

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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BAXTER STATE PARK ANNUAL REPORT - 2024



To the Baxter State Park Authority

February 2025

Table of Contents

Section 1. Director’s Summary.....	5
Section 2. Administration.....	6
Baxter State Park Authority.....	6
BSP Advisory Committee.....	7
BSP Advisory Committee.....	7
Legislative.....	8
Remembrances.....	9
Section 3. Financials.....	11
Fee Structure.....	11
Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Biennial Budget.....	12
Expense Notes.....	13
Investment Committee and BNY Wealth.....	13
Baxter State Park Investment Committee.....	14
Section 4. Business Administration/Human Resources.....	15
Staffing.....	15
Training.....	17
Organization Chart.....	18
Campground Utilization.....	19
Day Use Parking Reservation (DUPR) Utilization.....	19
Winter Lottery.....	20
Visitor Information Center Statistics.....	21
Reservation Software Upgrade.....	21
Reservations Subcommittee.....	22
Information Technology.....	22
Cyber Security.....	23
Section 5. Operations.....	23
Maintenance Highlights.....	23
Daicey Pond Project.....	25
Trails Highlights.....	28
Baxter Youth Conservation Corps.....	30
Maine Conservation Corps.....	30
Appalachian Trail.....	31
Enforcement Operations.....	31
Wildland Fire Operations.....	34
Search and Rescue.....	34
Notable Events, Activities, and Projects.....	35
2024 Road & Trail Openings and Closings.....	37
Section 6. Information & Education (I&E).....	37
Section 7. Natural Resources & Research.....	39
Introduction.....	39
Natural Resources.....	40
Research.....	42
Research Committee.....	43
Section 8. Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA).....	43

Introduction.....	43
Harvest & Operations.....	44
2024 Wood Buyers and Products.....	45
Silviculture.....	45
Monitoring.....	46
Outlying Forest Lots.....	46
Management Plans.....	47
SFMA Advisory Committee.....	47
Scientific Forest Management Advisory Committee.....	48
Demonstration & Partnerships.....	48
Administrative.....	49
Section 9. Volunteer Program.....	49
Introduction.....	49
2024 Highlights.....	50
Section 10. Appendices.....	54
Day Use Parking Reservations Statistics.....	54
Trail Statistics.....	56
Trail Use Statistics - May-Oct, 2024.....	57
Trail Use Statistics - Dec-March, 2024.....	59
Five-Year Cumulative Trail Statistics.....	60

Section 1. Director's Summary

One of my key goals since being named Director in 2023 was to return to the completion of Annual Reports following an interval without reports from 2019 to 2023 due to the COVID pandemic and administrative staff changes. The Park Leadership Team¹ recognizes the value of an annual record of decisions, improvements, challenges, and accomplishments, and that this record informs present and future Park staff in formalizing management plans, identifying and budgeting for infrastructure improvements, and facilitating research projects, among other objectives. Understanding and preparing for climate change and other natural and human impacts on the Park's resources, honoring Percival Baxter's vision, and providing the best wilderness experience for our visitors are among our primary objectives, and are reflected in this 2024 annual report.

Early in 2024, the Leadership Team identified goals that included reviewing and revising (or creating new where necessary) certain BSP policies. We initially focused on: Employee Housing, Administrative Sites, Gardening, Uniforms, Conference Room Use, and Reservation Fraud Alert. This project will continue to be accomplished with small groups of subject-appropriate staff and will include a deep dive into the Standard Operating Procedures.

Spring Training was another focus area with the prior year's training and de-brief in mind. In 2024, a new planning methodology was used to perpetuate staff knowledge and experience, whereby two non-leadership staff were chosen to lead the planning with the intent that the senior, more experienced lead would relinquish that role the following year and the secondary lead would take it over with another staff member to assist. Supervisory Ranger Bruce White and Supervisory Enforcement Ranger Justine Rumaker were the primary and secondary planners, respectively, in 2024, and it is planned that Justine will assume the primary lead in 2025 with Inventory and Property Associate Deanna Madore as the secondary planner. These planning staff work closely with Park leadership and the spring training committee to identify key training needs and improve and streamline the schedule to efficiently accommodate the tight two-week training window.

The renovation of the historic Daicey Pond cabins was in full swing in 2024 and those BSP staff and volunteers assigned to this substantial project brought forth the dedication, expertise, and creativity necessary to ensure that the cabins retain their traditional rustic design, true to the wishes of Percival Baxter.

Amid major plans and projects, we learned that a rare celestial event in the form of a total solar eclipse was going to occur on April 8 and the Park was in the path of totality, which set off a comprehensive and successful public communications plan to ensure the safety of Park visitors and the protection of the natural resources of the Park during this winter to spring transitional period. This breathtaking event was certainly one of the highlights of a productive 2024.

From the Director's desk, I want to acknowledge several groups starting with our Baxter State Park employees who are dedicated to a mission and direction to accomplish and preserve Percival Baxter's vision of the Park. Every day, our staff perform ordinary and extraordinary accomplishments ranging from providing directions to visitors, maintaining our roads, trails and

¹ Park Director Kevin Adam, Natural Resources Director Nava Tabak, Director of Administrative Services Lori Morrison, and Chief Ranger Matthew McGuire comprise the Leadership Team

buildings infrastructure, protecting the Park's biota, rescuing lost or injured hikers, and thriving in a sometimes dangerous but exhilarating wilderness environment. Baxter State Park also appreciates its many partners including but not limited to Friends of Baxter State Park, Maine Association of Search and Rescue (MASAR), Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG), Maine Warden Service, Maine Forest Service, Millinocket Fire and Rescue, Maine Appalachian Trail Club, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, numerous fisheries, wildlife and plant biologists and researchers, and our many contractors who provide services to the Park. These organizations contributed toward the core goals of the Park, and are further highlighted throughout this report.

Section 2. Administration

Baxter State Park Authority



Chair Patty Cormier,
Director, ME
Forest Service



Judy Camuso,
Commissioner,
ME Dept IF&W



Aaron Frey,
ME Attorney General

The Authority is the governing body of Baxter State Park and is composed of the Director of the Maine Forest Service (Patty Cormier), the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (Judy Camuso), and Maine's Attorney General (Aaron Frey). This Authority entered its fifth year in 2024.

The Authority held six public meetings in 2024. Authority **decisions** included the approval of new committee members for all four advisory committees, as well as re-appointments for the BSP Advisory committee, the SFMA Advisory committees, and the Wilderness Fund Trust. A new fee adjustment schedule and the FY26/27 Biennial Budget were approved as separate items in the October 4 meeting of the BSPA. In the December meeting, the SFMA Herbicide Policy was approved.

Other key topics of discussion at the Authority meetings in 2024 included:

- Private Equity funds and the advantages of these investments.
 - In December of 2023, with the approval of the Authority, the Investment Policy Statement was updated to allow a fairly broad range of private investments with a maximum allocation of 25%.

- The need for an SFMA Master Plan (a reference document that will provide guiding principles, policies, and history, updated yearly through appendices), SFMA 10-year Management Plan, in development
- Nesowadnehuk Stream Study conducted by Acadia Civil Works which addressed recurring issues (flooding, road damage, erosion)
- Review of UMaine Civil Engineering Nesowadnehunk Stream Bridge Design
- Daicey Pond Project updates
- Day Use Pass Reservation
- Several executive sessions were held following Authority meetings to discuss the Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps.

BSP Advisory Committee

This active and dedicated committee provides the Park Director the benefit of the experience and knowledge of persons familiar with Baxter State Park affairs and Governor Baxter's intentions in creating the Park. The BSP Advisory serves at the pleasure of the Baxter State Park Authority and the Director and provides critical input on important projects, policies, and issues.

In 2024, three long-standing Advisory members stepped down: Tom Goetz who also served as Vice Chair and Chair during his series of terms that began in 2008 and who assisted with several volunteer projects in the Park including lean-to construction, Bob Baribeau, who served since 2014 and contributed his carpentry skills to many projects in the Park, Tom Bradbury whose appointments began in 2013 and who (along with Bob Baribeau), assisted with the Daicey Pond Project, and Brian Threlkeld who has served since 2020. New members in 2024 are Julianna Hansen, Cameron Trubey, and Herb Fithian. The Authority recommended the addition of a Wabanaki member from the Penobscot Nation on the Advisory Committee. That seat is not yet filled.

BSP Advisory Committee	
Rick Bray	Brant Miller - Vice Chair
Carl Carlson, Chair	Edward Pontbriand
Herb Fithian	Carla Ritchie
Julianna Hansen	Cameron Trubey
Charlie Jacobi	*R. Michael White
Lauren Jacobs	Sam Wright

*Baxter Family Member

In 2024 the BSP Advisory Committee worked in several subcommittees (some having been formed in 2022) to address various objectives and projects:

The **Commercial Use Subcommittee** has been working with the Director to further refine the Commercial Use Policy and permit conditions. Members are Bob Baribeau, Charlie Jacobi, Carla Ritchie, Lauren Jacobs, and Ed Pontbriand. The goal was to have a new policy and permit conditions rolled out to commercial users by April 2025.

The **Statement of Purpose Committee** was formed to update the 2010 Statement of Purpose. A draft revision was formed in 2023 and required further review by the incoming Director. Activity in 2024 mainly consisted of Director Adam working with Charlie Jacobi on a minimal basis with the intent of engaging the full subcommittee early in 2025. Members are Anne Huntington, Brant Miller, Charlie Jacobi, and Lauren Jacobs.

The **Reservations Subcommittee** was formed to examine reservation policies and issues, focusing on camping and day use parking reservations (DUPRs). Members are Michael White, Charlie Jacobi, Ed Pontbriand, and Sam Wright

The **Daicey Pond Subcommittee** was established in 2022 as the plans for the Daicey Pond camps' renovations and replacements were being developed. This committee, comprised of Carl Carlson, Tom Goetz, Bob Baribeau, Sam Wright, Mike Perry, and Brant Miller met often with Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Keith Wehmeyer and planned extensively to ensure the rustic nature of the buildings and the historical aesthetic of the campground were maintained, with careful attention to the design and use of materials that balanced this goal with the sustainability and energy efficiency of the structures. As a subcommittee, the group's work in 2024 was minimal, though several advisory members provided significant volunteer services on the project throughout the year.

The **Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps Committee** was formed to assist in assessing conditions and creating a vision for the rustic buildings (camps) and surrounding area once the ownership of all or part of the buildings is obtained by Baxter State Park. Members are Carla Ritchie, Rick Bray, and Charlie Jacobi. When a final agreement is reached, this committee will become active.

In addition to the Park's Advisory Committee, there are independent advisory committees: Investment (for the Parks Endowment and Trust funds), Research, and SFMA. The Leadership Team has made it a priority to keep our advisory committees' memberships at appropriate levels and follow the terms in the respective Statements of Purpose, where they exist, while ensuring that staggered terms allow for the continuity of institutional knowledge. Our committees continue to provide invaluable experience, expertise, and advice and the activities of each of these committees in 2024 are described in the corresponding report sections.

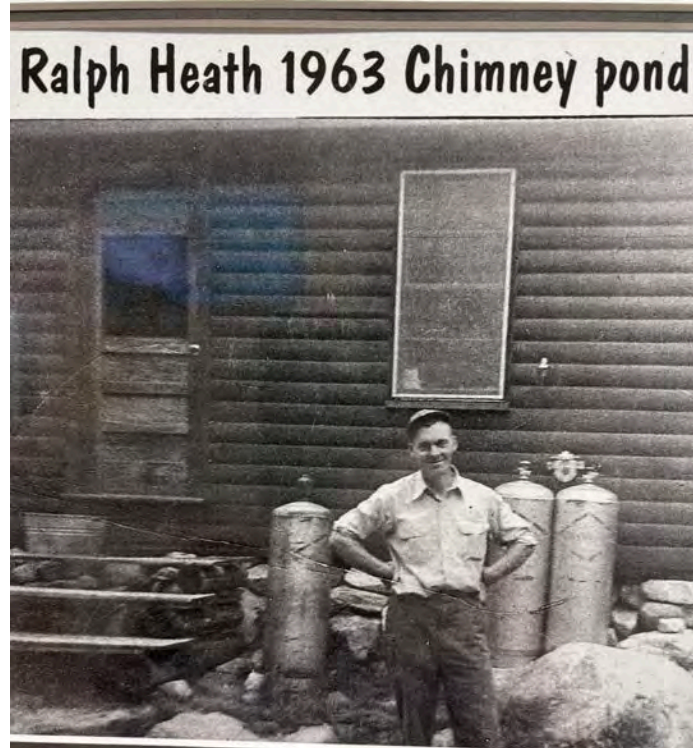
Legislative

The 131st legislature proposed a bill that dealt directly with Percival Baxter's wishes about the composition of the Baxter State Park Authority. LD 294 *An Act to Include a Tribal Member in the Baxter State Park Authority*, involved many hours of effort on the part of the Baxter State Park Leadership Team, along with Assistant Attorney General Lauren Parker in providing facts and

testimony to Attorney General Aaron Frey, who provided testimony to the Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation Committee. Lauren Parker also answered questions from the committee at two separate work sessions. In the second session of the 131st Legislature, the bill did not reach the Governor's desk.

Remembrances

Baxter State Park Law Enforcement Rangers remembered Ranger Ralph Heath's ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty that occurred on October 29, 1963, when he attempted to rescue Margaret Ivusic on the Knife Edge during a blizzard. In honor of Ranger Heath, BSP Rangers attended the Maine Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony held in Augusta, Maine during Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Week. Additionally, District Ranger Rob Tice assisted the family of Ralph Heath and active and retired Baxter State Park employees in having a private ceremony at Ranger Heath's gravesite in Sherman, Maine. In the fall of each year, Ranger staff are assigned the honor of cleaning and preparing the gravesite for this ceremony and placing a fall-themed basket of flowers to honor his memory.



It is with great sadness that this annual report includes the loss of three key Park enthusiasts; one was a long-time advisor, and two were dedicated employees.



Frank Clukey

Former BSP Advisory member Frank Clukey passed away in 2024 at the age of 70. Frank was an ardent supporter of Percival Baxter's vision, providing 20 years of insight and passionate service on the Advisory Committee, and was also an active member of the community.

Former Park Ranger Ester Hendrickson served the Park as the first female Ranger and was stationed at Chimney Pond Campground from 1983 to 1993. Esther succumbed to cancer in September of 2024 at the age of 64.



Ester Hendrickson

Customer Services Representative and avid outdoorsman Tom Power left us way too soon after a bravely fought battle with cancer. Tom worked at the Visitor Center and then at Togue Pond Gate from 2010 through 2024. With his immense knowledge of the Park and his calm presence and easy-going style, he was a mentor to new staff and a favorite among visitors. His smile and sense of humor will be fondly remembered by all who knew him. Tom was 63 years old.



Tom Power

Section 3. Financials

Fee Structure

A review of Baxter State Park's fees is conducted concurrently with the Biennial Budget every two years. Past reviews were completed in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2021. A fee review proposal was approved by the Baxter State Authority in October 2024. Fees will be adjusted in January 2025.

