



**Friends  
of  
Baxter State Park**

# Forever Wild

Newsletter of the Friends of Baxter State Park

Spring 2005

Vol. 4 No. 2

## *President's Column*

*By Charles Jacobi*

### **Being There**

The Friends has been interacting with the Authority and the Park on several fronts recently. The East Branch Lands have been in the press this winter (check Phyllis Austin's article in this issue, and the longer version on the web). In December, we wrote to the Authority expressing our support, stating "... the conservation of the East Branch lands, especially the area around Katahdin Lake, is of paramount importance. FOBSP supports efforts to conserve these lands through, in priority order, public acquisition, compatible conservation ownership by another entity, or easement." Let's hope for a conservation success for these lands soon.

We also responded to a proposal from the Park to harvest timber on the so-called Legal Mile, a section of the Tote Road that serves as the boundary with the Scientific Forest Management Area. The SFMA is all about demonstrating good forestry according to Governor Baxter's wishes, and manager Jensen Bissell does an excellent job. However, we urged that a suitable buffer be left

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View of the Traveler over South Branch Pond from the Ledges with North Turner in the distance - *Photo by Brendan Curran*

## **East Branch Land Deal in Peril**

The expansion of Baxter State Park is at the center of the state's on-again, off-again acquisition negotiations for Township 3 Range 8 (T3R8) on the eastern border of the preserve. In the latest development, landowner W. T. Gardner & Sons agreed to stop cutting old-growth forest in the so-called "Katahdin Lake tract" a 6,098-acre piece of T3R8, while an appraisal is being done of the value of the entire property.

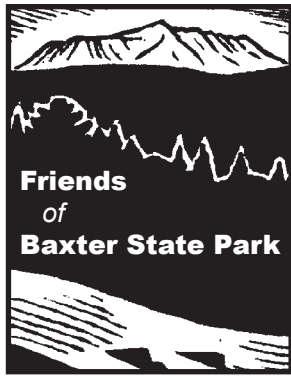
If the appraisal doesn't help the parties to come to an agreeable price, Gardner will resume harvesting around the lake, the last of Maine's unsaved old-growth will fall, and the opportunity to expand the Park will be lost for now. Also, without a deal, Gardner will apply to the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) for a permit to bridge Wassataquoik

Stream to access its land on the north side of the waterway. The stream is known as the state's wildest flowing water, its headwaters emanating from the slopes of mile-high Katahdin and the remote Klondike.

Failure of a conservation success will almost assure that Gardner will develop the land or sell to another party who will. The Lincoln-based contracting company is well-experienced in converting its cut-over parcels into house lots. Developing pristine Katahdin Lake would almost certainly be of interest to Gardner because of the high prices lots would bring.

Already, Gardner's harvesting crews have fragmented much of the T3R8 forest with roads and heavy logging. Haul roads have been

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### **Board of Directors**

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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**  
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**President's Column** (Cont. from p.1)  
along the road to ensure wilderness values are well protected. We think such a buffer is good management, is sensitive to the competing goals and values of wilderness and forestry, and helps avoid public misunderstanding.

Several members of our board met with Park staff on December 3, 2004, to discuss a variety of topics and hear about upcoming projects in the Park. It was a productive meeting, and we agreed to try to meet annually. We are planning another field trip with the Director in the spring. We also attended an Advisory Committee Meeting in January and are currently participating in a series of meetings to revise the five-year Management Plan. All of this has kept us on the go, and we will continue to make every effort to be there for you. We hope you will be there for us by renewing your membership this month and always letting us know what you think.

### **Opening Day Greet New Rolling Reservations System**

On the eve of Opening Day, folks were lined up at the back door of the Katahdin Inn, waiting to make reservations for 2005 in the Park. Some people had been there for a few days; tents were visible in the shadows. Buzz and Jan Caverly arrived with donuts and hot coffee, and Authority member Steve Rowe chatted with folks about the new rolling reservation system. All was calm so I headed out to get some dinner and a few hours of sleep.

Next morning at 4 am, I joined the brisk predawn lineup of those waiting to get a number so they could then line up INSIDE to get a chance to go to Park Headquarters to line up again to make one reservation. One number, one reservation. The fellow ahead of me in line shared a piece of his styrofoam board with me and the fellow next to me. Hot tip --standing on it saved my feet from freezing. Buzz again appeared with hot

refreshments! By 6 a.m. (earlier than promised!) we were inside with numbers in hand. Before noon, I had been through the lines twice, made reservations for my family trip to Russell Pond in August and the Friends overnight at Abol Campground over Labor Day weekend. At that point, the Park staff had processed 113 reservations and had not exceeded 20% occupancy of any campground on any given day. The overall atmosphere had none of the irritable panic that I remembered from Opening Day years back. The new rolling reservations system -- see the Park's website for details -- was off to a great start.

