



Baxter State Park Authority Meeting Minutes
Kidney Pond Campground Library
10 am, June 2, 2023

Approved by Authority Vote (Date): _____ Chair Signature: _____

Attendees:

Baxter State Park Authority: Chair and MFS Director Patty Cormier, Attorney General Aaron Frey

Assistant Attorney General: Lauren Parker

BSP Staff: Director Kevin Adam, Natural Resources Director Nava Tabak, Maintenance & Transportation Supervisor Keith Wehmeyer, Trail Supervisor Brennan Turner, Ranger Pete Sweeney, Office Specialist Georgia Manzo

BSP Advisory: Vice Chair Erica Dubois, Mike Perry, Carla Ritchie

Friends of Baxter: Executive Director Aaron Megquier, President Josie Quintell

BPWF Trustees: John Loyd, Chip Weickert, Buzz Caverly

Other guests: Louise Caverly, Carol Minnehan

Chair Cormier called the meeting to order at 10:05 am with a formal welcome and introduction of new BSP Director Kevin Adam, congratulating him and adding that he brings a well-rounded set of skills and experience to this position.

Consideration of the March 24, 2023 minutes: AG Frey moved to approve the minutes, and Chair Cormier seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried, 2-0.

Rule 2.2: Proposed adoption of amendments: Tabled until Commissioner Camuso is available to participate in the consideration.

Donations Report: Director Adam explained that the report was for the period 9-20-2022 through 05-24-2023, with those donations of \$1,000 and over to be approved by the Authority, including \$155,000 from the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund in two quarterly increments, and \$4,592.33 from Friends of Baxter (proceeds from the annual Sign Auction). **Attorney General Frey expressed appreciation for all the groups and individuals who contributed a tremendous amount to the Park and moved to accept these donations. The motion was seconded by Chair Cormier. No discussion. Motion carried, 2-0.**

SFMA & Research Committee Appointments: Nava Tabak invited the Authority to consider State Horticulturist Gary Fish to replace his predecessor Kathleen Murray on the Research Committee. He has been attending meetings as a guest and has greatly contributed to the committee. With recent retirements from the Research Committee, additional members are being sought.

SFMA Advisory Committee members serve 3-year terms, with no limit on the number of consecutive terms. Records of past reappointments are spotty, and most Advisors have continued to serve despite likely term expirations. Nava requested the Authority reappoint for a 3-year term those members whose terms would have expired in 2022 or the spring of 2023. They are Barrie Brusila, John Bryant, Andy Cutko, Shawn Fraver, Allison Kanoti, Ken Laustsen, Jim O'Malley, Bob Seymour, Craig Troeger, and Aaron Weiskittel.

Three members who would have been officially reappointed in 2021 but were not, and Nava requested that they be appointed to serve until 2024—the timeframe of a 3-year appointment since 2021 are

Philip Ahrens, Rob Bryan, and Joe Wiley. BSP Staff and the committee are seeking new members to fill vacant seats and replace some of the longer-term members over time.

AG Frey moved to accept the recommendation for 1) Gary Fish to join the Director's Research Committee, 2) those identified on the SFMA Advisory Committee whose terms would have expired in 2022 or 2023 to be reappointed for a three-year term, and 3) three SFMA Advisors who would have been reappointed in 2021 but were not, to be reappointed to serve until 2024. The motion was seconded by Chair Cormier. All were in favor. Motion carried 2-0.

Endowment/Trust Fund Overview: Lori Morrison was unable to attend. Mike Daley plans to attend the next Authority meeting and will provide an overview of the funds.

Baxter Park Wilderness Fund Update: Chair Cormier asked Buzz Caverly to step forward to receive a gift from the Authority as thanks for his service as a Trustee of the BPWF. After Buzz retired as Park Director in 2005, he continued working to benefit the Park, coordinating with Frank Trautmann and the Trust for Public Lands, and was instrumental in arranging for and raising the final funds to complete the purchase of the Katahdin Lake parcel before the purchase window closed. In 2007, Buzz and Frank Trautmann created the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund, now the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund Trust. Buzz was one of three founding trustees, along with James Garland and Willard Pease, and served as a trustee since 2007. His current term ends this coming August.