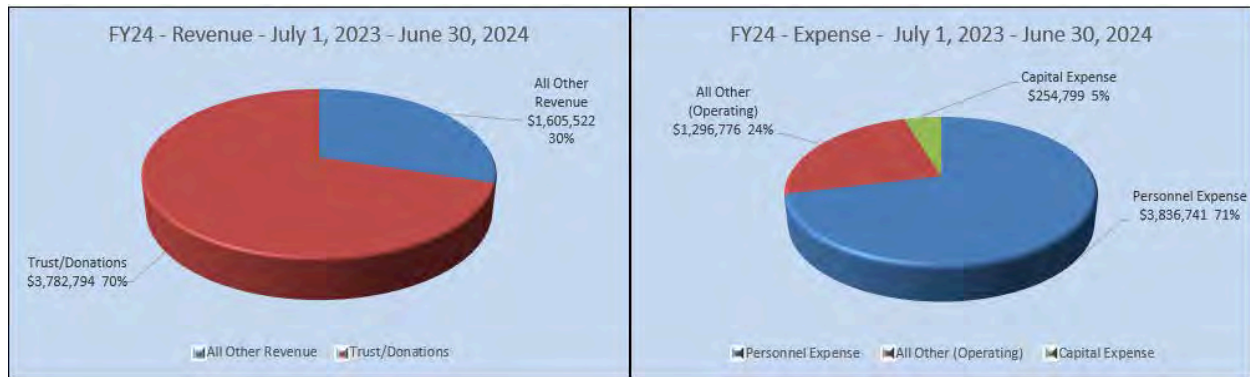
Baxter State Park Fees			
2024			
Winter Rates effective 12/1/2023		Summer Rates effective 1/1/2023	
Entrance Fees	\$0.00	Entrance Fees (non-Maine residents only)	\$16
		Season Pass (for entrance only)	\$42
Camping Fees (per unit, per night)			
Lean-to or Tentsite	\$18	Campground Lean-to or Tentsite	\$34
Chimney Pond Lean-to	\$46	Backcountry Lean-to or Tentsite	\$22
Cabin-2 person	\$60	Bunkhouse- fee per bunk	\$13
Cabin-3 person	\$82	Cabin-2 person	\$60
Cabin-4 person	\$110	Cabin-3 person	\$60
Cabin-6 person	\$142	Cabin-4 person	\$110
Bunkhouse- fee per bunk	\$21	Cabin-6 person	\$142
Chimney Pond Bunkhouse	\$42	Group Site (per person per night)	\$9
		Group site minimum	\$50
		Canoe Rental	\$1/hr, \$8/day
		Bundled firewood	\$5
		Day Use Parking Reservation	\$5
Refunds/Transfers (Winter and Summer)			
Site Transfer			\$16
Refund Fee (refunds are only issued when requested a minimum of 14 days in advance of the camping date)			\$16

Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Biennial Budget

Baxter State Park relies on a variety of revenue sources to finance its operational costs. In FY24 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024) 30% of revenue came from non-resident and camping fees, and 70% was received from trusts established by Percival Baxter, The Baxter Park Wilderness Fund, and other donations. These funds are essential for the ongoing care and maintenance of Baxter State Park, ensuring its preservation for future generations to enjoy. Baxter State Park does not receive State of Maine general funds.

A heartfelt acknowledgment is extended to the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund Trust for their generous donation of \$420,000.00 in 2024, which significantly contributed to 7.8% of the Park's total revenue. Established by the dedicated and passionate Margery and Frank Trautmann, the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund Trust reflects their deep affection for the Park, where Frank spent countless hours volunteering. Their legacy continues to inspire others to contribute to the Park's well-being. The trust is managed by three trustees who are appointed by the Baxter State Park Authority to serve staggered 3-year terms. The current trustees are: John Loyd, Jensen Bissell and William Weickert.

Baxter State Park - FY24/25 Biennial Budget		
	FY24 Actual 07/01/23-06/30/24	FY25 Budget 07/01/24 - 06/30/25
Revenue		
Park Services	\$1,605,522	\$1,458,130
Other Trusts and Donations	\$458,782	\$702,336
BNY Wealth Endowment	\$3,324,012	\$3,891,191
Total Revenue	\$5,388,316	\$6,051,657
Expense		
Personnel Services	\$3,836,741	\$4,140,392
All Other	\$1,296,776	\$1,566,265
Capital	\$254,799	\$345,000
Total Expense	\$5,388,316	\$6,051,657



Expense Notes

- Personnel Services: Employee Salary and Benefit costs
- All Other: Professional and contracted services*, vehicle operation, utility services, rents, repairs, insurance, general operations, equipment and technology, uniforms, office and other supplies, statewide cost allocation

*Professional and contracted services include: building security, building maintenance, building and maintenance inspections, fire safety equipment and inspections, heating, cooling, and propane services, generator and solar system, two-way radio services, phone and cellular service, employee training and development, engineering, IT Network and Infrastructure service and support, firewood processing, road and bridge maintenance, dispatch, administrative services provided by the Natural Resource and Service Center, trail maintenance, vehicle and heavy equipment maintenance and environmental services

- Capital: Vehicle fleet, building, land, and road infrastructure

Investment Committee and BNY Wealth

The Investment Committee's purpose is to provide long-term direction to the Baxter State Park Authority for the investment and spending of the Park's endowment fund. The primary objectives of the committee are as follows:

1. To provide as much spendable income as possible for the Park now and in the future, with neither period favored at the expense of the other.
2. The goal is for the spendable income to be somewhat predictable in the near term and not decline significantly at any time.
3. To keep the market value of the endowment assets whole, after inflation, while recognizing that normal security price gyrations may keep market values over- or underpriced for several years at a time.
4. To avoid risks that might impair the ability to meet Objectives 1, 2, and 3.

BNY Wealth has served as the investment manager for the Endowment since 1990. Before 1990, Boston Safe Deposit & Trust was appointed sole trustee for the Percival Baxter Trust on July 6, 1927.

Baxter State Park Investment Committee	
Name, Title	Expertise
Brian Noyes, Board Chair of R. M. Davis, Inc.	Brian brings over 40 years of for-profit and non-profit board and investment committee experience. R.M. Davis, Inc., is a wealth management company.
Michael Daley, Senior Portfolio Manager, BNY Wealth	As a Senior Portfolio Manager, Mike oversees portfolio construction, asset allocation, manager selection, and comprehensive investment reporting across his nonprofit client base.
John Loyd, Retired Attorney	John is a retired attorney and has served on Park committees for over 40 years including 30 years as a member of the Investment Committee. John is a trustee of the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund Trust.
Edward Creedon, Managing Director, HICO Investment Group	Ned has been investing in private markets for nearly 20 years on behalf of institutional investors, including public pensions, endowments, foundations, and family offices.
James Bennett, CFA, Chief Investment Officer, MainePERS	As CIO, Jim oversees the management of MainePERS' \$20 billion portfolio, focusing on strategic asset allocation and portfolio construction. MainePERS has investment responsible for assets covering pensions for Maine teachers and employees
Rupert White, Grand Nephew of Percival P. Baxter	In addition to providing family lineage and rich historical knowledge, Rupert brings 60 years of experience as an investor to the Investment Committee.
Scott Kenney, SVP, Director of Wealth Management, Bangor Savings Bank	Scott is the Managing Director of Bangor Wealth Management and serves on the Bank's Senior Leadership and Asset/Liability Management committees. He also serves as the President of Bangor Wealth Management of New Hampshire.
Steve Hutnak, CPA, MST. Founder and Practice Leader of S.A. Hutnak & Associates, LLC	Steve brings a deep understanding of complex accounting and tax matters to benefit his clients in building and maintaining wealth. He has over 25 years of personal and professional experience with the Park while serving on multiple committees.
Jessamyn Larabee-Norton, Chief Investment Officer, Spinnaker Trust	Jessamyn was the former Chief Investment Officer, Principal, and Executive Vice President at Spinnaker Trust in Portland, Maine.
Jeremy Baker, Investment Strategist	Jeremy brings expertise in investment strategy and asset allocation alternatives.

Section 4. Business Administration/Human Resources

Staffing

Lori Morrison became a member of the Park's Leadership team in January 2023 when she took on the role of Director of Administrative Services. In this capacity, she is responsible for steering the financial operations of the Park, ensuring that budgeting development and practices are both efficient and strategically aligned with the Park's long-term objectives. Her role encompasses a broad range of responsibilities, including the management of human resources, oversight of information and technology, enhancement of customer service standards, and optimization of reservation operations, all designed to create a seamless experience for visitors and staff alike.

Matthew McGuire joined the leadership team filling a crucial leadership role as the new Chief Ranger in the fall of 2024. The recruitment process for the Chief Ranger position was thorough, involving a national search that focused on outdoor-oriented job listing services. Candidates underwent a rigorous selection process that included essay submissions, in-person interviews, and the preparation of presentations for the hiring committee. Finalists then completed a second, informal interview involving a day trip into the Park to discuss ongoing projects and challenges. Ultimately, McGuire distinguished himself throughout this process.

The Park's human resources administrator left for a career advancing opportunity in State Government. This position was re-classified as Business Administrator to better reflect current responsibilities. Jessica Wheaton joined the Park team and plays a vital role by providing a wide range of administrative support. She serves as the Human Resources Administrator and Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, managing employee relations that include hiring, onboarding, benefits administration, payroll processing, and all other employee-related needs. Additionally, she provides essential financial services support, including both accounts payable and accounts receivable processes. Her contributions are crucial to maintaining an efficient and well-organized business environment.

Bryan Buhler became an integral part of the Park's administrative team, taking on the role of Park Services Manager in the Spring of 2024. This new position is a result of a reclassification that eliminated the Office Associate II supervisory position. Bryan oversees the dedicated customer service representative team stationed at Headquarters, Togue Pond Gate, Matagamon Gate, and the Visitor Center. Bryan brought with him a wealth of experience in team leadership, training, and project management, which proved to be invaluable in his new position. He implemented comprehensive onboarding and training programs that not only helped new staff members acclimate quickly but also enhanced the skills of existing employees. Additionally, Bryan played a pivotal role in facilitating a seamless transition to upgraded reservation software, ensuring that all staff were well-equipped to navigate the new system. His efforts significantly contributed to the efficient operation of the Park's services, enhancing both staff performance and visitor satisfaction.

Laura Whitney was hired to fill the Supervisory Law Enforcement position managing the

Chimney Pond and Roaring Brook campgrounds. Laura has worked at Baxter State Park for three seasons as a Campground Ranger. More information can be found about Laura's journey to become a Law Enforcement Ranger on page 34.

The Daicey Pond Project created employment opportunities for the duration of the initiative. As part of the project, a Functional Job Analysis was conducted, leading to the establishment of limited-period positions. Jesse LaPorte was promoted to the position of Building Maintenance Superintendent. Four Conservation Aid positions were created for the period from May to November, which were filled by Dawson McKenny and staff hired through a contracted staffing agency (due to a lack of candidates to fill the positions directly). Additionally, two Winter Conservation Aid positions began work on January 2025, filled by Dawson McKenny and Alex Mangus.

After conducting an extensive job analysis over several years with the assistance of Amanda Beckwith (the Director of Human Resources at the Natural Resource Service Center) and her team in Augusta, several opportunities for position reclassifications were identified. A Supervisory Law Enforcement role is in the process of being reclassified and retitled to the Baxter State Park Law Enforcement Ranger, a non-supervisory law enforcement position to provide more focused oversight of the Park's vast fisheries and wildlife resources. Additionally, the Baxter State Park Law Enforcement Ranger title changed to Baxter State Park Supervisory Law Enforcement Ranger to more accurately reflect the responsibilities of these positions; the three Supervisory Rangers, along with one Baxter Park Supervisor, now oversee two campgrounds and five campground rangers each.

Recruitment and Retention for seasonal employees continued to be a high priority for Park staff. The process starts annually at the end of December, as positions are resigned and the effort continues through early May, just prior to the season opening. In the last three years, we experienced a significant turnover in Customer Representatives at Togue Pond and Matagamon Gates, and 2024 was no different. Supervisors spent a significant amount of time responding to staffing shortages and shift vacancies, often developing creative solutions to meet the operational needs of the Park. The consequences of these staffing issues are supervisors spending far too much time filling position and schedule gaps. This reduces the supervising staff's available time to impact process improvements. At the end of 2024, with the exception of the Baxter State Park Law Enforcement Ranger, all full-time positions were successfully filled. For the 2025 season, the recruitment strategy will include a focus on utilizing diverse recruitment channels like social media, niche job boards, national parks, recreation job boards, recruitment fairs, and local community newspapers.

Contracts were negotiated in 2023 and in 2024, state employees, including Baxter State Park, received generous enhancements to compensation and benefits. Baxter State Park collaborates with several different unions and bargaining units within those unions that represent full-time and seasonal employees. As a result of recent negotiations, the majority of BSP employees received a 13% pay raise and an \$800.00 prorated lump sum payment. Then in October of 2024, as the result of a State of Maine resolution, employees received a \$2,000.00 prorated lump sum payment. Over the last several years, Baxter State Park has filed many different management-initiated Functional Job Analysis (FJA) requests for multiple positions to reclassify or create new positions, raise pay ranges to bring external equity in the workforce, and minimize pay gaps that exist within the Park. We have been successful with many efforts and will

continue to evaluate positions, job descriptions, wages, and benefits to attract and retain the most talented workforce that we can.

Training

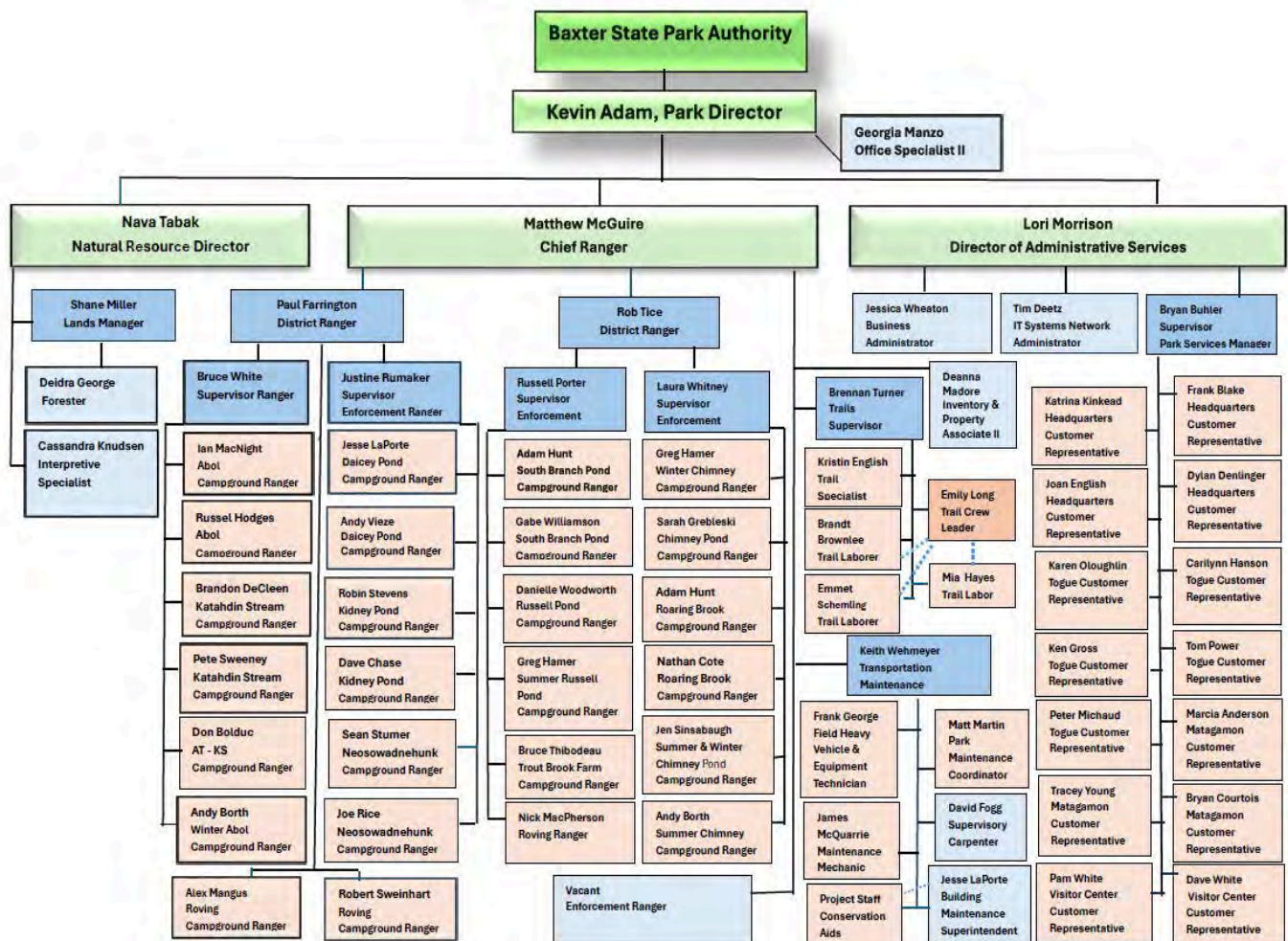
The leadership team recognized a significant need for employee training focused on career development. The Park opened an opportunity to select staff to enroll in the Institute for Civic Leadership, a program offered by the Maine Development Foundation. Baxter State Park opened this opportunity to select employees, resulting in strong interest from the staff. Ultimately, two candidates were chosen to participate: Park Services Manager Bryan Buhler and Maintenance Supervisor Keith Weymeyer are attending the program and are expected to gain enhanced supervisory skills that will benefit Baxter State Park.

