



FOREVER WILD



Newsletter of Friends of Baxter State Park

Summer 2016

Vol. 15 No. 3

Executive Director's Column

by Aaron Megquier

Many of us think of Baxter State Park as wilderness, but that is not entirely true. The majority of the Park's 209,644 acres are managed as wilderness according to Governor Baxter's "forever wild" principles. But Governor Baxter also set aside 30,000 acres in the northwestern corner of the Park for the practice of exemplary forest management. In this portion of Baxter State Park, known as the Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA), a significant amount of timber harvesting takes place alongside recreational use and protection of ecological values. The SFMA includes popular north end recreational locations such as the Freezeout Trail, Webster Stream, and Frost Pond.

Forestry operations in the SFMA are under the capable oversight of Eben Sypitkowski, Baxter State Park's Resource Manager. The SFMA received certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in 2001 and has maintained that prestigious certification ever since. The SFMA has its own advisory group, made up primarily of forestry professionals from Maine and currently chaired by Alison Dibble. During recent years, forest products revenues from the SFMA have provided about 5 – 6 percent of the Park's annual operating budget.

Like other forestry operations in Maine, the SFMA is grappling with rapid changes in the forest products industry. For the first time in over a century, there is no paper or pulp manufacturing in the entire Penobscot River watershed. The mills in Lincoln, Millinocket, East Millinocket, and Bucksport are closed. It is very expensive – often prohibitively expensive – for the Park to transport wood to the Maine mills that are still open. For all of these reasons, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Baxter State Park to profitably market forest products from the SFMA.

At its meeting on May 20, 2016, the Baxter

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Botanist Glen Mittelhauser and Baxter State Park Naturalist Jean Hoekwater hold a copy of *The Plants of Baxter State Park* field guide published this month by the University of Maine Press.

– Photo © John Gordon

Plants of Baxter State Park Field Guide Released

by Aaron Megquier

On August 23, the University of Maine Press will publish *The Plants of Baxter State Park* field guide in association with the Maine Natural History Observatory, Friends of Baxter State Park, and Baxter State Park. Four years in the making, this guide represents an incredible conservation tool for Baxter State Park, and a new way for visitors and staff to understand the Park's biodiversity and wilderness landscapes.

At 6 inches by 9 inches in size, the field guide will fit easily in a backpack. It includes all 857 species found in Baxter State Park, with a complete description of each species and over 2,000 color photographs. The guide also includes excellent flower and leaf keys developed by Glen Mittelhauser. These keys help to narrow down the choices quickly when you are confronted with an unknown species. The guide is split into four primary sections: 1.) wildflowers and low shrubs; 2.) trees and tall shrubs; 3.) ferns and other spore producing plants; and 4.) grasses, sedges, and rushes. Within those four sections, species are grouped alphabetically by family. It also includes information on the abundance of each species in the Park, and useful notes on conservation status and similar species.

The field guide will be available for purchase at bookstores and many other locations around Maine. If you don't see the guide at your local bookstore, please ask

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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

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State Park Authority revised its Wood Sales Policy to adjust to these changing economic conditions. The policy still includes a strong preference for local wood markets, but gives the Park more flexibility to sell forest products elsewhere if markets do not exist in Maine, or if significantly better prices are available. This should be helpful as the Park adapts to changing market conditions over time.

Friends is exploring new ways to highlight the outstanding forestry taking place in the SFMA. We think this area has tremendous educational potential, and we would like to bring the good work being done there to a broader audience. Please stay tuned for more on this project over the next few years.

Answer: Trivia Question in Spring Newsletter

In our spring newsletter, we posed this question: "Percival Baxter's first gift of land to the State of Maine included much of Katahdin itself. When he made this gift, he transferred it _____?" The answer was B, as a 3/8 interest in the property.



Membership Matters

By Sarah Holland, Administrative Manager

Studying a spider web intricately formed between a blue spruce tree and my car I pondered its complexity, strength, the breath of its span, and how it is connecting these otherwise disparate objects – my car and a spruce tree, weaving it all together in a fine fabric. I wonder about what connections we make in our lives – to family, to community, to nature. With the internet we have digital connectivity which allows us to expand our networks and accomplish great tasks. But what about the more meaningful deep connections? How are those fostered and maintained?

