



# FOREVER WILD

Newsletter of Friends of Baxter State Park

Fall 2014

Vol. 13 No. 4



## Executive Director's Column

by Aaron Megquier

As I talk with friends at other organizations, it often occurs to me that many nonprofits work to change an unacceptable status quo. Organizations often measure their impact by change – more acres saved from development, fewer homeless people outside on a cold winter night, or higher academic achievement.

One of the quirks of working on behalf of a place such as Baxter State Park, which is already utterly extraordinary, is that our impact is often measured by whether things stay the same. Our mission is to advocate for this spectacular place, support it in any way we can, and enhance the wilderness values of the Park whenever possible. We do that – quite successfully – in an ever-increasing number of ways, but it feels different from the work of many other nonprofits that are striving to change something.

Internally, FBSP is in the midst of a period of intense growth, with a clear and ambitious vision for where we are headed. We are adapting to better meet the needs of the Park and better achieve our mission. By any measure, 2014 has been a big year for Friends. As we evaluate the success of our work, identify ongoing challenges, and begin to plan for next year, here is an abbreviated list of milestones from the first ten months of 2014:

**January:** The FBSP Board of Directors met with a representative of Ellitsville Plantation Inc., the foundation offering to donate land for a new national park along Baxter State Park's eastern border.

**February:** FBSP was awarded \$34,000 by the Recreational Trails Program for the Marston-North Brother trail relocation project.

**March:** FBSP reprinted 10,000 copies of our popular *Know Before You Go* brochure, which is distributed at dozens of locations statewide, including all official State of Maine visitor information centers.



Artist Michael Vermette and the graduates of the 2014 Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program pose with their watercolor paintings of Katahdin, created in the footsteps of Marsden Hartley, Frederic Church, and other famous painters on the shores of Katahdin Lake. – Photo © Holly Hamilton

## Painting at Katahdin Lake with the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program

by Michael Vermette

On August 8th, I hiked 3.8 miles to Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps in Baxter State Park. It began to rain, and I took momentary refuge in the outhouse – not the greatest outlook for what I hoped to accomplish. My plan was to do a watercolor at Painter's Beach. I set up my easel and began drawing Katahdin, starting with the Knife Edge. An eagle flew over my head and took cover in the thick spruces across from the beach. I kept my head and was rewarded with a great image.

I was determined to paint a watercolor so I would have an example to

show the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program students the following day. My plan was to expand the watercolor class I did last year by including a canoe excursion to all three of the main beaches that painters in history actually used. I wanted them to stand in the very footsteps of such great artists as Frederic Church, Marsden Hartley, and James Fitzgerald. There was a very dramatic sunset, but I saved my last large sheet of watercolor paper for the alpenglow on Katahdin early the next morning.

The Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program students reached the

*Continued on pg. 2*

*Continued on pg. 3*



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Friends of Baxter State Park is a 501(c)(3) organization working to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of Baxter State Park in the spirit of its founder, Percival P. Baxter.

## Executive Director's Column

*Continued from pg. 1*

**April:** FBSP moved into a new office in downtown Belfast, hired Alison Violette as our part-time Volunteer Coordinator, and hosted a lively annual meeting with over 75 members in attendance.

**May:** The Plants of Baxter State Park project began its third season of research in the Park, and produced a first draft of a full-color field guide to over 800 species of plants in the Park.

**June:** FBSP offered a chainsaw certification course in Skowhegan for trail volunteers, and hired Sarah Holland, who had been working for FBSP on a contract basis for several years, as our part-time Administrative Manager.

**July:** On July 24, we launched our 2014 Speaker Series on Wilderness and Nature-based Tourism in Millinocket, funded by the National Environmental Education Foundation.

**August:** The 6th Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program took place in the Park from August 2-10, with rave reviews from graduates. On August 22, Friends was awarded a \$40,000 grant from the Quimby Family Foundation.

**September:** In early September, we launched our new Forever Friends sustaining membership program, which allows members to set up automatic, recurring contributions to FBSP.

**October:** As this newsletter goes to press, a six-person Maine Conservation Corps trail crew, funded by FBSP, is now hard at work relocating a section of the Marston Trail in Baxter State Park.

As a member of Friends, you are part of each and every success that we achieve. Many thanks for your continued support as we work to protect this special place we all love!



