Millinocket Opening Day

by John and Betty Howard

January 1, 2002, found us approaching the Medway exit of I-95 just as twilight was being overtaken by evening. This would be the 10th year we would be on hand to assist the Baxter State Park staff on the opening day of reservations—the first business of the New Year.

We swung by Park Headquarters in Millinocket where there was no sign of activity. That was a favorable sign that all was ready for the following morning's invasion of "reservationists" determined to get their favorite campsite on the specific days they wanted.

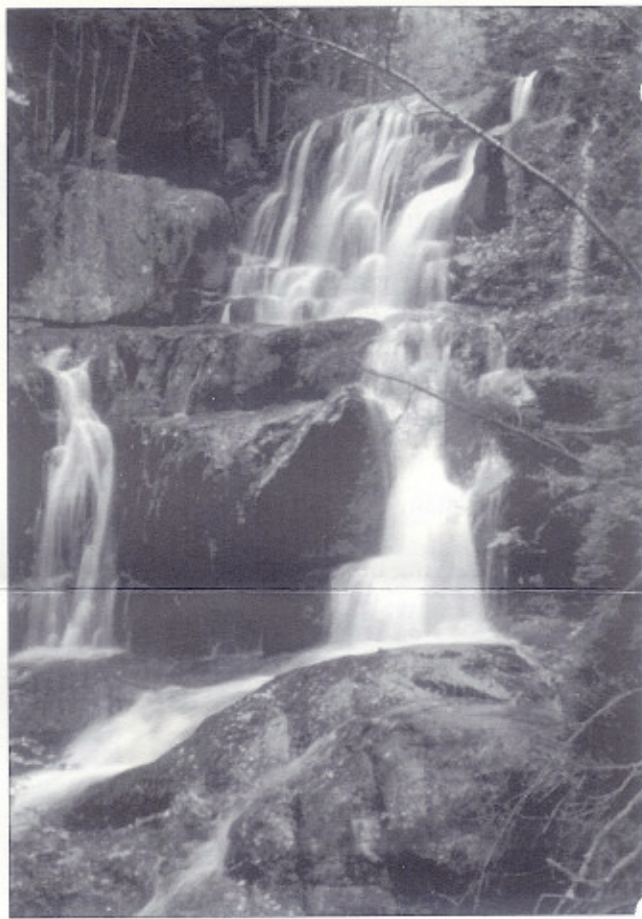
We passed the Katahdin Inn, where about 40 reservationists were queued up outside their tents enjoying the 30-m.p.h. north wind, swirling snow, and temperature slipping toward 0°F. We recognized old friends from previous years in their friendly competition to be first. By 6 a.m. the next day, the line outside the inn had grown to 100 with more coming all the time. At 7, the door opened and the rat race began.

Coffee, donuts, and other goodies took the edge off the long night's vigil. After completing a reservation work sheet, applicants moved to Park Headquarters where the final entries were made and fees paid. The process went on non-stop until after 5 p.m., when there were no more waiting.

When we left at noon the next day, 419 reservations had been completed—an all-time high. By day's end more than \$229,000 had been paid for reservations.

Over the years, we have watched the number of complaints become fewer as modifications have been made to this system. All agree that the system can be fine tuned. Computers may be a tool to that end; but in the final analysis, it's the friendly, helpful attitude of Park personnel and volunteers working under pressure which makes the experience of securing an opening day reservation a positive one.

*Where is it? This beautiful cataract is one of many in Baxter Park and is among some of the spectacular photos in the slide show we've put together on the Park. Can you identify where the picture was taken?*



## Have Slide Show, Will Travel

Do you know an organization or audience that would be interested in learning about Baxter State Park and its Friends?

Maybe it's another conservation group or a land trust. Maybe it's the local library. Maybe it's the university nearby. We're not choosy, and this offer is FREE to all members (and everyone else, too). It's your chance to help in our statewide membership campaign in 2002.

Your Board of Directors has developed a slide show that covers the Park's management structure and funding, its history and the Deeds of

Trust, and some past issues affecting wilderness values. The show explains who the Friends are and why they are needed. Several Board members in different parts of Maine are prepared to visit your location or group.

So go hustle up a crowd and a venue for a close encounter with moose and mountains, eagles and ice feathers, the Knife Edge and more, in this brilliantly illustrated extravaganza. All hyperbole intended.