Research indicates that spending time connecting to wilderness benefits one's mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health. Similarly, studies show that connecting with other people strengthens our overall state of wellness, longevity, and happiness. Whether it's spending time with family, sharing a passion with friends, participating in an event or volunteering, these experiences form strong bonds that can last for years and span great divides. Being a member of FBSP not only connects us with a group of like-minded people from all walks of life in diverse locations, but it also helps us connect more deeply to the wilderness that we care about. So it's a "two-fer" as my nephew would say. The more our members participate in FBSP activities, and the more members we have, the stronger that web will become. The stronger that web becomes the stronger the bond to Baxter State Park and the mission to protect its wilderness character. If you are a member, thank you for being part of our web of Friends! We welcome others who would like to connect with us to continue weaving this fine tapestry.



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The *Plants of Baxter State Park* field guide will help Park visitors and staff identify common species (such as green ash, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, left photo) as well as less common species that are not typically included in field guides (such as podgrass, *Scheuchzeria palustris*, right photo). All 857 vascular plant species known to occur in the Park are included in the field guide. – Photos © Aaron Megquier

them to stock it! Copies may also be purchased online through the University of Maine Press, the Maine Natural History Observatory, or on our website at www.friendsofbaxter.org. All royalties from sale of the field guide will support Friends of Baxter State Park.

Friends is hosting book release parties in August at three different locations around Maine. All are welcome at these events, and we especially encourage volunteers and donors who supported the project to attend. You can buy a copy of the field guide, have it autographed by lead author Glen Mittelhauser, and meet one or more of the other authors. Light refreshments will be provided at all events.

Here are details for the celebrations:

Orono:

Tuesday, August 23 @ 7:00pm, University Club at UMaine's Fogler Library, 5729 Library Circle, Orono, ME

Brunswick:

Wednesday, August 24 @ 7:00pm, Gulf of Maine Books, 134 Maine St, Brunswick

Millinocket:

Tuesday, August 30 @ 7:00pm, Millinocket Memorial Library, 5 Maine Ave, Millinocket

Friends would like to thank Glen Mittelhauser for his exceptional leadership on this project, both as lead author for the field guide and as lead scientist for the four-year research effort. We also deeply appreciate the leadership and expertise provided by Alison

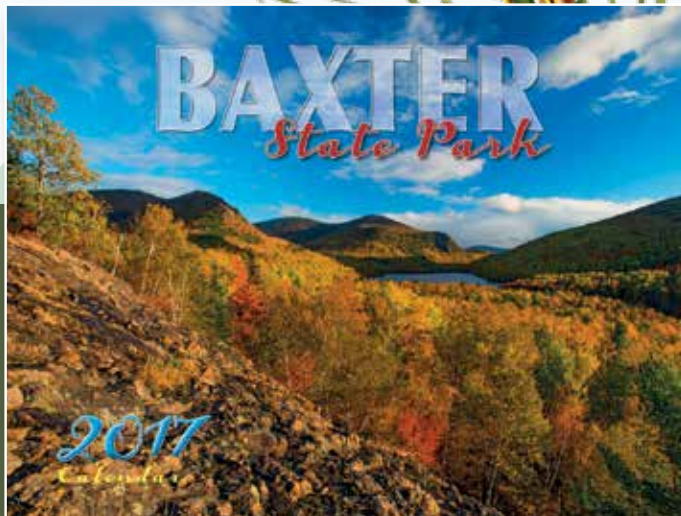
Dibble of Stewards LLC, Don Cameron of the Maine Natural Areas Program, and the many other professional botanists who assisted with the project. Friends would also like to thank the 66 volunteers who devoted time and expertise to the project, the 113 donors who contributed to our crowdfunding campaign for the field guide, more than a dozen foundations that provided generous grant support, and the countless other individuals and organizations who helped in ways both large and small.



2017 Baxter State Park Calendars have arrived!

Friends has 2017 Baxter State Park calendars for sale. The price is \$13, with sales tax and shipping included. All proceeds benefit Friends of Baxter State Park. We also have a limited number of 2016 calendars still available. These are on sale for \$8, with tax and shipping included. You can order online at www.friendsofbaxter.org or give us a call.

