



**Friends  
of  
Baxter State Park**

# Forever Wild

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BAXTER STATE PARK  
SUMMER 2007 VOL. 6 No. 3

## President's Column

by Barbara Bentley

### Wilderness in Recovery

When asked to envision the Katahdin Lake landscape fifty years from now, my initial thought was, "How should I know?" Then I realized that I started visiting the Park more than fifty years ago and have camped there almost every year since. The Park has changed dramatically during that time. As I look at the Park of my early days in the 1950's, and then the one of 100 years ago described by John Neff in his recent book, the changes I see during those years show patterns of a wilderness in recovery.

As this wilderness recovers - trees grow up where there were none, logging roads grow in, viewpoints grow scarce, trails to summits grow fewer, rules and regulations grow in number and scope, and Park users grow older. This demographic change — that we who use the Park are aging and that there are fewer users of the Park than in years gone by — is of particular interest to many. How did we aging campers come to love the wilderness experience? And perhaps more worrisome, who will appreciate and defend the Park in the future?

In 1955, as a 9-year-old camper, I learned to rappel in the Chimney on Katahdin with our camp director and

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Spring was late this year. Loons call from ice filled waters on Lower Togue Pond as Trash Pick-up Day on May 5th comes to a close. — Photo by Barbara Bentley

## Record Attendance at Friends' Annual Meeting

by Linda McKee

Fifty-one FBSP members gathered for the Friends of Baxter's Annual Meeting at the Oakland Grange on April 28th. An address by the Park Director, election of new officers, awards, committee reports, and a keynote presentation by a conservation biologist highlighted the morning.

Outgoing President Charlie Jacobi presided at the meeting and presented "Darn Good Work" awards to Barbara Bentley, for her work on the organization newsletter; to Bill Bentley, for his photography of the Park; to Howard Whitcomb, for his continuing work on the Baxter Papers; and to John Neff, for the publication of his new book about the Park.

Jensen Bissell, BSP Park Director, presented his annual report, speaking on the Park's new reservation system, job standard review, SFMA operations, seasonal hiring, a new year-round Interpretive Specialist position, budgeting and finances, operational activities, a search-and-rescue reimbursement, and plans for the Katahdin Lake Parcel. (See p. 6.) A brief question-and-answer period followed Bissell's speech.

Howard Whitcomb, compiler and editor of *Percival Baxter's Vision*, introduced special Annual Meeting guest, Thomas Hilton of Boothbay

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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.



Newly elected President Barbara Bentley receives a “Darn Good Work Award” from Charlie Jacobi and is very impressed by his eloquence. — Photo by Bill Bentley

**We’re on the Web**

Check out the Friends’ website at [www.friendsofbaxter.org](http://www.friendsofbaxter.org).

Take a look at the beautiful note cards and photos of Katahdin, many of which have appeared in the newsletter. Contact Bill Bentley at 207-763-3014 or [bentleys@tidewater.net](mailto:bentleys@tidewater.net) to order some for yourself.

**Do you need reservations in the Park?**

There is room to camp in the Park this summer! The rolling reservation system is working for mail-in requests, plus you can make reservations by phone 14 days before the date of your visit. Parking reservations for day use are also available to Maine residents. Just call Park Headquarters at 207-723-5140.

**President’s Column — Continued from p. 1**

other girls my age. Our camp had a large lean-to at Chimney Pond designated for its use; it was always full as groups rotated through all summer. That was the experience for the younger girls. Older girls, say 13-14 years old, were dropped off in remote areas and picked up somewhere else a week or ten days later. We cooked all our meals from scratch — bake, boil, and fry each meal— on wood fires. A family camping tradition started by my mother Whit McEvoy survives to this day. We spend a week at Russell Pond each year; she was 76 years old when she made her last trip carrying her own gear the 7 miles into the campground. Those who organize the trip - then and now - grew up in camps that provide wilderness experiences.

