



FOREVER WILD



Newsletter of Friends of Baxter State Park Fall 2018 Vol. 17 No. 4

Executive Director's Column

by Aaron Megquier

For more than a decade, the Katahdin Region has been struggling with its own version of the Great Depression. A series of paper mill closures – and the resulting economic freefall – have affected every part of life in the region, from schools to housing, and from healthcare to municipal services. Although these changes are happening outside the Park boundary, they have an unmistakable impact on what happens inside the Park. Communities in the region provide a wide range of goods, services, and infrastructure to Baxter State Park, as well as housing and livable communities for Park staff. It is very difficult for Baxter State Park to thrive when the communities around it are suffering.

In recognition of this, Friends has been working for many years to support efforts to revitalize the region. Over the past three years, we have become involved in the Katahdin Collaborative, which is striving to build a brighter future for the region. Over a year ago, we signed an open letter to the Katahdin Region with our partners from the Collaborative. The following is an excerpt from that letter:

The Katahdin Collaborative, founded in 2015 as an informal roundtable of Katahdin area organizations, clubs, municipalities, businesses, and individuals, has launched the Katahdin Gazetteer: A Roadmap to the Future. We, the undersigned, ask you to join us in the process of capturing the values, hopes and dreams for the future of our great region. The 12-month Katahdin Gazetteer process will result in an action plan to help all of us prepare for a healthy, prosperous future. The process is community-based and community-led. Be a part of the future of the region – join us at one of the many upcoming community events so we know what is important to you!

In late September, this process culminated in a five-day public visioning workshop. Citizens from around the region participated in a range of sessions, focused on topics like 'Local Business and Entrepre-

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Members of the Millinocket-based crew of the 2018 Baxter Youth Conservation Corps with stepping stones they installed on the Blueberry Ledges Trail.
– Photo © Aaron Megquier

A Wonderful Second Season for the Baxter Youth Conservation Corps

by Aaron Megquier

Our Baxter Youth Conservation Corps recently completed an outstanding second season of trail work in Baxter State Park. This program offers summer employment for high school students from the Katahdin region, as well as mentoring opportunities and job skills training. After launching the program in 2017 with a crew of 10 youth and 2 leaders, we successfully doubled the size of the program in 2018. We offered 20 full-time positions for local youth, and also expanded geographically by adding a northern crew based in Patten. Our youth participants this summer came from the communities of Millinocket, East Millinocket, Medway, Lincoln, Patten, Sherman, Mount Chase, Benedicta, and Oakfield.

Our crews got a lot of work done during a month in the Park, including installing 100 stepping stones and seven bog bridges, blazing 6.2 miles of trail, and completing more than 14 miles of trail corridor work. Several things made this possible: great leadership from our adult crew leaders, outstanding support from Baxter State Park trails staff, and of course, hard work on the part of the youth participants.

Our Patten crew also built an entirely new 1.5-mile trail on land owned by BSP in the town of Mount Chase. Park staff flagged the route, and then the Maine Conser-

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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

neural Needs' and 'Energy and Natural Resources'. Friends participated extensively in this process, especially in parts of the conversation that directly related to Baxter State Park. A draft Vision and Action plan from the workshop is scheduled to be released shortly.

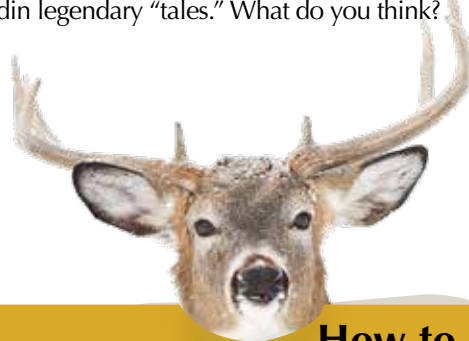
Many of the ideas shared during the visioning workshop are already starting to take root in the region. There is a definite sense of positive momentum, thanks to the hard work and good ideas of so many people. We will continue doing everything we can to support and sustain it.

Looking back...

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

Katahdin's Great Basin Meteor?