John Loyd announced the BPWF received a \$15,000 gift last week from a family that has now donated over \$45,000 and is the largest single donor, honoring Frank Trautmann's wish for an entity to accept large gift donations on behalf of the Park. The Trustees continue to take steps to actively grow the corpus of the Trust through external donations. John added that the Trustees serve 3-year terms, and they are working toward providing the Authority with a list of successors who meet the qualifications required by the Trust.

Chip Weickert announced that the distribution of \$400K in FY 2024 is a significant increase from the 2023 FY distributions totaling \$280,000, and is a result of Jim Garland's work/formula/conservative approach for the Trust to be sustainable in perpetuity.

History/Background/Evolution of K-100: Director Adam reviewed the timeline/history of discussions and meetings between Tribal members and the Authority/Park Staff beginning in 1977.

- Historical perspective of Indigenous people and their relationship to Katahdin recognized by the Authority
 - was the foundation of the discussions
- Fees were not waived
- Katahdin Stream Campground identified as a suitable Group site for this event
 - Labor Day weekend - the entire weekend must be reserved
 - Request made each year between 12/1 - 12/14 and paid in advance
- Group Rate changed from per site to per person over time - both half of the usual rate
- Park will update the policy to reflect the current fee structure.
- Chair Cormier will send a letter to Matthew Dunlap, Chair Episcopal Diocesan Committee on Indian Relations, communicating that we're still in discussion and that the current structure will remain for now.

Overview of Park Operations: Fourteen new seasonal employees have been hired thus far this season, and one new summer intern is working as a Summit Steward. Cassandra Knudsen was chosen for the position of Interpretive Specialist. Her position as a customer service representative at the Visitor Center will be filled soon.

At the **BSP Advisory meeting on April 29**, it was discussed and passed to make a permanent seat for a Wabanaki Tribal Member. There are currently 13 members on this 15-member committee. There is one other permanent seat held by a Baxter family member. We are currently evaluating Advisory member terms and recruiting new members. The Advisory is working on an updated Statement of Purpose, and staggering terms of its member positions is included in those updates.

In the south end of the **SFMA**, BSP staff and contractors are preparing road access for summer and fall operations. Staff are working to engage contractors for several miles of boundary line maintenance. Conversations have started with a pre-commercial thinning contractor and we are trying to finalize the details. Markets are down, and our hardwood pulp from the last harvest may be converted to firewood. Kevin Osborne, retired SFMA technician, will be working part-time this summer to assist staff with road layout and operations, and deferred maintenance projects.

Trail Supervisor Brennan Turner provided a **trail maintenance update**. The staff has been clearing blowdowns from trails in the Daicey and Kidney Ponds area, clearing more than 500 trees from roughly 12 miles of trails. This week they are continuing efforts around Trout Brook Farm and South Branch Pond campgrounds. BSP Trail Specialist Kristen English attended a three-day “rigging for trailwork” course in New Hampshire and the trail crew completed their spring training by participating in a prescribed burn with the Maine Forest Service. Brennan, along with the National Guard, repaired a boardwalk along the AT over the weekend and carried a bog bridging to a project site on the Sandy Stream Trail. The Maine Appalachian Trail Club volunteers completed their first of two weeks of annual cleanup projects along the AT in BSP. May was a busy month, and in June the trails staff will be able to move onto the mountain trails projects and cleanup and start Chimney Pond and Saddle Trails in conjunction with the OJI trail which also sustained a lot of damage. Construction projects will begin at the end of June. We are slowly opening up Trails. Abol and Hunt are open, and the Chimney Pond trail to the campground is open.

Justine Rumaker graduated from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Law Enforcement Program on May 19. Congratulations, Justine, on this major career accomplishment. **The Ranger Heath Memorial** was attended in Augusta and with the family at his actual gravesite in Sherman.

Daicey Pond Project Update: Keith Wehmeyer thanked the Advisory sub-committee members for their time and efforts in helping to develop this project plan. The scope of work was discussed in detail (footings, sills, framing members, decks/floors, railings/ballisters, walls, rafters/roofs) and an on-site tour at Daicey Pond with the Authority followed lunch.

Adjourn: AG Frey motioned to adjourn at 11:40 a.m. Seconded by Chair Cormier.

Respectfully submitted,

Georgia Manzo