So, as my husband frequently asks, what’s my point? Over time, as Park policy has evolved, what seemed like good and necessary changes at the time they were made have limited the number and size of groups able to use the Park, making it all but impossible for camp groups to enjoy extended stays in the Park. Even family groups like ours can no longer camp in several remote areas; a single lean-to for four can’t even accommodate mom, dad, and three or four children let alone our family group, now limited to twelve by the reservation system. And our options for day hikes from remote sites are fewer as trails grow in or are discontinued. Fewer people in the Park; fewer options for the backcountry camper.

A couple of weeks ago, I dropped off my fisherman at Kidney Pond and found half the cabins available! I drove up to Nesowadnehunk to see the new lean-tos; the campground was a ghost town - two sites in the whole place were occupied. I hiked to Williams Pond, and a barred owl flew in close and asked, “Whooooooo are you?” Exactly. The wilderness camper appears to be a dying breed, replaced by the fully equipped car camper and the drive-in visitor. To appreciate the value of wilderness, to learn the lessons it teaches, a person needs to experience it, to be submerged in it, and to love it. Many of the aging majority who use the Park today, and work to protect the wilderness for tomorrow, started out as young campers. Perhaps we should see what we can do to get young campers back into the Park. Therein lies a healthier future for them and for the Park.



## Howlett Reviews Finances Committee Seeks New Members

On behalf of the Friends of Baxter State Park Finance Committee, Al Howlett recently reviewed the financial practices and records of FBSP and found things to be in good order. He reports that the Administrative Manager is well qualified and doing an excellent job. He has submitted a full report to the Board with a few recommendations going forward.

The Finance Committee is seeking additional members from the Board or the membership at large. Having someone on the Committee who is an accountant would be an advantage. Members are encouraged to contact Chairman Don Hudson about joining the committee. He can be reached at [donhudson@chewonki.org](mailto:donhudson@chewonki.org) or 207-882-7323.

### Hiking to Katahdin Lake?

Be sure to ask for the handout with map at the Togue Pond Gate as you enter the Park. You'll find information on the area, an update on the planning process now underway, as well as descriptions of the route and what you will find there. If interested in spending the night, contact camp manager Holly Hamilton at Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps.

### Looking Back Old Rum Mt. Trail

Almost due south of Katahdin's South Peak is a small gently rounded wooded peak named Rum Mountain. It is so dwarfed by the Katahdin massif that one can hardly notice it at 3,361 ft. In 1962, a trail from Abol CG across the flank of Rum Mt. and up a spectacular ridge to South Peak was proposed and subsequently built by the Intercollegiate Outing Club Association and rangers. After storm blowdown delays, the work was finally completed in 1966. Within a few years, however, continued blowdowns and other problems made maintenance difficult and the trail was finally abandoned. I had the good fortune of climbing this route in 1967, and I still remember the sight of the bold precipitous south flank of Katahdin and exhilarating climb to South Peak where the trail joined the Knife Edge. The first .8 mile of the trail is still in use as the trail from the Abol CG to Little Abol Falls. I wonder how many other Friends "old timers" climbed that trail during its short life-span. Let us know.

— John W. Neff, author of *Katahdin: An Historic Journey*



SFMA Park Tote Road connector in the "Forestry Mile" shown under construction here is now complete. — Photo by Park Staff

### Update from the Park by BSP Director Jensen Bissell

After a long winter and a cold spring, summer is in full swing in Baxter State Park. In early June, we held our annual spring training sessions at Park Headquarters. This is one of the rare times each year that the entire Park staff can gather in one place. The intent of the meeting is to update staff on changes in policy and procedure and begin to orient new staff to the skills and abilities in resource protection, public safety, information, and education they will need to be successful in their work during the coming season. Along the way, we have a few laughs and a nice meal together. We also take a picture to help us remember ourselves in the years to come.

This summer, Park staff will be engaged in a full slate of projects in the Park, working on the new staff lodging at Daicey Pond and the Stump Pond access trail in July. The trail crew will continue restoration of the Saddle Trail and the Hunt Trail east of the Thoreau Spring. Work continues on the Nesowadnehunk staff lodging and the shop/storage building at Nesowadnehunk to move all operations there East of the stream.