Can it be true? Who knows for sure? You, dear reader, may be the judge. In one of Col. A. J. Farrar's famous guidebooks covering Moosehead Lake and the Maine Woods published in the 1880s, he tells of the remarkable experience of a group camping in the basin in 1885. During a raging storm one night, they were awakened by a thunderous avalanche of rocks descending off the basin headwall. That was surely enough unnerve them, but there is more to the story of their visit to the mountain's glacial cirque. Another night, as they were watching an extraordinary display of shooting stars filling the dark sky above them, a great fiery ball suddenly descended into the basin in a blaze of fire and light. The campers fled for their lives to a remote corner of the basin, feeling an intense heat and a frightening crackling noise. We do not know where their refuge was the rest of that night, but in the morning they managed to find the courage to seek out the immense meteor boulder. It was still warm on the basin floor. It is said that each of them brought a fragment home. One of many Katahdin legendary "tales." What do you think?



Membership Matters

by Sarah Holland, Administrative Manager

Member Profile of John Neff

As the author of two books on the subject, John Neff is one of the most informed historians on all matters Baxter State Park. In *Katahdin: An Historic Journey*¹ he recounts the experiences of Native Americans, early colonial explorers, loggers, railway workers, sporting camp hunters, as well as the writings of Thoreau, the influence of politics, and all manner of misadventures. In *Katahdin & Baxter State Park*², part of the *Images of America* series, John and his co-author Howard Whitcomb make this history come to life with images and tales of people that pop off the page and transport the viewer to another time. At numerous presentations he has entertained audiences with tales of the region's past.



John Neff

However, beyond sharing his knowledge of the history of the Park, John has been busy forging his own indelible marks on the history of this place. John first climbed Katahdin in 1953 after moving to Portland. "It was magic and I was smitten right away". When he moved to Orono in 1968 he became a frequent visitor. In the 1970s he started volunteering and became a trail overseer. He maintained and monitored the final miles of the Appalachian Trail headed into the Park. In 1980 the maintenance of that section of the trail was handed over to the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. John became the President of that group, inspiring many volunteers to participate over the years. During that time he was the maintainer of the Hunt Trail from Katahdin Stream Campground to the summit and later switched to become maintainer of the trail south of that campground.

As a pastor he shared his belief in the profound transformative and healing power of wilderness and the call to shepherd its preservation. "*Katahdin is considered to be one of the sacred mountains of the world and I have discovered first hand why that is so true. When one is in the shadow of Katahdin there is spiritual presence that surrounds*

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Members of the 2018 Patten-based crew of the Baxter Youth Conservation Corps on their way to work in the Fowler Ponds area. – Photo © Aaron Megquier

Baxter Youth Conservation Corps – Continued from pg.1
 vation Corps went through and rough-cut the trail with chainsaws. Then our crew got started. Over the course of six days, they removed all of the cut stumps from the treadway, cut brush from a 4-ft by 8-ft trail corridor, created the treadway itself, and painted blazes around the 1.5-mile loop. This trail is now open to the public, and is located off the Owlsboro Road in Mount Chase. Several of our youth participants have already taken their friends and families back to check out the trail that they built.

By the end of the season, our crews had donated 1,805 hours of service to the Park, and we had invested over \$25,000 in payroll in the communities of the Katahdin Region.

We see a significant opportunity to expand the program further. We received 24 applications for 10 spots in 2017, and 42 applications for 20 spots in 2018. This indicates that there is unmet need, which we are eager to meet. We are planning additional program expansion for summer 2019 – please stay tuned for details!

John Neff – Continued from pg.2

one. The native peoples knew and experienced this, and it remains a basic part of their life. There is something felt at Katahdin that moves one beyond the human sphere where we normally live. We are lifted to another level of inner life. The natives felt the presence of the Great Spirit in that place and made pilgrimages to the mountain – and still do. So many I have met along the way speak of their travels to Katahdin in the same way. It is not just a clergy experience – people of all walks of life witness to this spirit presence.”

In the late 1990s he and others began to organize a group to defend against perceived threats to the wilderness values of the Park. That led to the founding of Friends of Baxter State Park in 2000. From 2000 to 2003 John guided Friends through our early years and helped define a mission with a timeless call to duty: “ to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of Baxter State Park in the spirit of its founder, Governor Percival Baxter.” After his term as President ended in 2003, he served on the Board of Directors until 2006. During that time Friends helped create the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund and supported efforts to acquire 4,000 acres surrounding Katahdin Lake. That dream was realized in 2006 and completed Percival Baxter’s vision for the Park – a truly historic achievement. John remains an Honorary Director, a voice of wisdom, and a reservoir of historic knowledge for our organization.

