

**Friends
of
Baxter State Park**

Forever Wild

Newsletter of the Friends of Baxter State Park

Spring 2003 Vol. 2 No. 2

President's Column

By Holly Dominie, President

With so many changes and competing causes in the Maine Forest, did you wonder, when you first learned about Friends of Baxter, whether this new organization warranted your time and money?

As Friends enters its fourth year, I am certain of the answer—a resounding Yes! And the organization's growing membership is proof that others agree. Land transactions surrounding the Park are reason enough. Your Friends Board is working quietly to promote conservation of the East Branch Lands.

The Board also recently weighed in on LD 538 (see article on page 2) with testimony, hearing attendance, and follow-up letters. While not a pot-boiler, this issue has demonstrated the need for rapid political action.

Finally, Friends continues to promote public discussion of wilderness in the Park, which in some locations, is being "loved to death." As you may know, we are planning a forum on wilderness in 2004. This month more members weigh in on Buzz Caverly's "Wilder Within" concept on page 3. We love hearing from you.

Friends welcomes new members to help keep Governor Baxter's vision front and center as we continue to face important issues in the years ahead.



Late Spring, and snow and ice still fill the gullies on Baxter Peak. More shaded spots in South Basin may harbor the remnants of winter well into the warm days of summer.
Photo by Charlie Jacobi

Variety to Mark 2003 Annual Meeting

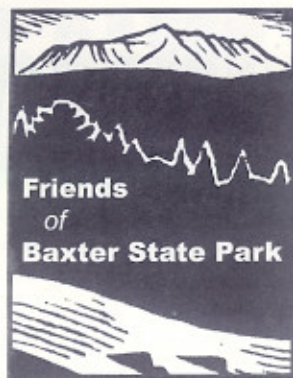
A slide show on winter in the Park, a briefing on northern land sales and conservation and how they might affect the Park, a tribute to the late John Howard, and an update by Park Director Buzz Caverly will be among the highlights of the Friends Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 12, in Waterville.

This year's event will be held again in the Capitol Room of the Best Western Waterville Inn on Main Street just off Exit 34 of I-95. Friends will begin gathering for coffee, donuts, and small talk at 8:30 a.m., with the business meeting scheduled to start at 9.

This will include a report from the Nominating Committee that is recommending Cindy Swan of Rockport, Sandra Johnson of Orono, and Sally Daggett of Portland as new directors. Officers will remain the same for another year with the exception of the vice presidency, where Dave Getchell, Sr., will take over from Howard Lake.

Buzz Caverly will follow with his always interesting update on the Park and field questions from the audience. He will also offer a Memorial Tribute to John Howard, who was one of the founders of the Friends of Baxter State Park and a long-time and very active Park volunteer (See story on page 3).

Continued on page 4



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The Friends of Baxter State Park is an independent citizens' 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**

**PO Box 1442
Bangor ME 04402-1442**

Friends Back Park in Opposition to Katahdin Trail Bill

The Friends of Baxter State Park testified at a Maine state legislative hearing recently in opposition to a bill that would designate the Baxter State Park Tote Road (the former Perimeter Road) as part of the Katahdin Trail, a route intended to attract tourist travel through the Park.

Both Park Director Buzz Caverly and the Friends, along with a number of others, agreed that it was not in the best interests of the wilderness concept to encourage tourist traffic through the Park, especially on a road never intended to handle such traffic. Governor Baxter often expressed his opposition to any such use for the Tote Road; it was to be used strictly to get people to campgrounds or trailheads.

Friends President Holly Dominie, in her remarks, expressed concern for the declining economic situation in the Millinocket area but testified that this particular effort was encroaching needlessly on the important wilderness purpose of the Park. As of this writing the committee recommendation had not yet been reached.

Volunteer Help Needed With Historical Project

Member Dr. Harold Whitcomb of Georgetown is progressing steadily in gathering together all the Governor Baxter materials, including speeches, correspondence, and official documents that throw light on his wish for the Park to remain forever wild. The resulting document will be available to anyone who wishes to know more about the founder's unswerving commitment to the wilderness values we will be called upon to defend and preserve in future years.

Dr. Whitcomb has been much moved by what he has discovered in these

materials and is eager to complete the project as soon as possible. He also needs help from members of the Friends of Baxter State Park. He has received permission to copy many documents in the Baxter Collection at the Maine State Library. It is a case of spending three or four hours at the Library doing routine copying at Dr. Whitcomb's direction.

If you can help him do that work, please call him at (207)371-2296 or email to <whitcomb@wiscasset.net>.

Young Writers Sought for Essay Contest

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Percival Baxter's first visit to the Katahdin area, the Friends are sponsoring an essay contest for students in grades 6-12. The winner will receive \$100 and a family trip to Baxter State Park this summer.

Entry forms have been sent to 300 schools in the state. More are available by contacting Barbara Bentley at (207)763-3014 or <bentleys@tidewater.net>.

How about getting a young writer you know to present his or her vision for the future of Maine's wildlands in which there is a balance of environmental, recreational, and economic interests? Essays are due May 15th.

New Katahdin Film Now Available on Video

The new film "Wilderness and Spirit, A Mountain Called Katahdin," produced by Huey Films, premiered in October and has been received with much excitement and appreciation.

Friends of Baxter State Park has purchased a video copy of the film, and it is available to our members upon request. Simply write your request to our Membership Manager, Barbara Bentley, 546 Hatchet Mountain Road, Hope, ME 04847. Friends will bear the expense of sending it to you; we ask that you bear the expense of returning it.



John C. Howard

We Lose a Great Friend

Baxter State Park has lost a long and devoted Friend with the passing of John C. Howard, 81.