## Answer: Trivia Question in Summer Newsletter

Our puzzle master is on a roll! In our summer issue, we asked: "In 1963, helicopters dropped what animals onto the Northwest Plateau?" The answer was A, caribou.

## Membership Matters

By Sarah Holland, Administrative Manager

When the fleeting summer ebbs and the leaves tinge to welcome autumn, it reminds us that nothing is permanent. We can't take anything for granted. Temperatures change, landscapes change, animals change, and our own lives change. One thing that we hope does not change is your commitment to Friends of Baxter State Park. If you are a member, you get an annual reminder from us to renew that commitment. If you forget to renew, you may get additional reminders or even a phone call. We know how busy and hectic life can be, and it's easy to lose track. If you want to keep your commitment of support to Friends of Baxter State Park, but not receive these reminders, we now have a sustaining membership program called **Forever Friends**. This will allow you to make automatic, recurring gifts of any amount, with a \$5 per month minimum. Please let us know if you are interested in this program and we will email you a link to set it up. We already have 35 members signed up as Forever Friends!

We appreciate every one of you, and do not ever take your support for granted. So we want to hear from you about what you like best about Friends' activities – what needs improvement, and what should we do more of, or less of? Our current programs include Walks in the Park, funding for trail work in the Park, funding for training, volunteer programs, special events, presentations, the Baxter State Park calendar, brochures, publications, our *Forever Wild* Newsletter, monthly e-newsletters, the annual Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program, and, of course, our ongoing advocacy on behalf of the Park. None of this is possible without your support. So please let us know how we're doing. Thank you all!



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## Painting at Katahdin Lake *Continued from pg. 1*



MYWLP participants completing a 20-minute watercolor sketch on the dock at Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps.  
– Photo © Michael Vermette

campers at 11:00 a.m. the next day. I began by explaining how beauty can save our world, and how land trusts across America are holding wet paint *plein air* auctions to raise funds to preserve land for future

generations. After showing them my sample paintings, I challenged them to consider that they too were all artists capable of creating beautiful paintings. I described how 16 painters and photographers had an auction in 2006 to help save Katahdin Lake, which ultimately became the crown jewel of Baxter State Park.

Their eyes opened wide when I started to treat them as artists, handing out new, top quality art supplies donated by Blick Art Materials. Sherry Godsil, the Donation Program Coordinator for Blick, wrote, "Blick Art Materials is pleased to assist the Friends of Baxter with their current project, namely the painting project at Katahdin Lake for the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program students." We got a similarly enthusiastic response from Daniel Smith Artist Materials, which generously provided watercolor paints to round out the 12-color palettes.

When we arrived at the beach in front of the cabins, I demonstrated everything I expected the students to do, including a 15-minute sketch called a watercolor "quickie." I had one of the students time me as I talked them through it and completed my sketch. Then, I asked each of them to try it, giving them an extra five minutes of painting time. My aim was to expose them to a process, not make them work in a particular way. After 20 minutes, I stopped them for a short critique. They were amazed at what they had created in such a short period; everyone's painting was unique. We took a break for lunch and the students cheered at the thought of eating a home-cooked meal prepared by Rachel and her kitchen staff.

After lunch, I met with the students again to give them the afternoon assignment. I wanted to take them in canoes and kayaks to the three famous beaches where painters in history had worked. I gave them a choice of locations to paint for up to an hour. Some students painted close to the camps at the Hartley Beach, some further away at the Fitzgerald Beach and others with me at the Church Beach the furthest down the lake. Each group had about four students, as well as a trip leader or instructor.

The wind had picked up, which made for slow paddling, but we all made it to our destinations. As the hours flew by, something amazing happened – the students began to make a connection with Katahdin itself. It was just as I hoped! An hour passed, then another, then a third and they were still painting. Perhaps it was the way the mountain seems to rise up higher above the shoreline the farther you get back from it, or maybe it was the absolute gift of giving them time to be alone with their subject. They all went way over their time, finishing at 4:00 p.m. Even they were amazed at

how time seemed to fly by as the mountain placed them under its majestic influence. I knew that I had helped to facilitate a greater sense of awe than I had planned. These students had a heartfelt experience with Katahdin who chose to show her glorious beauty to them. That day, they all joined the long line of painters from history who have had made a similar connection.