John now lives in Wells, Maine with his wife Helen. At age 80 he was still able to climb Katahdin. Now at age 88 he still joins the M.A.T.C. crew each spring to help get the Appalachian Trail ready for the season. He hopes to camp again at Chimney Pond in the near future. Until recently he still camped and climbed regularly at South Branch Pond, which is one of his favorite spots. As a pastor, author, historian, volunteer, trail steward, and leader he continues to leave an impression on the Park as well as on those who are inspired by his enthusiasm and passion for wilderness. If you see John, give him a big tip of the hat and a hearty thank you for everything he has done and is still doing for the Park!

Footnotes for Membership Matters Column

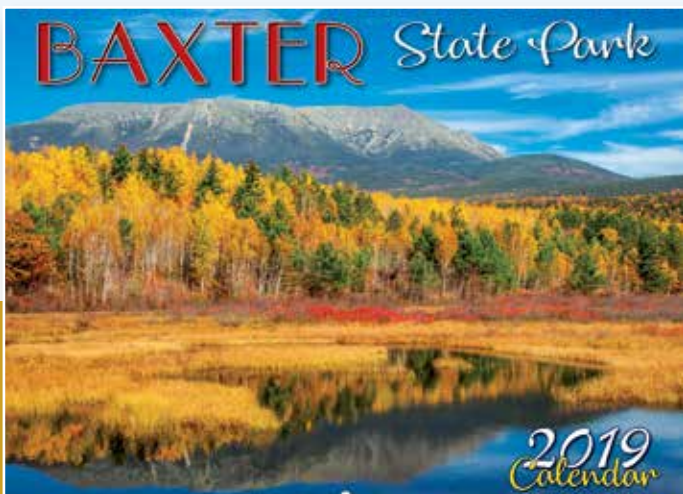
1. *Katahdin: An Historic Journey*, published by Appalachian Mountain Books, 2006
2. *Baxter State Park & Katahdin – Images of America Series*, published by Arcadia Publishing Company 2012

Answer: Trivia Question in Summer Newsletter

In our summer newsletter, we asked: “How high did the water in Chimney Pond rise during a flood in early spring 2018?” Answer: No one was there to see it happen, so we’re not sure. The Ranger Station is about 20 feet above pond level, and it was flooded with about 16 inches of water. When staff arrived in May, they found water lines on the walls, and desk drawers full of water. Park staff believe that an inlet stream to Chimney Pond was blocked by an ice dam, causing localized flooding, but it’s possible that the entire pond rose to that level.

Correction: Trivia Answer for Spring Newsletter

In our Spring newsletter, our trivia question asked for a list of all Directors or Superintendents of Baxter State Park. The answer we published in our Summer newsletter was woefully incomplete. We omitted Harold Dyer (1940-1950), Robert Dyer (brief period in 1950), and Harry Kearney (1969-1971). Many thanks to John Neff (see facing page) for setting us straight!



– Calendar cover photo © Donna Lawson

2019 Baxter State Park Calendars

The 2019 Baxter State Park calendar is available, and makes a great gift for the holidays! Calendars are available for \$15, including tax and shipping. You can order online at www.friendsofbaxter.org, mail a check to PO Box 322, Belfast, ME 04915, or call (207) 505-5779. All proceeds benefit Friends of Baxter State Park.



Late fall along the shores of Katahdin Lake in Baxter State Park.

– Photo © Betsy Dawkins

President's Column

by Dick Klain

I recently attended the fall meeting of the Baxter State Park Authority at Kidney Pond Campground. I opened my car door and stepped out into the parking lot. It hit me again as it always does. The aroma of the air is different. Sometimes it is the odor of the old pines, but today it is the scent of the leaves that have fallen and have begun to recycle themselves in their decomposition back into their chemical constituents. They will provide the humus for the continuing cycle that we take for granted. The leaves give themselves up annually to become food for the very small and microscopic fungi, animals, and other plants that sustain us and indeed the whole planet. Our lives cannot happen without these very basic life forms.