Baxter State Park encompasses some of the most rugged terrain in the Northeast, which requires staff to be prepared and confident in their ability to respond to various incidents in extreme weather conditions. New seasonal staff are onboarded in early May with two weeks of training. Returning seasonal staff join the new seasonal staff at the beginning of week two for an entire week dedicated to training. During these two weeks, staff participated in various trainings, including Wilderness Advanced First Aid, CPR, Low Angle Rescue, and equipment maintenance, to name a few.

Baxter State Park recognizes the importance of continued education for its employees' success. Training continues throughout the year in many forms at Baxter State Park. Supervisory Rangers conduct Toolbox Talks and check-ins with individuals and small groups of staff, focusing on policies and processes in the work environment. These discussions empower staff to share thoughts and ideas through collaboration. Additional training offered this year was in partnership with Maine Forest Service, Safety Works, OSHA, Maine Development Foundation, and the Maine Association for Search and Rescue. Individuals also attended trainings and learning opportunities specific to their professions, such as forestry-related workshops, an alpine stewardship summit, and the Maine Master Naturalist program.

In 2024, BSP employed a total of 70 staff members, comprising 24 full-time employees and 45 seasonal workers. This staffing configuration reflects the organization's commitment to its current workforce, as the number of staff has remained consistent since 2023. Looking ahead, BSP plans to maintain this staffing level in 2025, anticipating that the same number of personnel will continue to effectively meet the demands of the Park's operations throughout the upcoming year.

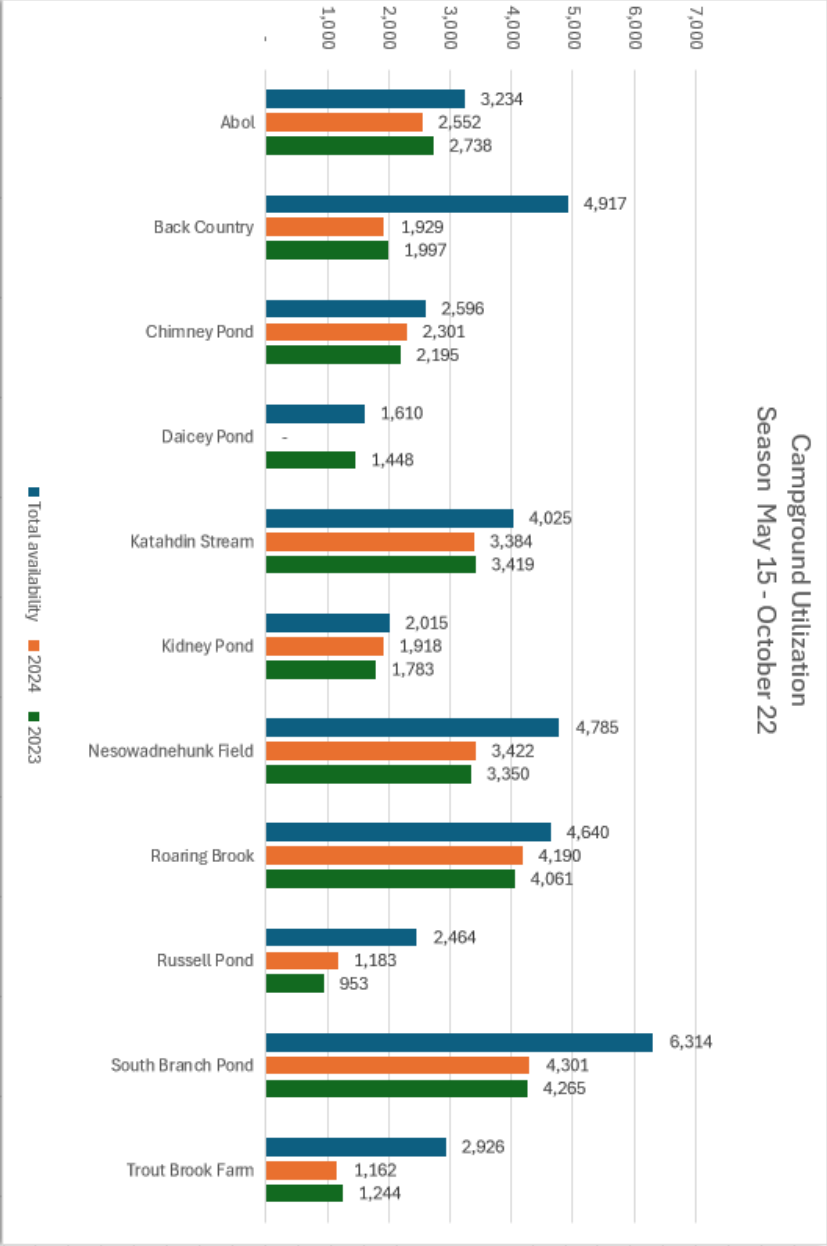
Baxter State Park – Organizational Chart



Season End October-2024

Campground Utilization

The chart below illustrates that campground reservations for 2024 were remarkably stable and aligned closely with previous years' utilization rates. One notable exception to these trends resulted from the closure of Daicey Pond, which impacted the combined annual totals. In contrast, several campgrounds - namely Chimney Pond, Kidney Pond, Nesowadnehunk Field, Roaring Brook, Russell Pond, and South Branch Pond - experienced higher levels of utilization than what was recorded in 2023.



Day Use Parking Reservation (DUPR) Utilization

DUPRs became available for purchase by Maine residents on April 1, 2024, for dates from June 1, 2024, to October 15, 2024. Due to the seasonal closure of the Katahdin and Traveler Loop Trails on October 14, 2024, refunds were issued for passes sold for October 15, 2024. Excluding October 15th, 97% of the available DUPRs were sold for the season. The no-show rate (the percentage of sold DUPRs that were not utilized) for 2024 was 64%; however, many of those passes were reissued to visitors who were waiting in line at the time of the DUPRs' expiration (7 am each morning). The total seasonal statistics are as follows and are demonstrated on the All Trailhead DUPR chart in the Appendices:

- DUPRs available: 8,432
- DUPRs sold: 7,978
- DUPRs sold to residents: 72%
- DUPRs sold to non-residents: 28%.

Winter Lottery

The winter lottery took place on November 1, 2024, with commercial applications accepted on the next business day, Monday, November 4, 2024. The following Lottery data compares the reservations processed in 2023 and 2022.

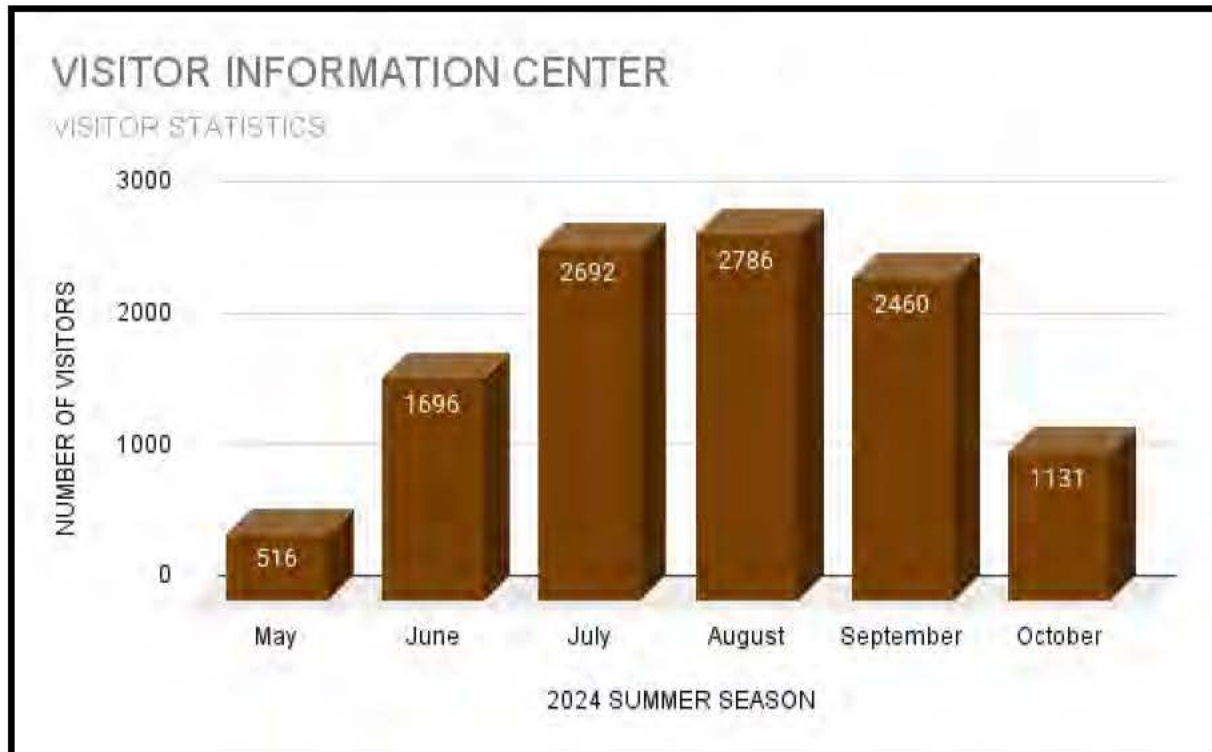
Winter Lottery			
Year Lottery Winter Reservations	11/1/24 Total Reservations	In-Person Attendance	Received by Mail, processed 11/1/24
2024	141	89	52
2023	174	91	83
2022	83	56	27

Year	Total Reservations Commercial Use Permits 11/4/24
2024	3
2023	13
2022	9

Year	Revenue Including Commercial 11/1-11/4
2024	\$77,362
2023	\$88,779
2022	\$73,147

Visitor Information Center Statistics

During the summer of 2024, the Visitor Information Center welcomed 11,281 visitors, marking an increase of 3.77% or 410 visitors compared to the previous year. The Visitor Center welcomed guests from 49 states, 45 countries, and 9 Canadian provinces. Visitors sought assistance with trail information, recommendations for hiking and fishing, tips on the best locations for wildlife spotting in the Park, and acquired maps, patches, or books.



Reservation Software Upgrade

We've modernized and streamlined the reservation system to make it faster, more reliable, and easier to use. By upgrading our underlying software, improving how we manage data, and refining the overall look and navigation, we've created a smoother experience for visitors and a simpler, more efficient system for our staff. These enhancements ensure that booking and managing reservations at Baxter State Park is now more user-friendly, responsive, and ready to support future improvements.

The system has been completely rewritten and revised due to outdated languages, runtimes, frameworks, and server build packs. This update addressed technical debt and improved the user interface. Previously, there was no caching apart from browser caching, but now users receive notifications when updates occur. A new cache database has been added, reducing the load on the main database and increasing site speed. Database procedures have also been optimized, preventing the need for an expensive database server upgrade.

Reservations Subcommittee

A subcommittee of the Park's Advisory Committee was organized to review reservation processes to identify opportunities for enhancing visitor experience and overall system improvements. Park staff members Lori Morrison, Bryan Buhler, and Katrina Kinkead worked directly with the group. The subcommittee convened on October 4, 2024, and continued to meet biweekly through November. The goal of the subcommittee was to review processes identified by staff as being high priority, including DUPRs, Park access before camping check-in, rolling reservations and extensions, and the online reservation start time.

The BSPA endorsed the following changes for the 2025 summer/fall season. These changes address needs identified based on visitor use data and experiences, and are aimed at providing fair access opportunities as envisioned by Governor Baxter and clarifying and streamlining the reservations and planning process for Park visitors.

1. A parking reservation/pass for use of all trails departing from trailheads that include Katahdin trails will be called a Katahdin Trailhead Pass (KTP).
2. The cost of a single Katahdin Trailhead Pass will be \$10.00 per vehicle.
3. On April 1st, all visitors will have access to reserve a maximum of 2 KTPs per month for the season June - October.

Information Technology

In 2023/2024, the IT and Networking Department focused on maintenance and enhancement projects, prioritizing system stabilization and improvements. Below are a few of the highlights from the past two years.

- Existing satellite internet services (phone and Wi-Fi) in the Park have been upgraded. Starlink Satellite services were installed at the Togue Pond Gatehouse, Togue Pond Ranger Camp, Matagamon Gatehouse, and SFMA Hemlock Camp, and Hughes Net services were upgraded at the SFMA's North End Camps. Internet access is available only to staff for essential job functions.
- A computer replacement cycle project was established, resulting in the deployment of twenty-eight new computers. Some older laptops were refurbished and stored for emergency readiness.
- All other laptops were upgraded to Windows 11 with 16 GB of RAM.
- A new data collection model was created, implementing dynamic statistical analyses for all major areas of data collection, including trails, campground people & occupancy, financial data, parking, AT hikers, gate vehicles & people, visitor center activities, and reservation calls.
- Firewalls were installed at the gates, and internal staff internet traffic is now directed back to Park Headquarters to reduce the risk of outside cyberattacks and unnecessary network traffic.
- A new server was installed at Headquarters to replace an aging six-year-old server, which now handles file server and caching. Additionally, a second uninterruptible power supply (UPS) was added to the primary rack at Headquarters to support the new server and better manage the electrical demand of devices within the main rack.

Cyber Security

The Park is implementing various measures to protect itself from cybercrime and security threats, to ensure the security of our systems, we now scan all official emails for viruses. We utilize SentinelOne for antivirus protection on all computers, continuously monitoring them and sending immediate alerts if a virus is detected. We prioritize any identified infections and respond promptly, removing the affected device from the network if necessary. We separate network traffic using different SSIDs for guests and employees. We also use VLANs for IP phones and remote connections. A Meraki Dashboard helps us monitor wireless traffic, while Cisco Umbrella protects against DNS threats. Each remote site has its own firewall, which sends traffic to our headquarters, which also has a firewall. Staff with state of Maine accounts participate in the state of Maine's annual Security Awareness Training to ensure they have the highest level of knowledge.

Section 5. Operations

Baxter State Park's Chief Ranger oversees the day-to-day field operations and leads and coordinates the activities of the Maintenance and Transportation Department, Trails Department, campground operations, inventory and property, and law enforcement. The search and rescue and wildland fire programs are integral to the safety and protection of Park visitors and resources and also fall within the Park's field operations.