-- Barbara Bentley

### **What did Governor Percival P. Baxter (1876-1969) really say?**

Several years ago, the Friends of Baxter State Park embarked on an ambitious research project to identify, annotate, and make readily accessible source materials pertinent to understanding Governor Baxter's vision and intent for the Park. Howard Whitcomb, a member of the Friends and a frequent Park visitor, is the project coordinator and annotator. He is an emeritus professor of political science at Lehigh University and now resides in Georgetown, ME. The four-volume work brings together the Deeds of Trust, appellate court opinions, Attorney General opinions, Baxter's speeches and correspondence, and other important materials. Copies will be located at the Maine State Library, the Maine State Law Library, the Office of the Attorney General, Baxter State Park Headquarters, and several public libraries across Maine.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Davis Conservation Foundation and gifts from other contributors, the limited-edition work will be published in late April or May of this year. Although there will be an  
(Continued on page 5)



## In the Mail ...

... My wife and I would like to join Friends as we recognize your efforts help shape the Park. We have spent considerable time over the past ten years hiking and fishing throughout some of the West's designated wilderness areas. As a result of these wilderness experiences, we know the importance of land without motors! Keep up the good work.

— Dick and Denise Behr

... The snowmobilers I've come in contact with have all been friendly and courteous. The first person on a snowmobile who sees us on the trail raises an arm to warn the others. All pass safely and at slow speed. We often chat with them - though our choice in transportation differs, we are all out there for the same or similar reasons. Having a perimeter road packed by snowmobiles makes hauling a sled full of gear and lasagna easier, and is especially nice for longer treks to Roaring Brook and South Branch ... We've never hired a guide to haul our gear in via snowmobile, but we think that when we visit the Park in winter at age 70 or 80, it would be nice to have that choice. Though we treasure trips where we don't see another living soul (including humans on foot), it's also nice to know that we could flag down a passing snowmobile for help if necessary.

— Melissa J. Winchenbach

## Membership Matters

We have completed the transition to a single annual renewal date for all members. Renewal letters were mailed in February, and all memberships are renewable on March 1st of each year. If you haven't already done so, please send in your renewal now.

FOBSP currently has 451 members. For purposes of these statistics, a couple or family counts as one member. This number includes those whose

memberships have lapsed. We have continued to send our quarterly newsletter to members even after their memberships have expired, but we cannot continue this practice indefinitely due to rising costs. Don't miss an issue; send in those renewal checks now!

The wide geographic spectrum represented by our membership is a tribute to the unique nature of Baxter State Park. We have members from 25 states and two Canadian provinces, as shown in the table below:

Maine	279	62%
Other N. E. states	84	19%
NY-NJ-PA	36	8%
All other	52	11%
Total	451	100%

— Mary Cooke

**East Branch** (Cont. from page 1) extended east and north of the lake and east along the south shore of the Wassataquoik. A substantial number of old growth hardwoods and softwoods (120 years old-plus) have been cut, according to the conservation parties, undermining the land's wild character and its potential for wilderness recreation.

Charles FitzGerald, owner of Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps, and conservation philanthropist Roxanne Quimby have been working with the state and the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) to acquire the whole township of 24,000 acres. Both are upset with the protracted talks, mistrust among the parties, and the loss of old-growth stands.

Ralph Knoll, deputy director of the Department of Conservation (DOC), regrets that a purchase agreement couldn't be worked out earlier and the old growth trees spared. The timber cruise being done now as part of the appraisal will tell the tale of how much old growth Gardner actually

has cut so far. No one from Gardner has been willing to comment.

T3R8 is considered the "crown jewel" of the lands along the East Branch of the Penobscot River. The 717-acre Katahdin Lake is accessible only by foot or seaplane and is rated by LURC as having outstanding and or significant fisheries, scenic, shoreland, cultural and physical resources. While much of the township was cut in the past, there is a significant old-growth stand between the Park and west of the lake, as well as scattered old-growth trees elsewhere around the lake. Besides the ecological resources, the Katahdin Lake camps are one-of-a-kind historic asset dating to 1896, and best known for the famous artists hosted there, including Frederick Church and Marsden Hartley. Park donor Percival P. Baxter planned to purchase T3R8 but died in 1969 before he could accomplish his goal.

Gardner's strategy up to this point has been to take as much wood off T3R8 as quickly as possible but leave enough old growth to keep the conservation parties interested. The state let Gardner know from the beginning that it wouldn't pay more than the appraised value. The Land for Maine's Future Program, which likely would participate in the acquisition financing, has never been willing to pay landowners above-appraisal prices.

