



Friends
of
Baxter State Park

Forever Wild

Newsletter of the Friends of Baxter State Park

Summer 2003

Vol. 2 No. 3

Katahdin Lake Camps Purchased; Additional Protected Land Sought

By Phyllis Austin

Maine Environmental News

Wilderness advocate and businessman Charles FitzGerald has acquired Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps bordering the southeast side of Baxter State Park. Now, he is positioning himself to join a conservation effort to acquire the East Branch lands being sold by Irving Woodlands.

FitzGerald is particularly interested in protecting about 16,000 acres of forestlands around the lake and along Wassataquoik Stream because the area is relatively pristine and unroaded. "This could be a very important reserve," he says.

FitzGerald, who deals in real estate and manufactures and sells wood products, is known as a conservation risk-taker. He made the decision to buy the Katahdin Lake camps sight unseen because of their history, backcountry setting, and strategic position to Baxter Park. The purchase price of the facilities, on the lake's sandy beachfront, was \$395,000. The lakeshore provides some of the most spectacular views of Mt. Katahdin, as well as South Turner Mountain, and has attracted noted artists for over a century, among them Frederick Church and Marsden Hartley.

FitzGerald did not buy land with the camps. The facilities are on 31 acres leased from Irving. The land is part of the 78,000 acres Irving has for sale on the East Branch of the Penobscot River. Ralph Knoll, planning and land acquisition supervisor for the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, confirms that the



Classic lodge at Katahdin Lake

state and the Trust for Public Land are "having discussions with Irving to see what can be done to insure that most, if not all, these lands will end up in some form of land conservation."

Katahdin Lake camps will continue to be available for traditional public recreational uses, FitzGerald says. "I intend for the camps to remain remote and wild, just like they have been managed for many years" under the ownership of Al and Sue Cooper, he says. He praises the Coopers for their careful stewardship of the camps and says they will continue to provide the day-to-day management of the facilities in the near term.

Upon learning that FitzGerald

(Continued on page 2)

President's Column

By Holly Dominic
President

There is much change percolating and more to come in the Park. A new Authority is in place; subcommittees of the Advisory Committee are developing reservations and commercial use proposals; and Director Caverly is nearing retirement.

Two new Authority members joined Attorney General Steven Rowe, who is now chair, at the May meeting at Kidney Pond—Forestry Director Alec Giffen and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Commissioner Dan Martin. The triumvirate took an active and enthusiastic interest in the affairs of the Park, requesting in-depth workshops on several matters in the months ahead.

One of these workshops will consider recommendations regarding the Park's reservations system, which the Advisory Committee's Reservations Subcommittee has developed. Friends asked the Authority at the meeting what the process for public comment on these recommendations would be. Steve Rowe said to channel our comments through the subcommittee

(Continued on page 3)



**Friends
of
Baxter State Park**

Board of Directors

Holly Dominie, President
David Getchell, Sr., Vice President
Joanne McPhee, Secretary
Don Hudson, Treasurer
William Bentley
Sally Daggett
Clint Dyer
Charles Jacobi
Sandra Johnson
Howard Lake
Pat Murtagh
John Neff
Ken Spaulding
Cindy Swan
Jon Tierney

Honorary Directors

Eric Baxter
Alexandra Conover
Donn Fendler
Leon Gorman
Jon Lund
Elizabeth (Libby) Mitchell
Chellie Pingree
Kay Rand
Neil Rolde

Membership Manager

Barbara Bentley
Newsletter Editor
David R. Getchell, Sr.

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

Members Provide Strong Guidance to Directors at FOB Annual Meeting

Over 40 members attended this year's annual meeting and gave strong guidance to the Board of Directors on matters ranging from snowmobiles to potential changes in Baxter State Park facilities at Dwellley Pond and Hathorn Brook.

Director Buzz Caverly updated the group on activities in the Park, highlighting the work of the reservations and commercial use subcommittees of the Park's Advisory Committee. He also reported the Authority's recent change in road policy, which will reduce the number of miles of road open to the public to 17 in the Scientific Forest Management Area as opposed to 82 in the past. The remaining 65 miles will only be open during harvesting.

In addition, Caverly explained his proposal to the Authority to close off the service road to McCarty Field, reclaim the Dwellley gravel pit, put in a walk-in lean-to, and create a hiking trail along the old Hathorn Brook trail to Little Wassataquoik Lake. In response to a question about snowmobile use, he described infractions that have occurred at Basin Pond, Chimney Pond, South Branch, and other locations.

When asked by Board President Holly Dominie how many members supported the proposed changes at Dwellley Pond and Hathorn Brook, the group expressed unanimous

support. They also supported banning recreational snowmobile use in the Park.

Featured speaker Deputy Commissioner of Conservation Karin Tilberg summarized the enormous changes in ownership that have taken place in the Northern Forest over the last half-decade. Five



Time to Talk. Park Director Buzz Caverly chats with Friends Steve Cartwright, center, and Jym St. Pierre at our annual meeting in Waterville. Photo by Bill Bentley

million acres have changed hands—about half of the region and one fifth of the state. She said that this time will be looked back upon as a very significant period in Maine's history.