– Calendar cover photo © Billy Fay



Beyond Katahdin

For too many people climbing Mount Katahdin is the end of their experience in Baxter State Park. From the summit they gaze to the east, west, and south to take in the views on those days of exceptional clarity. Except for gazing down at Chimney Pond they rarely look to the north. As a reformed KPOOMer (Keep People Out Of Maine) I take pride in that area north of Katahdin and want people to get to know it better. I love the ride into South Branch Pond Campground through the northern entrance having passed through the village of Shin Pond (last ice cream before entering the Park) and the town of Patten. Starting with those great views out across Grand Lake Matagamon you know that you are in for a special treat. Last time out

we climbed Horse Mountain affording great views of the lake and areas even farther north. After passing Trout Brook Campground you hang a left off the Park perimeter road and start climbing the rough dirt road into South Branch. You pass several trails that lead further into this area. Soon you start descending more gradually – and then, you are there.

If Percival Baxter hadn't purchased this area and saved it for us to enjoy, I am sure that this site would now be owned by someone who could afford a mansion and manicured lawns down to the water's edge. There are too few views like this that remain within the public domain. I liken it to the view at Acadia National Park from the Jordan Pond House or maybe the view of Mt. Blue from the state park of the same name. This view from South Branch Pond has been featured several times in our calendar and I never get tired of looking closely at those photos. From this campground there are several trails for every level of interest. Canoeing brings the opportunity for more exploration and fishing. For the really adventurous sort on the hottest days, canoe to the southern pond, climb the rocks, and carefully jump into the always chilly water. At night you can be serenaded by the loons and during the day you can watch the antics of the resident merlins as they teach their youngsters how to hunt.

A day's hike south of here brings you to Russell Pond. This small campground is tucked in the middle-of-no-where accessible only by foot, snowshoe, or ski depending on the season. This trip in the winter



South Branch Pond is the usual jumping off point for the Traveler Loop – a rugged, 10-mile traverse with several miles above treeline. Even though the maximum elevation is only 3,541 feet, many hikers find the Traveler Loop to be just as difficult as climbing Katahdin. Center Ridge, shown in this photo, offers a scenic ridgeline walk near the beginning of the loop when hiking in a counterclockwise direction.

– Photo © Aaron Megquier

on skis can really bring a sense of the wilderness that is Baxter State Park. Russell Pond is almost indescribable from many perspectives. You are visitors here more than elsewhere in the Park. The moose viewing is great. The silence is even greater. Its about the only place I know where you can sit at the pond's edge and hear the water streaming from a moose who has just raised its head from feeding on the bottom. Russell Pond is where time slows to the rhythms of the rain drops and the rustling of air in the pines.

From both Russell and South Branch ponds there are numerous trail heads leading to wonderful experiences. All require preparation and good gear. Some of these trails will require overnight stays. Some may be only a couple of hours. There is no cellphone reception in these areas and help in a emergency must come from yourself or your party. Always be safe. Let the ranger know your intentions and general timetable. Carry a map of the area, a compass, a whistle, plenty of water, warm clothes and a hat even at the height of summer, and rain gear. Snacks are always good to bring along. If there is an unplanned weather change, don't be afraid to turn back. For many hikes, getting to the top is only getting halfway home.

Friends is hosting a hike up North Traveler from South Branch Pond in October. This will be a long hike during a short day, but with good weather the fall foliage will be terrific. Here is your opportunity to see some of the north end of Baxter State Park.



Update from Baxter State Park

By Jensen Bissell

All signs have pointed to a very busy summer in Baxter State Park. The reservation office was crazy busy with reservations this spring as we worked out the bugs of our renovated reservation software. We have some additional items to work on with our reservation system this winter, but Reservation Supervisor Nancy Guay and her team have done a great job rolling this system out to customers.

The Abol Trail opened to hikers on July 1. The trail was closed in 2014 after significant soil, rock and boulder movement on the Abol Slide made the route very hazardous for hiking. During 2014, a new location was finalized to the west of the slide and construction work began late in 2014 and extended through 2015. Work on the 1 mile relocated section of this 3.4 mile trail will continue throughout the summer and likely next year as well, but the trail is now suitable for hikers. Both Park staff and hikers are happy to have this third Katahdin trailhead open once again.



An interesting rock feature along the new section of the Abol Trail.
– Image courtesy of Baxter State Park

As we complete the relocation work on the Abol Trail, we are turning our attention to a more recent spring time landslide across the Dudley Trail. This trail, originally located by LeRoy Dudley in 1922-23, provides the most direct access to Chimney Pond from Pamola Peak. A rock slide this spring removed a section of the trail near where the trail gains the ridge proper after ascending from Chimney Pond Campground. We are currently assessing options for either the repair of the trail in place or re-routing the trail to a more stable location. We hope to have this work completed soon and have plans in place to get to work on restoring this important trail and the access it provides to Katahdin hikers.

