



FOREVER WILD



Newsletter of Friends of Baxter State Park Summer 2018 Vol. 17 No. 3

Executive Director's Column

by Aaron Megquier

Baxter State Park doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's part of the broader fabric of the Maine woods, and is ecologically, economically, and culturally connected to the surrounding landscape. On a clear day, the view from Katahdin encompasses a massive swath of the Maine woods, including lakes, rivers, mountains, other conserved lands, rural communities, and working forest. In *The Maine Woods*, Henry David Thoreau described the view from Katahdin as follows:

From this elevation, just on the skirts of the clouds, we could overlook the country, west and south, for a hundred miles... No clearing, no house. It did not look as if a solitary traveller had cut so much as a walking-stick there... The forest looked like a firm grass sward, and the effect of these lakes in its midst has been well compared, by one who has since visited this same spot, to that of a "mirror broken into a thousand fragments, and wildly scattered over the grass, reflecting the full blaze of the sun."

In many ways, the view from Katahdin today is largely unchanged from Thoreau's time. It's more patchwork in places, and a few radio towers blink on the horizon, but the lakes and the vast unbroken forest are mostly still there.

Unfortunately, that view might look a bit different if a proposed rule change from Maine's Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) is approved. LUPC is the state agency charged with regulating the more than 10 million acres of Maine's Unorganized Territories. For over 40 years, development in the Unorganized Territories has been guided by the adjacency principle and its "one-mile rule." This essentially means that any new development has to be located within one mile by road of existing compatible development. This rule has largely kept subdivisions, industrial facilities, and sprawl out of the Maine Woods.

The current proposal is to replace the one-mile adjacency rule with an alternative system for defining adjacency. The proposed rules identify nearly two

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Park Director Eben Sypitkowski headed home with some reading material. The two large volumes he is carrying are part of *Percival P. Baxter's Vision for Baxter State Park*, compiled by Howard Whitcomb and published by FBSP in 2005. This four-volume set is the definitive documentary history of Baxter State Park, containing the Deeds of Trust, letters, other communications, legal decisions, and other materials.

– Photo © Aaron Megquier

Eben Sypitkowski hired as Director of Baxter State Park

by Aaron Megquier

Friends of Baxter State Park is pleased to report that Baxter State Park has appointed a new director following the retirement of Jensen Bissell in December 2017. Eben Sypitkowski, who previously worked as the Park's Resource Manager, brings a wealth of experience and skills to the position, as well as a deep knowledge of the Park and its unique mission. We believe Eben Sypitkowski is an outstanding choice to lead the Park. Friends would like to congratulate Eben on his new position, and the BSP Authority on its excellent choice. The following is the official press release announcing Eben's appointment as Park Director, reprinted in its entirety:

It is with great pleasure that the Baxter State Park Authority announces the appointment of its new Park Director, Eben Sypitkowski. Eben brings a proven commitment to Governor Percival Baxter's vision that will serve the Park well under his tenure. Eben's understanding of the workings of the Park is exceptional and his knowledge base will be of great advantage as he works with BSP staff to bring the Park to a heightened level of excellence.

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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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million acres of the Maine woods as "Primary" and "Secondary" areas that automatically have adjacency – including large areas near Millinocket and Patten. These areas are prominently visible from Katahdin and other mountains in Baxter State Park, as well as the two entrance roads to the Park. We believe that sprawl or strip development in these areas would significantly harm the scenic value and remote character of Baxter State Park. In addition, the proposed rules could allow 'recreation-based subdivisions' near trailheads, lakes, and other sensitive recreational areas throughout the Maine woods.

The Maine Woods and our rural communities are far too important to make changes of this magnitude without a full understanding of the potential impacts – which, in our view, could be negative, profound, and irreversible. Please see our story on page 6 for more details about this proposal, and how to share your own opinions through the public comment process.

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Baxter State Park Trivia

How high did the water in Chimney Pond rise during a flood in early spring 2018? Send trivia answers to Sarah at admin@friendsofbaxter.org.



Mathias Deming – Photo courtesy of Mathias Deming

Membership Matters

by Sarah Holland, Administrative Manager

In this summer issue of *Forever Wild*, we continue our series of articles profiling members of Friends of Baxter State Park. Our member profile for this issue was written by Jill Ippoliti, a long-time member of our Board of Directors and a neighbor of Mathias Deming, who is profiled in this article.



