



MEMORANDUM

Date: 10/30/2023

To: Baxter State Park Authority

From: Park Director Kevin Adam

Subject: Park Operational Updates for December 8 Authority Meeting

Committees:

BSP Advisory Committee:

The Advisory Committee met on December 6 and named a Vice Chairperson, and had discussions about active sub-committees, updates on the Kidney- Daicy Bridge Project, and the Daicey Pond project.

SFMA Committee: Working on a management plan.

Research Committee: Finding new members for recent vacancies that have occurred.

Legislative/Public Relations: Friends of Baxter hosted a meet-the-director night at Colby College. This was well attended by Park supporters and the leadership team answered questions and presented upcoming projects for the Park.

Human Resource: BSP currently has four job openings: Park Services Manager, Human Resource Administrator, Daicey Pond Maintenance Project Manager, and Baxter Park Trail Crew Member.

Information & Education:

I&E staff worked with rangers and Deanna Madore (Storehouse Manager) to update and distribute winter-specific signs throughout the Park. Staff also assisted the Reservations team in planning, preparing, and staffing the November 1st opening day for winter reservations. Interpretive Specialist Cassandra Knudsen has been researching the history of the Daicey Pond cabins and aspects of the cabin repair project in preparation for publishing a webpage on the BSP website for this project.

SFMA:

Harvest operations have continued through the fall with only short breaks for wet conditions, and the harvest crew is expected to relocate to the north end of the SFMA in early December. Horizon Forestry contractors returned to the SFMA to complete approximately eight miles of boundary line maintenance in the north end of the SFMA, which will be cost-shared with a neighboring landowner. SFMA staff have drafted a policy and procedures for using herbicides in the SFMA, which is currently under review by the SFMA Advisory Committee. On November 16th SFMA and other Park staff toured both the Dover and Enfield Pleasant River Lumber mills. These mills acquire a large portion of the spruce and fir sawlogs from the SFMA and are owned by A&A Brochu- the current contractor for harvest operations and road work in the SFMA as well as in the Park. Looking ahead to next summer,

SFMA staff conducted interviews for seasonal interns, and have secured commitments from two forestry students from the University of Maine.



Small spruce and fir logs being processed at the PRL Enfield mill

The SFMA Advisory Committee met in the southern part of the SFMA on October 20th, examining various sites to provide advice to staff. On October 27th staff and two members of the SFMA Advisory Committee hosted a full-day tour for approximately 25 members—including board members—of Friends of Baxter State Park (FBSP). As a follow-up to a recent webinar, FBSP members learned more about silvicultural approaches, harvest operations, planning processes, and other aspects of the SFMA.



October SFMA site visits with (left) the SFMA Advisory Committee and (right) members of the Friends of Baxter State Park.

TRAILS:

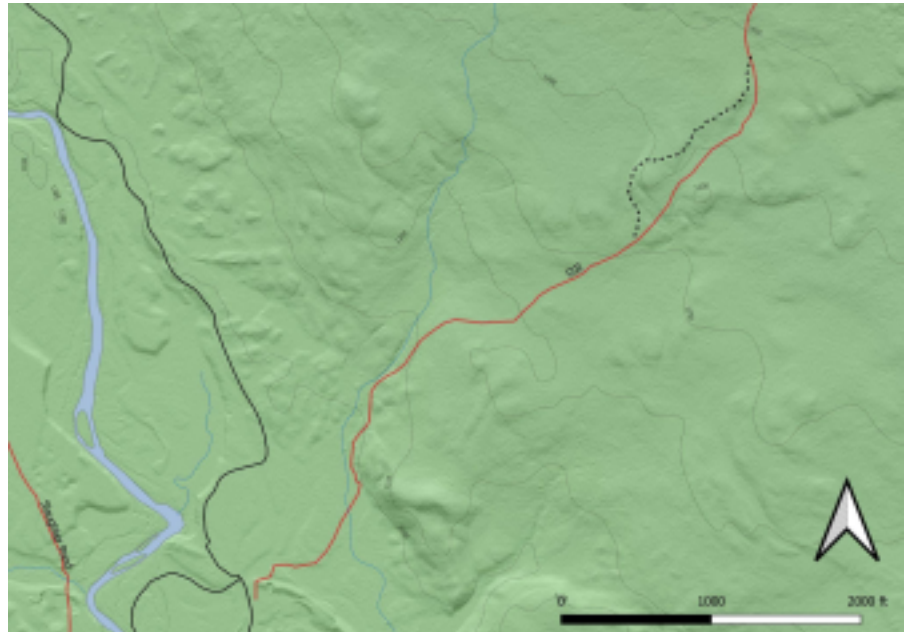
The following is a summation of goals and objectives for the BSP Trailcrew in 2024.