We are pleased to have on board our new Trail Specialists, Theresa Therriault and Alex Bradley. Working as a team, these two positions are managing the Park's trail work contracts with the Maine Conservation Corps, as well as conducting trail inventory work, scoping out relocation and other trail project work and organizing volunteer projects on Park trails. There's a good chance you will see them on the trail, so please say hello!



Theresa Therriault and Alex Bradley, BSP's new Trail Specialists.
– Image courtesy of Baxter State Park

Early this summer, we completed work on a significant contract to provide solar power to the Togue Pond Gatehouse. This work is the first step in a multi-year effort to improve the registration process at the gate and to link the gate directly with the Park's reservation



New solar panels provide power to the Togue Pond gatehouse.
– Image courtesy of Baxter State Park

system. With the establishment of a power supply sufficient to power the satellite dish, computers and other devices, we can now work on the next steps in a complex training and software/hardware implementation plan. The first change noticeable to visitors will be the ability of the gate to accept credit and debit card pay-

ments at the gate. This change may take place later before the end of this year.

The AT Northbound Hiker Permit Card system is now well underway. Staff at Katahdin Stream Campground are working out the kinks in the system for distributing these cards to persons hiking north on the AT and planning a Katahdin hike as part of their AT experience. We expect to refine the system through our experience during the 2016 season. The Baxter State Park Task Force, composed of most of the prominent players in managing the AT in the Katahdin region, has been working hard to successfully address issues involving AT hiker behavior. The Baxter State Park Authority continues to work with AT and NPS administrators to address the long-term concerns of increasing numbers of AT hikers entering the Park each season.



A happy AT thru-hiker, who goes by the trail name of Bookworm, with his BSP permit card in hand.
– Image courtesy of Baxter State Park

Due to structural and safety concerns, the pedestrian bridge linking the Katahdin Stream Campground Ranger office with the Katahdin Stream day use and primary campground area was removed early this spring. The BSP Maintenance crews, led by Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Stephen Bouchard utilized two beams from a former railroad car to provide the base for a new bridge. The work the maintenance crew, assisted by Park Rangers, in fabricating and then moving the bridge beams into place was thoughtful, and very well executed in a safe and effective manner. These folks deserve great credit for long hours of work and a clever, effective plan to replace this important structure. The new bridge will be in place for many decades and will provide safe and convenient passage for staff, campers and hikers over this historic stream in Baxter Park.



BSP staff installing a new footbridge at Katahdin Stream Campground.
– Image courtesy of Baxter State Park

As we move into the middle of summer, we are preparing for our next significant road construction project. We will be replacing two large culverts on the Park Tote Road between the Marston Trailhead and Slide Dam Picnic Area. Therefore, the Park Tote Road will be closed to through traffic at the construction site from Monday to Thursday one or two times between the period of July 15 and October 1. The timing of the closures is related to many factors, including weather, and cannot be determined ahead of time. We will be working with the contractor to determine the specific dates of the work, and the road closures, with as much lead time as possible. In 2017, we are now planning for the replacement of the Wadleigh Brook Culvert. Current plans are to install a short bridge at this site.



New ranger cabins at Kidney Pond are nearing completion.
– Image courtesy of Baxter State Park

We are also busy finishing up two small cabins that will provide the future lodging for campground ranger staff at Kidney Pond Campground. We hope to finish the interior work and landscaping on these camps so they can be occupied by Park staff near the end of this season or beginning in 2017.

Looking back...

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

Surviving the Sound and Fury

This year is the 160th anniversary of botanist Rev. Joseph Blake's exploration of the Katahdin alpine region and his ascent to the summit in 1856. His account of that trip, written in 1861 as the shadow of civil war began to overtake our nation, was not published until 1916 when the winds of war were enveloping Europe. His words speak eloquently to us today as we find ourselves surrounded by our own winds of violence and turbulence, which we endeavor to face and overcome.