By July, we should have an internet connection established at our Togue Pond Gate. This effort, limited strictly to the gatehouse, will allow us to move current reservation information to the gate when Park Headquarters closes each day. This connection should provide an improvement in public safety by allowing the evening patrol Ranger to stay in the Park through the mid to late afternoon hours (instead of driving to Millinocket to get the reservation sheet to carry to the gate.) This connection will also decrease radio traffic and save the Park some money.

Work is now complete on the construction of the new SFMA – Park Tote Road connector in the "Forestry Mile" which will be

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**Update from the Park** *Cont. from p. 3*

used by staff and Forest Guild and Cooperative Forest Research Unit tours of the SFMA this summer. SFMA staff will also be working on the interpretive trail extending from the SFMA Kiosk on the Park Tote Road.

In the Katahdin Lake parcel, we have dissembled the log piles on the logging roads behind the Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps and will plant 600 red pine seedlings there. Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camp manager Holly Hamilton has made significant progress with camp repairs and upgrades and now has several camps open for rental. The Maine Conservation Corp, led by Jeff Kimball, did an excellent job installing about 1000' of bog bridging on portions of the Katahdin Lake Trail, and the trail is now a very pleasant walk. Park staff constructed a low rack and placed two BSP rental canoes and an information board on the south shore of Katahdin Lake. Keys for the rental canoes are available at Togue Pond Gate and Roaring Brook Campground.

Our project to capture data for our economic impact survey is well underway. Many members of the Friends have volunteered their time for the survey and their efforts are greatly appreciated. Returned forms are now coming in at a steady rate, and the information gained will be very useful to the Park in the coming years.

Finally, we have recently distributed Automated External Defibrillators, more commonly known as "AED's" to each campground in the Park. Historically, heart attacks comprise around 30% of the overall mortality count in Baxter State Park. Many of those tragic events took place in, or very near, a campground. The track record for AED's seems much more effective than CPR. Although I hope never to use one, I doubt we will ever regret having an AED on hand.

As the weather warms and the Park gets busier, we are hopeful for an exciting, peaceful, and safe summer season in Baxter State Park. I hope to see you on the trail this summer!

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Above: Volunteers for the Economic Survey discover there is never a spare moment as gatekeepers paint signs when there is no traffic. L to R: Park employees Marybeth Varney and Miranda Brodeur with Friend volunteer Sally Daggett.

— Photo by Sue Lussier Below: Park employee Gail Carter paints ominous sign.  
— Photo by Barbara Bentley



### How well do YOU know the Park?

by Trivia Wizard Al Howlett

On the morning that Henry David Thoreau made his attempt to reach Baxter Peak, he reported that his breakfast included:

- a) Fat of bears
- b) Musquash
- c) Raw Pork
- d) Granola bars

Answer in next newsletter.

In case you missed the Annual Meeting, the following are the answers to the trivia questions that appeared in the Spring Newsletter. It was Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas who inspired long time Park Ranger Ed Werler to quit smoking. And when you head north out of Millinocket towards the South Entrance of Baxter State Park, you pass through T3 Indian Purchase.



## SFMA VOLUNTEERS Needed in North of the Park

The 29,587 acre Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA) in the northwest corner of the Park was created by Governor Baxter to be, in his words, “a large area wherein the State may practice the most modern methods of forest control reforestation and production.” The area offers a working example of long-term forest management. Park Resource Director Carol Redelsheimer invites us to learn more about the area and to volunteer in the some of the many projects there. A brochure on the SFMA is available at Park Headquarters. She describes current projects:

- trail clearing and maintenance on Frost Pond trail, Wadleigh Brook trail, and the Freeze out trail
- replacing sill at Webster Camp (July)
- Forestry in Action trail - clearing, marking, etc. (week of July 10)
- help with data collection - timber cruising and collecting data on culverts, bridges, etc., including GPS waypoints (Sept./Oct. are the nicest times although we cruise year round!)
- general camp / campsite maintenance - cleaning, painting, and so forth (any time)
- new picnic area at south entrance
- winter projects: lynx tracking (requires being avail. on short notice); owling in March/April (requires freezing in the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere)
- other more specialized wildlife monitoring opportunities
- boundary line updating for the SMFA lines and the Boody Brook Natural Area boundary (clearing brush and refreshing paint on blazes)

For more information on these projects in the SFMA and to find yourself an opportunity to help out, **please contact Mac Browning at 723-8194**. Staff members are in the woods 11 months of the year and can always use a hand!



Many folks turned out on Saturday, May 5, 2007 to pick up trash along the southern approach to the Park. Shyla Cyr and Devin and Riley Whitney (pictured L to R here on the rock) reported that beer bottles and cigarette butts and cartons were plentiful and pointed out that it takes seven years for a cigarette filter to decompose. They wish folks would not throw them out the car window.

— Photo by Barbara Bentley

## Three New Board Members for Friends

by Linda McKee

A founding member of Friends of Baxter State Park and Park devotee for a half-century has been elected President of the organization. Barbara Bentley of Hope joins the Board as she succeeds Charlie Jacobi of Bar Harbor, who steps down after four years of service. A long-time high school teacher and community activist, Bentley has served as Administrative Manager of FBSP and the Editor of *Forever Wild*. “I look forward to working with the dedicated individuals who serve on the Friends’ Board,” Bentley said, upon the announcement of the election at the Annual Meeting in April. “They bring a multitude of talents to the table.”

Bentley began her yearly adventures in the Park during the 1950s at Camp Natarwi on Lower Togue Pond and led the Junior Maine Guide Program there ten years later. She carries on to this day a life-long family tradition of annual trips to Russell Pond each August as well as volunteer service in the Park. Her husband, Bill, also a Founding member and former Board member, is well known for his photographs of the Park, many of which were displayed at the meeting.

Bentley said that her goals for the organization include finding more ways for members of Friends to participate directly in projects within the Park and expanding educational opportunities in the Park to increase awareness of the importance of wilderness.

Other officers elected include Ken Spalding, vice-president; Sally Daggett, secretary; and Don Hudson, treasurer. Chip Ahrens of Yarmouth and Chaitanya York of Leeds were named to the Board for three-year terms. Ahrens, an attorney in Portland who enjoys hiking and fishing in the Park with his family since 1975, has years of experience in environmental work,

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## Bissell Radiates Optimism in Address to Friends

Nothing is more eagerly awaited at Annual Meeting than the Park Director's remarks. Jensen Bissell, completing his first full year as top administrator, lived up to expectations.

Calling the Park a "vibrant, active place" whose strong staff is committed to the natural environment, Bissell sprinkled his remarks with optimism, confidence, and assurance that things are going well at Baxter State Park. He specifically congratulated the new Resource Manager of the Scientific Forestry Management Area, Carol Redelsheimer, on the successful transition in management, having assumed the reins in '06 from Bissell himself.

In his update on Park activities, Bissell said that the new Park reservation system is living up to hopes by providing a faster, more convenient and fair system. The web-based rolling system limits first-day registrations and staggers registrations throughout the season. "We are continuing to work toward providing a real-time view of campground reservation status on our website to help speed the process for campers," he added.

Bissell emphasized that he is working steadily to expand the Park community by actively involving nine existing committees and sub-committees to work on issues and initiatives. These individuals, he said, "extend far beyond the BSP Advisory" and bring wide expertise and experience.

Some of the most interesting comments about the Park centered on an understanding of the multiple generations represented by the staff. With the eventual retirement of some long-time rangers, Bissell said the first challenge is to transition their knowledge gained from extensive experience. "But the second challenge," he emphasized, "is more complicated."