Imagine my alarm when I read that many insects that we have taken for granted are no longer in the abundance to sustain the animals that feed on them. In comparison studies done in Europe and in Puerto Rico invertebrate populations have declined by as much as forty to sixty percent. These areas are certainly a long way from the center of Maine, but anecdotally I have enjoyed the fact that I am no longer plagued by the swarms of mosquitos and black flies that used to make early spring gardening and hiking such a chore. Likewise my enjoyment of the Park has always included avoiding the “black fly” season. I no longer have to swat at the green heads and horse flies. At least this July those pests were not in the numbers that I recall from the past. I heard one scientist recount an informal study that he used to do during the year by counting the number of bugs hitting his windshield during his daily commute to work. It was an informal study without real controls but he became alarmed when he no longer had to clean the “June Bugs” off his windshield. Most of us are not missing these pests, but some animals are.

We have an excellent article about the fish in the streams and ponds of Baxter State Park in this issue. What will those fish do when the mayflies don't hatch? What will they do without mosquito larva to eat? Insect cycles are being affected by the early spring and late fall warmth. There is much to be concerned about as changes outside human control move into the Park. If these pests are being affected, what about those “beneficial” bugs that breakdown the previously mentioned leaf litter? What will our forest soil and duff be like in years to come? Oh so many questions – changes to the northwoods are coming.

I began this column about the last meeting of this Authority. Dean Levasseur, the ranger at Kidney, had fired up the stoves in the library and it was toasty warm. This was the last time that this Authority met as a group. Chandler Woodcock, Doug Denico, and Janet Mills have been fine stewards of Percival Baxter's greatest legacy. They have learned about the Park, about Baxter's deeds of trust, about the commitment of the staff, and the passion of people like us. They will continue to influence the Park because of the rule changes they have instituted and the personnel they have hired. Now this group is about to change. Whoever becomes the state's governor and whoever serves in the state legislature will have the final say over who becomes the next Baxter State Park Authority. It will be up to us and the staff of the Park to educate and share with the new Authority. In his closing remarks at the meeting Doug Denico lamented that it took him a while to get up to speed about the Authority's responsibility. “Coming into this office I didn't know what I didn't know about Baxter Park. You (referring to those of us at the meeting) have to educate the new folks coming in.” We will take that as a sacred trust.



Peak fall colors and sunny weather on Indigenous People's Day weekend has made for busy end to our season, as have our efforts to **hire several administrative team members**. Christine Theriault continues to provide stalwart institutional knowledge for the Park's business and HR department. Marc Edwards came on in early September as Park Naturalist after serving as Interpretive Specialist since the beginning of the year. Marc's considerable background and skill at connecting people to the natural world will serve the outreach and education needs of the Park well. Don Bolduc will join the Park as Chief Ranger as these words are printed. Don brings years of experience as Chief of Police in Millinocket and Skowhegan, and a holistic approach to enforcement and education that will serve Park Operations well. Don has long harbored a dream of working for the Park and we're happy he can help us as we continue to professionalize and focus our operations.

As of this writing we are still interviewing some very qualified candidates to fill what I considered to be the best job in the world (before taking this one). A Resource Manager will likely be on board before the snow flies. Then we will be fully staffed, and there will be a collective release of tension that has been present in the staff since Jensen announced his retirement last year. Now we can focus on bringing new folks up to speed and preparing for the changes likely to come in the Authority. **While what we do will never change, how we do it must always change with the times.** With the institutional knowledge we still retain in long-serving Park employees like Greg Hamer, Bruce White, and Mike Martin, we have opportunities to bridge the lessons of the past with the opportunities of the future.

Last winter threw a few curveballs that the maintenance and operations staff had to bat away. The largest was the **flood of the Ranger Station at Chimney Pond**; though 20' above the level of Chimney Pond, apparently ice and a small inlet diversion conspired to fill the camp with 15-20" of water



Members of the Baxter Youth Conservation Corps painting blazes near Middle Fowler Pond.