Maintenance Highlights

The Park's Maintenance and Transportation Department consists of the Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor, Field Heavy Vehicle and Equipment Technician, Park Supervisor Carpenter, Park Maintenance Coordinator, and Park Maintenance Worker. This department maintains and repairs all major Baxter Park infrastructure, including structures, photovoltaic (solar) systems, 38 vehicles, 25 snowmobiles, 3 dump trucks, and all major and minor field equipment.

All four Maintenance Department crew members spent multiple days working along the Park's Tote Road in the spring removing blown-down trees from along the road corridor. These trees were either hauled to locations in the Park to be turned into firewood by Campground Rangers (approximately 8 to 10 cords), or hauled out to where they will be milled into lumber for future Park projects. In the spring, the crew also rock-raked and removed brush from the interior of the Park's road system between Nesowadnehunk and Trout Brook crossing, allowing this final portion of the Tote Road to be opened for the season. Additionally, Maintenance personnel spent multiple days hauling gravel on the Park's north end from the East Branch pit to repair significant winter storm damage.

In June, Edward Stamborski of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) came to inspect the Park's Black Brook Service Area. This site was previously permitted by DEP as an approved disposal area for the Park's septic waste. Waste disposal at this location was halted 5 years ago to better align with the Park's mission and the Park worked with DEP to surrender this

permit. Waste disposal is currently a contracted service and this year over 20,000 gallons of waste were pumped from more than 40 outhouses and 4 septic tanks.

Stream Restoration Specialist Alex Abbott was contracted to assess stream crossings along the Tote Road that are undersized, susceptible to failure during extreme weather events and inhibit passage for aquatic organisms. The goal is to improve both the capacity of the crossing and eliminate the barrier presented to fish and other wildlife. Mr. Abbott has vast experience in stream survey and crossing design and was referred to the Park by staff from Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Mr. Abbott worked with Park staff to survey the road crossing at Bear Brook along the Roaring Brook Road, which has washed out multiple times in the last two years. Additional surveys are also planned for three crossings on the north end of the Park: South Branch Campground, Dry Brook, and Littlefield Brook.



New Propane Platform, Chimney Pond

The Maintenance Department continued to maintain and repair all of the Park's propane appliances and lights attached to Ranger Camps and gatehouses. Several propane water heaters were installed in the Park, including in the second Ranger Cabin at Roaring Brook, the Trapper John cabin, and two water heaters at the SFMA Hemlock Camps. New propane platforms were installed at the Chimney Pond Ranger Camp and Crew Cabin.

Tree root intrusion caused a failure in the leachfield (installed in 1993) and issues with the septic system that serves the Visitor Center and Trapper John cabins. Edward MacArthur, a local septic designer, generated plans for a new leach field and distribution system, and handled the permitting of the project.

The new field that was installed at the end of September utilizes pre-cast concrete chambers to mitigate future root issues.

Park staff worked with the New England Outdoor Center (NEOC) to coordinate the replacement



Nesowadnehunk Gravel Pit

of the bridge over Rum Brook on the Logan Pond Road in the Park. This road is not used for Park operations but has easements for Millinocket Middle School and The Nature Conservancy to access their respective properties. The Logan Pond Road also serves as a major snowmobile connector to locations outside the Park, and NEOC relies on this bridge to groom and maintain this trail. The bridge replacement was not funded by the Park; however, Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Keith Wehmeyer and Land Manager Shane Miller provided oversight

of the bridge replacement to ensure construction activity did not conflict with the Park's natural resource protection.

The Park faced many challenges with solar electric systems in 2024, primarily aged and failing batteries, the need for increased capacity at some sites, and unreliable backup generators. In response to these challenges, a new solar installation at the Visitor Center began this fall. A pole that will hold the solar array and conduit into the Visitor Center was installed by maintenance personnel in preparation for further work in the spring of 2025. The new installation will allow for increased power capacity at the Visitor Center and the addition of internet access for staff to use to assist visitors and other operations. These solar electric issues shed light on the Park's need to monitor these systems more consistently and consider more robust systems as operational needs evolve.

Road contractor A&A Brochu replaced the 60' deck on the Trout Brook Crossing bridge, including both the transverse timbers and the wear layer. The crossing was closed for multiple days during the replacement project but was reopened ahead of schedule.

The Maintenance Department also worked with A&A Brochu on multiple areas of road resurfacing and cross-drain culvert replacements. Over 1,000 cubic yards of gravel were hauled and distributed along the Tote Road. Culvert work took place between Ledge Falls and the Dwelly Pond Trailhead. Five non-functioning or damaged steel culverts were replaced, and two cross-drain culverts were added. Additionally, the Maintenance Department and contractors hauled and stockpiled gravel from Nesowadnehun Pit near the Park's south gate..

The Park is currently on a cycle of replacing two fleet vehicles each year to ensure that staff have safe, well-functioning vehicles to conduct Park operations. In 2024, the Park purchased two new pickup trucks: one ½-ton truck was assigned to Law Enforcement staff and one ¾-ton truck was assigned to the Maintenance Department.

Daicey Pond Project

Following significant planning and preparation, the Daicey Pond cabin rebuilding project began in earnest in 2024. Spruce logs were harvested in the SFMA and debarked by a contractor based in Patten.



Daicey Pond Cabin 1 prior to renovations



Daicey Pond Cabin 1 nearing completion

The Park hired a Building Maintenance Superintendent for the Daicey Pond Project to oversee the on-site, day-to-day operations. In February of this year, the Park's Maintenance and Trails Departments took advantage of frozen ground and snow to strategically stage more than sixty logs in the construction area.



Daicey Pond Cabin 2, completely new construction

Additional project-dedicated staff were hired to carry out the work of repairing and replacing the historic cabins. These dedicated project positions included four Daicey Crew Member positions.

Cabin 10 at Daicey Pond was temporarily converted to housing for the Daicey Crew Members, with the addition of a propane water heater, propane stove, sink, cabinets, countertops, and a small shower house.

An overview of project progress is provided to the public on the Baxter State Park website, maintained by the park's Interpretive Specialist, utilizing reports from the Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor. The table below is a synopsis of the work completed in 2024 on the Daicey Pond cabins:

Structure	Description of Work Completed	Percentage of Planned Work Completed
Cabin 1 (<i>Owl's Nest</i>)	Cabin jacked and leveled, new footings, new roof purlins and sheathing with new roof orientation, replacement of rotten porch sill log, exterior and interior Perma chinking, new gable end walls with shingles, new door, new porch railings, new metal roof with metalbestos chimney, exterior stain.	90%
Cabin 2 (<i>Lady Slipper</i>)	Complete re-build.	90%

Cabin 3 (<i>Tamarack</i>)	Cabin jacked and leveled, new footings, new roof purlins and sheathing, replacement of rotten porch sill log, exterior and interior Perma chinking, new gable end walls with shingles, new door, new windows, new porch railings, new metal roof with metalbestos chimney, exterior stain.	95%
Cabin 4 (<i>Chipmunk Hollow</i>)	Complete re-build.	90%
Cabin 5 (<i>Mountain View</i>)	Cabin jacked and leveled, new footings, new roof purlins and sheathing, replacement of two rotten sill logs and one rotten wall log, exterior and interior Perma chinking, new gable end walls with shingles, new door, new porch railings, new metal roof with metalbestos chimney, exterior stain.	90%
Cabin 6 (<i>Blue Lodge</i>)	New roof purlins and sheathing, new metal roofing with metalbestos stovepipe.	80%
Cabin 7 (<i>Loon Lodge</i>)	New roof purlins and sheathing, new metal roofing with metalbestos stovepipe.	70%
Cabin 8 (<i>Birch Bark</i>)	New roof purlins and sheathing, new metal roofing with metalbestos stovepipe.	70%
Cabin 9 (<i>Whispering Pines</i>)	Multiple sill logs and entire sections of wall logs have been replaced, cabin jacked and leveled, roof structure and porch have been rebuilt, new metal roofing with metalbestos stovepipe.	75%
Cabin 10 (<i>Nature at Peace</i>)	Installation and removal of temporary staff amenities.	50%

Along with the Daicey project crew, staff including the Park Carpenter, Park Maintenance Coordinator, Daicey Pond Campground Rangers, Roving Rangers, and Supervisory Law Enforcement Rangers have made significant contributions to this project. As a result, seven of the ten Daicey Pond cabins will be open for public camping in the Spring of 2025, with the remainder of the cabins anticipated to be open for public use by early summer 2025.

The work being conducted on the project is successfully preventing further deterioration of these iconic structures while adhering to Governor Baxter's wish to maintain the rustic character of the campground.

Trails Highlights

Baxter State Park has more than 220 miles of trails. The department is led by the Trail Supervisor, who coordinates projects and planning with the Trail Specialist. The work of a small seasonal crew is supplemented by contracted trail companies, organizations, and volunteers. The Baxter Youth Conservation Corps (BYCC, see below) generously funded and run by the Friends of Baxter State Park, assists with trail projects annually and provides an opportunity for the Trails Department to teach and mentor youth who may seek employment at Baxter State Park or pursue other conservation careers in the future.



BSP Trails Team (L-R) Emmet Schmeling, Emily Long, Brandt Brownlee, Kris English, Brennan Turner, Mia Hayes

In 2024, the Trail Crew focused on specialized training in Search and Rescue, wildland firefighting and pumps, mechanical advantage systems including grip hoist rigging and block and tackle setups, and two days of chainsaw training. Trails Supervisor Brennan Turner is the Park's chainsaw instructor and Trail Crew members are certified as "B" sawyers (limbing and



Trail Adopters on National Trails Day

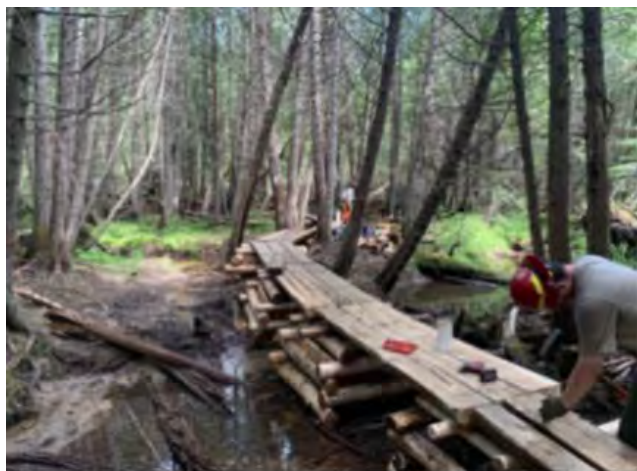
bucking only). Turner also instructed two chainsaw courses for other Park staff, utilizing an area around the Newsoudnahunk walk-in sites heavily impacted by blowdowns. These courses certified 17 staff as "B" sawyers. Additionally, Trail Specialist Kris English attended timber bridge building and trail project management

classes in North Conway, New Hampshire at the annual Trails College, hosted by the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Early summer saw the Trail Crew removing blowdowns throughout the north end of the Park, Five Ponds Loop trail, Fowler Ponds Trails, Doubletop Mountain, OJI Trail, and Marston Trails.

The Park hosted a National Trails Day event in early June where volunteers worked on the OJI Trail relocation. The trail crew and the Natural Resource Department worked together to replace all the string fencing on the west side of Katahdin's Tablelands.

During the height of the summer season, the trail crew rebuilt the bog bridging boardwalk at the Grassy Pond outlet along the Appalachian Trail, approximately 0.4 miles south of Katahdin Stream Campground. This



Grassy Pond Bog Bridging

project required the disassembly of existing structures in order to re-use good material that had been installed in 2021. After the structure was disassembled, the boardwalk was rebuilt on top of a series of log cribbing, each of which was then loaded with a box made of cedar harvested from the SFMA. These boxes were filled with stone and sand to weigh down the structure and make it more resilient to major flooding events. A total of 90 feet of bog bridging was replaced. In addition to the Grassy Pond structure, the Trail Crew cleared overgrown sections of the Dwelley Pond Trail.



Mia Hayes drills & splits granite for Hunt Trail stone staircase project



Hunt Trail Staircase

In August, the Trail Crew focused on rebuilding the stone retaining wall that supports the streambank on the eastern side of Upper Saddle Brook crossing. This wall is critical to supporting the 30-foot bridge over the flood channel crossing. In total, 32 stones were set to establish the footer of the retaining wall. 71 feet of bog bridging around Basin Ponds was replaced due to excessive rot and deterioration. Additionally, the Trail Crew replaced 50 feet of bog bridging around Sandy Stream Pond, and log stringers for the new OJI bridge crossing were prepped and set.

The crew continued on the Hunt Trail Relocation that was started in 2016. The crew built a large arcing stone staircase that carries the trail around a significant climbing turn. Challenged with cold nights, repeated bear sightings, and some rainy days, the crew built an exceptional structure that will prevent erosion and minimize hiker impact for decades to come. 15 stone steps were set, and many square feet of riprap were placed to prevent erosion around the staircase.

The Trail Crew finished their summer season by conducting maintenance on the braided Saddle Trail to repair and improve some of the scree walls that delineate the Saddle Trail to keep hikers on the trail and reduce the impact on the surrounding area. These scree walls will be paired with additional improvements that will encourage hikers to stay on the trail and slow down the impacts of rain-induced erosion.

One noticeable change for visitors is that the Sentinel Mountain Trail that connects Kidney Pond and Daicey Pond Campgrounds has been renamed the Kidney Pond Trail. This new naming scheme will reduce confusion and sign clutter.

The Park's Trail Supervisor and Trail Specialist work together in the off-season to prioritize trail projects and develop work plans for the next year. The Trails department is also responsible for manufacturing new and replacement signs, fabricated during the off-season at the Park's carpentry shop. A great deal of foresight, planning, coordination, and staging of materials must be carried out each year by the Trail Supervisor and Trail Specialist to ensure that projects are completed on schedule and on budget.



Upper Saddle Brook Bridge and armored streambank

Baxter Youth Conservation Corps

The Baxter Youth Conservation Corps (BYCC) is a job training and service-learning program hosted by the Friends of Baxter State Park. Employing area high school students and recent graduates, the BYCC provides the Park with trail work to assist Baxter State Park. Work conducted during the summer of 2024 by the BYCC trail crew included brushing back the Kettle Ponds Trail and cleaning drainages on the Abol and Chimney Pond trails. The BYCC crew finished their time in the Park assisting the BSP Trail Crew in finalizing and constructing portions of the OJI reroute.

Trail Supervisor Turner instructed BYCC members on trail construction techniques and wilderness ethics. The goals of this program not only include on-the-job training for area youth, but it also serves as an opportunity to develop future Park employees and appreciation for Baxter State Park.

Maine Conservation Corps

BSP utilized the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) during the 2024 summer season to conduct deferred trail maintenance and allow the Park's trail crew the ability to focus on technical trail projects and water crossings. During two sessions totaling 10 weeks, the MCC worked to clear blowdowns on the 5 Ponds Loop and Trout Brook Mountain trails, brushed back overgrown trail corridors in the north end of the Park, conducted improvements to the Dwelley Pond Trail, and corridor clearing along the Wassataquoik Lake Trail. Additional corridor clearing and blazing occurred on the Center Ridge Trail from the Pogy Notch Junction to the summit of the Peak of the Ridges, a project that has been a high priority for the Park. The MCC was also able to brush back the dense spruce forest that had engulfed the trail between North Traveler and The

Traveler, a time-consuming and overdue project. Finally, the MCC brushed back and blazed five miles of trail corridor along the Pogy Notch Trail south of South Branch campground.

As climate change and extreme weather events challenge the Trails Department to react to such events and construct more robust trails, contractors such as the Maine Conservation Corps will continue to play a role in assisting the Park with general trail maintenance.