- Blowdown Patrol - We will be experimenting with a new implementation scheme for our annual blowdown patrol. Typically, the annual clearing of blowdowns is completed by our 4-person trail

crew, led by the BSP Crew Leader and Trail Specialist. This year, however, the BSP crew will be supported by a small 3-person MCC crew. The BSP crew will prioritize the clearing of early-season fishing access trails, Katahdin trails, and other popular mountain trails. The remainder of the trails will be cleared by the MCC crew arriving in mid-June. This will allow us to patrol the trails that receive regular foot traffic early in the season but then free the BSP Trailcrew to tackle other projects while the MCC crew finalizes the patrol.

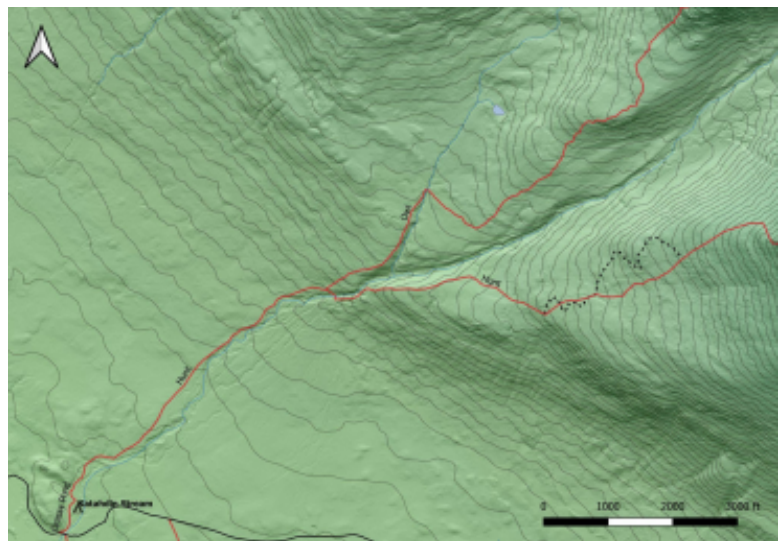
- Finalize and open the OJI reroute - I scouted a small reroute of the swampiest portion of the OJI Trail with Dan Rinard in 2021. We hired a small MCC Crew in the Fall of 2022 to begin construction which was finalized by the BSP Trail Crew in 2023. All that remains now is to cut the final 100' of trail on either end of the reroute, blaze the new trail, and close the old trail. This new trail is a sustainably designed reroute that will require minimal annual maintenance. The new trail is 1,660 ft long and closes 1,600 ft of shin-deep mud-covered trail.

Figure 1. The OJI Trail is shown in red, while the new reroute is shown as a dashed black line.



- Hunt Trail Relocation - BSP Trail Crew will be continuing the construction of the Hunt Trail Relocation that was designed by Lester Kenway in 2014. This is a major ongoing project. In the past, this project has been conducted by contracted crews such as the MCC and the MATC and has been met with varying levels of success. This will be the first season that the work is conducted solely by BSP Trail staff.

Figure 2. Hunt Trail relocation is shown as a black dashed line



- Chimney Pond Trail Maintenance - We will resume construction of an elevated turnpike structure between the upper and lower Saddle Brook Bridges, about 0.5 miles below Chimney Pond Campground. A portion of the

trail that parallels Saddle Brook was deeply scoured in the October 2022 flooding events, and the trail currently sits below the waterline causing hikers to leave the trail in a futile attempt to keep their feet dry. This project is scheduled to conclude in the summer of 2025.