Membership Profile – Mathias Deming

In the summer of 2014, Mathias Deming participated in the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program (MYWLP). We thought you'd be interested in his reflections on the program and his adventures since.

Mathias is now 20 years old and splits his time between Maine and the remote Argentinian steppes in Patagonia. From December to May he is part of a team researching Hooded Grebes (*Podiceps gallardoi*) for Aves Argentinas. Glacial lagoons just east of the continental divide are the grebe's breeding grounds and where they perform their elaborate mating dance each spring. After talking with Mathias about this project it is difficult not to make the rest of this article about the grebes. Mathias is a naturalist who shares his knowledge with enthusiasm. But back to Mathias...

Mathias grew up in Winthrop, Maine. A friend of the family became his birding mentor and he was an accomplished sight and ear birder by his early teens. By the time he participated in MYWLP between his sophomore and junior year he was also a skilled photographer. Mathias gives our leadership program two thumbs up. He came into the program with a love of nature and his 10 days in Baxter amplified that appreciation. He describes MYWLP as "a solid experience, nothing felt like filler. It was a real learning program. It was about teaching not entertaining." Mathias recalls the day Barry Dana met with them in the interior of the Park at a point and place in time that has retained a hard to describe "realness" for him. I expect many of us have had "realness" moments in the Park.

Mathias is discerning and motivated in seeking educational opportunities. He attended Chelonki the spring semester of his junior year. Back

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Eben Sypitkowski hired – Continued from pg.1



Eben Sypitkowski (at left) leading members of the Board of Directors on a tour of the SFMA in 2015.
– Photo © Aaron Megquier

Eben is currently serving as Baxter State Park's Resource Manager and is managing its Scientific Forest Management Area. He brings knowledge and experience to the role of Director, and a proven passion for upholding the Baxter Trusts and serving its mission. Eben is a graduate of Bangor High School, Bates College, and has earned a Master's Degree in Forestry from the University of Maine. Eben and his wife and daughter reside in Millinocket.

Eben will lead the approximately 22 year-round, and 39 seasonal employees that protect, maintain and operate the Park. Park operations are also supported by the Maine Conservation Corps and other contracted personnel to prepare firewood bundles, perform road maintenance and forest harvesting and management operations and other maintenance work. Baxter State Park is the result of a dream of former Governor Percival P. Baxter who donated the first parcel of land in 1931 and over the years added various parcels until his final acquisition in 1962 brought the Park's area to 201,018 acres. Since then, the Authority has purchased and been gifted additional acreage to bring the Park to its current size of 209,644 acres. In addition to the various gifts of land, Governor Baxter also left two sizeable trust funds to carry out the operation and maintenance of the Park without the need for state funding.

The Baxter State Park Authority, comprised of the Attorney General, the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Director of the Bureau of Forestry, have been charged since 1939 with carrying out Governor Baxter's vision that "Katahdin in all its glory, forever shall remain the mountain of the people of Maine."

Mathias Deming – Continued from pg.2

at Winthrop High School for his senior year, his course of study included enrollment in the electrical technology program at the Capitol Area Technical Center in Augusta. Mathias continues to pursue becoming a journeyman electrician through courses at Southern Maine Community College and working with an electrical engineering group in Portland when in Maine.

Rock climbing has superseded birding as his primary hobby these past two years. After high school graduation, Mathias worked in Bar Harbor hiking and climbing in Acadia National Park as often as time allowed. In May, when interviewed for this profile, Mathias had just returned from Perito Moreno, Argentina and was patiently waiting for the snow to melt and a trip to Baxter to climb North Basin.

Our Readers Write Northern Forest "Adjacency Rule" is under Fire

We in Maine enjoy being able to see moose and bear, to go camping, fishing, hiking, and hunting, especially in remote wilderness areas. A big reason is that Maine's current and longstanding "adjacency policy" serves the Unorganized Territories and our state well. Large tracts of north country have been protected from sprawling development, where we can still "get away from it all," and where animals needing large wilderness areas can survive.

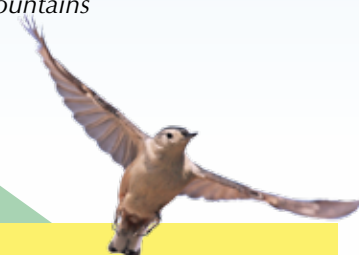
Thanks to the adjacency policy, when new development locates within a mile of already existing development, we concentrate development rather than let it sprawl haphazardly. We pay less in service costs instead of subsidizing services ten miles away. We protect Maine's wildlife, rivers, forests, and lakes from the threats of development sprawl. We maintain the community-oriented character of our state rather than allow strip development to cut up our north woods.

The Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) now proposes allowing development to go ten miles from outer boundaries of "rural hubs" and two miles from public roads. Close to two million acres of Maine's north woods are targeted to become "primary locations" for development.

Large-lot subdivisions that fragment the North Woods, banned since 2001, would be allowed. Economic costs of sprawl are many, and anyone who wants to protect Maine's natural resources ought to take notice, too. What will happen to the lakes and ponds located within the ten-mile development areas, and outside them, too? Where will wilderness dependent animals and people go?

This process appears to be pushed by developers or landowners—and rushed with a vote scheduled for November. The one-mile adjacency rule plays an extremely important role in protecting Maine's unique character. The public must take the proposal to eliminate it seriously. To submit comments, please email benjamin.godsoe@maine.gov; or write to Land Use Planning Commission, c/o Ben Godsoe, 18 Elkins Lane, 22 State House Station, Augusta, ME, 04333, Phone (207) 287-2619.

Cloe Chunn, Waldo, ME
Author, *Fifty Hikes in the Maine Mountains*
Registered Maine Guide



Answer: Trivia Question in Spring Newsletter

In our spring newsletter, we posed this question: "List all the individuals who have ever held the position of Director or Superintendent of Baxter State Park." Here is our list: Helon Taylor, A. Lee Tibbs, Irvin "Buzz" Caverly Jr., D. Jensen Bissell, Eben Sypitkowski.

President's Column

by Dick Klain

A New Perspective

My daughter recently recommended that I read a blog by Bill Gates. That post referred to the death of a friend of his who had done much to change the perspective of the global human population. Hans Rosling was an epidemiologist who studied human diseases around the world. In recent years he had posted several popular TED Talks which have shown the marked improvement in the lives of humans on this planet during the last century. His most recent and final book is called *Factfulness*; I and Bill Gates highly recommend it. It documents so well that within my short lifetime the world has changed, in many ways for the better.

I always try to make time for reading. I realize that that statement probably dates me. True enough, I was born in the middle of the last century. I still have decent eyesight thanks to some amazing surgery and I read not only because I can, but because I love it. My mind still opens to well founded arguments and descriptions. My latest novel is called *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. For someone who loves trees and forests this is a must read. Powers descriptions are wonderfully poetic and compelling. He weaves a story of many human characters into a web of interrelatedness similar to the web of a healthy forest. Life pulses dramatically throughout this novel.

Which brings me finally to the crux of my new perspective. As Powers notes in his book human longevity is nothing to the giants in a forest. Where we can sometimes attain a century of perspective many trees are just coming into their maturity in that time. Unlike the trees in most of the state, the trees of Baxter State Park don't have to fear the saws of humans. They will be free to grow to a maturity that I and my children will never see. Over time perhaps the white pines may again grow to the size of the King's Pines of legend. Perhaps the oaks of the Park will grow to the size used to frame the first frigates of this nation's navy like Old Ironsides. It seems strange that we note these trees because of their military uses.

We forget the importance of wood in our daily lives. We take it for granted. As I write this, I am sitting on wood. My laptop is supported by wood. My feet are on wood. And this room is paneled in wood. The trees that produced all this wood around me never attained old age. We, in our hubris, cut them when they were of "marketable" size. When a tree is felled in some places, like butchering a hog, everything is used except the squeal. Little remains on the forest floor. Arguments take place among the foresters of the world about this. What constitutes best practice? Best practice for the human market? Best practice for the forest? The answer is far from clear. Rest assured the trees that have grown in the protection of Baxter State Park will not be subject to this human debate.