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Stop! Skiers and snowmobilers check in at the northern gate to the Park. Photo by Howard Lake

### *East Branch (Cont. from page 3)*

FitzGerald believes the state's priority all along has been to save the Katahdin Lake tract because of its importance as an addition to Baxter Park. The Park Authority, the three-member policymaking board, has been privy to the purchase negotiations with Gardner but not been directly involved. The state (through the Bureau of Parks and Lands) has represented the park's interests in talks with FitzGerald and Quimby. And those talks have faltered at times because of demands made by the Authority on access to the lake and other issues.

Previously, the state, working through the non-profit Trust for Public Lands (TPL), and Charles FitzGerald separately, tried to purchase a larger tract of several townships from Irving in 2002. But the state and FitzGerald had tough competition – major logging contractors-turned-developers. Gardner and Herb Haynes bought 47,000 acres from Irving in T2R8, T3R8 and the southern half of T4R8 for a reported \$30 million in 2003. Once they had bought the land from Irving, Gardner and Haynes divvied up the 47,000 acres, with Gardner getting 24,000 acres in T3R8. Gardner immediately began extending the Rocky Pond Road north of Katahdin Brook and building a network of feeder roads. The state, still hoping to negotiate an acquisition deal with Gardner, convinced the company to avoid the old growth area between the park and Katahdin Lake, according to FitzGerald. Gardner's first harvesting target was the "valley", and the siting of the logging roads up slopes and knolls seemed to point to intentions to develop the higher ground, with extraordinary views of Katahdin Lake and Baxter Park's mountain ranges.

Alarmed, FitzGerald decided to go for broke to buy out Gardner, but was unsuccessful. Consequently, the state and FitzGerald joined forces in order



Tim Vrabel (right) and Dave Burdette at Wassataquoik Stream  
*Photo by Brendan Curran*

to pool enough resources to cause Gardner to get serious about selling. FitzGerald, Knoll, Bureau of Parks and Lands director Dave Soucy, and TPL director Sam Hodder haggled intensely to find common ground. There were many meetings and many disagreements over details of a package to present to Gardner.

Part of the arrangement with Gardner from the beginning was confidentiality. FitzGerald struggled over whether to remain a party to negotiations or to go public to try to force Gardner to stop cutting and spare the old growth forest. But he stuck with the private process, convincing Roxanne Quimby to enter into the talks last summer. Quimby agreed to offer an exchange of lands – about 19,000 acres – with Gardner. FitzGerald was willing to contribute \$3 million in cash.

But the fine details presented problems to both FitzGerald and the state, and they couldn't come to terms. An agreement among the three parties was off at the end of January. The state agreed to step aside to see if

FitzGerald and Quimby could buy directly from Gardner. But Gardner wasn't interested.

Fitzgerald and Quimby then returned to the negotiating table with the state for another try at resolving their differences and coming up with a successful deal with Gardner. The last offer to Gardner included Quimby's exchange lands, some amount of cash from FitzGerald, and the rest of the money (approximately \$10 million) from the state. Gardner didn't reject the offer out of hand and agreed to an appraisal by the state. It was then, in mid-February, that the state demanded Gardner stop cutting in the Katahdin Lake area for the time it took for an appraisal.

Since then, communication among the state, FitzGerald and Quimby has been unsettled to the point that neither knew by the first of March if the state was still including them in the deal with Gardner. The state may go it alone on the Katahdin Lake parcel, leaving the other 18,000 acres of T3R8 unprotected at the moment.

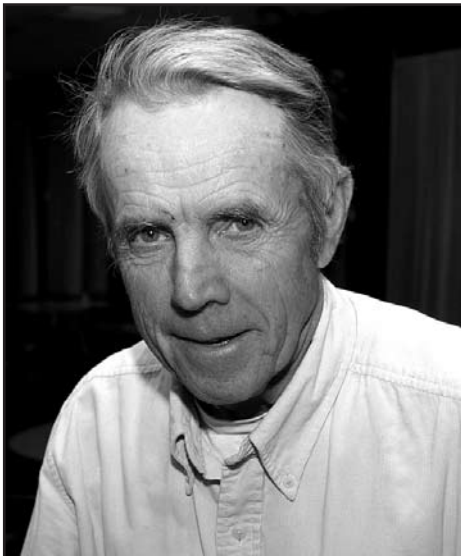
~ Phyllis Austin



**Baxter** (Cont. from page 2) informal recognition of this achievement at our Annual Meeting on April 9, 2005, a more formal public presentation will be held sometime in May. Members will be informed of and invited to that event.