"We passed a fine beautiful day on the mountain, our country's birthday. Our prayer was that God would bless our land, healing all dissensions and bringing good out of evil, that our Union might last and our country prosper.... But Katahdin, though ... floods have dashed upon it and some mighty force has splintered and shattered its granite sides, still stands, young, grand, sublime, and so our country survives the deluge of fire and blood that has swept over it." [From "A Second Excursion to Mount Katahdin," *The Maine Naturalist*, June, 1916, 78.]

A stirring message from the past!



Meghan and Ned tie the knot, August 29, 2015.

– Photo © Chelsea Cyr

Finding Love in Baxter State Park

In the summer of 2010, Ned and Meghan met while working on a trail crew under Ranger Paul Sannicandro's leadership. Something magic happened that summer. Was it the star filled evening skies, the balsam breezes, or floating on crystalline pond waters? Was it spending time in the company of a kindred spirit who enjoys the soulful hard work of trail maintenance in the wilderness? Whatever it was, they fell in love... with Baxter State Park – oh, and each other!

After four years they decided to elope and thought what better place to go than where it all began – Baxter State Park. The intimate gathering included Diana Campbell (Millinocket town clerk) who performed the ceremony, Ranger Paul Sannicandro who read a Robert Frost poem during the ceremony, and Chelsea Cyr who took all the photos. They spent their first of five nights in the Park at Camp OJI (aka the Bridal Suite). Now, a year later, they want to celebrate their first anniversary by sharing the wonders of the Park and the region with their family and friends. They plan to stay at one of the large group sites and occupy some of the local hotels. If you see this happy couple in the Park or walking on the streets of Millinocket, wish them a Happy Anniversary!

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Volunteer Opportunities in Baxter State Park

Volunteering is a great way to support the Park, meet new friends, and enjoy working in a spectacular setting! Baxter State Park staff are coordinating all volunteer programs this year. Georgia Manzo is the contact person for volunteers, and can be reached at (207) 723-9500 or georgia.manzo@baxterstatepark.org. All prospective volunteers need to complete the online BSP volunteer application form for 2016, available at www.baxterstateparkauthority.com/volunteer.

Here are a few of the opportunities planned so far:

August 12 – 14: Staining, carpentry, and firewood at Togue Pond Camps. 2 days, 6 – 8 volunteers needed.

August 12 – 14: Wheelbarrow work with gravel and stone at Togue Pond Pole Barn. 2 days, 6 – 8 volunteers needed.

July – September (flexible): Paint removal, paint floors, stain camps at North Branch Camps. 2 volunteers needed.

July – September (flexible): Stain lean-tos and picnic tables at Frost Pond, Hudson Pond, and Webster. 1 – 4 days, 2 – 4 volunteers still needed.

July – September (flexible): Stain outhouse at Webster Outlet. 1 day, 1 volunteer still needed.

July – September (flexible): Scrape and paint metal gates in SFMA. 1 – 4 days, 1 volunteer still needed.

July – September (flexible): Stain kiosks in SFMA. 2 days, 1 volunteer still needed.

September (flexible): Clean up old metal/glass dump areas not used since early 1960s near Camp Phoenix and Togue Pond Camps. 6 – 10 volunteers needed.



Volunteers staining cabin #7 at Kidney Pond.

– Photos © Alison Violette



Highlights of the 2016 Annual Meeting

By Sarah Holland



Sean Birkel, Maine State Climatologist, wraps up an excellent presentation on climate change in Maine and its potential impacts on Baxter State Park.

– Photo © Sarah Holland

On April 2, Friends held its Annual Meeting on a lovely spring day at Viles Arboretum in Augusta. This event is always a celebration of good work, an inspiration for work yet to be done, and a chance to gather with fellow members to share stories and enthusiasm about the Park. This year was no exception. After morning coffee and muffins, President Dick Klain brought the meeting to order with a brief synopsis of the year's many accomplishments, membership growth, and financial status. He summarized that Friends is in very good shape as an organization. This was followed by more detailed reports from Friends committees. These included the success of the eighth Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program, an update on the *Plants of Baxter State Park* field guide, Walks in the Park, advocacy efforts related to AT hikers, and the proposed National Monument on lands east of Baxter State Park.