- Upper Saddle Brook Bridge Replacement - The BSP trail crew will replace bridge #7 over the Upper Saddle Brook bridge on the Chimney Pond Trail.
- Grassy Pond Outlet Bridge Replacement - We will also replace the two 25' split-log bridge crossings over the Grassy Pond Outlet on the AT, approximately 0.4 miles south of Katahdin Stream Campground
- Sandry Stream Bog Bridging Replacement - The BSP trail crew will replace the bog bridging down to the first view point along the Sandy Stream Pond. They will be supported by the Baxter Youth Conservation Corps Trail crew.
- North Peaks Trail Clearing - Each year the trail crew spends 80 work hours based out of Russell Pond providing trail maintenance in the area. We will begin a multi-season project to maintain and improve the North Peaks trail.
- Traveler Trail Delineation - A second MCC crew will spend two weeks in the fall constructing and repairing cairns along the Traveler Loop. They will provide annual maintenance of blazes and corridor brushing as well, time permitting.
- Dwelley Pond Improvement - The crew will work to reopen the overgrown and impassable portions of the Dwelley Pond Trail.
- Five Ponds and Trout Brook Mountain Improvement - The Baxter Youth Conservation Corps will install stepping stones and water bars on the Five Ponds Loop, and may begin cutting a sustainable route up the Trout Brook Mountain Trail from the new trailhead (rerouted in 2020) to where it connects with the original trail.
- Winter 23/24- Trail Specialist Kris English and I will spend the winter preparing for the above-listed projects. We will focus on sign making, tool maintenance, project material staging, and assisting Rangers with the opening and maintenance of winter access trails and hauling projects.

Law Enforcement:

For the winter of 2023/2024 here is a list of some projects Staff will be working on:

Resupply flight with National Guard Blackhawk helicopters to Chimney Pond campground, Russell Pond campground, South Branch Pond campground, Little Wassataquoik Lake, and other trail crew material flown to and from the Katahdin Tableland. Materials include gravel, bridge materials, propane tanks, lumber for propane platforms, solar battery replacement, and removal of surplus logs from lean to construction.

Staff will be resupplying/hauling via snowmobile: trail crew bridge and decking material and other campground supplies to Chimney Pond and Russell Pond not flown in. Replacement canoes to Center

Pond lean-to, roofing material for Dweley Pond picnic shelter, and removal of unregistered watercraft in the Park at Katahdin Lake and Foss Knowlton Pond/ Lost Pond area.

In the spring there is planned construction of replacement lean-tos at Katahdin Stream and Roaring Brook and a cribbed gravel tent platform to replace old wooden tent platforms at the AT Birches camp. The removal of a pine tree in the campground at Daicey Pond is planned.

Staff will be starting on BSP policy review and updating of sections of the Standard Operating Procedures, Duty Officer Manual, Law Enforcement Manual, and Campground Standard Operating Guidelines. Staff will also be cutting and blazing the Park's boundary line as time allows.

Maintenance: Maintenance will be conducting a park-wide assessment of propane regulators and appliances.

The closure of the summer camping season in the Park marked the start of the Fall road work season. The Maintenance department took steps to alleviate long-term drainage issues in the Roaring Brook parking lots. Historically, heavy rain events led to uncontrolled runoff from the Camper parking lot through the upper tent sites. Maintenance built a retaining wall along the South and Eastern edges of the parking lot using large rocks, then added gravel to raise the corner of the lot by up to 2'. The added elevation allowed regrading to force runoff into existing ditches and settling areas. This work will lead to decreased erosion in both the affected campsites and the parking lots preventing sedimentation in drainages that lead to Roaring Brook. This was the first step of many planned improvements to drainage issues in the campground with the work being planned from the top down. Gravel for this project came from Nesowadnehunk Pit and had been stockpiled along Roaring Brook Road periodically during the summer.

Just outside the campground along Roaring Brook Road two 18" cross culverts were added to reduce flow in a long, slopped ditch that had a history of eroding during rain events. The ditch was cleaned and reshaped. An improved turnoff and settling pool were added at the bottom of this ditch to prevent sedimentation of a minor stream crossing nearby. All disturbed soils were stabilized with straw and seed. Further south on Roaring Brook Rd. an 18" crossing culvert was replaced with a 24" culvert. The existing culvert was severely undermined due to the rotting remains of an old wooden box culvert. Ditches leading to this crossing were improved, with turnoffs into vegetated buffers created to prevent direct drainage into the crossing. Rock tailings were added to the turnoffs to slow flow velocity. All disturbed soils were stabilized with straw and seed.

Along the Park Tote Rd. between the top of Abol Hill and Stump Pond 3 steel culverts were replaced, and one additional steel culvert was removed. First, two 18" culverts with a shared inlet pool were both compromised preventing adequate flow. The first culvert had an upturned inlet, and the other was heaved in the middle while also having a severe drop pool at its outlet. The first culvert was removed entirely, and the second was replaced with its outlet stabilized with stone tailings to eliminate the drop pool condition. Traveling North, a 15" culvert with a damaged inlet was replaced.