This challenge concerns the differing attitudes and expectations existing between multiple age groups. Speaking both with humor and sincerity, he outlined these groups: "Traditionalists" born before 1946; "Boomers," the "Me Generation" born after 1947; "Generation Xers," the first technology group born after 1964, who use technology for fun and eschew dress codes; and "Millennials," born after 1980, who expect technology to provide solutions. "Each defines success by different standards," he said.

But he added, "I am convinced that the root mission of the Park... is universal and has the power to cross any generational line, but translating that appeal effectively to new generations of Park staff will require us to be flexible, innovative, and engaging."

On other matters Bissell discussed the relocation of the lean-to at Chimney Pond, the Park's first charge last summer for a search-and-rescue operation, the building of a cabin/lean-to on a Wassataquoik Lake island, and efforts to complete the "Forestry Mile's" demonstration trail in the SFMA.

In response to several questions regarding the newly acquired Katahdin Lake parcel, the Park Director said that the review and assessment may take five to ten years. "We're not in a rush. We want to do it well, careful and thoughtful. We've much to be considered," he told the audience.



Thomas Hilton recounts that, as a young boy, whenever he came home from school and saw a limousine parked in the driveway, it meant that his father and Governor Baxter would have maps spread on the table.

— Photo by Bill Bentley

### Annual Meeting *Continued from p. 1*

Harbor. Hilton's father, William Hilton, was present at the June 2, 1931, signing of the agreement between Governor Baxter and William Whitcomb, president of Great Northern Paper, to purchase the parcel that included Mt. Katahdin. Gov. Baxter and Hilton teamed up again for Baxter's final purchase, the Togue Pond acquisition, in 1962. Baxter wrote to Hilton, "You gave me my start, and without your help there would be no Baxter State Park today." Thomas Hilton spoke to the group briefly following the introduction, recounting his youth during which he had had the pleasure of seeing and meeting Gov. Baxter.

Outgoing Board members Bill Bentley, Jon Tierney, and John Neff were presented awards. After lunch, Board member Al Howlett led the group on a hike along Messalonskee Stream for Annual Meeting attendees.





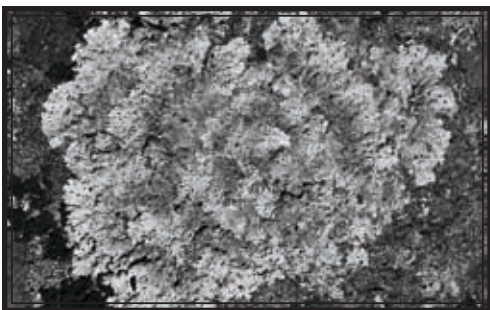
Dr. Alison Dibble describes the beauty at our feet and cautions us to step with care.

— Photo by Bill Bentley

### New Board Members Elected

*Continued from page 5*

providing legal advice and representation to the Governor’s office and other State agencies. He has served on the BSP Advisory and is presently on the SFMA Advisory. York has 28 years of experience with natural resources and organizational development, serving in leadership positions with Maine Conservation School, Maine Organic Farmers Association, Maine Department Of Agriculture, and Common Ground Fair. Calling the Maine Woods his day care center as a child, he has explored the Park well and has volunteered there for 20 years.



Aptly named “Target Lichen”

— Photo by Bill Bentley

## Katahdin Host to New and Rare Species Dibble Describes Parks Bryophytes and Lichens

If you’ve climbed Katahdin, your eyes were probably focused more on the awesome views than upon the warm boulders where you took your rests. Not so anymore for Park lovers who heard Dr. Alison Dibble’s fascinating presentation on bryophytes and lichens at the Annual Meeting in April.

Seems those fuzzy little tufts of dry mosses and crusty lichens at high elevations above Chimney Pond are worth our taking a close look. According to Dibble, a plant conservation biologist and professor at the University of Maine, they are integral to the health of the alpine ecosystem, and important factors may be increasing their vulnerability. Since 2000, she and a team of five scientists have been identifying, studying, and collecting samples of these valuable bryophytes and lichens, hoping to learn more about their role.