Dick Klain then introduced Park Director Jensen Bissell for his annual "State of the Park" address. As usual, this was a highlight of the gathering and there were many questions for Jensen. After a coffee break, Sean Birkel, the Maine State Climatologist, gave an overview of climate change in Maine and the possible effects on Baxter State Park. Sean covered a range of topics, including extreme weather events, flooding, added moisture content in the soil, longer and warmer summers, loss of habitat, loss of species, invasive species, and disease vectors. An audience member asked about BSP management practices that would help alleviate the worst of these effects. Jensen Bissell answered that improvements in infrastructure, bridges, culverts, and erosion control measures will help, and

that these measures are already underway. Monitoring ecosystem health will also be very important to identify potential threats early and implement strategies to contain or eliminate those conditions.

After this serious topic, Executive Director Aaron Megquier lightened the mood with a presentation of images from the 2017 BSP Calendar. This part of the meeting was accompanied by the sound of "ooohs and aaahs" in reaction to an amazing variety of colorful sunsets, summit views, wildlife, flora, pond reflections, autumn foliage, and snow-capped peaks. These images remind us of the vastness, beauty, and fragility of Baxter State Park and why it is so important to protect it.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Dick Klain presented Park Director Jensen Bissell with the "President's Award for Damn Good Work," and Sean Birkel was presented with a Katahdin USGS Benchmark replica in gratitude for his presentation. After the meeting adjourned, the hungry crowd enjoyed a lunch of sandwiches, side dishes, desserts, and beverages. In the afternoon Aaron Megquier led a hike to the Annie Sturgis Wildflower Sanctuary in Vassalboro. All in all it was a lovely day. Thank you to all who participated and attended, and we hope to see you next year.



Great food is one of the hallmarks of our annual meeting. These sandwiches, catered by Small Town Bakery in Wayne, disappeared soon after this photo was taken.

– Photo © Sarah Holland



Forrest Bonney, fisheries biologist and brook trout expert, speaking during the 2014 speaker series on wilderness and nature-based tourism.

– Photo © Aaron Megquier

Speaker Series on Wilderness & Nature-based Tourism

FBSP is proud to present its second speaker series on Wilderness and Nature-Based Tourism this summer. The series kicked off on August 11 with a panel discussion on AT and Hiking-related Tourism, featuring panelists Claire Polfus of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Jaime Renaud of the AT Cafe and Lodge in Millinocket, and Jarrod Hester of Shaw's in Monson. All events will be held at 7:00 p.m. at Baxter State Park headquarters in Millinocket.

- Sept 1: Moose Biology and Update on Maine's Population**
Lee Kantar, MDIFW
Moose Biologist
- Sept 8: Moose Tourism - Photographing the Giants of the North**
Mark Picard, Photographer and Owner of Moose Prints Gallery
- Additional events TBA**

Baxter State Park Trivia

In 2000, legislators in Augusta decided that the mountain just outside the Park west of Doubletop would no longer be referred to as Squaw's Bosom. The new name is:

- a. Little Bosom
- b. Big Bosom
- c. Moose Bosom
- d. Moose Mountain

Send Trivia answers to:
admin@friendsofbaxter.org





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Thank you!

2016 Walks in the Park

FBSP is offering an expanded series of overnight trips, day hikes, and other adventures this summer. Advance sign-up is required, and space is limited. For programs marked as full, we would be happy to add your name to the waiting list. Please RSVP to Sarah Holland at admin@friendsofbaxter.org.

Kidney Pond Weekend: September 8 – 10 ** TRIP IS FULL**

Kidney Pond makes a wonderful base camp for hiking on the western side of the Park, paddling the many ponds in the area, or relaxing in the library with friends. Join our day hike of the Owl on Friday if you wish. Cost: \$75 per person for three nights. Capacity: 8 Hosts: Marion Gray, Andy Walsh.

Day Hike of the Owl: September 9

The Owl is a challenging day hike with spectacular views of Witherle Ravine and Katahdin. We'll make the 6.6-mile round trip and enjoy lunch on the summit if conditions permit. Capacity: 11 Host: Aaron Megquier

North Traveler Day Hike: October 15

North Traveler offers fascinating geology and sweeping views over the northern portion of Baxter State Park and the East Branch of the Penobscot. We will depart from South Branch Pond Campground. Please note the date change – this hike is now scheduled for Saturday, October 15 to better accommodate those who are signed up. Capacity: 11

South Branch Pond Weekend: October 14 – 16

Enjoy two nights at South Branch Pond, with wonderful opportunities for hiking, canoeing, fishing, and relaxing. Join our day hike of North Traveler on Friday if you wish. Cost: \$22 per person. Host: Ellen Klain