Photo © Aaron Megquier

sometime in early May. The floor buckled and water remained in cabinet drawers until Rangers were able to access the camp in late May. Our operations squad quickly mobilized several resources to the camp and after flying a few loads of new materials into Chimney Pond and several ton-bags of

kids could accomplish in a few weeks. One crew installed stepping stones on the Blueberry Ledges and Abol Pond trails and bog bridging on the Abol Stream trail, as well as some stellar corridor work on the Foss and Knowlton Trail. The second crew spent their time at a little known 200+ acre out-lot of the

Park, the Mt. Chase Forest on the Owlsboro Road. Purchased with the additional land fund monies back in the 1970s, this piece was intended to be a place to showcase exemplary forestry closer to population centers for those who couldn't make the trip into the Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA). The new trail here will serve as an educational trail for folks to learn about forestry and forest ecology in a format similar to the self-led Forestry Interpretive



A winter visitor headed into the backcountry via the Poggy Notch Trail. Photo © Jym St. Pierre

soggy material out, maintenance got to work refurbishing the place. By July 1 our Chimney Pond Rangers were able to move back in and carry on as normal, albeit with fresh floors and knee walls. The saga of backcountry facility maintenance continues.

Our trail specialists have been plowing ahead with **various trail projects** with the help of several outside contracted crews. Maine Conservation Corps performs the bulk of the work, from blow-down patrol to rock steps on Dudley. The Maine Appalachian Trail Club helps out with a section of the Hunt Trail, and our trusty trail adopters work on their various charges around the Park.

The **Baxter Youth Conservation Corps**, led by Aaron Megquier and consisting of Katahdin area youth, knocked it out of the Park this year. They blew away everyone's expectations for what a small group of high school

Trail near Trout Brook Crossing in the SFMA. We're very happy to hear that the young people from the Katahdin Region have been bringing their families back here to see their work already, and we look forward to engaging local schools in the near future.

Winter is a slower time in the Park; only 4,000-5,000 campers per year come to stay in snow-cave lean-tos at Chimney or string together ski trips between bunkhouses. As a staff, we say goodbye to almost 40 seasonal folks and a core of about 20 year round folks take a breath and then begin to prepare for next season. We'll spend the winter hauling materials by snowsled for various building projects, refining policies and protocols, and honing staff skill sets with trainings and meetings so that we can better steward the Deeds of Trust. And if we're lucky, we'll see you on some snow-covered trail!

Review of *Appalachian Odyssey: A 28-Year Hike on America's Trail*

By Jeffrey H. Ryan, DownEast Books (2016)

Reviewed by Howard R. Whitcomb, FBSP Historian

If you would like the vicarious experience of hiking the Appalachian Trail, I highly recommend Jeffrey H. Ryan's *Appalachian Odyssey: A 28-Year Hike on America's Trail*. Ryan, a veteran of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and former L. L. Bean employee, is a gifted writer with a genuine flair for capturing the rich history and charm of the locales through which trail traverses, as it wends its way for 2,181 miles across 14 states. What makes this AT account particularly captivating is that it took the author 28 years to complete his hike, section by section.

Ryan's own photographs, maps, and trail profiles enrich the chapters which correspond to the chronological segments that he and his sole companion, Wayne Cyr, hiked, beginning with Katahdin's Hunt Trail in September 1985, and ending in October 2013 at Springer Mountain, GA. Despite the fact that Ryan's account has the northern and southern termini as the bookends of their sectional hikes, the randomness of the locales of the intervening hikes, both south and northbound, was largely a function of their respective work schedules and vacation time. Logistics are always of concern for AT hikers, sectional or thru, and it is fascinating to see how Ryan and Cyr utilized, especially for the non-New England sections, both AMTRAK and inter/intra state buses to reach their destinations. Also, Ryan's insights on hiking gear and provisioning are informed by his years at L. L. Bean, especially as a catalogue writer.

Those contemplating hikes on the AT will find Ryan's personal account most informative, especially if they are desirous of capturing the trail's scenic beauty and the culture of its surroundings. The volume would be too cumbersome for most to carry, but copious notes from Ryan's account, in a small notebook, would enrich any hike of significance on the Appalachian Trail.

Marc Edwards hired as Park Naturalist



Marc Edwards, BSP Naturalist
– Photo courtesy of Baxter State Park

The following is an excerpt of the official press release from Baxter State Park:

It is with great pleasure that the Baxter State Park Authority announces the appointment of its new Baxter State Park Naturalist, Marc Edwards. Marc is currently the Park's Interpretive Specialist. A National Association of Interpretation Certified Interpreter Trainer, Marc holds both a Bachelors and a Masters in Science in Parks, Recreation and Tourism from the University of Maine. Marc brings years of experience to the Park, including stints as a Park Manager in the Vermont State Parks system, as a Tourism Economic Development Professional at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and as an Interpretive Ranger in the National Park Service and the US Forest Service. "I am looking forward to furthering the mission of Baxter State Park as Park Naturalist," Marc said. He lives with his family in Strong, Maine. Marc will manage the Park's Information and Education department, including interpretive programming, public information efforts, research and resource monitoring, and will serve as a member of the Park's administrative team. sured outdoor traditions.