Participants had the opportunity to paint for several hours at spectacular and historic locations along the shore of Katahdin Lake, including this spot favored by artist James Fitzgerald.  
– Photo © Michael Vermette

People often wonder why I teach, why I even bother with students since I could make a better living as a full-time painter. Well, this is why. I can give you 12 reasons why imparting into the future feels so good. Like so many of the other instructors who have imparted their knowledge to the future generation of leaders, I was humbled and proud to leave them with a genuine love of Baxter State Park and Katahdin.

It was fitting that these students would end the program here. They had spent a week going from one campground to another. I shook everyone's hand and told them they were now Katahdin Painters. I gave my sketch to the two counselors for helping me. Then I packed up and left them all to enjoy a refreshing afternoon swim under the shadow of the mountain they had just painted.

Remember everyone – beauty really can change the world!  
The very best to you all,

Michael E. Vermette, Artist and Instructor of the MYWLP  
A Friend of Baxter

## Our Readers Write...

### Update from an MYWLP Graduate

Just a little update on my life: I will be attending College of the Atlantic this coming fall to study Human Ecology with a focus in experiential education! I've always been interested in programs like Chewonki, Kroka, and NOLS, and I love what they do with bridging the gap between nature and education. I must credit the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program for my immense passion for it, though. That program was truly life changing, and I don't know how to thank you and the Friends of Baxter State Park enough for what you do for kids.

Enjoy the year,  
Ivy Enoch

*Ivy Enoch is a graduate of the 2013 Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program.*

*Continued on pg. 4*

Congratulations to Friends members Dean and Sheila Bennett, recipients of the 2014 Harrison L. Richardson lifetime achievement award from Maine Conservation Voters.

**Fun in Nova Scotia, thanks to Friends of Baxter State Park**

We just returned from a lovely trip to the south side of Nova Scotia, specifically the LaHave islands. The trip was donated by Anne Huntington and we were the lucky ones to win it. After a ride on the ferry and a visit to Kejimikujik National Park (well worth the trip), we made our way down to the coast through narrow bridges and gorgeous views until we came to Bell Island.

Anne was a terrific hostess. She greeted us with homemade bread and zucchini cake and treated us to several delicious meals. There was little traffic in September so our visit included walks on 2 nearly secluded beaches. Anne drove us to Lunenburg – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – where we learned the history of the Bluenose schooner and its racing successes.

The quaint maritime museum was filled with exhibits about the hard lives of those who have made their living from the sea since the 1600s. Anne filled us in on some of the trails and events at Baxter Park and shared her extensive knowledge of the plants and birds of both areas. We slept well in her spacious yurt and didn't even have to bring backpacks or sleeping gear!

Many thanks to Friends of Baxter and to Anne.  
Joel Packer and Diane Clay

**Cutting for Sign  
President's Column**

by Charlie Jacobi

Many years ago in the Great Smokies, I took a tracking course from an old-timer of a ranger named J.R. Buchanan. J.R. taught me how to "cut" for sign of a person lost in the woods, and then follow that sign to find them, and (ideally) a happy ending. We learned that those skills could also be used to follow poachers and others guilty of failure-to-do-right in the park. Of course most of them were trying to hide their tracks, and had tricks to throw us off their trail. I learned to look closely at the ground and at branches for details like broken twigs, turned over pebbles, and even how branches overlapped in the puckerbrush (there was a lot of that in places). Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid discovered that they left a trace even in the slickrock desert.

All of us look for signs all the time to tell us what to do next or where to go. Road signs, trail signs, weather signs, human behavior signs. Sometimes we run right into them. Sometimes we have to look closely and carefully to find them as with tracking. Sometimes we miss them altogether. And then when we see what we missed, it seems so obvious we wonder how we overlooked it the first time.