Appalachian Trail

Appalachian Trail (AT) hiker registrations were on par with 2023 until the Katahdin Massif and Traveler Loop were closed for the season on October 14th due to snow, ice, and variable temperatures. The Park recorded 2,335 AT hikers through October 14th, compared to 2023, which saw 2,383 AT hikers registering through October 23, 2023. Baxter State Park continued collaborating with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to manage the use of the AT in BSP (an effort that began in 2017 following a request by Baxter State Park Authority member, Commissioner Chandler Woodcock, who expressed concern about the number of search and rescue incidents in the 100 Mile Wilderness). Over time, many of the issues have been addressed thanks to the relationships formed with the Monson Visitor Center staff, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, Friends of Baxter, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, the Maine Warden Service, the Maine Forest Service, and the Maine Army National Guard. The information sharing that occurs in the Spring AT Meeting and throughout the season is creating a better, more informed, and safer experience for AT hikers entering Baxter State Park. Supervisor Ranger Bruce White has been pivotal in the coordination of these meetings, and fostering communication with all parties.

Supervisory Ranger Bruce White also coordinated a meeting on October 25th between Baxter State Park, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, and the Monson Visitor Center to review the 2024 AT season. This “lessons learned” session was insightful to all who attended, and there is agreement that communication between all interested parties remains paramount.

Information provided at the Park’s AT Kiosk, the Katahdin Stream Ranger Station, and the daily 5:00 PM talk to AT hikers camping at the Birches, has reduced incidents and allowed the Park to provide constructive messaging and assist hikers with logistics. Supervisory Ranger Bruce White, Campground Rangers Pete Sweeney and Brandon DeCleene, AT Ranger Don Bolduc, and ATC Golden Road Ridegerunner Melonie Schuck, have played critical roles in educating and assisting AT hikers.

Enforcement Operations

Baxter State Park field and law enforcement operations are overseen by two District Rangers and four Law Enforcement / Supervisory Rangers. From May to October, these six year-round rangers supervise a seasonal staff of twenty Campground Rangers, three Roving Rangers, and the Appalachian Trail Ranger. The Park operates eight roadside and two backcountry campgrounds during these months. Additionally, from December through March, the Park has three Winter Rangers, two who are based at Chimney Pond and one who is based at Abol.

Park law enforcement completed multiple State of Maine training classes that are required for rangers to keep their state law enforcement certification. Training included mental health first aid training, active shooter training, criminal justice information service and security training (CJIS), state-mandated annual law enforcement case law training, and mandatory firearms qualifications with the Maine Warden Service.. The Maine Forest Service Aviation Division also assisted with Park operations by flying supplies that could not be hauled into Russell Pond because of poor winter conditions.

During 2024, the Law Enforcement Rangers issued 45 warnings and or summons for violations in Baxter State Park.

Law/Rule	Violation	Summons (USAC/VSAC) or Warning Issued	2024 Total
Title 12, Section 12606(1)E	Ice fishing in closed waters	USAC	2
Title 17-A	Theft (BSP Bobsled)	Warning	1
Title 12, Section 903	Snowmobiling in restricted area	USAC	3
Title 12, Section 10236	Shooting from a motor vehicle	USAC	1
Title 12	Failure to tend trap	USAC	1
BSP Rule, 3.2	Fishing on closed water	Warning	1
BSP Rule 5.5	UAV	Warning	1
BSP Rule 5.5	Use or possession of a UAV	USAC	1
BSP 1.3	Failure to register	USAC	1
Title 12, Section 12501 (1)	Fishing without a valid license	Warning	1
BSP Rule 1.2	Camping without a reservation	USAC	7
Title 12, Section 12655(1)	Fish w/worms in ALO Water	USAC	2
Title 12	Use of Bait (worms) in artificial lure water only	Warning	1
BSP Rule 4.11	Dog in Park	USAC	1
BSP Rule 4.1	No animals in Park	Warning	1
Title 12, Section 903(3)	Destruction of structure, monument, marker, or notice	USAC	1
Title 12	Fraudulent obtaining of ME Resident Fishing License	Warning	1
BSP Rule 1.2	BSP Rule 1.2	USAC	1
BSP Rule 1.2	Failure to register at gatehouse before 8 am	Warning	1
Title 29-A	Imprudent Speed, vehicle crash	VSAC	1

BSP Rule 3.1	Firearm in Baxter Park	USAC	1
BSP Rule 1.1	Campsite over capacity	USAC	1
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC	5
BSP Rules 2.2, 1.3, 1.2	Hiking a closed trail, failure to register, camping w/o reservation	USAC	3
Title 12 Section 13104(1)(F)(1)	Unregistered snowmobile	USAC	2
Title 12, Section 903	Snowmobiled in a closed area	USAC	2
Rule 2.2	Hiking Katahdin above Treeline without permit	USAC	1
		2024 Total:	45

After completing the Maine Criminal Justice Academy's required Law Enforcement Pre-Service course, Laura Whitney was sworn in as a Certified Law Enforcement Officer by Director Kevin Adam. Laura completed the final 80 hours of supervised field training and firearms proficiency and can now enforce state laws in addition to BSP rules. Laura will attend the 18-week Basic Law Enforcement Training Program (BLETP) at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, located in Vassalboro, with an anticipated completion date of May 2025. The 18-week BLETP is required for all full-time Maine law enforcement officers.



Director Kevin Adam, swearing in Enforcement Ranger Laura Whitney

Wildland Fire Operations

The Maine Forest Service (MFS) and Baxter State Park continue to coordinate for fire suppression within and near the Park's boundaries. MFS assisted with the annual Maine Wildfire Course, including pump training, hose lays, hand tool use, fire fighting tactics and hazards, fire shelter deployment, and a controlled burn field practical. This relationship is recognized in the *Baxter State Park Fire Plan*, which contains the principles and general guidelines for fire management within Baxter State Park. The Fire Plan was reviewed and updated in 2024.

In March, the Maine Forest Service Incident Management Team coordinated an in-depth training at the Park headquarters with 40 people from multiple agencies including Baxter State Park, Maine Forest Service, NOAA, Penobscot and Piscataquis Emergency Management Agencies, Local Fire & Rescue, DEP, and the Baxter State Park Authority. The tabletop hypothetical scenario involved a fire that started in Baxter State Park and participants practiced department roles, deployments, finance aspects, and legal scenarios. This exercise identified policy gaps and response issues and strengthened relationships with partner agencies that assist during emergency events.



Enforcement Rangers Laura Whitney & Justine Rumaker mopping up on the Clifford Ridge Fire

The tabletop scenario was realized in late September when Baxter State Park Law Enforcement and Campground Rangers assisted the MFS with the Clifford Ridge wildfire off the Park's southwest boundary in the vicinity of Rainbow Lake. Five staff members provided fire suppression and mop-up efforts over two days on this remote lightning-generated fire. The location of the fire on a series of steep ledges prevented the MFS from being able to fully utilize aerial water drops. As a result, Baxter staff were critical in putting out the fire. Baxter State Park received a reconditioned Type 6 engine and skid pump in 2024. This vehicle provides the park with firefighting apparatus that can move easily on [Park roads](#) and conduct initial attacks on fires. The engine and skid pump were provided by the Maine Forest Service, Forest Protection Division.

Search and Rescue

District Ranger Rob Tice and Chief Ranger Matt McGuire coordinate search and rescue (SAR) activities for the Park, and work with the Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) teams to schedule volunteer Park-wide SAR coverage and volunteer and staff training focusing on basic search and rescue procedures, technical rescue techniques, and emergency medical skills. Ongoing communication and training with MASAR teams and partnering agencies ensures interoperability, and is a focus of this department.

An introductory Search and Rescue class was taught to new staff after spring training. The class was focused on Baxter State Park tactics, response, equipment, protocols, and communications. The training concluded with the Maine Forest Service Aviation branch and the Maine Army National Guard 126th Blackhawk at Caribou Pit for basic helicopter crew member safety briefs as well as an overview of the various capabilities of each aircraft. National Park Service Katahdin Woods and Waters Chief Ranger Ben Polloni also attended.

Forty-five SAR incidents occurred during 2024. SAR incidents occurred at 20 different locations within the Park, including campgrounds and trails, and involved both roadside and remote areas in varying times of day and weather conditions. Mountain patrols conducted by Park staff throughout the summer season support SAR efforts by emphasizing preventative search and rescue education (PSAR), responding to incidents on Katahdin trails, and collecting trail activity data.

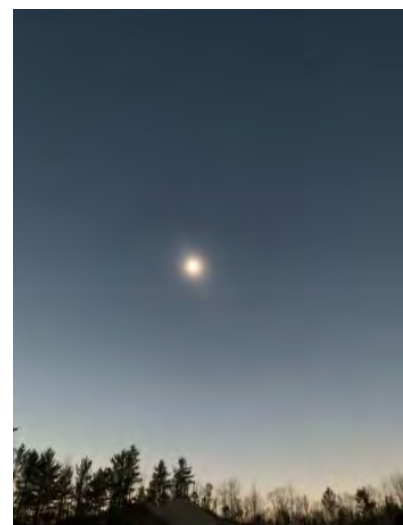
Three rescues requiring a helicopter were conducted with assistance from the Maine Forest Service in 2024. These rescues occurred on the Abol Trail, the Knife Edge, and the Wassataquoik lean-to. Air operations provided by the Maine Forest Service and the Maine Army National Guard continue to provide critical rescue and hauling capabilities essential to Park operations.



View from Hamlin Trail
Photo by Ranger Jen Sinsabaugh

Notable Events, Activities, and Projects

The April 8, 2024, total solar eclipse brought thousands of visitors to the Millinocket area. Park staff recognized the year prior that planning for this event was necessary to protect the highly fragile ecosystem on Katahdin and the Traveler Range at this time of year, including additional staffing at the Park in the days leading up to and of the event. The Park was open for day-use visitors, however, camping and the Katahdin and Traveler trailheads were still closed for the season. All staff were in work status for the eclipse to monitor allowable use and be available to assist the public. An Incident Action Plan for the eclipse was developed, which involved multiple meetings with local, county, and state agencies. Approximately 50 visitors viewed the eclipse from within the Park and there was only one incident of an illegal hiking party on the Katahdin Trails. The Park had assistance from MASAR volunteers during the solar event.



Total Eclipse from Abol Bridge Pit

At the end of August and through most of September, the southern end of the Park had regular bear activity in visitor use areas. A sow and two yearlings caused damage to vehicles and became a nuisance at Roaring Brook campground. LE Rangers used non-lethal methods including shotgun bean bag rounds, noisemakers, and paintball rounds to keep the bears

away from campsites and vehicles. To protect the animals and visitors, LE and Campground Rangers heavily patrolled the area and conducted education and outreach regarding food storage. Handouts were provided to visitors at the Togue Pond gatehouse and Roaring Brook campground. Additional areas of bear sightings included Abol Campground, the section of the Tote Road between Abol and Katahdin Stream, and the Hunt and OJI Trails. Bear sightings decreased by late September.

The beginning of the general firearms season led to increased hunting and trapping patrols by the Park's Law Enforcement Rangers. Interior Park gates were closed at the Sanctuary Line on the Roaring Brook Road, at the base of Abol Hill, and at Wadleigh Brook in the Park's north end to assist in delineating the hunting and no hunting zones.

Baxter State Park Law Enforcement and Supervisory Rangers accomplished a wide range of projects in addition to duties associated with the busy summer camping season. Among the projects were re-establishing the viewshed at Mountain View, lean-to construction at Nesowadnehunk Campsite 3, new tent platforms at The Birches, seasonal shut down of buildings and water systems, brush pile burns at Nesowadnehunk, Rum Brook, and East Branch pits, an inspection of boundary lines, firewood and propane escorts, installation of winter signs on Tote Road and Park access points, construction of new sled shed ramps, winterization of seasonal equipment, and conducting staff evaluations.



New Lean-to, Campsite 3, Nesowadnehunk

Early in the fall of 2024, Baxter State Park received an invitation to participate in the Governor's recognition program for departmental Employees of the Year. Criteria for consideration included service to the agency, outstanding attitude and work ethic, acting as a role model, and demonstrating the importance of working as part of a team. South Branch Campground Ranger Gabe Williamson was nominated by Baxter State Park staff and was selected for this award. The award was presented to Gabe by Governor Janet Mills at the Blaine House during a December ceremony.



L-R Chief Ranger Matt McGuire, Marcia and Gabe Williamson, Governor Mills

2024 Road & Trail Openings and Closings

- Jan 17: Tote Road opened to the public for snowmobiling.
- March 4: Tote Road temporarily closed to snowmobiling due to long stretches of road without snow.
- March 23: Tote Road opened again to snowmobiling after two large snowstorms.
- April 3: Tote Road closed.
- June 1: Katahdin Trails open except for Saddle Trail.
- June 6: Saddle Trail opened.
- Oct 14: Katahdin Trail and Traveler Trail closed.
- December 1: Katahdin Trail and Traveler Trail open.

Section 6. Information & Education (I&E)

The Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak, Interpretive Specialist Cassandra Knudsen, and two seasonal Interpretive Interns (Katie Fink and Chloe Tardanico) accomplished a variety of projects and activities in support of educating and engaging visitors, staff, and organizational partners about the Park's natural resources, history, and operations. Prior to 2022, there had been several years with short turnovers and significant vacancies in the positions serving I&E in the Park (the Naturalist, the Interpretive Specialist, and the Interpretive Interns). In late 2021, the Natural Resources Director position was created, including oversight of the Park's I&E Efforts. In 2022, the Interpretive Specialist position was filled, and an Interpretive Intern joined the Park in June. Since 2022, I&E staff have worked to assess, update, re-establish, and innovate educational work for the Park. These program rebuilding efforts are ongoing and include updating signage, updating and creating publications, engaging the public on social media, updating the Park's website, re-establishing programming in the Park, public communication planning for special projects or events, and community outreach.



The Dacey Pond Cabin Project Takes Off!

The Campground is Closed May 2024 - April 2025

The Dacey Pond campground offers one of the most popular and treasured camping experiences in the Park, with visitors often returning to the same cabin year after year. Aside from the stunning view of Katahdin and the excellent fishing and recreational opportunities around Dacey Pond, the rustic feel of the cabins is one of the things visitors love most about the campground. The cabins were initially built in the early 1900s as part of Twin Pine Sporting Camps, and thus represent a chapter in Maine's rich culture. Since then, they have undergone relocation and rebuilding, and some of the materials used to build the cabins are approaching a hundred years old. While they have endured over this time and benefited from routine maintenance, structural repairs are needed before they become uninhabitable. Baxter State Park has undertaken the planning and work necessary to preserve these beloved cabins for continued public use.

Beginning in spring 2024, the project entered its construction phase, necessitating a closure of the campground between May 2024 and April 2025. During this time, access to day uses such as fishing, paddling, and hiking are expected to remain accessible. At the end of the project, the cabins will look and feel largely the same as before – but younger, as if visitors were stepping back in time.

This season, Dacey Pond Campground Rangers Andy Vietze and Jesse LaPorte will assist day use visitors and help with this and other projects around the Park. Like so many others, Andy and Jesse each have a strong, personal connection to Dacey Pond. Andy, who has been one of the Dacey Pond Rangers for 20 of his 22 seasons with the Park, met his partner, Lilly, at the campground, and has many fond memories of hiking around the area with his two sons. Jesse, who has been a campground ranger with the Park for five years and transferred to Dacey in 2023, was married on the shores of Dacey Pond in 2021.

Both rangers agree that the best part of working at Dacey Pond Campground is the location. "It hardly seems like work when you get to look at the mountain all day long," Andy said. They also consider getting to know the campers and anglers that come here to be a true highlight. "We have some great people that have been coming for many years," Jesse said, adding, "It's a very family-oriented campground." Once the cabin project is complete, both rangers are looking forward to, as Andy put it, "Seeing all the regulars return like so many loons."