Donald Bolduc hired as Chief Ranger



Donald Bolduc, BSP Chief Ranger
– Photo courtesy of Baxter State Park

The following is an excerpt of the official press release from Baxter State Park:

It is with great pleasure that the Baxter State Park Authority announces the appointment of its new Baxter State Park Chief Ranger, Donald Bolduc. A lifelong outdoorsman, Don brings deep experience in public service management from his time as Police Chief with both Millinocket and Skowhegan police departments. Don also brings his emergency response and emergency medicine technician skills to the Park. Don will manage the

Park's operations department, including law enforcement, maintenance, and search and rescue efforts, as well as serve as a member of the Park's administrative team. "I am very excited about the opportunity of working at Baxter State Park as Chief Ranger. It will be an honor and a privilege," Don said Monday. He lives with his family on Ambajejus Lake.

Trip Report: Autumn at Katahdin Lake

In September, I stayed at Katahdin Lake with a couple of friends. Each day, we paddled the lake, sometimes through whitecaps, other times in flat calm, always beneath a canopy of magnificent clouds and overseen by Pamola lounging on Katahdin. Though there were others at the lean-tos, we saw no one else on the water. It felt extraordinary to have a big, wild Maine lake to ourselves. One day, we hiked to Martin Ponds where the leaves were just starting to turn seasonal reds and yellows. Another day, we hiked to Twin Ponds through an old-growth forest on state land that, sadly, is scheduled to be logged. A wonderful variety of birds kept us company, including eagles, loons, ducks, pipers, flickers, warblers, robins, gulls, a hawk, and a lone cormorant (a sign of climate change). While my companions keyed out plants using *The Plants of Baxter State Park* book, I photographed sunrises and sunsets and everything in between, though my effort to photo the Milky Way one dark night floundered. The fly fishing was slower than other times I have been there, but we caught and released several small trout and a mess of dace. Each morning there was evidence that a nocturnal bear had been digging behind our campsite the night before. Maybe it was looking for donuts.

Jym St. Pierre
Brunswick, ME

Second-Annual Sign Auction

From now through December 5, you can bid on 18 retired Baxter State Park signs (and one additional very special item) in our annual sign auction. Check it out at: www.32auctions.com/fbsp2018

Baxter State Park Trivia

About how many miles of trails did Baxter State Park have in the early 1960s? (Bonus question: name two trails that have been built since then). Please send trivia answers to Sarah Holland at admin@friendsofbaxter.org.

The Native Char of Baxter State Park

Guest column by Bob Mallard, Maine Chapter of Native Fish Coalition

Baxter State Park is best known for its mountains, hiking, and camping. When it comes to wildlife, moose, loons, deer, and bear get the most attention. But the Park is also home to numerous native fishes, including three species of salmonids: brook trout, lake trout and Arctic charr. Two of these species, brook trout and Arctic charr, are formally designated *State Heritage Fish*.

While referred to as “trout,” brook trout and lake trout are not true trout but members of the char, or *Salvelinus*, genus of the Salmonidae family. Brook trout are the most “trout-like” species of char, utilizing stream, river, pond, and lake habitat. Lake trout are primarily a deep-water fish found mostly in large lakes. From a habitat and behav-



A brook trout caught from a Maine pond by the author. Maine is home to roughly 90% of the remaining wild native brook trout lakes and ponds in the country.

– Photo © Cecil Grey

ioral standpoint, Arctic charr are more like lake trout than brook trout.

Brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*, are by far the most common char in Baxter State Park, followed by lake trout, *Salvelinus namaycush*, and Arctic charr, *Salvelinus alpinus*. The subspecies of Arctic charr found in Baxter is known as *Salvelinus alpinus oquassa*, named after Rangeley Lake in Maine where they were once found.

Over fifty lakes and ponds in Baxter State Park are home to native brook trout. Most of them are self-sustaining; fewer than ten are stocked. The three largest brook trout lakes are Grand Lake Matagamon, Nesowadnehunk Lake, and Katahdin Lake, the first two of which are only partially in the Park. The three largest brook trout lakes solely within the Park are Katahdin Lake, Wassataquoik Lake, and Lower South Branch Pond.