In early September, not far in on the Pogy Notch Trail, I encountered the relatively new trail sign telling me that I was entering Maine's largest wilderness, that I was responsible for my own safety, and that I'd better be prepared. Down the trail a little further, two fresh and frighteningly large piles of half-digested blueberries in the trail was a recent sign of an ursine resident passing through. As I headed up the lovely, noisy Howe Brook Trail, I knew I'd be looking for a sign that I was finished with my trail steward assignment after



One of many spectacular waterfalls and pools on Howe Brook, the sign of a trail steward assignment nearing completion. – Photo © Charlie Jacobi

three seasons of toil interrupted by knee surgery. Farther up the trail I began cutting brush to define the trail corridor. After several hours of cutting on a hot and humid day, I was tired and thinking of coming back yet another time. Until I caught a glimpse of the falls – my sign to keep working and finish the trail – which I did, and found most satisfying.

Friends of Baxter State Park is looking for signs too. Signs that tell us when to grow the organization and its capacity; signs indicating where to apply our limited resources to support the Park; signs identifying the next big threat to the wilderness values of the Park. If you think we've missed a sign, please let us know. If we are on the right track, send us a sign about that too. Thanks again for your continued support.

**Looking back...**

by John Neff, Author of  
*Katahdin: An Historic Journey*

**It All Started 250 Years Ago**

It was 250 years ago, in 1764, that the first recorded colonial American (the native peoples were here first, remember) stood in the very shadow of Katahdin. John Chadwick was asked by the governor of Massachusetts to map the Penobscot River from the Atlantic coast into Canada and to locate

a possible land route to link British Canada with colonial New England. Chadwick traveled to the Moosehead region and then into Canada and on to Quebec. He returned to Moosehead's now famed "Northeast Carry" and descended the West Branch of the Penobscot, eventually reaching the ancient native campsite opposite the mouth of Abol Stream.

Naming the mountain we know today as Katahdin "Satinhungemoss Hill" he was moved by "so lofty a pyramid," just as we are today from that very spot. The Chadwick party may have made at least a partial ascent of Katahdin; the record is not clear on the matter. Later the mountain is identified as "Teddon" on one of his maps, a name used by the native peoples at the time.

Quite an historic start to our pilgrimages to this beloved region. Happy 250th!



**Call for photos for the  
2016 BSP Calendar**

**Deadline October 30, 2014**

We're looking for photos for the 2016 Baxter State Park calendar. FBSP members and Park staff donate all photos published in the calendar each year. Each photographer may submit up to 10 digital photos on CD, DVD, or SD card. For detailed entry instructions, please visit [www.friendsofbaxter.org](http://www.friendsofbaxter.org).



## Update from the Park by BSP Director Jensen Bissell

The 2015 summer was fairly typical in most respects. An early spate of helicopter evacuations of injured hikers caused some concern, but the summer turned out to be average in terms of search and rescue incidents. Park revenue reports through August suggest that camping use has been roughly equal to 2013 while day use has been slightly lower than 2013. The lower day use statistic is echoed by other land use managers around the Park such as North Maine Woods.

After a year of planning, a skilled and capable crew from Wyman and Simpson, Inc. began work on installing new bridge abutments for the Kidney Pond Bridge. The new abutments were installed 30 feet downstream from the existing abutments. On July 23, with the use of two cranes, the Kidney Pond Bridge was moved from the failing abutments to the new abutments. This project was completed in the height of the busy summer season without a single complaint from visitors – kudos to BSP Maintenance Supervisor Rod Angotti for his coordination of this project. The new abutments should ensure safe passage to Kidney Pond Campground for the next century. This project is one of many that lie ahead for the Park as we work to replace aging segments of our infrastructure.

Baxter Park Trail Crew members have started work on the relocation of the segment of the Freezeout Trail obliterated by a July 2013 tornado, which affected the Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA) and areas near Trout Brook Farm. The relocation includes approximately two miles of new trail clearing, and circumvents the tornado damage area as well as a section of the Freezeout Trail with extensive bog bridging. Crews hope to clear the trail corridor sufficiently to allow hiking traffic in 2015. If needed, additional trail work to complete the trail treadway preparation will be scheduled for next summer.

Early in September, we bid a fond farewell to BSP Resource Manager Rick Morrill. During his tenure, Rick successfully completed a full cycle of Forest Stewardship Certification including two full field audits. Rick also organized and provided direction to the impressive data that exists and is constantly accumulating to describe the forest structure, ecology and business management of the SFMA. The



The Park is working on a significant relocation of the Freezeout Trail following damage by a tornado in July 2013. The new trail, shown in orange on this map, is approximately 2 miles in length.