Road & Trail Closure

Due to harvesting projects in the Scientific Forest Management Area of the Park, the **Lyns Road** will be closed to visitors through the beginning of August. It will remain gated near the **Bobcat Road** into Fall.

Sections of the **Wadleigh Brook Trail** will pass through harvesting operations. Visitors should use **caution** and pay attention to temporary signage.

To learn more about Dacey Pond Campground's history and the cabin project, and to follow updates, visit our webpage at <https://baxterstatepark.org/home2/dacey-pond-cabin-repair-project/>

We are also pleased to have renewed our collaboration with Friends of Baxter State Park on the production of the annual photo calendar in 2024.

The summer and fall of 2024 saw the return of a robust series of public educational programs in the Park after several years without, including guided walks and lectures on a wide range of natural resource topics. Several new-this-year (or renewed) educational outreach efforts included attending regional career events, participating in local programming for youth, and a series of educational social media posts. In collaboration with staff from other teams, I&E engaged in a variety of events including the Eastern Maine Sportsmen's Show, the 4000 Footer Club's annual event, and the Trail's End Festival in Millinocket.

This year's version of the Park publication "Wildnotes" grew to include additional information on the Park's rules and regulations and essential information for those wishing to plan a Katahdin hike. The Wildnotes News insert to this publication featured the Daicey Pond cabin project. I&E interns and staff created a new three-fold brochure on the Geology of the Park, and a fact sheet on amphibians.

Two special communications efforts took place in 2024. Staff continued executing the Daicey Pond cabin project communication plan (which was initiated in early 2023), including signage in the Park and providing project updates on a web page dedicated to the project. In preparation for being in the path of totality of the April 8, 2024, solar eclipse, staff worked with regional partners and Media outlets to provide information about safe viewing options in the Park and the region during Maine's mud season.



Since 2022, the Friends of Baxter State Park (FOBSP) has produced a podcast series about Baxter State Park and neighboring areas, which has provided (and created an archive for) a breadth of information about the Park. Interviews on a variety of topics have been conducted and produced by FOBSP members Jensen Bissell (former BSP Park Director), and Bill Green (former host of Bill Green's Maine). In 2024, FOBSP produced and shared 12 of these podcast episodes, including interviews with State Historian Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., co-author of the graphic novel Lost Trail Lynn Plourde, BSP Authority chair Patty Cormier, and BSP Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak. FOBSP also supports the Park through its outstanding reoccurring programs such as the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program, the Baxter Youth Conservation Corp (highlighted in the Trails section of this report), its annual sign auction in which proceeds of the sale of retired BSP signs are split between FOBSP and BSP, and its integral and ongoing Wabanaki connection and sharing of its history.

Visiting Artist Jadyn Ladeau spent two weeks in September in the Park, enjoying its inspiration for both landscape and detailed paintings of fungi and animals. During her stay, she provided public programs on nature journaling and a painting demonstration, along with an open house of her works towards the end of the residency.

A collective of 14 Park staff provided a presence on the various Katahdin trails during 73 days of the summer and fall hiking season, with more than half of those patrols including a stop at Baxter Peak- arguably the Park's most popular backcountry destination. This represents a 28% increase in "Mountain Patrol" effort over the 2023 season. Staff ranging the Katahdin trails focus on providing the visiting public with information primarily



Visiting Artist Jadyn Ladeau

on hiking routes, natural history, and Park rules. The staff's presence on Katahdin's tablelands provides protection for natural resources through limiting off-trail use, preventing and cleaning up food and other litter, and following other Leave No Trace practices. During these patrols, staff are also well-placed to provide preventative Search and Rescue information, and to respond to rescue needs on Katahdin.

Section 7. Natural Resources & Research

Introduction

The preservation of natural resources is the primary goal of Baxter State Park, and efforts to do so are made across the organization. The Natural Resource Director oversees work focused on natural resource monitoring, research, and specific conservation measures for priority resources. It is often arbitrary to distinguish between monitoring and research efforts, and there is also considerable overlap in this work with the I&E team, especially in community science projects. The Park has a



Katie Fink and Chloe Tardanico on Mountain Patrol

long-established Research Committee, which works with the Natural Resource Director to approve or deny shorter-term, focused research projects that are proposed to the Park by outside researchers. While several longer-term monitoring efforts have been ongoing for many years and were not reviewed by the Research Committee at their onset, new long-term monitoring efforts are now directed to the Committee for review and approval.

Natural Resources

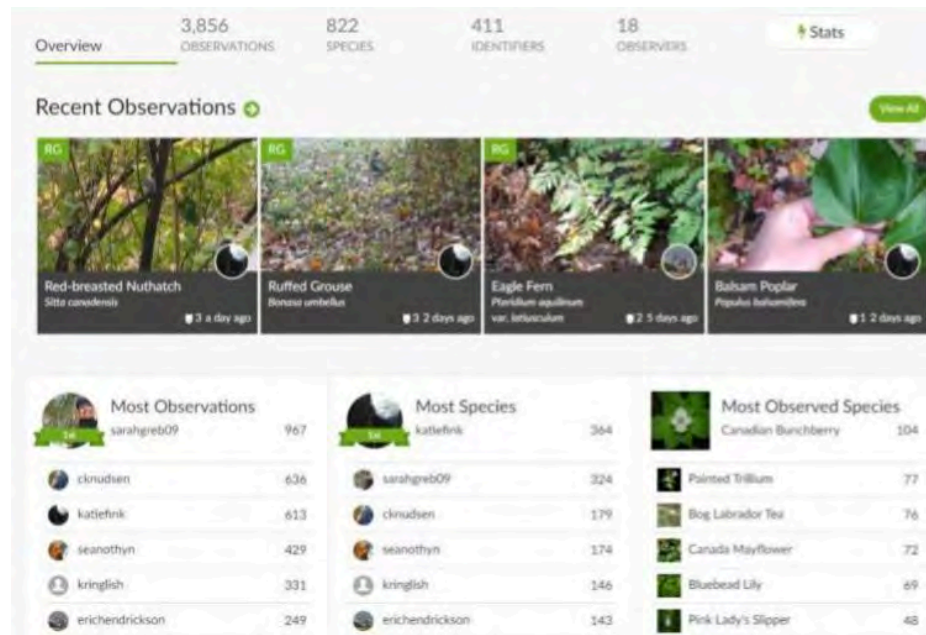
Baxter State Park staff coordinated the Region 16 Maine Audubon Loon Count. Continuing on a trend of several years, a record number of volunteers (including Park staff) participated (47) and a record number of waterbodies were surveyed (27), providing more robust data on loon populations in the Park. Volunteers recorded 40 adult loons, 5 chicks, and 3 nests on the loon count day in 2024, which is within the historic range of counts since 2002. In collaboration with Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, staff surveyed 10 sites across the Park with acoustic bat detectors, recording 7 of the 8 bat species that are known to occur in the state. Staff and a member of the Research Committee also conducted a Katahdin arctic butterfly (state endangered) survey; while flight conditions were not ideal on the day of the survey, staff counted 9 adults in flight, which is within the norm of previous years' surveys.



Staff installing bat detectors at Hudson Pit - SFMA

Natural resource professionals from Maine agencies and other projects continued ongoing natural resource monitoring efforts in the Park. The Maine Forest Service surveyed Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plots for the US Forest Service and monitored spruce budworm, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection conducted water quality sampling at South Branch Pond, and Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife surveyed fish in six waterbodies. University of New Hampshire researchers collected water samples from Abol Pond as part of a long-term study by the US Environmental Protection Agency on recovery from acid rain; this was the final year of data collection for this project.

Volunteers from the Mountain Birdwatch project, a regional monitoring program facilitated by the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, conducted high-elevation bird song surveys at three transects in the Park.



iNaturalist Observations

During the summer camping season, fifteen staff from across Park duty stations (and a few volunteers) populated an iNaturalist project with nearly 4,000 observations. Many of these observations were

submitted to the Appalachian Mountain Club's two plant phenology projects. The season's observations included a diversity of taxa, with over 800 identified species, which represents a notable addition to information on the Park's biota. Trained staff also continued a multi-year effort to collect detailed alpine plant phenology data from 5 permanent plots on Katahdin, as part of a regional program coordinated by the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Park staff focused efforts on two invasive plant species - knapweed (*Centaurea sp.*) and bristly locust (*Robinia hispida*). Knapweed is known to occur primarily from what appears to be a fairly recent introduction to the Park (detected in 2020) along a few trails in the southern end of the Park, as well as one locality at Trout Brook Farm (whose introduction may have preceded that of the southern sites'). Since 2022, staff have documented the localities of knapweed and hand-pulled plants before they went to seed, aiming to prevent further spread and eventually exhaust the seed bank. In 2024, staff and interns completed 6 surveys of the southern trails

between July 2-August 13, finding and removing relatively small numbers of plants (ranging from none to 17 stems at most sites). They also pulled all of the plants at Trout Brook Farm in early July.

Bristly locust was planted in the Park along Upper Togue Pond for erosion control many years ago and is also found near Togue Pond



Staff with long bristly locust root

Gate (at the area known as "Mountain View"), the access road to Rum Pit, and an old sand/gravel pit along Roaring Brook Road. Control/eradication efforts began in 2017, but lacked the necessary follow-up to ensure their efficacy. In 2022, staff resumed efforts with mechanical methods (by digging and pulling), which has been relatively effective, and have observed that the plants appear to only be spreading vegetatively at their known locations. In 2024, staff removed all of the stems of bristly locust at Mountain View and removed some of the plants at Togue Pond Beach. Plants growing along the Upper Togue Pond shoreline are intermixed with native species and their stems were cut instead of pulling or digging, to avoid erosion and impacts to the native vegetation.

Research

The Research Committee met twice in 2024 to review research proposals. At the regularly scheduled March 1st meeting, the committee reviewed one new research proposal titled “The effect of human feeding on Canada jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*) behavior and nest predation”, submitted by Dr. Jennifer Long and Dr. Marielle Postava-Davignon. The committee rejected the proposal due to lack of specificity to BSP, and evidence that Canada jays are known to have been fed by people in the Park, and as such sites in the



Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) Botanists - Rare Plant Search

Park do not represent control sites (where the birds have not been fed). The Committee granted an indefinite extension to Arthur Haine’s ongoing work to document rare plants in the Park, and a two-year extension to Dr. Aaron Putnam and his team for their work to reconstruct the history of deglaciation and climate change since the last ice age in BSP (which was first approved in 2020 as a five-year project). In March, the committee also received updates on ongoing research projects and discussed ways to ensure compliance with research permit and agreement conditions in the rare instances where researchers do not follow them.

In August, the Committee convened via Zoom, by request of Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak, to review a proposal by Andrea Tirrell (PhD candidate) for a project titled “Alpine Plants as a model system for biodiversity dynamics in a warming world”. This regional project proposed the inclusion of two alpine areas in BSP in a common garden experiment to study genetic and functional traits that may be more or less adaptive to climate change and entailed small collections of seeds and leaf tissues of five species of alpine plants in BSP. The committee approved the project based on the value of the information to BSP (and supported by conservative collection methodology and Ms. Tirrell’s strong track record of collaborating on alpine plant research in the Park).

Several research projects included fieldwork in the Park in 2024. PhD candidate Maraina Miles continued to lead work on the glacial geology study in the Park (under Aaron Putnam’s research agreement), collecting rock samples for Beryllium dating. Arthur Haines conducted searches for several rare plants in the Great and North Basins of Katahdin. Maine State Botanist Eric Doucette conducted several rare plant searches/surveys in preparation for a statewide effort to assess the efficacy of plant conservation efforts (the Plant Report Card). John Hagan of Our Climate Common visited the two northernmost townships in the Park to ground-truth a LiDAR-based model of late-successional old-growth forests, a project funded by the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (of which BSP is a member).

Five prospective Committee members attended the March 1st meeting, and all were subsequently appointed to the Committee at the BSP Authority meeting on May 31st: Ron Butler, Malcolm Hunter, Laura Kenefic, Gabe LeMay, and Shevenell Webb.

Research Committee	
Ron Butler	Laura Kenefic
Don Cameron	Malcolm Hunter
David Courtemanch	Gabe LeMay
Charlene Donahue	Glen Mittelhauser
Dykstra Eusden	Aaron Putnam
Gary Fish	Shevenell Webb
Don Hudson	Paula Work

Section 8. Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA)

Introduction

The Scientific Forest Management Area is an area of nearly 30,000 acres in the northwest of the Park with a mission distinct from that of the rest of BSP. In the SFMA, the primary goals set out by Governor Baxter are to produce a continuous supply of forest wood products using scientific forestry, to demonstrate these forestry practices, and to provide public access for recreation. The SFMA is managed by Shane Miller, Lands Manager, with support from Forester Deidra George and oversight by Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak. The SFMA relies on Park resources, in particular Maintenance staff and Rangers, and contracted labor to perform harvest operations, build and maintain infrastructure, and manage Park visitors. A&A Brochu was the contractor for harvest operations (including trucking) and road work for the SFMA in 2024. Additionally, the Park manages two relatively small outlots that are separate from BSP and the SFMA.

Harvest & Operations

Harvest operations took place in the north end of the SFMA in the winter and in the south end in the summer and fall. Wet and warm conditions in the winter required constant assessments and presented challenges to operations, including trucking road closures and limitations on the use of winter-only roads. The winter harvest ultimately concluded early due to warm weather and rain. Due to spring road conditions, staff facilitated alternatives for the delivery of products to mills.



SFMA Logs

The summer harvest began in mid-June and continued through the relatively dry fall without interruption. Most of this harvest was in management units along Bobcat Road, necessitating a closure of Wadleigh Mountain Road for traffic entering through the Lynx Gate, near its intersection with Bobcat Road.

In 2024 the SFMA restored forestry internships after a period without them, working with the University of Maine's School of Forest Resources. From June to August, Forestry Intern Lou Packer joined staff, assisting with tasks such as

CFI data collection, timber harvest layout, general forest inventory, pre-commercial thinning, data entry, and harvest assessments and inspections.

In the fall, SFMA contractors A&A Brochu finished a complete replacement (including abutments) of the Murphy Brook bridge crossing on Brayley Ridge Road and a partial replacement of the bridge crossing Halfway Brook on Brayley Ridge Road (which had been damaged earlier in the season).

In total, approximately 4,960 cords of wood were trucked from the SFMA in 2024². Wood products were primarily hardwood sawlogs, hardwood pulp, spruce/fir sawlogs, and studwood. There were also small volumes of veneer logs, tonewood, and clapboard, the latter two being new markets for the SFMA in 2024. The harvest in 2024 provided all firewood for use in BSP, and cedar and tamarack sawlogs for use in Park construction and trail building and maintenance. Wood markets were generally weak in 2024, especially the hardwood pulp market.

² For the purposes of SFMA planning, Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) and actual harvest volume are calculated for years starting June and ending in May. This figure is based on the volume trucked from the SFMA in calendar year 2024, as documented by trucking trip tickets, and not of the volume cut in the calendar year (which differ since there is a delay between cutting and trucking).