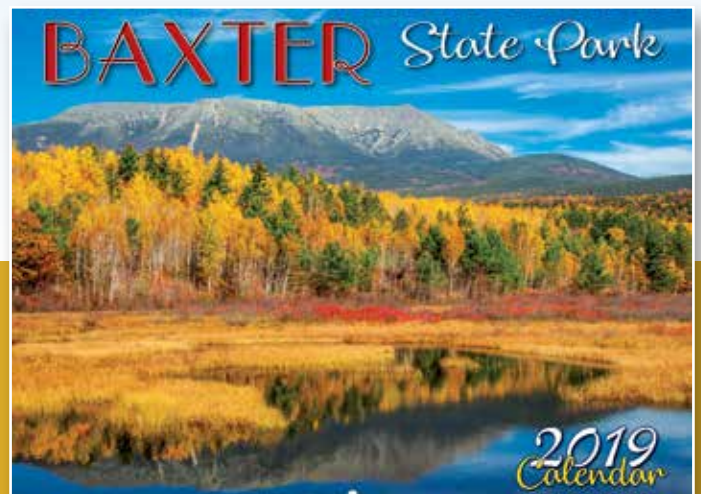
There are even some "old growth" areas within the Park where trees can count two centuries and more. It is not neat. There is lots of moss, fungi, and rot growing there. The air seems oxygen rich and dense. The water table is high. Straight lines of trees don't exist. There are no "giants" here. It is decidedly mixed growth and there are no trails to it. When I was shown this area I felt like an interloper as we bushwhacked to it. It reminded me more of a jungle than the forests that I have known. It was never cut because of its remote location. Now it can be studied at our leisure as a remnant of what the Maine woods were like when the first Europeans came to this continent.

Our new park director Eben Syptkowski was our guide to this area some few years ago. At that time, he was the newly hired re-

source manager of the Scientific Forest Management Area of the Park. Like his predecessor, he reveled in his new position and couldn't imagine a better job. He was humbled by the managers who preceded him. Their hard work, their plans, he said, made his job easier. He loved the old-growth area. Now he is responsible for the whole Park where the trees may be old growth some day. Now this small part of the 17+ million acres of forested land in the state has a new supervisor. The trees in their stoic majesty may note his presence only if something goes drastically wrong. We wish him well.



Old-growth red spruce and hemlock in BSP's Scientific Forest Management Area
– Photo © Jym St. Pierre



– Calendar cover photo © Donna Lawson

2019 Baxter State Park Calendars now available

The 2019 Baxter State Park calendar is hot off the presses! 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.



Update from Baxter State Park by Eben Sypitkowski, BSP Director

Dear Friends,

First off, I want to remind you that the Park doesn't care at all about the personnel transitions that have been taking place in the administration of the Park. The moose are still munching pond weeds, the loons are still issuing their shrill calls, and the mountain stands above all of our humanly concerns.

It is, however, heating up for all the organisms in the Park as I write this, just as our season starts to wind up in full force. The spring proved cold and long, delaying campers and staff alike, but lean-tos have taken shape at South Branch and Chimney, rocks have been moved into place on the Hunt trail and Dudley, our rugged staff has dealt with fixing those pains winter inflicted on our buildings and roads, and several thousand people have enjoyed a night or two in the Park. Now it's 95 on the mountain and I watched on the 4th of July as the last patches of snow on the south side disappeared.

As the new Park Director, I am honored and humbled to serve the Authority and lead the dedicated Park staff. Former Park Director Jensen Bissell, my mentor these last few years, has left some enormous shoes to fill, but I'm confident that together with the Authority, committed staff, and dedicated advisory groups, we'll continue to competently steward the natural resources of the Park and the wishes of Governor Baxter.

Gov. Baxter's vision extended far beyond simply donating some of the wildest topography in Maine to the people of this state. With that gift he created an entirely new governance structure we know as the Authority. The current Authority – Chair Doug Denico, Director of the Maine Forest Service, Janet T. Mills, Maine Attorney General, and Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Chandler Woodcock – is going on eight years of service to the Park and Governor Baxter's vision. Despite busy schedules in their respective positions, they have consistently found time to focus on the Park and have brought the Governor's directives to bear on many tough issues.

Governor Baxter also left a large trust fund that has allowed the Park to be free from state General Fund monies since the 1970s. This fund has grown to where it comfortably accounts for two-thirds of our operating budget, and continues to grow in part due to conservative disbursement strategy recommended by the sage advice of the investment commit-



Baxter State Park's large and talented staff.

– Photo courtesy of Baxter State Park

tee. Taken together, the land, governance, and funding provide a sturdy three-legged stool on

that concerned Governor Baxter as well, as he sought in his Formal Communications in 1945 to “provide against commercial exploitation...and the trappings of unpleasant civilization”.



BSP will be implementing a permit system for commercial use, including guides, shuttle operators, and photographers, during the 2019 season.