Members unanimously agreed, when polled by Dominie, that Friends should stick to its current policy to support the work of other organizations that raise money for purchase of lands important to the Park rather than to raise funds ourselves.

Katahdin Lake Camps

(Continued from page 1)

purchased the camps, Park Director Buzz Caverly was "pleased to learn Charles has bought the camps. I think it means the camps' wilderness characteristics will continue in fine tradition," he said. Caverly is well-acquainted with FitzGerald because of the latter's long involvement in Park issues and his work as a volunteer.

Looking for Word on Buzz

Journalist Phyllis Austin is writing a book about Buzz Caverly's years in Baxter State Park. She is looking for documents about the Park from 1960 to 2003 that may be in private files.

If you have relevant documents, she would appreciate your calling her at 207-725-8885 or <trout1@gwi.net>.

Two Young Writers Are Big Winners in Our Essay Contest

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Percival Baxter's first visit to the Katahdin region, we asked young writers in Maine to take a look at Baxter's legacy to the people of Maine. We asked them what seeds could be sown today that would establish another legacy, compatible with Baxter's inspiration, that would benefit the people of Maine in the next 100 years.

Sixty-one young writers from 13 different schools sent us 500-word essays in which they presented their visions for the future of Maine's wildlands in the changing economic and political climate of the State.

First Place Winner in the Middle School division (grades 6-8) is Luke Graziano of York Middle School. He recommends use of public funds, legislation, and education to promote protection of ecosystems vital to the health of the environment. Runners-up are Esther Bizier of Livermore Falls Middle School and Ben Powers of Mountain Valley Middle School in Rumford.

In the High School division (grades 9-12,) First Place Winner is Arielle Blattner of Catherine McAuley High School. She recommends strategies for promoting biodiversity while providing for recreational use of wildlands. She says, "All residents of Maine are fortunate to have a place where nature rules. In honor of Governor Baxter, it is our duty to conserve his legacy and continue to promote a healthy environment, world, and Maine." Runners-up are: Jameson Welch of Madawaska High School, Jessica Theriault of Catherine McAuley High School, and Jen Clarke of Catherine McAuley High School.

The First Place Winners will receive \$100 each and a trip to Baxter State Park. They should contact



A Memorable Moment. Josie and Jack McPhee, founding members of the Friends, are pictured holding four lynx kittens in this Christmas card photo taken last year. The kits wear radio ear tags used in following their wanderings. It was in a flight May 4 over the woods north of Baxter Park to check tagged lynx that McPhee died when his plane crashed. A medical emergency is suspected as the cause of the loss of this careful and veteran bush pilot.

Barbara Bentley at 207-763-3014 or <bentleys@tidewater.net> to make arrangements for the trip. The runners-up will receive a certificate in the mail.

A huge THANK YOU goes to the writers who participated in the contest and to their teachers for their support!

Friends' Walk-in-the-Park Set; Space Open at Chimney Pond

You are invited to join Friends on August 1 & 2; we have reserved three leantos at Chimney Pond, a 3.3-mile hike from Roaring Brook. Bring your own gear and food. A few spaces are still available for this trip.

Some are determined to do the Knife Edge, and others have sights set on Hamlin and North Peaks.

To reserve yourself a spot on this outing, please call Barbara Bentley at 207-763-3014 or send an e-mail to <bentleys@tidewater.net>.

President's Column

(Continued from page 1)

as soon as possible so that it can consider them as it prepares its final recommendations to the Authority for an upcoming workshop.

Accordingly, we have sent some preliminary comments to the reservations subcommittee. We invite you to check out our website to see the Subcommittee report on Reservations as well as Friends's response to it. We anticipate that there will be a formal comment opportunity when the Authority considers these recommendations, so we encourage you to keep abreast of this process and share your concerns.

Visit our website

<www.friends of baxter.org>

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

Trip to SFMA Leads to Unusual Possibility

This spring, our peripatetic Membership Manager Barbara Bentley was part of a 14-member group touring the Scientific Forestry Management Area (SFMA). Much was covered, but the following item stood out. Barb writes:

After a recap of the year's activities by Jensen Bissell, the area manager, we focused on the topic of the day - the bark beetle which is killing the red spruce.

It was fascinating to get the various

perspectives of the experts present as they poked and prodded various trees, scanned the tops, and searched for beetles.

The beetle only likes mature trees of 20" or more. So, the problem is, what shall we do with these dying trees? You'll never guess—making sound boards for guitars and mandolins. Red spruce is the best. And it doesn't matter if it is dead so long as the grain is straight and the wood is clear.

A guitar maker in Lewiston has expressed interest in trying some. At this writing Jensen was waiting for an order.

Long-Lost Film Sought

Ronald Epp, director of the Shapiro Library at Southern New Hampshire University, is trying to locate a film made in July 1925 by Pathé News of the ascent of Katahdin by then Gov. Ralph Brewster and Acadia National Park Superintendent George B. Dorr.

Epp, who is preparing a biography on Dorr, worries that all copies of the film may be lost, but asks if any Friends may be able to help in tracing it. He can be reached at 603-668-2211, Ext. 2164, or by e-mail at <r.epp@snhu.edu>.

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, 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
Friends of Baxter State Park

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