2024 Wood Buyers and Products		
Buyer Name	Mill (Delivery) Location	Wood Products
Bourgeois Guitars	Lewiston, ME (Millinocket)	Tonewood
Daquaam (Lebel)	St. Juste, Canada	Spruce/fir sawlogs and studwood
D&G Forest Products	St. Aurelie, Canada	White Pine sawlogs, spruce/fir sawlogs
Columbia Forest Products	Milo, ME	Hardwood sawlogs
Hardwood Products	Guilford, ME	Hardwood sawlogs
Lumbra Hardwoods	Milo, ME	Hardwood sawlogs
Pleasant River Lumber	Dover/Enfield, ME (Millinocket)	Spruce/fir sawlogs and studwood
Ruff Cutters	Millinocket, ME	Hardwood firewood, cedar sawlogs
Sappi North America	Skowhegan, ME (Millinocket)	Hardwood pulp
Ward Clapboard	Moretown, VT (Millinocket)	Spruce/fir sawlogs

Silviculture

With input from the SFMA Advisory Committee, staff drafted a policy for the use of herbicides as a silvicultural tool in areas of the SFMA with failing forest regeneration. The Park Advisory Committee and the board of Friends of Baxter State Park were provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft before it was presented to the BSP Authority in May. Staff made minor revisions and clarifications that were requested by BSP Authority members, and in their December meeting the Authority approved the use of the policy.



Pre-commercial Thinning - SFMA

Staff also revised and finalized the Riparian Management Zone policy, which had been drafted (and largely implemented) several years ago, but not finalized. The finalized policy is

customized to the SFMA while meeting minimum state standards, and its implementation has slightly increased the area that is classified as Riparian Management Zone in the SFMA.

Following good results on pre-commercial thinning and boundary line maintenance in 2023, the Park again contracted Horizon Forestry to complete approximately 100 acres of pre-commercial thinning (in blocks along Boody Bog road).

Shane Miller and SFMA Advisory Committee member Bob Seymour analyzed the Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) data from the last 10 years and interpreted the results for planning purposes (including the forthcoming 10-year management plan).

Monitoring

Shane Miller developed a new forest inventory protocol to be used throughout the operational units of the SFMA, and with Deidra George and Lou Packer began collecting inventory data. Staff surveyed 14 Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) plots (as part of a new cycle of CFI sampling to take place over the coming 10 years). Deidra George installed water temperature probes and retrieved them and their data, which was submitted to the US Geological Survey. She also deployed and retrieved spruce budworm traps in the SFMA, which are analyzed by the Maine Forest Service. Two sites in the SFMA were added to the acoustic bat detector surveys (see Natural Resources section).

The SFMA has continued carrying out some legacy sampling over recent years, without any analysis of the data. In 2024 staff paused the cover object array surveys for salamanders and CFI plots that are specific to certain management units, have different methodologies than the SFMA-wide CFI sampling, and are not included in the CFI analysis that informs SFMA planning (at Frost Pond forest, Boody Bog Reserve, and the 2013 tornado blowdown area). These survey efforts can be resumed as needed and may provide a basis for student research projects.

Outlying Forest Lots

BSP forest management is also applied at the Austin Cary Lot in Harpswell (ca. 228 ac), and the Mount Chase Lot in Mount Chase Plantation (ca. 200 ac). These properties were acquired in the early 1970s by the Maine Forest Authority, to fulfill Governor Baxter's wish that additional reforestation, forestry demonstration, and wildlife sanctuaries be acquired in the state outside of Baxter State Park. Not long after their purchase, the management responsibility for both lots was transferred



Austin Cary Lot Tour

to BSP (and the Maine Forest Authority was abolished in 1983).

For many years BSP has contracted with Barrie Brusilla of Mid-Maine forestry to manage the Austin Cary lot. In January, the main access road in the Austin Cary Lot flooded and sustained major damage where it crosses Doughty Cove, a tidal bay and marsh. The Long Reach Road Association (LRRRA), composed of five private landowners with rights-of-way over the road and one additional neighbor, secured post-disaster grant funding that financed a majority of the necessary repairs to the road's surface; BSP and LRRRA members shared the remaining costs. LRRRA members were eager to make further investments in the road to ensure full-time vehicular access to their properties, and some members feel that BSP should be solely responsible for such investments. Park staff engaged in discussions with the LRRRA to learn about tidal flooding and explore flood-resilient long-term designs, and to consider current and future road management agreements.

There was no significant management activity at the Mount Chase Lot in 2024.

Management Plans

With input from the SFMA Advisory Committee, staff worked on the production of two separate planning documents: a 10-year management plan, and a long-term SFMA Master Plan. Shane Miller drafted the 2025-2035 management plan, which is focused on operations and tactics needed in the coming decade to achieve SFMA goals. At the close of 2024, this management plan is poised for review by the Advisory Committee and the Authority, and to be made available for public comment. The SFMA Master Plan will be a long-term living document to be updated as needed, covering the philosophy, principles, and goals of the SFMA. It will also address legal considerations and act as a repository for SFMA policies, deeds, surveys, history, and other reference documents. At the close of 2024, Nava Tabak had drafted an outline of the Master Plan, SFMA goals, and SFMA principles, incorporating initial input on these from the Advisory Committee.

SFMA Advisory Committee



SFMA Advisory - Fall Field Meeting in SFMA

The SFMA Advisory Committee held its spring meeting on April 5th, which included a discussion of a draft herbicide policy for the SFMA, a review of the Annual Allowable Cut summary for 2023-2024, results of CFI analysis, and a review of the 10-year management plan and principles of the Master plan. The Committee also

discussed the history and future of the Austin Cary Lot.

The SFMA Advisory Committee held its fall meeting on November 1st in the south end of the SFMA. Committee members were joined by former Park Director and Resource Manager Jensen Bissell and District Forester Lauren Ouellette. The group visited management units to provide input on silvicultural and restoration options and future experimental treatments to be conducted by the Maine Adaptive Silviculture Network (MASN). Staff provided the Advisory with updates on harvest operations, SFMA finances, and the status of the draft herbicide policy. Barrie Brusilla described the September public tour of the Austin Cary Lot and the continued invasive species control work, and the group briefly discussed the ongoing issues with road maintenance and improvements on Long Reach Lane. The Committee also discussed the status of spruce budworm (SBW) populations and the potential impacts to the SFMA and advised that there is no change in management necessary in the SFMA at this time.

In May 2024, the BSP Authority appointed Chuck Loring to join the SFMA Advisory Committee, and in December they renewed the appointments of Philip (Chip) Aherns and Joe Wiley for another 3-year term. Long-time Advisory members Rob Bryan and Aaron Weiskittel retired from the Advisory in 2024.

Scientific Forest Management Advisory Committee	
Philip Ahrens	Kenneth Laustsen
Barrie Brusilla	Chuck Loring
Rob Bryan	Jim O'Malley
John Bryant	Robert Seymour
Andy Cutko	Craig Troeger
Shawn Fraver	Aaron Weiskittel
Allison Kanoti	Joseph Wiley

Demonstration & Partnerships

Baxter State Park is a member of the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU), which conducts and funds applied research that provides information to guide sustainable forestry practices and science-based forest policy. In January 2024, Nava Tabak joined the CFRU's Executive Committee as vice-chair. Shane Miller and Nava Tabak reviewed the year's research proposals and voted on final research project funding for the year. Following the

recommendation of the Executive Committee and CFRU staff, the members of the cooperative agreed at their fall meeting not to solicit grant applications in the coming year. Instead, CFRU staff will focus on managing the many existing grant projects, and with support from members will attend to important administrative needs for the organization, including an update of the organization's prospectus and its fee structure.

The Maine Adaptive Silviculture Network (MASN) is a program of the CFRU, which monitors and assists researchers in evaluating silvicultural treatments at various sites across Maine. In 2024, the SFMA worked with MASN to initiate a site within the SFMA, and MASN conducted the baseline surveys of the site in anticipation of future treatments. SFMA staff will plan and execute silvicultural treatments to be included in the MASN in the coming years.

In August, Shane Miller and Dee George provided a tour of the SFMA for BSP staff. In September, Barrie Brusilla, forester and manager of the Austin Cary Lot forest, worked with Friends of Baxter State Park and the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust to provide a public tour of the property. The event was attended by people with a wide variety of interests, and several natural resource professionals assisted with the tour.

Administrative

Shane Miller created several new tracking tools (tables) to improve SFMA planning and operations, and Nava Tabak created a new version of the trip ticket tracking/invoicing files for 2024. BSP contracted with the State of Maine to be included in the state's ArcGIS services, and Shane Miller completed training by the state that enabled him to add SFMA GIS files to state servers and to develop field mapper applications. For now, the remaining Park GIS files continue to be hosted by a private server, and will be the focus of the next effort to migrate files and work flows to the state's ArcGIS system.

Section 9. Volunteer Program

Introduction

The Baxter State Park Volunteer Program has a long tradition of promoting stewardship and service. It provides essential assistance to staff in maintaining and operating Park facilities and infrastructure, protecting and monitoring the Park's natural resources, and enhancing the more than 220 miles of trails within Baxter.

Volunteers also assist with clerical duties, visitor outreach and education. This valuable resource is managed at a level of between 100 - 200 volunteers per year, not including the Maine Association of Search and Rescue (MASAR) teams



L-R, Ranger Pete Sweeney, Volunteers Rick Bray, Steve Marquie, Charity and Dears Levasseur at Appreciation Banquet

that are on standby in the Park from late spring to late fall and who assist with search and rescue events when called upon to do so.

Volunteer Coordinators are Supervisor Bruce White and Office Specialist Georgia Manzo, who work in close communication with the Chief Ranger, District Rangers, Campground Rangers, the Park Services Manager, and other staff to implement the volunteer program and utilize volunteer resources to accomplish a myriad of tasks. When recruiting volunteers, the considerations are the project's priority, the scope of work, the volunteer's skills, experience, interests and availability, the training and oversight needed, housing needs, and often, the weather is a determining factor.

2024 Highlights

In 2024, **260** volunteers enlisted. Of those volunteers, **195** actively participated - clocking **3,071** hours of volunteer service. This included individuals, families, small groups such as Friends of Baxter's Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program participants (completing a bog bridging project at Russell Pond), and nurses from Maine Medical Center led by BSP Advisory member Julianna Hansen (painting three buildings at Trout Brook Farm). The Mitchell Scholars brought 68 enthusiastic volunteers who worked for three hours (totaling 204 hours of service) graveling lean-to sites at Roaring Brook and assisting with a book inventory project at the Daicey Pond Library. Baxter Park also benefits from the skills and dedication of the Maine Association of Search and Rescue (MASAR)



Volunteers cleaning crevices
on the Hunt Trail



Eric & Elaine Hendrickson & Family - Earth Day Litter Patrol

team members who in 2024 contributed **2,263** standby hours and **200** active hours of service. Outside agencies who assisted the Baxter State Park SAR program in 2024 include Millinocket Fire and Rescue, Maine Forest Service, Maine Warden Service, and the 126th Aviation Regiment of the Maine Army National Guard.

In total, the **5,334** hours of service by Baxter State Park volunteers is a measure of the incredible passion and commitment shown to this very special place.

The volunteer kick-off event each year is the annual Earth Day Litter Patrol, which in 2024 took place on Saturday, April 27. A

league of 40+ eager volunteers gathered at headquarters for a safety talk and to choose their ½ mile of road for cleanup. This event accomplished the cleaning of roadside litter from Millinocket to the south entrance of Baxter Park and was followed by a BBQ luncheon hosted by Baxter Staff, with BSP Advisors as grillmasters.

An ambitious endeavor to build 10 new lean-tos at Katahdin Stream began in 2017 and was completed in 2024. This accomplishment is a credit to the perseverance and tenacity of Supervisor Bruce White who, through several changes in Park leadership staff, periods of extreme weather events, and the COVID-19 pandemic from January 2020 to May 2023 continued to lead staff and dedicated volunteers each season to accomplish this substantial project that is also a great training opportunity for staff and volunteers.



Rick Bray and BSP Staff building Lean-to 1 at Katahdin Stream



Marcia Williamson, painting signs



Sue Lussier, clearing trails

In addition, volunteer service in 2024 included the following:

- Spring Training:
 - Volunteers posed as visitors to help train new staff in several scenarios
- Trout Brook Farm, South Branch Pond, Kidney Pond, Nesowadnehunk, Abol, and Daicey Pond Campgrounds:
 - Oiling bunkhouses, painting (buildings, floors, posts, furniture, and picnic tables), raking, spreading gravel, brush cutting, hooking up water, splitting and stacking wood, repairing buildings, cleaning cabins, sewing and hanging curtains, light carpentry (building steps and small tables), picnic table repair, garage organization, installing and storing canoes, boats, and related equipment, cataloging libraries books at Kidney and Daicey

Pond, sign inventory, cleaning fire pits and stoves, office assistance, installing marker buoys around loon nesting areas, registration box repairs

- Daicey Pond Project:
 - Demolition/controlled burn monitoring, perma-chinking, painting buildings, measuring for curtains
- Road to Matagamon Gate and Tote Road to Trout Brook Farm:
 - Ditching, cleaning culverts, hauling brush, weed whacking, chopping kindling, blowdown cleanup
- Trails:
 - Trail adopters, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) Stewards, and the 101st Division of the Air National Guard accomplished:
 - National Trails Day Training (and work on the OJI reroute), clearing blowdowns and brushing back overgrowth on the trail corridors, brushing the Kettle Ponds Trail, cleaning drainages on the Abol and Chimney Pond trails, finalizing the OJI reroute with the BSP Trail Crew, maintenance of assigned trails
- Togue Pond and Matagamon Gates:
 - All-staff meeting and celebration coverage
- Visitor Center:
 - Coverage when staff is not available
- Hunt and Dudley Trails:
 - Caves and crevices trash clean-up
- Reservations Office:
 - Coverage during two weeks of staff training in the spring



Maine Med Nurses at Trout Brook Farm



ME Youth Wilderness Leadership group - Friends of Baxter - Russell Pond

- Headquarters and Storehouse:
 - Document sorting and labeling for digital archiving, uniform sorting, clerical work, filing, AT hiker registration data entry, clearing pathways, Junior Ranger packets assembly, staff gift prep
- SFMA
 - Winter hauling, moving beds, blowdown cleanup, road clearing, launching the boat, storing the boat, fixing a gate, blowdown patrol, and mowing
- Information and Education:
 - Visitor programs in the Park on wildflowers, a freshwater aquatic bioblitz (species identification), a geology walk at Howe Brook, Booth coverage at the Eastern Maine Sportsmens' Show in Orono, and the 4000-Footer Club annual award event in Exeter, NH
- Maine Audubon Society's annual Loon Count
- Fall All-Staff Meeting:
 - Gate coverage, and monitoring of campgrounds and trailheads



Ellen Manzo cataloging books - Kidney Pd Library

A volunteer appreciation banquet was held at Jeff's Catering in Brewer, Maine on Sunday, November 3 for those volunteers with 25 or more hours of service, as well as for representatives from the Maine Forest Service, the Maine Warden Service, the Maine Army National Guard, Millinocket Fire and Safety, and the seven MASAR teams that provided standby and active search and rescue assistance in 2024.

At the end of the year, volunteers received a letter of appreciation from Director Adam, providing an overview of accomplished projects and thanking active volunteers for their service with a volunteer patch, rocker, and decal.