Following that, a 36" steel crossing culvert that had exceeded its useful life was replaced with a 30" plastic culvert.

Between Abol and Katahdin Stream Campgrounds two damaged 15" cross-drain culverts were replaced with 18" culverts. Ditches in the area were cleaned and improved. Road resurfacing was done in the area of all projects with gravel hauled from Nesowadnehunk Pit. An additional day of gravel hauling (3 dump trucks, 7 loads each) for resurfacing took place following the culvert projects. As always logistical planning and communication were essential during the road projects. While work was done after the close of camping, the Tote Road and Roaring Brook Roads. were still in their open seasons. Road closure decisions were made on a day-to-day basis based on work locations. Gravel hauling from Nesowadnehunk Pit took up to 3.5 hours round trip per load depending on work location. The Park's new log hauling trailer was used to move the 30' culverts to work locations and proved to be an extremely useful tool yet again.



Roaring Brook Road



Roaring Brook Parking Lot

In addition, the deck on the Kidney Pond Rd. Bridge was replaced. Both the wearing surface and cross timbers were redone with a continuous wearing surface being installed as opposed to the previous treadway-only surface.

Maintenance worked to close and winterize several locations around the park, including the Togue Gatehouse Area (Lower Togue Camp, Trapper John, the Visitor Center), Abol Field Area (Field Camp, Pine Camp, Trails End), in addition to other areas.



Kidney Pond Bridge



The seasonal vehicle fleet has been serviced and stored at Headquarters in Millinocket for the winter, and heavy equipment has been moved to its winter locations along with small engines, outboard motors, and other seasonal equipment. As of this writing, Maintenance is a quarter of the way through servicing the snowmobile fleet and putting it into service.

Other fall work included the seasonal covering of all through-wall air conditioning units at the Millinocket Headquarters and the service of the complex's two pellet boilers. The servicing of the 10kw Kohler backup generator is scheduled for December. This fall a contractor was hired to replace roofs on two cabins at the Hemlock camp complex in the SFMA. An overhaul service of the two 10kw Kohler generators in the SFMA will be completed before Christmas.

Maintenance also played a lead role in staging materials for spring projects, including moving new lean-to kits (50 cedar log pieces and 6 purlins per lean-to, flooring decking, roof sheathing, shingles, etc.) to Katahdin Stream and Roaring Brook campgrounds, 6x6 timbers to South Branch for a retaining wall project, 2x6 framing materials for new propane tank platforms at Chimney Pond, and more.



Lean-to materials being staged at Roaring Brook for a spring build

Looking ahead Maintenance will be spending the winter months taking a close look at specific critical building systems throughout the Park. This work is a more thorough servicing than the routine preventative Maintenance that has been ongoing.

The Department is planning to service every piece of propane infrastructure, cleaning and adjusting each propane light, refrigerator, range, and hot water heater. During these service trips, records will be kept to update inventories and plan future appliance replacements.

Also, each solar power system will be visited, inventoried, and otherwise serviced. Firmware will be updated in charge controllers; batteries will be tested, and the programming of the system will be checked. This will help inform future solar upgrades and preventative maintenance.



Using a Phone App to Check Winter Sun Angle and Potential Solar Charging at Matagamon



Making Wiring Adjustments to the Matagamon Solar Inverter/Charger

Daicey Pond Project: Some big milestones in the buildup to the Daicey Pond project were reached this fall. The 260 logs harvested from the SFMA were debarked by a contractor in Patten. Enough logs to replace all roof purlins were milled flat on one side for easier installation, a huge step since milling logs up to 36' long is not a task that can be done with most equipment.

With the completion of this work, the logs were moved from Patten to the Daicey Pond Campground in mid-November. Moving 36' logs on the winding park Tote Rd. was no small feat. With the help of A&A Brochu, the logs were staged in the field near the Daicey Pond day-use parking, which is much closer than had been thought possible given the Park's road limitations. From this location the logs will be further processed, cut to length, and moved as close as possible to each cabin for use when the project begins this spring.

The Daicey Pond Crew Leader (Limited Period, Building Maintenance Superintendent) has been posted and applicants are being screened for minimum qualifications. We expect the crew member positions to be posted in January.



Logs being transferred from Highway Trailer to Self-Loader at Mountain View

Logs Being Off-Loaded in the Field at Daicey Pond