Bryophytes, she carefully explained, are plants and include mosses and liverworts. Lichens, however, are not plants, but, instead, are a symbiosis between an alga and a fungus. Both are tolerant of extreme conditions and can exist “out at the edge of what life can endure.” However, mosses cannot tolerate air pollution by heavy metals, which is why few are found in cities.

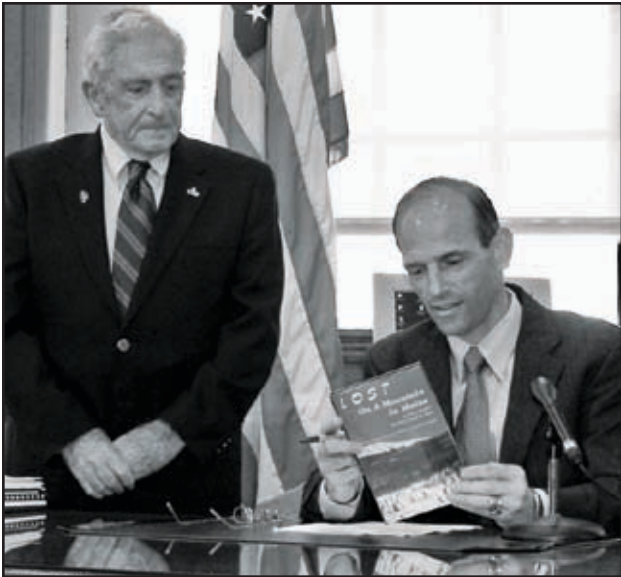
Documentation of these small-bodied species actually began in the late nineteenth century with further exploration occurring in 1900, 1902, and 1938. Dibble’s team worked for sixteen days from 2000 - 2004 to collect the most current data, surveying the North Basin, the Tableland, and the South Basin.

In the lichen survey, the scientists noted 290 species of lichens on Katahdin, 9 of which were not previously known in North America, reflecting significant range extensions. Thirty-eight were new to the northeastern U.S. and 27 new to Maine. Results of the survey of mosses indicate at least 96 mosses and 50 liverworts, some very rare. Five mosses and four liverworts are of possibly regional significance. Special habitats noted include cirque headwalls and alpine fens and seeps over bedrock. One unusual habitat revealed “calcareous seep,” characteristic of higher pH rock types.

Dibble said the team still does not know the full extent of rare, sensitive biota on Katahdin. Nor do they know the effects of acid rain of the 1970s-80s and ongoing air-borne pollutants. The impacts of drier or wetter weather are also still unknown.

In the meantime, said Dibble, there are some lessons learned and some things we can do to protect this fragile alpine ecosystem. In the Tableland area, the unusual lichen habitats are in gullies, tops of cliffs, calcareous bedrock, away from trails. The crustose lichens are poorly known, and we need a baseline dataset on water chemistry of the area. The studies and lessons show, she said, that there are some management implications in any area used by hikers as a latrine, which could have a negative impact on lichen habitat and water quality in and around Chimney Pond. At Chimney gully, rare lichens and mosses are particularly vulnerable to climbing activities.

Want to know more? Dibble suggests Ralph Pope’s new paperback *Alpine Lichens* (2006).



## Free Fishing for Fendler at Last

Rescued after being lost on Katahdin from July 17 - 25, 1939, 12-year-old Donn Fendler was promised a lifetime fishing license by then-governor Lewis Barrows. At the urging of Maine Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan, Governor John Baldacci presented Fendler with the long awaited license and an autographed canoe paddle on June 5, 2007, at the State House. The Governor received a copy of *Lost on a Mountain in Maine*, in which Fendler recounts his 1939 solo experience in the Maine woods. A member and Honorary Director of Friends of Baxter, Fendler still spends summers in Maine.

Donn Fendler and Governor John Baldacci in the Governor's Office on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007. — Photo by Linda McKee

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Please make checks payable to Friends of Baxter State Park. Dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Send to **Friends of Baxter State Park, P.O. Box 1442, Bangor, ME 04402-1442.** Thank you!

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