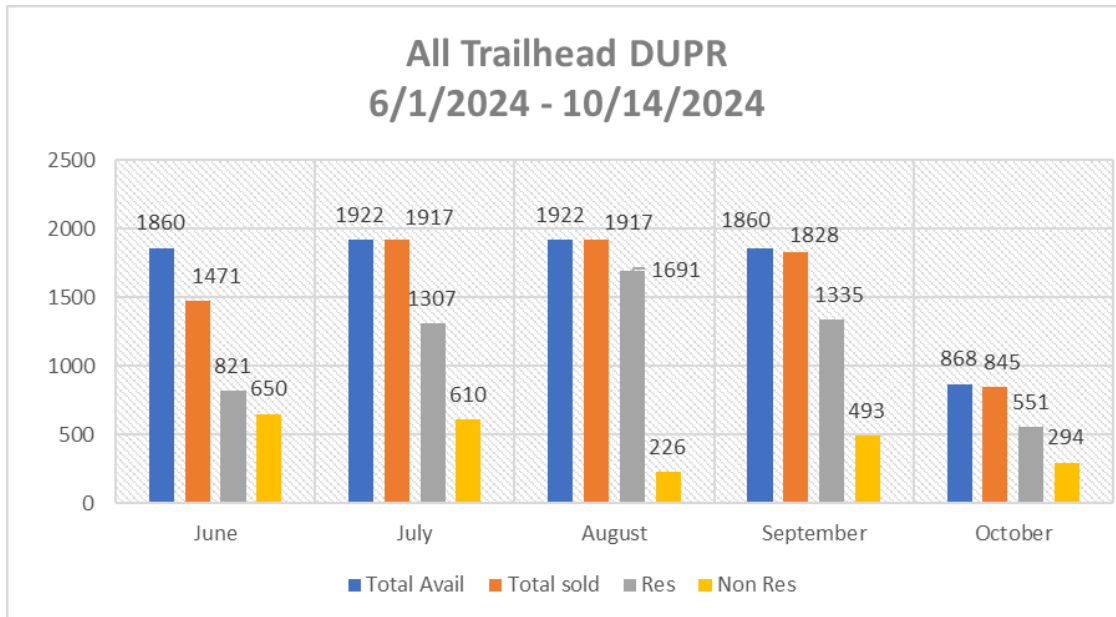


Chief McGuire thanking MASAR Team Members at Appreciation Banquet

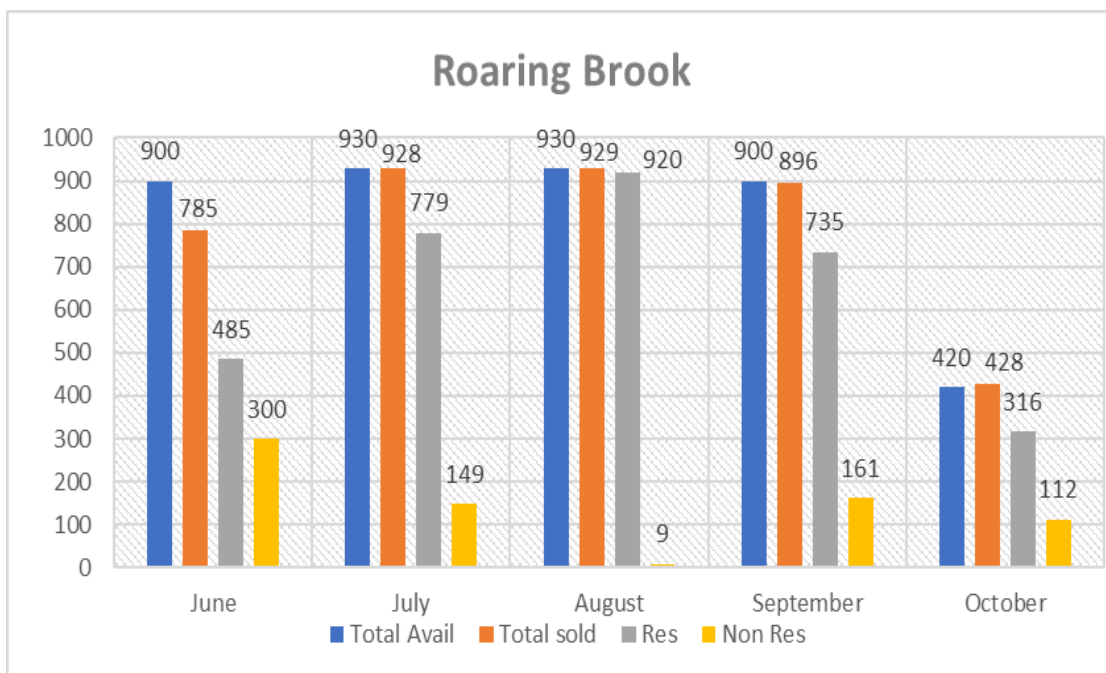
Section 10. Appendices

Day Use Parking Reservations Statistics

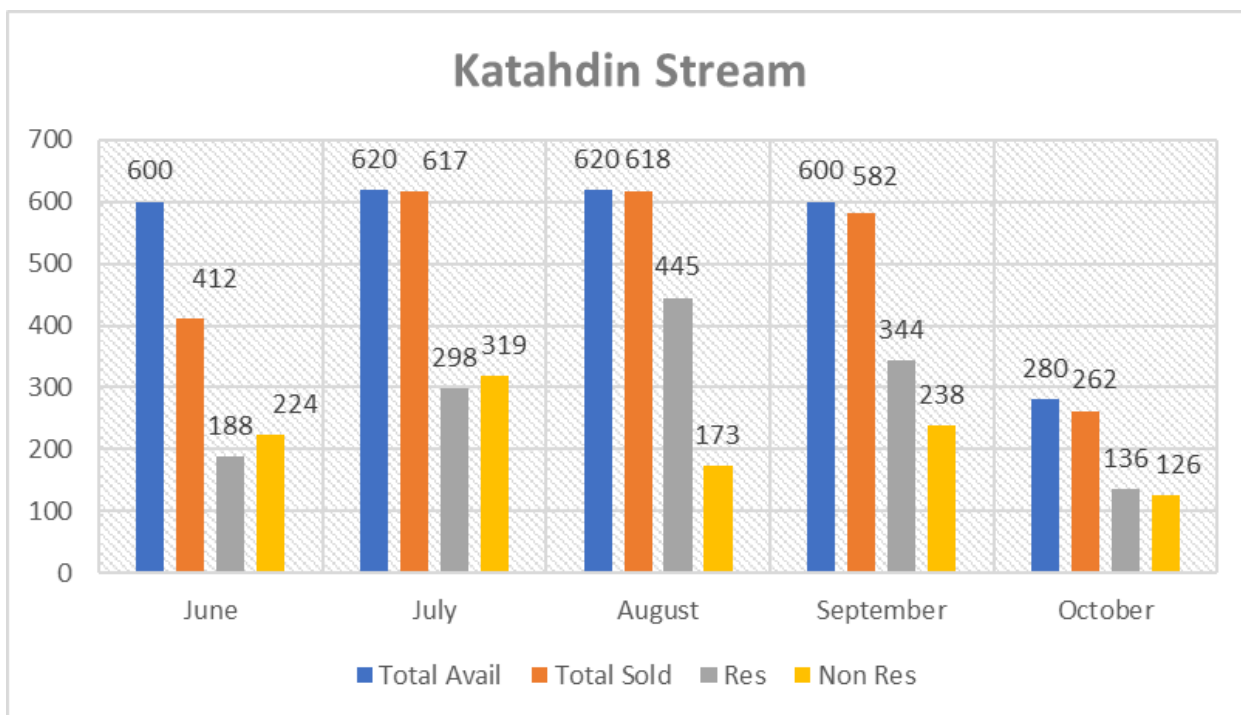
Monthly DUPR sales statistics, totals and by Katahdin trailhead, are as follows:



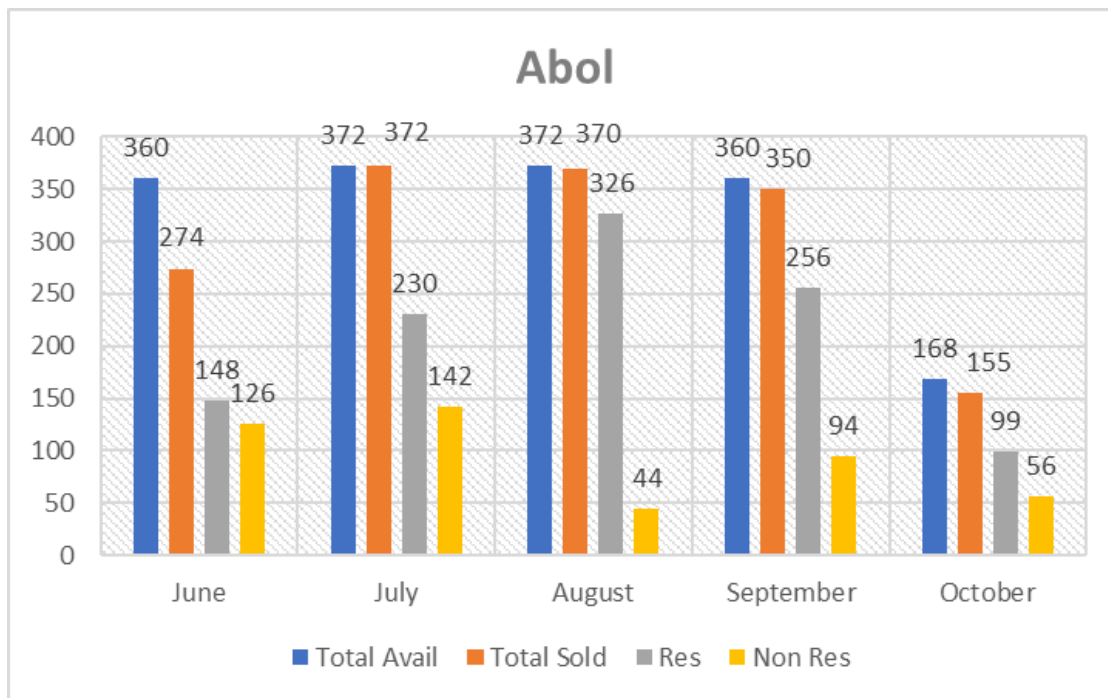
Roaring Brook has 30 DUPRs available for sale each day. According to the chart below, 97% of these DUPRs were purchased. Of those sold, 82% went to Maine residents and 18% went to non-Maine residents.



Katahdin Stream has 20 DUPRs available for sale each day. According to the chart below, 92% of these DUPRs were purchased. Of those sold, 57% went to Maine residents and 43% went to non-Maine residents.



Abol has 12 DUPRs available for sale each day. According to the chart below, 93% of these DUPRs were purchased. Of those sold, 70% went to Maine



residents and 30% went to non-Maine residents.

Trail Statistics

Summer and winter trail statistics are collected at the trail sign-in sheets located at the trailheads. Although signing at the trailhead is strongly encouraged, usage may not be fully reflected in these statistics.

Trail Use Statistics - May-Oct, 2024

Abol							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Abol	0	724	1249	1210	842	313	4338
Abol Falls	41	24	86	58	56	62	327
Abol Stream/Pond	28	37	50	86	11	37	249
Blueberry Ledges	140	188	541	647	240	124	1880
AT North	27	153	397	560	584	145	1866
Foss & Knowlton	5	8	12	30	7	4	66
Kettle Ponds	5	16	28	41	31	21	142
Crandberry Pond	51	86	70	154	130	77	568
Total	297	1236	2433	2786	1901	783	9436
Chimney Pond							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Dudley	0	211	190	322	199	78	1000
Cathedral	0	568	851	842	803	94	3158
Saddle	0	592	886	738	606	330	3152
Hamlin	0	32	47	34	59	13	185
North Basin	0	19	36	16	11	5	87
Northwest Basin	0	7	31	5	7	14	64
North Peaks	0	0	1	5	2	0	8
Total	0	1429	2042	1962	1687	534	7654
Daicey Pond							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Niagara Falls	210	547	1012	910	684	391	3754
Daicey Pd Nature	4	37	75	57	50	82	305
Lost Pond	0	2	9	9	9	6	35
Sentinel Mountain	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
AT to Katahdin Str	3	2	17	18	1	3	44
Daicey to Grassy Pd	0	1	15	9	10	15	50
Daicey to Elbow Pd	0	0	7	1	9	4	21
Total	217	589	1137	1004	763	501	4211
Katahdin Stream							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Hunt	0	1212	2368	2584	1925	905	8994
Owl	0	84	140	189	107	35	555
Grassy Pond	78	248	279	254	193	171	1223
OJI	45	33	140	99	72	74	463
AT South	8	171	110	64	31	19	403
Blueberry Ledges	9	40	65	94	71	19	298
Total	140	1788	3102	3284	2399	1223	11936

Kidney Pond							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Doubletop	14	34	58	57	49	26	238
Sentinel Mountain	79	79	107	209	193	120	787
Rocky Pond	46	44	84	130	86	44	434
Draper Pond	8	27	13	25	41	13	127
Kidney Pond Circuit	14	4	15	32	20	20	105
Celia & Jackson	13	32	29	25	52	22	173
Windy Pitch/Niagara	0	20	26	40	35	223	344
Slaughter Pond	9	24	10	21	30	29	123
Total	183	264	342	539	506	497	2331
Nesowadnehunk							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Doubletop	83	153	161	265	223	138	1023
Marston	55	134	228	293	186	74	970
Wassataquoik Lake	6	12	67	78	83	25	271
Dwellely	0	24	53	57	74	49	257
Center Pond	5	21	15	0	0	3	44
Total	149	344	524	693	566	289	2565
Roaring Brook							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Chimney Pond	2	2262	3145	D	2538	995	8942
Helon Taylor	0	690	1045	a	944	187	2866
Sandy Stream	243	1052	1534	t	1233	1139	5201
South Turner	119	130	160	a	133	120	662
Russell Pond	14	171	323	m	259	74	841
Nature Trail	6	35	55	i	54	35	185
Katahdin Lake	19	86	129	s	122	63	419
Martin Ponds	9	22	32	s	32	22	117
North Katahdin Lake	1	15	34	i	13	14	77
Rum Pond	6	11	5	n	0	23	45
Total	419	4474	6462	0	5328	2672	19355

Russell Pond							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Russell Pond	3	13	31	18	22	10	97
Wassataquoik Strea	5	77	130	127	115	310	764
Pogy Notch	14	17	23	33	29	10	126
Wassataquoik Lake	21	74	164	180	131	39	609
Northwest Basin	6	58	67	106	66	32	335
Grand Falls	5	15	41	76	54	14	205
Lookout	12	13	18	22	21	10	96
North Peaks	0	7	34	39	14	0	94
Total	66	274	508	601	452	425	2326
South Branch Pond							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
South Branch Falls	53	169	337	327	185	88	1159
Ledges	46	51	149	208	97	71	622
Howe Brook	26	170	574	608	384	135	1897
North Traveler	0	57	254	268	141	75	795
Center Ridge	0	7	18	14	22	2	63
Traveler Loop	0	108	193	261	218	70	850
South Branch Mtn	48	47	117	149	311	56	728
Pogy Notch	49	61	92	91	109	33	435
Middle Fowler	4	11	41	38	24	28	146
Burnt Mountain	0	12	53	67	48	35	215
Total	226	693	1828	2031	1539	593	6910
Trout Brook Farm							
Trail	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Horse Mountain	8	16	71	124	63	39	321
Five Ponds	34	43	133	125	131	46	512
Fowler Pond	49	66	71	100	72	36	394
Freezeout	25	51	56	68	38	64	302
Frost Pond	3	14	10	8	6	10	51
Trout Brook Mounta	11	43	131	126	83	37	431
Wadleigh Brook	4	0	24	8	5	5	46
Total	134	233	496	559	398	237	2057
Grand Totals	1831	11324	18874	13459	15539	7754	68781

Trail Use Statistics - Dec-March, 2024

2023-2024 Winter Trail Stats					
Trail	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
Abol	11	65	103	111	290
Abol Stream/Pond	25	110	225	207	567
Foss Knowlton	25	89	228	101	443
Hunt	0	0	19	19	38
Doubletop/Kidney	0	0	35	11	46
Marston	3	4	12	15	34
Dudley	0	5	18	9	32
Cathedral	0	7	3	5	15
Saddle	1	39	85	120	245
Total	65	319	728	598	1710

Five-Year Cumulative Trail Statistics