This is the fulfillment of one of the missions of the Friends of BSP -- to make available the tools necessary to continue to protect this great wilderness treasure in the years ahead.

— John Neff



Dave Getchell, Sr. Photo by Bill Bentley

## Getch Leaves Big Shoes to Fill

Founding Member #1, and the first and only editor of "Forever Wild," has handed over his editorial responsibilities to his successor. Dave Getchell, Sr., was part of the original effort to get Friends of Baxter State Park up and running as a non-profit organization. He felt communication with the members was of utmost importance and to that end began the newsletter, the first issue of which came out in the winter of 2002. Presently, the newsletter has a circulation of about 600. It is sent to members, to the Authority and Advisory, to the Park staff, and to Honorary Directors. It is also distributed at retail locations in

various parts of the state as well as at the Park Headquarters. Thank you, Dave, for your leadership and hard work. It will take a concerted group effort to fill your shoes!

— Barbara Bentley

## Volunteers Needed for Major Trails Projects

1. **Chimney Pond Trail** - Long Bridge reconstruction, June 19-25, 2005. Stay at Roaring Brook lean-tos. Level of Difficulty - moderate, 4.4 miles round trip to/from worksite.
2. **Wassataquoik Lake Trail** - Bog Bridge construction, June 22-29, 2005. Backpack 8 miles to lean-tos for base camp. Level of Difficulty - moderate, minimum commitment any four days.
3. **Sentinel Mtn Trail** - Deck Bridge construction, July 17-21, 2005. Stay at Kidney Pond wall tents. Level of difficulty - moderate.
4. **Hunt Trail** - erosion control, July 27- Aug. 3, 2005. Stay at Kidney Pond wall tents, Level of difficulty - strenuous (building rock staircases and waterbars), minimum commitment any four days, 3-mile round trip to/from worksite.
5. **Sentinel Mtn Trail** - erosion control, September 19-22, 2005. Stay at Kidney Pond wall tents, Level of difficulty - moderate (building rock staircases and waterbars), 5-mile round trip to from worksite.

BSP will provide all safety equipment, tools, training and supervision, and tent sites or lean-tos at no charge. Bring your own clothes, outdoor gear, and food. To help out, **contact Paul Sannicandro** at tel. 207-723-9616 or email <paul.sannicandro@maine.gov>

## Walk in the Park for Members

In recent years, members of Friends have camped together in the Park. We have explored various parts of the Park from Chimney Pond, from Avalanche Field, from

Nesowadnehunk Field, and South Branch Pond campgrounds.

This year, we'll camp at Abol Campground in lean-tos #8, 9, and 10 for easy access to new hiking trails in the southwest corner of the Park. Doubletop, Mt. Coe, and North Brother are also possible destinations. Dates for this gathering are the nights of September 2, 3, and 4, 2005. This is Labor Day weekend so plan your getaway now! **Contact Barbara Bentley** to reserve one of the 12 spots at 207-763-3014 or <barbarabentley@tidewater.net>

## Folks on the move, or has 911 changed your mailing address?

Mailings to the following folks have been returned by the Post Office: Hob Calhoun  
Patricia Smith  
Christopher Pratt  
Edward Coulter  
Frank Taylor  
Melanie Michel  
John and Mary James  
**Please send sightings to Mary Cooke** at 207-763-4535 or <macooke01@yahoo.com>

## Annual Meeting to Highlight Adjacent Lands Management Saturday, April 9th

Dave Soucy, Director of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, which manages the Telos Unit bordering the northwest corner of Baxter Park, and Bart DeWolf, ecologist for Roxanne Quimby, who owns T5R8 on the northeast boundary, have both agreed to participate in the 2005 Friends Annual Meeting. Each will talk about how their lands are or will be managed in relation to Baxter State Park. Park Director Buzz Caverly will also update us on what we can expect in the Park for 2005, including proposed changes for Nesowadnehunk Campground. Please join us and bring your questions for them. Please see page 6 for time and location of meeting.

**Annual Meeting**  
 on  
**April 9, 2005**  
 9 am - noon  
**Best Western Hotel,**  
**Waterville, ME**  
 I-95 Exit #130



The Katahdin Range in winter splendor viewed from Chesuncook Village. *Photo by Bill Bentley*

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Visit our website!  
[www.friendsof baxter.org](http://www.friendsof baxter.org)  
 Courtesy of GWI.net

## ***We're looking for New Friends!***

Friends of Baxter State Park  
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**Do you know someone who might be interested in the Friends of Baxter State Park?  
 Each new membership adds another voice in support of Governor Baxter's wilderness.**

*I'd like to be a Friend. Sign me up!*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Street

\_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State and Zip Code

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

**Please make checks payable to  
 Friends of Baxter State Park**