



Forever Wild

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BAXTER STATE PARK
FALL 2006 VOL. 5 No. 4

Katahdin Lake Campaign Deadline Looming

by Linda McKee

Sam Hodder of The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a very busy man these days. He's the lead fund-raiser for the acquisition of one of the most important natural places in Maine: Katahdin Lake and 6,000 acres surrounding it. And he's not wasting a minute. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity.

At scarcely two months to go and a Dec. 15th deadline looming, almost \$8.5 million of the needed \$14 million has been raised to date, leaving \$5.5 million for the final scramble. Hodder, a seasoned fundraiser, however, is optimistic. "We're following up now on the many folks we've taken into Katahdin Lake, and we're moving along."

"We're especially grateful to Friends of Baxter State Park for supporting the campaign," he added, noting that no contribution is too small. He wants to involve as many donors as possible. Hodder also cited the highly successful art auction held earlier this year to benefit the campaign. "Artists are at the Lake right now completing

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President's Column

by Charlie Jacobi

Significant Digits for Katahdin Lake

What do you remember about your high school math? Significant digits are the number of digits needed to express the precision of a calculation. (You math teachers may correct me here, but I think I'm pretty close.) We usually think of them as to the right of the decimal point — the more digits, the more precise the measurement. Another school of thought argues that the most significant digit is the one furthest to the left of the decimal point. If you think about that, it makes a lot of sense.

Let's apply this second school of thought to the Katahdin Lake Campaign. The most significant digit of any campaign gift is of course the one furthest to the left of the decimal point. Each extra digit to the left is a big step, a multiple of ten (thanks to our fingers, I guess.) How far to the left can you go? And what will be the value of that furthest left and most important number?

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Katahdin seen from Katahdin Lake Camps, on the path of Parson Keep
(See "Looking Back" on p. 5) — Photo by Bill Bentley, 2006



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

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the painting commissions they donated to successful auction bidders,” he said.

TPL, in partnership with the Maine Department of Conservation (DOC), has secured an option to purchase a total of 4,040 acres around Katahdin Lake and almost 2,000 acres to the north of the Lake from the Gardner Land Company, a three-generation logging family from Lincoln, Maine. The partners’ intent then is the incorporation of the 717-acre lake and the surrounding lands into Baxter State Park, an addition the BSP Authority has unanimously endorsed. The northernmost lands will be owned and managed by the Department of Conservation Bureau of Parks and Lands, who will manage the land for multiple use.

Earlier this past spring, the Maine Legislature passed complicated land swap legislation, facilitating the project. Because the Gardner Company did not want to sell for cash, they negotiated with the state for several public land parcels located across the state, which would be suitable for timber harvesting. TPL raised the money to purchase the unconsolidated lots and then trade them with the Gardners for Katahdin Lake.

DOC Commissioner Patrick McGowan, who has worked tirelessly for the past three years on this project, remarked this week, “The time is short, but we are committed to meeting the deadline to complete Governor Baldacci’s Katahdin Lake project. We will fulfill Governor Baxter’s legacy.”

Governor John Baldacci added his own reactions to the immense value of the Katahdin Lake Campaign. “Last weekend I visited Katahdin Lake. I stood on Painter’s Beach and enjoyed the tremendous view of the mountain.

It struck me that this is a place so beautiful that nature is at rest.”

Linda McKee is a former Maine legislator and current Friends’ Board member.

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The grassroots campaign is well underway. You may have already received a mailing from us recently or from the Trust for Public Land if you visited the Park in the last few years. Much, much money still needs to be raised, and every digit counts. The addition of Katahdin Lake to Baxter State Park is not a slam dunk. It may even be a long shot, but it has to be our best shot.

I am delighted and proud to announce that the fifteen members of your Board of Directors have collectively contributed a gift with five digits to the left of the decimal point. I think that is fantastic, and I thank them for their generous support of the campaign. We are also all working with our friends and in our communities to generate news, interest, and, of course, donations for Katahdin Lake.