– Photo courtesy BSP photo files

clear course that Rick has determined for the SFMA still requires careful management and additional challenges lie ahead. After a thorough search, the Baxter State Park Authority approved the selection of Eben Sypitkowski as BSP Resource Manager. Eben began his tenure with the Park on September 8, jumping right into a field tour by the SFMA Advisory Committee that doubled as a transition event for Rick and Eben.

As Eben takes the reins of the SFMA, he may not have long to get oriented. There is much current buzz in the forest management world about the anticipated return of the spruce budworm (*Choristoneura fumiferana*). Spruce budworm has periodically reached epidemic population levels in Maine and Canada resulting in regional landscape defoliation of balsam fir, white spruce, and to a lesser degree, red spruce. Population outbreaks have historically occurred in Maine on roughly a 60 to 80 year cycle, with lesser mid-cycle population peaks at 30 to 40 years. The last outbreak of the spruce budworm was in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The defoliation decimated the conifer forest at Chimney Pond, and the subsequent recovery of the conifer forest at Chimney Pond over the past 30 years is one reason hikers who haven't been to Chimney Pond in a decade or more typically comment on how much the campground has "grown in."

Expanding spruce budworm populations and defoliation in areas of western Quebec have been precursors of outbreaks in Maine. Defoliation in Quebec is currently underway and this has the full attention of land managers in Maine. Population increases of spruce budworm in Maine sufficient to cause significant defoliation are anticipated within the next two to four years. The Maine Forest Service website has excellent information on spruce budworm at: [http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest\\_health/insects/spruce\\_budworm\\_2014.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/insects/spruce_budworm_2014.htm)

In many ways, the forest structure and landscape in northern Maine are unique to history. Entomologists and land managers are unsure what effects the current forest



Members of the SFMA Advisory Committee, one of four volunteer committees that helps guide Park management, visited the SFMA for their annual forest review on September 11. Rick Morrill, departing BSP Resource Manager, is at center holding the paddle, and Eben Sypitkowski, incoming BSP Resource Manager, is at far left.

– Photo courtesy BSP photo files

structure will exert as budworm populations expand. Planning for an unknown future is the norm for forest managers, and we will proceed with stand structure evaluations, risk, susceptibility, vulnerability and protection effort planning.

## Trip Report: Scientific Forest Management Area Tour

By Dick Klain

Governor Baxter set aside about 30,000 acres of land in the northern portion of the Park to practice scientific forest management, and as a demonstration area for best practices in forestry. The Scientific Forest Management Area (SMFA) is a working timber harvesting area managed by the Park. It serves and has served as an outdoor classroom for generations of foresters from all over the world. Friends of Baxter State Park offered a tour of the SFMA on September 6, 2014, as part of our series of *Walks in the Park* for the summer.



FBSP group near Frost Pond in the SFMA.

— Photo courtesy BSP photo files

With about fifteen people in tow, our leader for the tour was BSP Resource Manager Rick Morrill. Rick's wife Dawn Morgan joined us on this farewell tour for Rick. Rick and Dawn are moving to Vermont to work as forest management consultants with Dawn's father.

The tour began with an examination of a map of the entire SFMA with each management unit delineated. There are units within the SFMA designated as resource protection areas where logging does not occur. Our tour focused on areas being managed for forest products. Harvests on the SFMA contribute revenue to the Park's annual budget and supply wood to area mills. The SFMA has been actively managed since 1981. In 2001, the SFMA received certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) program for ensuring sustainable management.

At our first stop, we admired red spruce and hemlock trees, which have been growing for over 200 years. We learned about specialty markets for red spruce "tonewood." Makers of string instruments, particularly guitars and violins, seek mature red spruce grown under conditions

that yield a wood with fine acoustic characteristics. These luthiers pay a premium for fine red spruce that is considered the "Holy Grail" of tonewoods. At each unit visited, we looked at what was above us, what was at eye level and what new growth was coming in at ground level. We visited inventory plots and Rick explained how select trees were numbered and marked for re-measurement as part of an ongoing inventory system. We learned the simple method devised by Jensen Bissell to monitor the salamander population.

