



**BAXTER STATE PARK AUTHORITY MEETING MINUES  
KIDNEY POND CAMGROUND, BAXTER STATE PARK  
OCTOBER 2, 2015  
10:00 A.M. TO NOON**

**ATTENDEES:**

**BSPA MEMBERS:** Janet Mills, AG; Chandler Woodcock, Commissioner IF&W

**ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL:** Lauren Parker

**BSP ADVISORY MEMBERS:** Rick Bray, Advisory Chair

**BNYMellon Endowment Manager:** Mike Daley

**BSP STAFF:** Jensen Bissell, Jean Hoekwater, Eben Sypitkowski, Ben Woodard, Christine Theriault, Morgan Taylor, Diane Freelove, Bruce White, Stewart Guay, Connie Theriault

**GUESTS:** Wendy Janssen, NPS Superintendent, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Ron Tipton, Executive Director, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Aaron Megquire, Paul Sannicandro, Kevin Miller, Paul Renaud, Jamie Renaud, Evan Watson, Henry Beeuwkes, Richard Klain, Chris Beeuwkes

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mills called the meeting to order at 10:10 and stated that Chair Denico had an important issue arise and could not make the meeting and that she would be acting as Chair. Mills then called for introductions around the room.

**MAY 29, 2015 BSPA MEETING MINUTES**

Mills brought the May 29, 2015 Authority minutes forward. Motioned by Woodcock, seconded by Mills, and followed by a unanimous vote to pass the motion.

**ENDOWMENT UPDATE**

Mike Daley, Bank of New York-Mellon fund manager for the BSP Endowment, presented an overview of BSP endowment management activities. The Investment Committee met August 28 in Brunswick. The committee has been considering a number of alternate investment strategies. After considerable discussion regarding vehicles for real estate investment, including a white paper on available options including risk and

accessibility issues prepared by committee member Erin Kinsella, the committee has not found a real estate investment option that appears suitable for the Park portfolio at this time. Daley also discussed recent committee work to improve the benchmarks current used to gauge performance. He then moved to a discussion of the downturn in equity returns over the previous quarter. Questions ensued about predictions for future performance. Daley

## **DONATION REPORT**

Bissell reviewed the donation report provided for the period May to Oct 2015. Along with the very significant donations from the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund and a number of field and reservation office donations, notable donations included a large (\$5,000) donation from Ed Hawkins and approximately \$1,000 of donations from John Lyon and friends of John Lyon in appreciation of the successful SAR effort to locate Mr. Lyon after he became lost off trail north of North Brother. .

## **TRAUTMANN TRAIL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE**

Mills asked Bissell to present on this issue. Bissell noted that the donations from the Baxter Park Wilderness Trust have enabled the implementation of the Trautmann Trail Improvement Initiative. This initiative works to identify, plan and implement critical improvements to the Park's 225 mile trail network. The initiative has focused on relocation of eroded fall-line trail segments throughout the Park. These relocation efforts provide new trail segments that can be adequately maintained over time, with lower grades for easier hiking and opportunities for safe litter evacuations.

The relocation of a significant segment of the OJI Trail was the first project completed under the TTII. This project was followed by a relocation of a segment of the Marston Trail. Currently, the substantial relocation effort of the Abol Trail is underway and will be completed at the end of the 2016 season.

Bissell then displayed large maps detailing relocation lines that have been flagged for work on an existing segment of trail above the long staircase above Katahdin Stream Falls as well as relocation of two segments of the Hunt Trail above and below the Oh Joy Brook crossing. The relocations will eliminate severely eroded sections of fall line trail and replace them with more maintainable and less steep treadways on this very heavily used Park trail. The logistics for this project will be worked out this winter and work is expected to begin in 2016 or 2017. Work assessing future TTII projects beyond the Hunt Trail project is ongoing.