Katahdin Lake will be a valuable addition to Baxter State Park, valuable for its natural resources, valuable for its undeveloped character, and valuable for completion of Governor Baxter’s vision of a wilderness park and wildlife sanctuary. If you have already given, thank you for your support. Please consider an additional gift before December 15. If you haven’t given yet, the time is now. I urge you to make your gift as significant as you can.

Destination Katahdin Lake

Some by foot on the old tote road from Avalanche Field from the west or through the woods and swamp near the Rocky Pond logging road from the east, others by air to the Lake itself, folks have been arriving at Katahdin Lake during the past few months to see for themselves the beauty of the area slated to become part of Baxter State Park.

Buzz Caverly, Jr., retired Director of BSP and now Honorary Chairman of the Katahdin Lake Campaign, has lead hikes coordinated by Friends on May 15th, May 30th, June 12th, June 22nd, August 14th, and September 15th for over 70 people. He has made many other trips himself to meet planes flown in by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and to accompany other individuals to the Lake. He is a wealth of information and entertaining stories about the history of the region, and his enthusiasm for BSP and the Katahdin Lake region is without bounds.

After the last hike, some folks stayed on at Katahdin Lake Camps and volunteered to begin to reverse the 100-year trend of “carry-in but NO carry-out.” With the help of Barry MacArthur and Loren Good Sr. and Jr., mountains of trash were moved to roadside. On Saturday, there were 20 volunteers working at the camp.

Special thanks to caretakers Holly and Bryce Hamilton for their wonderful hospitality. And if any of you is traveling that way in the future, take trash bags along and keep the trend of “carry-out” going strong! (See photo of evidence at bottom of page.)

On one trip to Katahdin Lake, as we passed through a notable stand of red spruce, Jensen Bissell, Director of BSP, pointed out what looked like saplings. We were surprised to learn that these little trees were older by far than we were! It turns out that red spruce has

Katahdin Lake Campaign

Donate online at:

www.katahdinlakecampaign.org

or contact:

The Trust for Public Land

377 Fore Street, Portland, ME 04101

(207) 772-7424

Please make checks payable to *TPL – Katahdin Lake Campaign* and indicate that you are a member of Friends of Baxter State Park. Thank you for your support!

evolved a strategy for regeneration that includes great tolerance to shade along with relatively great longevity. Unlike yellow birch, poplar species, white ash, and balsam fir, red spruce can survive for long periods underneath a large canopy of softwoods. In stands that have not been affected by harvesting or by severe natural disturbance such as hurricanes, insect epidemics, or fire, one can find old, large mature red spruce in the 150- to 300-year-old class and sometimes older. Underneath this canopy are individual red spruce in the 6’ to 12’ height range and 1” to 2” in diameter, usually with sparse crowns. These trees are likely much older than their size would indicate to most people — they can easily be 50 years old. Similar young spruce in the understory with 3” or 4” boles can be 100 years old or more. If the overstory is removed suddenly by insects, or wind, these understory spruce will respond with strong and vigorous growth until they reach a physical size equal to the former overstory. In Jensen’s words, “They’ll grow like teenagers!” And outlast us, too, as part of the Katahdin Lake heritage.

— Editor



“Carry-out” policy now under way at Katahdin Lake makes a mountain of trash at roadside. — Photo by Bill Bentley, 2006

Update from the Park by Baxter State Park Director Jensen Bissell

At this time, I can report that Park use in 2006 appears to be on pace with use in 2005. This is good news as it suggests that we may have reached an end to the decline in use rates we have noted since 2000. If so, we have a relatively stable base from which to plan future budgets and Park operations.