– Photo © Kyna Rancourt Stockford

He saw potential conflicts with commercial interests who might put their profit motives before respect for the resource and the wilderness experience of others. As a staff, we have been wary of these potential conflicts as well – but

which the Park will rest forever.

We are charged with caring for this place in perpetuity, which I believe to be a pretty long time. As I found while managing the Scientific Forest Management Area in the northwest corner of the Park, this mandate to manage something forever can be comforting; as a forester there is no threat that the objectives of the landowner will change to require a cornfield or housing development, or have some monetary requirement that spurs an order to cut it all. Instead, the future helps shape options, and there is time to gather information and thoughtfully consider them.

we have yet to gather enough information to understand the scope or breadth of this type of use in the Park. We know there are guides and shuttles and commercial photography, but we don't know how many, or whether those uses are crowding out the individuals and families for whom Baxter sought to provide a wilderness experience, a more personal engagement with the natural world.

The same assurance can focus an entire organization. We preserve and protect these natural resources and a wilderness experience for the people of Maine. Everything we do needs to relate to these broad objectives. This part is simple. But like those natural resources, how we approach this work is in constant flux. New tools become available; old ways of doing things are found to be cumbersome or inefficient. So we, like the creatures of those woodlands we protect, adapt to these changing conditions and go on preserving and protecting.

Next summer season we will begin to enforce a permit system for commercial use which will help us to gather enough data to understand the extent of this type of use in the Park. Commercial use permits will be required for any visitors participating in activities that require any form of remuneration to the provider or organizer. Special use permits will also be required by those participating in activities that don't meet the commercial definition but provide benefit to an individual, group, or organization rather than the public at large. Permits will be free. We will require these permits for a two year period after which Park administration will review these data and decide how to move forward. This represents one of the changing ways in which we are gathering information to make better decisions to protect the Deeds and the incredible resource left to us by Governor Baxter. Hope to see you on the trail!

One thing we've considered several times over the years but failed to get a handle on is our concern over commercial use in the Park. This was something

Land Use Planning Commission proposes sweeping changes for Maine's North Woods

By Aaron Megquier

Maine's Land Use Planning Commission is responsible for guiding development in the state's Unorganized Territories surrounding Baxter State Park. The agency is proposing to replace the one-mile adjacency rule with an alternative system for defining adjacency. The proposed rules identify nearly two million acres of the Maine woods as "Primary" and "Secondary" areas that automatically have adjacency – including large areas near Millinocket and Patten.

Friends provided oral testimony at a public hearing on June 20, 2018, and also submitted extensive comments to the Land Use Planning Commission. The following is a brief excerpt of our written comments. The full comments are available on our website at www.friendsofbaxter.org/position-statements.

The LUPC is charged with stewardship of the public interest in a region of local, state, and global significance. Toward that end, we appreciate your efforts to refine the "adjacency principle." As you know, a rigorous approach to adjacency has been one of the bedrock principles guiding development in the Commission's jurisdiction for almost 50 years. Evidence suggests that this approach has largely fulfilled the goals of the statute, which calls for "orderly development" rather than sprawl. Furthermore, we believe that the 'one-mile rule' for rezoning has been effective in allowing growth that is compatible with the world-class ecological, forestry, and recreation values of the Unorganized Territories. We are not opposed to some revisions to improve on that record and accommodate issues that have emerged in recent years. We are extremely concerned, however, about the magnitude of the proposed changes, the lack of specific information and analysis on the impacts of the proposed rule change, and the negative consequences these changes could bring to Baxter State Park as well as surrounding communities and ecosystems.

After considering the issues involved in some depth, the essence of our recommendation is that you put the proposed rules on hold, because despite your best intentions, we believe the proposed rules would have negative and irreversible impacts on Baxter State Park and the surrounding communities and ecosystems.

Significance of the Maine Woods

It's difficult to overstate the ecological, cultural, and recreational value of the Maine Woods. The Maine Woods are the heart of the largest globally important bird area in the continental United States, and the last stronghold for native brook trout in the eastern United States. Viewed at night from space, the Maine Woods are a unique region surrounded by a glowing web of development that sprawls along the entire U.S. East Coast, from Florida to Maine, and into Canada. On so many measures of ecological value – including connectivity and resilience to climate change – the Maine Woods are nationally and globally significant. They are at the heart of our recreation economy, our forest products economy, and our most treasured outdoor traditions.