A visitor to the Park over the years, John and his wife Elizabeth (Betty) began volunteering at Baxter in 1984, a service that continued for the rest of his life. Some of John's most memorable work was with volunteer recruitment, particularly the "Volunteers for Peace" program, where he helped transport international youngsters to and from the Park each summer to join in public service efforts. His friendliness and dry humor were frequently revealed in his thank-you notes to volunteers.

In 1988, John became a member of the Baxter State Park Advisory Committee and served in that important work for the next decade. He was a veteran of World War II, an insurance adjuster for much of his business life, and a strong participant in civic affairs in Orrington, Maine, where he and Betty lived for 52 years, raising a family of four sons and a daughter. He was a Boy Scout

Readers Respond to 'Wilder Within'

In our Winter issue we published a number of letters from members commenting on Park Director Buzz Caverly's proposals for making the Park "wilder within." Below are further excerpts from your letters:

I think that Baxter State Park should be a World Heritage Site, it's so unique just as it is. I feel somewhat conflicted about the "Wilder Within" concept—at Roaring Brook, I've seen people discovering aspects of nature that they wouldn't find elsewhere and have also seen less mobile people still being able to enjoy an unspoiled spot without having to hike great distances. And I've also heard horror stories of people who seem totally unaware of the wildness of their surroundings. So I am not at all sure of what would be best.—T. Macaulay, Quebec City, Canada

—Our family holds, very dearly, the cabins at Daicey and Kidney ponds as important. They are what have been central to three generational yearly fall trips to BSP. Without cabins we could not have our wee ones or we elders (now with our bad knees, etc.). Please don't remove car access or these cabins.—Raquel Boehmer, Monhegan Island ME

I am almost 68 yrs old and some of the proposals, if implemented, would restrict my use of certain areas in the future, I am sure. I am willing to accept those limitations as long as they are evenly applied to all. I cheer the ideas that will make the park the wild place Percy wanted. It is not a "wilderness" in the classic way...as it was inhabited and worked before now. But it can be a "wild place", just the same. So I generally support the idea. —Dick Brooks, Phillips ME

I do think it might be worth considering keeping a cabin or two intact at Kidney Pond... I have had terrific winter camping experiences using those cabins as a bunkhouse. We broke trail into Kidney and were the only people there for days. One issue I wish you'd address is snowmobile use in the park. There really is no excuse for these noisy, non-wilderness vehicles to be buzzing around destroying the winter stillness... practically ruining the winter camping experience for me and others. Mr. Baxter wanted vehicles only to be a means

leader for many years. His lifetime of unselfish work for others was recognized in 1991 when he was presented the prestigious Jefferson Award for outstanding public service.

Not surprisingly, John was a founding director of the Friends of Baxter State Park and was active with the organization until late in 2002.

of getting somewhere to hike or camp; but snowmobiles are used as an end in themselves. The people riding them are perfectly fine, but what they are doing is not. —Steve Cartwright, Waldoboro ME

I support the closing of the Perimeter Road from Trout Brook Crossing southwest to Camp Phoenix. Roads are the bane of wilderness areas. The "forever wild" aspect will be greatly enhanced in the northwest portion of the park with the elimination of this section of road. As pressure mounts on the park, the lack of a road here will increase opportunities for hikers to be dispersed into a greater roadless area with fewer opportunities to see people and hear sounds of engines. —Dean Bennett, Farmington ME

Road ending at Windey Pitch. Excellent idea! This should seriously cut down on overuse by day hikers at Chimney Pond, yet still be within reach to those hikers who are fit and experienced. One negative repercussion of course would be that by essentially eliminating one of the approaches to Baxter summit for day hikers, you'd be funneling more people back to Abol and Hunt (which makes your Abol and Hunt limitation proposal idea even more pressing). My first thought when hearing Windey Pitch was whether or not the idea of reopening the old St. John trail may be possible. A bit selfish on my part to think this as it doesn't exactly fit in with the "Wilder Within" theory. But the old St. John trail was a bit of a classic, and it would allow a loop hike for backpackers parking at Windey Pitch. The bottom line, however, is that the road ending at Windey Pitch would help restore Chimney Pond CC. —Mike Arsenaault & Anne Lepine, Warner NH

CORRECTION

The following lines were dropped from the bottom of the second column on page 1 of our winter issue: ". . . approximately 75,000 acres in the four townships."

Visit our website
<www.friends of baxter.org>

We are grateful to GWLnet for their program to support non-profit organizations by hosting our site at absolutely minimal cost.

Weekend Volunteers Get Chance to Work on Trails

A new Trail Stewards Program will give weekend volunteers an opportunity to work on Park trails this summer.

Set up by Park Trails Supervisor Paul Sannicandro, the program will get underway June 7-8 with the Trails Stewards Weekend Workshop, when participants will learn BSP's standards for trail service work.

Stewards will concentrate their efforts on 16 trails over the course of the season. A commitment of three weekends is required. Applications

and further information are available from Trails Dept., Baxter State Park, 64 Balsam Drive, Millinocket ME 04462.

Annual Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Howard Lake, who, with a gang of 8, makes an annual trip into the Park each winter, will show slides of that rugged trek. Karen Tilberg, who has been close to the many changes taking place in the lands surrounding Baxter for quite some time, will brief us on the latest developments.

The meeting will adjourn at noon.

Members Please Note

We are in the process of changing to one annual renewal date for all members. By March 1, 2004, everyone will be in synch. Hang in there!

Our membership has grown to 394. Here's the challenge: we can double that figure if each of our present members will recruit ONE new member. You'll find a Friends business card to give to a prospective member in your renewals. Feel free to have folks call Barbara at 207-763-3014 or <bentleys@tidewater.net>.

Thanks for your help in spreading the word.

**Friends of Baxter State Park
PO Box 1442
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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, State and Zip Code

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

Please make checks payable to
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