Speaking of Park operations, we have been working steadily on a number of Park projects this summer including the new Ranger Camp at Daicey Pond, the completion of the Ranger Camp at Nesowadnehunk Field, the restoration of Avalanche Field, the removal of the Sentinel Bridge across Nesowadnehunk Stream, and the replacement of this crossing with a low-profile removable (seasonal) crossing. We have begun work on a more formal visitor access route on Stump Pond. This is the last phase of planned work to protect wildlife use around Sandy and Stump Ponds.

We are currently working with a technology contractor to complete a significant upgrade to our reservation system. The upgrade will improve the efficiency and ease of operation of the system in our Millinocket office, and the final phase of this work

will allow real time reservations in the Park to be displayed on-screen in format that could be eventually placed on our web-page or at Park gates. This work is an important step for the Park in our efforts to carefully modernize our reservation system.

This season has been (knock on wood) relatively event-free regarding search and rescue ops. During August, we were able to alert the Maine Army National Guard's 112th medivac regarding the potential need for assistance for an individual with a broken leg on Abol Slide, dispatch Roving Ranger Tom Bell up from Abol Campground toward the injured individual, and direct the helicopter to the location because we received two cell phone calls and GPS coordinates from hikers. Two important components of this rescue — the cell phone call and the coordinates — would not have happened 10 years ago and symbolize the changes that technology is bringing to our operations and to the wilderness experience. We will be considering these changes carefully over the winter months.

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Readers write.....

Send letters to Friends of Baxter
Box 1442, Bangor, ME 04402 or
barbarabentley@tidewater.net

I am writing to express my hope that the Park might reopen the North Peaks (Howe) Trail. I have fond memories of hiking that trail some 20 years ago, and was dismayed to discover that the trail is now closed. I missed the opportunity to follow that route as a maintained byway on my recent visit to the area. If there is any chance that the trail might be restored, I would definitely be in support of such an effort.

— Judy Danna



Bull moose at Maynard's Marsh — Photo by Jensen Bissell

Unfortunately, not all search and rescue operations have a happy ending. On September 24th, IF&W Wardens assisted by search dogs located a suicide victim near Avalanche Stream below the Roaring Brook Road. These are always tragic events, but thanks to the effective and efficient work of Park and IF&W staff, a full-scale search was avoided. My thanks to all Park staff, who so capably assisted in this effort and special thanks to Deputy Chief Ranger Stewart Guay for his professional oversight of this incident from the Park side.

Many of you know or remember Marsha Williamson from her many years working as a CR1 at Daicey Pond with her husband Gabe. Marsha lost her sister to cancer earlier in September. Our thoughts and prayers are with Marsha and Gabe as we look ahead to brighter days and the healing that only time can provide.

This September, I was privileged to support BSP Ranger II Barry MacArthur in Augusta as he received recognition for 35 years of service to Baxter State Park. Barry was accompanied by his wife Ava and son Jeremy. Congratulations, Barry, and thank you!

Carol Redelsheimer, the new SFMA Resource Manager, assumed her position on August 14 and has oriented herself to the landscape and duties of the position during a very busy time in the SFMA. She has conducted forest tours with students from UM Fort Kent and UM Orono as well as hosting the annual SFMA Advisory Tour. Carol has done a remarkable job in getting up to speed quickly in the SFMA.

Fall is always a busy time for us as we wrap up our seasonal work and try

Looking Back to 1956: Parson Marcus Keep at Katahdin Lake by John Neff

Who made the first recorded visit to Katahdin Lake? Though pioneers and timber cruisers certainly knew about and visited Katahdin Lake in the early 19th century, Parson Marcus Keep was the first to write about it. A recent seminary graduate, Keep was drawn to the mountain as he journeyed north from Bangor in 1846 to serve his first parish in Ashland. That summer, after a night at William Hunt's farm on the Penobscot East Branch, he and a friend hiked up the relatively new tote road along Wassataquoik Stream, then struck off by compass reckoning to Katahdin Lake.