Impacts on Baxter State Park

Baxter State Park is not an island of conservation land, but rather an integral part of Maine's North Woods. It is ecologically, culturally, and economically connected to surrounding communities and landscapes. There are two road entrances to Baxter State Park: the Matagon Gate, which is accessed via Route 159 and the Grand

Lake Road from Patten, and the Togue Pond Gate, which is accessed via the Lake Road and Baxter State Park Road from Millinocket. The proposed rules would make both of these road corridors "Primary Areas" for development to within a few miles of the Baxter State Park boundary. We believe that this would encourage strip development, creating negative visual impacts for Park visitors and degrading the remote experience. The approach roads to Baxter State Park are also part of the Katahdin Woods and Waters Scenic Byway. The strip development encouraged by the proposed rules would severely degrade or eliminate the scenic value of the Byway. We appreciate the removal of T2R9 WELS from the proposed Primary Area, but this does not fully address our concerns.

This rule change would affect scenic values inside Baxter State Park as well. The road corridors mentioned above are prominently visible from Katahdin, Traveler, and many other mountains in Baxter State Park. Several of the lakes included in the Primary and Secondary areas near Millinocket – including Ambajejus and Millinocket Lakes – are prominently visible from Katahdin and other mountains. Intensive development in these areas could have significant negative impacts on scenic views from Katahdin and other mountains in Baxter State Park. There is precedent in your past agency decisions to not allow developments that would have a tangible adverse impact on important scenic views from public lands and waters. Inviting development in these areas now would send the wrong message and be counter to your statutory mission and Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Impacts on Katahdin-Region Communities

We anticipate that the proposed rules would also have profound impacts on the economic vitality of those communities that were identified as Rural Hubs in the rules. Many of the towns identified as Rural Hubs – including Millinocket and Patten – are struggling with severe economic challenges, including mill closures, high unemployment, and vacant storefronts downtown. Mill rates are soaring as these towns attempt to survive, and many communities are struggling to provide basic services for residents. We suggest that the proposed rule changes be considered in this broader context.

The areas identified as Primary and Secondary areas cover an estimated 24% of the LUPC jurisdiction. The proposed changes are too drastic, over too large an area, to be made all at once. Furthermore, because of the way Primary and Secondary locations are defined in the rules, these changes will be just outside some of Maine's rural towns most at risk. The idea that it would be economically and environmentally beneficial to encourage development near but outside the boundaries of the struggling communities of rural Maine is a concept that has not yet been proven, and is likely to have unexpected – and devastating – economic consequences.

Strip development and sprawl on roads outside the towns is very likely to harm Rural Hub communities. This type of development typically places a strain on municipal services while not adding property tax revenue. In many cases, there are already strong economic incentives in place to locate outside of town. The mill rates in the Unorganized Territory in the Katahdin Region are between \$6 and \$8. The mill rates in Millinocket and East Millinocket are well over \$30. This creates a powerful economic incentive to abandon the towns and develop in the UT. Meanwhile, the proposed rule changes would vastly expand the opportunity to capitalize on that incentive, making the problem worse.

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Some Rural Hub communities are already in the midst of efforts that would be severely undermined by these rule changes. For example, Millinocket is working very hard, through an innovative public-private partnership, to attract manufacturing and light industrial tenants to the former Great Northern mill site, and to revitalize its downtown. The broader Katahdin Region is currently engaged in a major community visioning process (*The Katahdin Gazetteer*) about the future of the region with the assistance of an international team of consultants. The proposed rule changes offer a ‘one-size-fits all’ approach to Maine’s Rural Hub communities that is unlikely to be appropriate for their specific circumstances. We believe that, despite your good intentions, the proposed rules could be the nail in the coffin for Millinocket, Patten, and other communities that are struggling to revive their downtowns and attract businesses to their industrial sites. We strongly encourage LUPC to engage in a Community Guided Planning and Zoning process before making any changes to the existing regulations surrounding Baxter State Park and the Katahdin Region.

Baxter State Park depends on surrounding communities, including Millinocket and Patten, for a wide range of goods and services, as well as housing and livable communities for its staff. With an annual payroll of about \$2.5 million, the Park is one of the larger employers in the Katahdin region. When Millinocket and Patten are struggling, Baxter State Park often struggles to attract and retain qualified staff. This is a significant, long-term concern for the Park, and we believe that the proposed rules would exacerbate this challenge.