Discussion of wood markets, recreational use of the SFMA and many other topics continued over lunch. It was terrific to have Jensen, Chief Ranger Ben Woodward, Rick, and Dawn (an ecologist) all with us for the day. What an opportunity to learn about this very special area of the Park. When we returned to the SFMA kiosk on the Tote Road just west of Trout Brook crossing, several of us checked out the new Forest Ecology and Management Trail, which begins at the kiosk. This trail



Outgoing BSP Resource Manager Rick Morrill with a replica of the Katahdin USGS benchmark, given to him by Friends on the last day of his employment at the Park.

— Photo courtesy BSP photo files

with 13 learning stations is a great introduction to the forest for visitors of all ages. On behalf of the Friends Board of Directors, Jill Ippoliti presented Rick with a pewter replica of the USGS elevation benchmark for Katahdin as a token of our appreciation for his service to the Park and his willingness and enthusiasm in sharing his knowledge. This was Rick's last day as Resource Manager for BSP.

## Trip Report: Chimney Pond Walk in the Park, August 22-24

By Dick Klain

Six people were able to take part in our Chimney Pond Walk in the Park. Hiking in two groups, we referred to ourselves as the four oldsters and the two youngsters. On the first night in, there were some anxious moments when one of the participants arrived well after dark due to visiting friends outside the park creating a late start. We

had saved her some supper that we quickly reheated, and all was well. We appreciated the accommodations in the bunkhouse. With only four people there the first night we were able to spread out very comfortably.

An hour after sunrise on Saturday the two youngsters showed up. Coming from Cambridge, MA, they explained that they had had a "gig" in Millinocket and were really looking forward to "doing" the mountain. They had a quick breakfast with us then headed for the Dudley Trail to Pamola, the Knife Edge, and Baxter Peak returning down the Saddle.

The oldsters decided to go up the Hamlin Ridge Trail. One member of this group had not hiked this trail to the top since 1965. The higher we hiked, the clearer the day became. By the time we reached Hamlin Peak it was a breathtakingly marvelous day. The winds were light and what clouds there were offered that fine dappled look to the forests so far below. The view of the North Basin, Blueberry Knoll, Knife Edge and far beyond was spectacular. Taking the Saddle Trail down was a bilingual experience as we became mixed among several other groups who were moving at various speeds on this steep mountain slide. There were Canadians, students from the University of Maine and Colby College as well as some local folks from Medway. Everyone was happily tired and pleased with our hike.

*Continued on pg. 7*



The rugged, exposed terrain of Hamlin Ridge offers sweeping views across the North Basin, South Basin, and much of the Katahdin massif. With less than ten percent of the hiker traffic of other Katahdin access trails, it also offers greater potential for solitude.

— Photo © Dick Klain

The youngsters got back much later than the oldsters as the former had stopped to “smell the roses” along the way, enjoying every moment of this pristine day. After a hearty supper, an informal lights out took place long before our normal bedtimes.

Sunday morning found the youngsters up and gone before the oldsters had had their second cup of coffee. “We have to head back to Millinocket to have breakfast with my grandmother.” Then they were out the door and gone. After a leisurely breakfast and lots of conversation we strapped on our packs and reluctantly headed back down the trail to Roaring Brook. Even at this late hour we met 75 people who were headed to Chimney Pond. It was a great day for hiking. We all gathered at the picnic table by the volunteer cabin. Three of our group took off their packs and went to checkout the view from Sandy Stream Pond, the fourth member laid back and napped in the clear air with Roaring Brook nearby doing its thing.

We all met again at Togue Pond for a farewell swim. The water and sun were terrific. It is always great to enjoy Baxter State Park and to meet and make new friends.

## Trip Report: South Branch Pond Walk in the Park, September 5-7

By Dick Klain

We filled the bunkhouse at South Branch Pond on Friday. Car camping at the Park is much easier from a logistics standpoint than backpacking. We even had a visit from FBSP President Charlie Jacobi, who was doing volunteer trail maintenance. An early arrival allowed a long canoe paddle to the upper pond followed by an equally long swim back at the campground.

On Saturday the group divided with most people going on the tour of the SMFA. Three hardy souls decided to brave the threatening weather forecast and hiked up and over South Branch Pond Mountain and Black Cap Mountain. The views from Black Cap showed the rain heading in from the west. We were off the exposed ridges long before the first raindrops fell. When the rain did come it was light. We didn't even bother with the foul weather gear we were packing.