As he stood at the outlet to the lake, he was without doubt as awed by the spectacular view of Katahdin as others would be in the years to follow. The two then hiked west, crossed Sandy Stream, and, after ascending Avalanche Brook and the East Slide, reached the rock-strewn ridge that today bears his name. They turned back after standing on Pamola Peak. (See photo of Knife Edge from Pamola on page 8.)

Keep returned in 1847 with a large group of friends and made it to the summit. In 1848, he began to lay out and cut the first clearly defined trail to Katahdin, the Keep Path. Although the Keep Path was abandoned by the late 1870s, a victim of increased logging in the region, Marcus Keep will forever be associated with Katahdin Lake. In gratitude for his efforts to make Katahdin more accessible, the Maine Legislature in 1859 granted Keep 200 acres of land (presently known as the "inholdings") on the east side of the lake. He built a log cabin below the outlet dam along Katahdin Brook. The probable site of the cabin has just recently been identified.

From the outlet brook, the Keep Path followed the south shore of the lake right past the present site of the Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps. What a walk it must have been!

Editor's note; John Neff is author of recently published [Katahdin: In History and Story](#). We will share more of the stories he has collected in future issues.

and complete some projects before the snow flies. The DOC has begun discussion on a strategic plan regarding snowmobiling in the Katahdin Region. Snowmobile use in Baxter Park (Rule 19) was last considered by the BSPA in 1981. The current policy for snowmobile use in BSP allows access to the Park Tote Road without grooming. This policy has served the Park and the snowmobiling community well for the past 25 years; we hope we can continue this policy into the future.

Lichens at Work on Blueberry Knoll

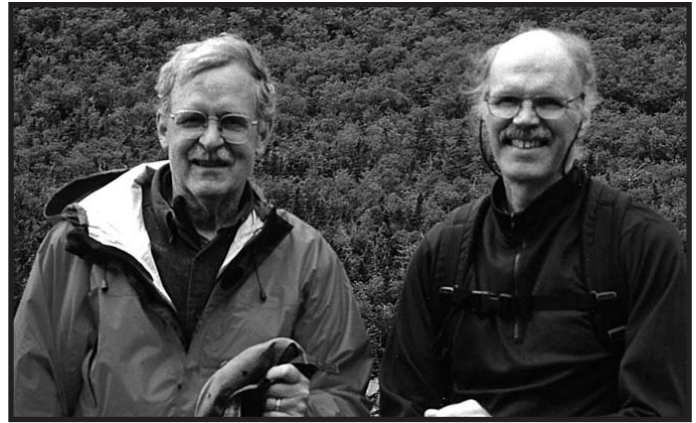
by Cope MacClintock and Howard Whitcomb

For two old-timer cousins doing a three-day stay at Chimney Pond in late July, Blueberry Knoll provided a perfect rain-day alternative hike. The area was replete with ripe blueberries, pale bog laurel, and mountain cranberries. From the Knoll, there is a grand view of Katahdin Lake.

At first glance, the topography of the North Basin points to a relatively simple glacial history. Indeed this Basin, along with the others on Katahdin, with its classic Alpine features, clearly was made by valley glaciers. Valley glaciers are local, form on mountain slopes, and erode their way back into the rock, forming cirques, tarns, and aretes (Hamlin Ridge, for example). These valley glaciers formed at the times of waning and waxing of Pleistocene continental glaciers that covered New England. Continental glaciers originated in the build-up of ice in Labrador.

When glaciers melt, they leave behind piles of debris. In North Basin, a question arises on the origin of the debris on the valley floor after the retreat of the last glacial ice. Most authorities say that, as the last continental ice sheet melted away, a valley glacier did the finishing touches on North Basin, leaving behind, as *it* melted away, recessional moraines, one east of the tarns (Blueberry Ponds) and the other, Blueberry Knoll. But wait a minute, not so fast. P.T. Davis argues that the last glacial ice in the Basin was continental, and that all depositional features in North Basin were left behind as *it* melted away. One clue is the presence of erratic boulders having a rock type different from the local bedrock, which in North Basin is all granite.