Over forty of the self-sustaining brook trout lakes and ponds in Baxter are classified as *State Heritage Fish* waters. These waters are protected under Maine’s State Heritage Fish law and closed to stocking and the use of live fish as bait. This designation has been granted to roughly 575 lakes and ponds statewide that are home to native brook trout or Arctic charr and have never been stocked or have not been stocked in twenty-five years or more. To learn more about Maine’s State Heritage Fish law go to www.nativefishcoalition.org/maine. With over 600 such waters, Maine is home to roughly 90% of the remaining wild native brook trout lakes and ponds in the United States. The rest are found in upstate New York, New Hampshire, and the Great Lakes.

Nine of the brook trout ponds wholly in Baxter are fly fishing only: Celia, Daicey, Draper, Foss and Knowlton, Jackson, Kidney, Lily Pad, Rocky, and Windy Pitch. Nesowadnehunk Lake is the second largest fly fishing only water in the state. The most popular roadside ponds are Daicey, Draper, Kidney, and South Branch. Some of the more popular hike-in ponds are Foss and Knowlton, Jackson, Rocky, and Russell.

Most streams in Baxter are home to wild brook trout as well. The



The author fishing Nesowadnehunk Stream, one of Maine’s few fly fishing only streams and the only one located in Baxter State Park. – Photo © Diana Mallard

most popular, Nesowadnehunk Stream, is one of the few fly fishing only streams in Maine and the only one in the Park. Trout Brook is home to a healthy population of small wild native brook trout as well. Remote Wassataquoik and Webster Streams are also worth trying.

Lake trout, called togue in Maine, are present in Grand Lake Matagamon and Webster Lake. Interestingly, according to Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife they are not present in Upper or Lower Togue Pond.

One water in Baxter, Wassataquoik Lake, is home to rare Arctic charr. One of just eleven remaining native Arctic charr waters in the contiguous United States, it is one of only four charr waters with what Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife refers to as a “high abundance” of fish. It is also the most remote Arctic charr water in Maine and the only one closed to fly-in access. Attempts to introduce Arctic charr into two other waters in the Park failed: Upper and Lower South Branch Ponds. To learn more about Maine’s rare Arctic charr go to: www.nativefishcoalition.org/maine.

While there is no Park-specific permit, you will need a Maine fishing license to fish in Baxter. All waters are open to fishing from April through September. Ponds are typically ice-free by early to mid-May. Streams often run high until mid to late May. The Park maintains an inventory of canoes on ponds which are available for a fee on a first-come-first-served basis. Float tubes are always a good idea as canoes may not be available when you need them. You can also bring your own canoe into the Park. Most of the streams are relatively small and easy to wade.

Like all wildlife in Maine, the char of Baxter State Park are managed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. There is however a unique in the state Park-wide ban on the use or possession of live fish as bait which was enacted to prevent the spread of nonnative invasive minnows, the biggest threat to Maine’s native salmonids. Motor boats are allowed on the three largest lakes, restricted to 10hp or less on two other lakes, and prohibited elsewhere.



A rare Maine Arctic charr. Extant only in Maine within the contiguous United States, Arctic charr are the rarest freshwater salmonid east of the Rocky Mountains. Only federally endangered Atlantic salmon are in more trouble. – Photo © Bob Mallard



Friends of Baxter State Park

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Join our Governor Baxter Society:

- _____ \$1,000 Pamola Peak
- _____ \$2,500 South Peak
- _____ \$5,267 Baxter Peak
- _____ \$10,000 Katahdin

Please make checks payable to Friends of Baxter State Park, or join online.

Dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Send to:

Friends of Baxter State Park
PO Box 322
Belfast, ME 04915

Thank you!

Reception for Eben Sypitkowski on November 27

Friends is hosting a welcoming reception for Eben Sypitkowski, the new Director of Baxter State Park, on the evening of November 27. This will be a great chance to meet Eben, hear about what's going on in the Park, and reconnect with other FBSP members. Light hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served. This event will be from 5:30 - 7:00pm on November 27 at the Viles Homestead in Augusta. Space is limited, and advance registration is required to attend. Please RSVP to Sarah Holland at admin@friendsofbaxter.org.