Supper was a stupendous affair with two different spaghetti sauces, salads, homemade breads, and desserts. Ranger Gabe Williamson and his wife, retired nat-

uralist Marcia Williamson, stopped by for a bite of dessert. After cleanup, dominoes appeared and new games ensued with lots of conversations and reminiscences of other days and other hikes.



Early morning meditation on the dock at South Branch Pond. – Photo © Dick Klain

Several sections have been relocated because of erosion from the brook. These sections make the hike even easier and, if possible, more scenic. (Congratulations to the trail crew for a job well done, and to Charlie Jacobi for his fine work as trail steward.) The canoes and kayaks beckoned to others who enjoyed the calm and quiet waters. A loon nearby called several times. What a wonderful sound. Most of us were packed and ready to go by checkout time. Some of the group stayed an additional day to climb Barrell Ridge on Monday.

Many of the people in this group had gotten to know each other previously at a Kidney Pond Walk in the Park. Getting caught up with folks you rarely see was a real treat.

## 2014 Speaker Series in Millinocket

This year, FBSP hosted a speaker series in Millinocket on the topic of wilderness and nature-based tourism. The series included four different events between July and October. The goal of the speaker series was to explore wilderness and nature-based tourism from a variety of angles, including art, ecology, business, and outdoor recreation.

The series began on July 24 with a talk by Scot Miller, author of *Thoreau, The Maine Woods: A Photographic Journey through an American Wilderness*. An award-winning photographer and author, Scot hails from Dallas, Texas. He is a frequent visitor to the Katahdin region. FBSP also hosted talks in Bangor and Portland during Scot's time in Maine. Over 100 people attended the three events.

On August 28, legendary Maine Guide Alexandra Conover Bennett, entrepreneur

Matt Polstein, and recreation expert Steve Spencer were part of a panel discussion on *The Business of Nature-Based Tourism*. This event was well attended, and featured lively and interesting discussion by Millinocket town officials, panelists, local business leaders, and interested citizens. According to local FBSP members, people are still talking about it in town.

Fisheries biologist Forrest Bonney spoke on September 11 about Maine's native brook trout and their wilderness habitat. There were several die-hard fishermen



Forrest Bonney, retired fisheries biologist and expert on Maine brook trout, speaks at Baxter State Park Headquarters on the evening of September 11 during the 2014 Speaker Series on Wilderness and Nature-based Tourism.

– Photo © Aaron Megquier

in attendance who kept Forrest on his toes with questions and discussion for nearly an hour after his talk. On October 5, Bill Murphy of County Wicklow, Ireland, gave a talk entitled *Wild Nephin: Stories from Ireland's First Wilderness*. Murphy spoke about the Nephin wilderness area in Ireland, some of the projected economic benefits of the Nephin project, and parallels with the Katahdin region.

Feedback from attendees and the Millinocket community was positive, and FBSP is exploring the possibility of continuing this speaker series in future years. The series was funded by an Every Day Event Grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation, with generous support from Toyota. Many thanks to those who attended these four events and made them a success!

## Baxter State Park Trivia

– puzzle Master Al Howlett

The name “South Branch Pond” refers to the south branch of what?

- a) Wassataquoik Stream
- b) Penobscot River
- c) Traveler Stream
- d) Trout Brook

Send Trivia answers to [admin@friendsofbaxter.org](mailto:admin@friendsofbaxter.org)



**Friends of Baxter State Park**

**P.O. Box 609**

**Union, ME 04862-0609**

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*Thank you!*

## Become a Forever Friend!

Friends of Baxter State Park now offers a sustaining membership program called **Forever Friends**. By setting up an automatic, recurring donation, you can save paper, spread your membership gift throughout the year, and cut down on costs for FBSP. If you would like to join, simply select your monthly donation amount, then securely enter your payment information online. You only have to do this once, and then your membership in Friends – and your support of Baxter State Park – will always be current. That means no more renewal notices in the mail, and you'll receive a special membership card with no expiration date.

We think being a Forever Friend is the best way to help keep Baxter State Park Forever Wild!

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Please contact Aaron Megquier at [director@friendsofbaxter.org](mailto:director@friendsofbaxter.org) or (207) 975-3787 with any questions.