## **AT ISSUES AND TASK FORCE**

Bissell provided an overview of efforts to address concerns with AT hiker use within the Park. Bissell discussed that these issues had been of growing concern to the Park for at least the past three years. Park officials met with Maine ATC officials and the then Executive Director of the ATC and the NPS law enforcement official for the AT in 2012 and discussed the concerns and requested an effort to find some resolution. In response to the absence of progress on the concerns in the ensuing two years, the Park issued an open letter to the NPS and ATC documenting the concerns in 2014. In July of 2015, in response to an AT-based event on Baxter Peak, the Park published a Facebook post discussing some of the concerns and including the potential resolution of the issue by discontinuing the AT within BSP. This post gained a strong reaction from the AT community, as well as the general public and the media. Following the post, the Friends of Baxter State Park organized an "AT Task Force" composed of representatives from Baxter State Park, the ATC, the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) the MATC and the Friends of Baxter State Park. This group met in July and identified issues and possible actions to consider to improve some of the issues of concern including hiker behavior, and group hiking size. The issue of the increase in hiker numbers was outside the scope of the AT Task Force. Bissell then reached out to the ATC and NPS-ATNTSC leadership and invited them to travel to the Park to familiarize themselves more specifically with the issues. Bissell discussed the most pressing issue concerning the AT and Baxter State Park, the steady and significant increase in AT hiker numbers entering the Park each season to climb Katahdin. Bissell discussed the hiker increase in AT use from around 350 in 1991 to over 2000 hikers in 2014. Bissell stated that anecdotal and statistical information indicates that the numbers of AT hikers will increase again this year. Bissell explained that since the mid-1980's, the Park has managed hiker use on Katahdin with a fixed use model. Using vehicles as a surrogate for hikers, parking lots for the three Katahdin trailheads are closed when full thereby limiting the total number of hikers each day during the camping season. The Park has instituted a Day Use Parking Reservation system to provide fair, equitable and predictable day use hiking access to hikers. Bissell noted that the AT hiking community is allowed to bypass this system. This was acceptable when hiker numbers were low, but with increasing numbers this issue has grown in concern. Trends in increasing hiker use over the past 20 years suggest that increases in

AT hiker use will continue into the future. Bissell stated he is very committed to finding a resolution to this issue in the near future.

Mills then recognized Ron Tipton, Executive Director of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and Wendy Janssen, National Park Service Superintendent of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Tipton acknowledged his the role of the ATC in the issue of trail growth. Tipton stated his confidence that the organizations can work together to find solutions to the concerns at hand. Tipton listed actions the ATC has taken recently including starting a voluntary thru-hiker registration program and

outreach efforts aimed at improving AT hiker behavior on the trail. Tipton also mentioned that his organization is continuing to encourage hikers to flip-flop their hike (traveling to Katahdin in mid-hike to ensure the Katahdin hike is finished before mid-fall when snowfall on Katahdin is likely).

Janssen followed Tipton's remarks with a description of her agencies process and structure and long term commitment to the effective management of this national resource. Janssen described the coalition of volunteer forces that help maintain the AT. Janssen stated that her agency is facing similar issues and challenges regarding high use along many popular sections of the AT. Janssen stated that while higher use is generally in keeping with objectives of the NPS, she was concerned about resource damage and the degradation of hiker experience resulting from overuse. Janssen stated that the NPS had contracted with a Virginia Tech researcher to study the carrying capacity of the trail. She indicated that this work had begun in Maine this summer due to the increased concerns with the northern AT terminus. Janssen stated that the study is a three year study.

Janssen stated that the AT is linked by partner agreements, usually codified in a Memorandum of Agreement and she referenced a 1972 MOA between the NPS and the State of Maine, signed by then-Maine governor Kenneth Curtis. Mills stated that in her judgment, the AT had no legal foothold in the Park. Assistant AG Lauren Parker related that her research supported that judgment. Mills stated that she did not believe that the 1972 Maine agreement took precedent over the authority of the Baxter State Park Authority to manage and administer the Park as a trust.

Mills stated, and stressed repeatedly, that the responsibility of the Authority was to manage the Park as trustees in accordance with Percival Baxter's wishes. Mill's said the Authority worked to "channed Gov. Baxter to reflect his sentiments as he prescribed in the deeds of trust and accompanying guidance he left for the Park.

Chandler Woodcock stated that he did not believe Baxter ever foresaw Katahdin as "a racetrack or the end of a competition", but rather as a place for solace and the opportunity to experience and connect with the natural world. Woodcock stated that as an Authority member, he felt Baxter wanted the Park to remain wild and in a natural state forever. Woodcock stressed the spiritual importance of Katahdin to Maine people and that he did not want to see this change. Mills closed the discussion by thanking Tipton and Janssen for making the effort to come to Maine and stating that she looked forward to hearing about proposals for resolution of the issues by the spring of 2016.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONAL UPDATES**

The meeting adjourned shortly after noon.

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Doug Denico, Chair BSPA  
Director, MFS

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Chandler Woodcock  
Commissioner IF&W

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Janet T. Mills  
Attorney General