Contact me in Bar Harbor at 288-5782 to schedule a viewing.

Charlie Jacobi

### Friends of Baxter State Park Board of Directors

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# Today's Wilderness is in the Eye of the Beholder

The scene was bleak—and magnificent. Leaning on my ski poles after a steady climb around the lower hump of Hamlin Ridge, I looked into North Basin where snow covered talus swept up to grey cliffs streaked with icy gullies and frozen waterfalls. To my right, the white slope, broken here and there with the tops of stunted firs all but hidden under many feet of snow, fell away to green forest that faded to a dark rug curving in the distance to the sides of South Turner Mountain. The granite colored clouds seemed to scrape the peaks.

Faint ski tracks led into the basin, but my three companions were hidden behind a bulge in the ridge. I was alone in an immense black and white world with no signs of man near or far. Recalling that the four of us and a ranger back at Chimney were the only people in the park that day, I was struck by a rare sense of true wilderness, the five of us the only humans in 200,000 acres—more than 300 square miles.

By contrast, a few years earlier, I had stood on Baxter Peak on a postcard-perfect Labor Day and counted more than 75 people at



*Very Much a Wilderness. In this view northwest from the rim of Witherle Ravine in late winter, The Owl in the left foreground guards the southern edge of The Klondike, the wilderness center of Baxter State Park. Rarely visited this time of year, the jumble of peaks "behind" Katahdin depicts a true representation of Gov. Baxter's philosophy.*

or near the summit. To those arriving at the top of Katahdin for the first time, looking out over the vast panorama of lakes and forest below them, it may have seemed as if they had arrived in the middle of nowhere. Unbeknownst to them were thousands of other visitors in and around the park. True, there was room for all, but there wasn't the same sense of emptiness that comes

when the roads and trails and campgrounds lie under several feet of snow and chickadees and hardy crows are the most active wildlife.

Therein lies the lure of this magnificent park where all can find their own space. Gov. Baxter knew this simple fact, and in this increasingly crowded part of the world, we are richer because of his foresight.

*David R. Getchell, Sr.*

## 2002 Agenda

*(Continued from Page 1)*

For example, adding too much land, too fast, without additional management endowment could tax the trust fund used to provide independent support for operation and maintenance.

### Facilities Improvements

The Board will tour the Park with Buzz this spring to learn about several physical projects requiring attention within the next year. Key among the sites to be visited are an unsafe bridge at Sourdnaunk Campground, an unsafe dam at

Katahdin Stream Campground, and road erosion from Sourdnaunk Stream below Slide Dam. These projects may require Friends' support or alternative proposals as we explore Governor Baxter's wish and Park policy that facilities or trails not be expanded, only replaced or relocated.

### Scientific Research

Park managers get many requests to use the Park for scientific research. In the fall, the Board will visit the Scientific Forestry Management Area to learn how this area is used for research in the larger context of the

Governor's vision and Park policy on this issue.

All members are invited to attend the annual meeting, and we'll keep you posted in subsequent newsletters on what we learn about these and other important policy matters, and any positions we may take on them in the future.

If you have questions on the Board's agenda, contact the Friends' Issues Coordinator Holly Dominie (email: Viewscape5@aol.com).

Visit our website at  
[www.friendsofbaxter.org](http://www.friendsofbaxter.org)

## Update

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our commitment to help preserve BSP's wilderness values.

(5) We will continue to do our own homework in regard to the views of Gov. Baxter so we can be ready if and when we are called upon to be advocates for those wilderness values. Seven members of the Board were present during a legislative meeting of the committee studying leases in remote areas of the state.

(6) We have set up an Endow-

ment Fund with contributions that were received recently in memory of Mary "Whit" McEvoy, a long-time user of the Park.

(7) We are exploring ways that our members can become involved in volunteer projects at the Park. You will receive further word on this soon.

We are impressed with the growing strength of our efforts and are now convinced more than ever that such a group can make a significant contribution to the efforts of the Park staff and the

Authority in preserving this remarkable place that Gov. Baxter wished to be kept forever wild.

### Have you a photo to share?

We notice many cameras in the Park year round, so there must be a lot of interesting photos of scenery, wildlife and people. Can we borrow some of your best for possible use in the newsletter? Just send to our Bangor address. We'll return them.

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

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Family

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Please make checks payable to  
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