Our contributions to the debate support both alternatives. Along the valley wall on the north side of Blueberry Knoll is a sharply incised eastward-draining gully. If this is an erosional feature, it could only have been formed by large volumes of rapidly flowing water, presumably from a valley glacier melting rapidly as it receded westward. One for the valley-ice guys. On the other hand, we actually found an erratic boulder made of lava that probably came from Traveler Mountain ten miles



Cousins Howard Whitcomb (l) and Cope MacClintock on Blueberry Knoll — *Photo by the cousins*

north. One for the continental-ice guys.

After glaciation, there was no soil. Lichens, able to live on bare rock, started the process of making soil by eating away rock as they grew. All who walk the Maine woods have seen lichens on rock - but only rarely is one privileged to see delicate lichen blisters containing tiny rock chips lifted up off the rock surface revealing the early stages of soil formation. We saw such a boulder in North Basin.

Ed. note: Cope MacClintock is an Invertebrate Paleontologist, Peabody Museum, Yale University. Howard Whitcomb is a Friends Board Member and compiler of *Percival P. Baxter's Vision for Baxter State Park: An Annotated Compilation of Original Sources*.

Walk in the Park '06 a Great Success

Twelve participants in this year's Friends' Walk in the Park camped at Roaring Brook and at Chimney Pond. Activities included climbing South Turner, exploring Sandy Stream and Daicey and Kidney Ponds, hiking to Blueberry Knoll, going to the summit of Katahdin by various routes, and enjoying Sally Daggett's extraordinary spaghetti sauce! After climbing the Helon Taylor trail, Leif Weaver said, "You couldn't have thrown yourself off Pamola Peak if you tried, the wind was so strong out of the west." And Kris Cook reported that fresh bear scat kept them wary on the trail to Blueberry Knoll. We hear that Bill Dale has posted on his office door a photo of himself next to the Baxter Peak sign as evidence of his accomplishments. He's a true Mainer at last. Ben and Grace Andrews, ages 6 and 7, made short work of the trip to Chimney Pond. Well done! This year's Walk in the Park was a great success all around. Where to next year?

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Artist Evelyn Dunphy and Park Director Jensen Bissell at Painters’ Beach
on Katahdin Lake — *Photo by Barbara Bentley*

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In Church’s Footsteps:

Artists Continue a Long Tradition at Katahdin Lake

One sunny afternoon this fall, I was lucky enough to find Evelyn Dunphy at home in her studio in West Bath. She is a woman on the move and paints on site wherever she goes. Surrounded by stunning paintings of Katahdin and its environs, Evelyn talked about her many visits to Katahdin Lake in every season of the year. The crimson pitcher plants in the bog reminded me of ones I had just seen near Russell Pond. Evelyn pointed to a painting of a winter scene, saying, “This is where I fell through the ice painting that one.”

For the past ten years, Evelyn Dunphy has been focusing on Mt. Katahdin as her principle subject. Twenty of these watercolors make up her “Katahdin Lake Collection,” which is currently being exhibited at Bowdoin College. The public is invited to view the collection before the paintings are disbursed into private collections. (See upper left.)

While the route to Katahdin Lake is much shorter and easier to navigate than when Frederic Church frequented the region, the splendid scenery and views of Katahdin are much the same. Currently, a number of artists are spending time at Katahdin Lake, some painting works they donated to the art auction held at the Portland Museum of Art earlier this year in support of the Katahdin Lake Campaign. Marsha Donahue is one of these artists. Her work, and that of many others, can be seen right in downtown Millinocket at the North Light Gallery. (See lower left.)



Katahdin in Baxter State Park with early morning shadows on the Knife Edge as seen from Pamola, terminus of Marcus Keep's first ascent. See "Looking Back" on page 5. — *Photo by Bill Bentley, 2006*

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