Cumulative Impacts

We urge the Commission to recognize the importance of cumulative impacts, which are already eroding the many values of the area. The Unorganized Territories have exceptional value precisely because they have been unfragmented by the sprawl that these proposed rule changes would facilitate. We believe that the cumulative impacts of this proposal would result in the ‘death by a thousand cuts’ phenomenon for the ecological, cultural, and economic values of the Maine Woods.

In conclusion, we urge the Commission to put the proposed rule changes on hold due to scenic and viewshed impacts on Baxter State Park, potentially devastating economic impacts to rural service centers, and the near-certainty of sprawl near our most precious trails, lakes, and natural areas. We urge the Commission to seek a third-party analysis of whether development that has been approved under current rules is meeting the intent and purpose of the statute; and to perform a detailed spatial analysis of the proposed changes for public review. The Maine Woods are far too important to make changes of this magnitude without a full understanding of the potential impacts – which, in our view, could be negative, profound, and irreversible.

If you have opinions on the Land Use Planning Commission’s proposed rule changes, we encourage you to actively participate in the public comment process. To submit comments, email benjamin.godsoe@maine.gov; or write to Land Use Planning Commission, c/o Ben Godsoe, 18 Elkins Lane, 22 State House Station, Augusta, ME, 04333. If you would like to provide feedback on the positions held by Friends of Baxter State Park, please write to director@friendsofbaxter.org or PO Box 322, Belfast, ME 04915.

Looking back...

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

Elizabeth Oakes Smith’s remarkable 1849 visit to Katahdin Lake

In the summer of 1849 Elizabeth Oakes Smith became the first woman to climb to Pamola from the east. She was prevented by bad weather from reaching the summit which was climbed for the first time by a woman only a few days later. Her four-part account was published in the *Portland Advertiser* in the fall of that year. The following is a portion of the vibrant account of her reaching Katahdin Lake early in her odyssey.

“We had been so long buried in the heart of the forest that when we emerged upon Lake Katahdin... the sensation was delightful beyond expression. The Lake was a lovely sheet of water embowered in the woods, the curves and inlets exceedingly graceful and picturesque, and the expanse sleeping under a saffron and rose tinged atmosphere, with here and there a dimple where a fish darted to the light. In front of us rose Katahdin, without a cloud, resting against the sky like the battlements of the Eternal, while hill and mountain flanked his throne far as the eye could reach.

[Later]... the twilight shadows deepened, and the mountains seemed to approximate like stony ramparts shutting us out from the world... All night at intervals the call of the moose, the prolonged cry of the loon, and the screaming of the owl gave us a gloomy cast to the hours, while in the morning the Lake wore again its cheerful aspect - if cheerful it can be in the midst of creatures which seek remoteness and solitude. The eagle and the hawk sailed away into the humid air, and ducks and geese dived at our approach. Old Katahdin showed but a meagre view, for he was enveloped in clouds, which curled about his hoary head, and rose up in endless shapes, white and beautiful, and moving in the distance like an army of Ossian’s shadowy ghosts, ancient, and silent warriors hastening to their vapory bells... A rain cloud after giving us a morning salutation, swept down to the low country, trailing a rainbow behind it, festooning lake and forest with rare loveliness, as if the beautiful Isis would lure us from this savage region.” [Signed] A Pilgrim

Update on the Baxter Youth Conservation Corps



Members of the 2018 Baxter Youth Conservation Corps with stepping stones they installed on the Blueberry Ledges Trail. Friends doubled the size of this program in 2018, offering 20 full-time positions for local youth and adding a northern crew based in Patten. Our crews accomplished a staggering amount of work 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. To top it off, they constructed an entirely new 1.5-mile trail on land owned by BSP in the town of Mount Chase. This new trail is already open to the public. Please stay tuned for more details in our fall newsletter!

– Photo © Aaron Megquier



Friends of Baxter State Park

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Belfast, ME 04915

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Thank you!

Baxter State Park Sign Auction

Have you ever wanted to own a piece of Baxter State Park history? In partnership with Baxter State Park, Friends will be holding our second annual sign auction to make historic Park signs and other special items available to the public. A total of 15 signs will be available in the 2018 auction. Friends will donate 50% of the proceeds directly to Baxter State Park, and 50% will support our programs. Bidding will open at 9:00 am on November 5th, 2018, and close at midnight on December 5th. This year's items will be available for preview by mid-October on the auction webpage: www.32auctions.com/fbsp2018.

