

To: Baxter State Park Authority

From: Kevin Adam, Director

Date: March 3, 2025

Re: Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps

As you are aware from past Authority meetings, I, along with AAG Lauren Parker, have been in discussions with David McDonald on behalf of Charles FitzGerald regarding the future of the Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps. These discussions have culminated in two proposed transactions that I am recommending to the Authority:

1. Accepting a donation from Charles FitzGerald of fourteen (14) structures—nine (9) camps and five (5) other buildings—owned by Charles and located on the Katahdin Lake Parcel; and
2. Leasing two (2) acres of the Katahdin Lake Parcel to Charles FitzGerald for five (5) years. The proposed two-acre lease area would encompass the buildings to which Charles is retaining title.

Relevant background information is set forth in the recitals of the attached draft Donation of Personal Property, the attached draft Lease, and the attached memorandum dated March 3, 2025, from David McDonald to me. Also attached is a map of the Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps that depicts (not to scale) the proposed lease area and the buildings to which Charles is retaining title, as well as the structures that I understand Charles intends to gift to the Authority.

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin Adam - Director, Baxter State Park

FROM: David MacDonald - on behalf of Charles FitzGerald

DATE: March 3, 2025

RE: Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps - proposed lease & donation

Thank you for the time and effort that you have put into working with Charles to find an agreement that serves the interests of all parties and the future of Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps. I am following up on your suggestion to briefly outline in writing some of the background and considerations that have brought us to this point.

Charles purchased Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps from Al Cooper in 2002, inspired by the Camps' unparalleled location and its potential to contribute to the conservation mission of Baxter State Park. With a multi-year lease with Great Northern Paper for the underlying 31 acres, Charles operated the camps year-round offering a remote experience in a rustic, traditional camp setting. He also pursued negotiations to try to buy the underlying land and surrounding acreage to protect it against timber harvesting and only paused these efforts reluctantly when the State of Maine and Trust for Public Land asked him to yield to their campaign to buy the larger tract around the lake in 2006. When the State's purchase was completed in 2007, they pledged to Charles and stated in public meetings of the Legislature and the Baxter SP Authority the intent to enter into a 25-year lease to allow the camps to continue. While the financial and logistical challenges of operating and maintaining camps in such a remote location took their toll over the years, the COVID pandemic was the final blow; the camps have not been operational since 2019, the lease has lapsed, and the buildings are suffering from lack of upkeep.

We have been in discussions since I started working for Charles in 2022 on how to agree on an arrangement that will lead to restoration and maintenance of these historic camps, that are of great interest to the general public in a manner consistent with the mission of Baxter State Park as well as with Charles's ownership rights and programmatic goals. The proposal now coming before the Authority for approval is a two-part transaction that would involve an outright donation by Charles to Park of the Main Lodge and eight cabins and associated outbuildings to the west while also entering into a new five-year lease on a much smaller (2-acre) envelope surrounding three cabins and outbuildings to be retained by Charles to the south and east of the Lodge (see exhibits).

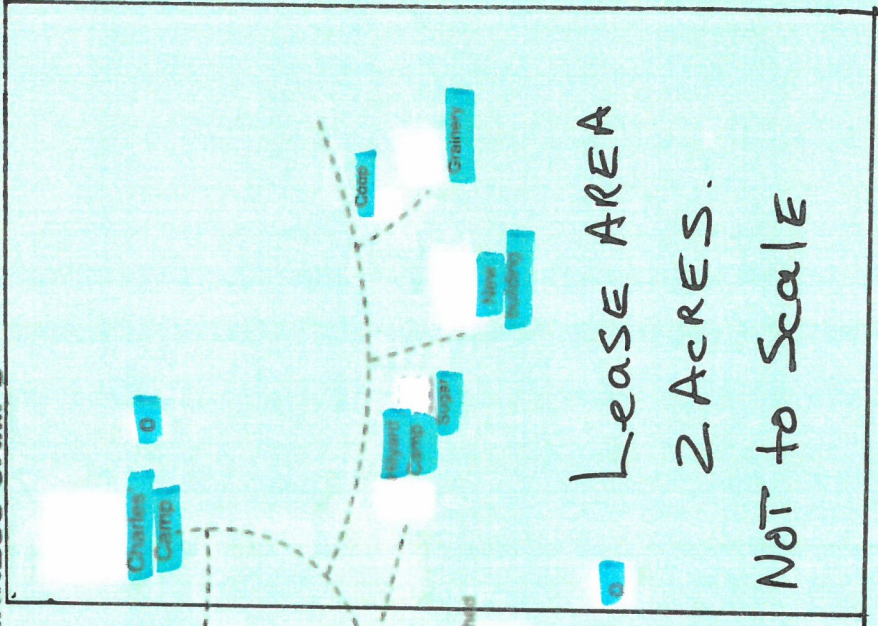
Charles's intent is to make the retained buildings available to researchers, teachers, students, artists and others whose work furthers the conservation mission and goals of Baxter State Park. Charles would intend to transfer the retained buildings and assign the lease immediately to a non-profit organization he has created, the Maine Woods Conservancy to fund and implement

these programmatic goals benefiting the Park and the general public. We hope to benefit from the input of the Park and Friends of BSP and other interested institutions in designing the details of the program; and we hope that if the program is deemed successful and effective by the Park after the first five year lease, that the staff will recommend to the Authority a renewal in 2030 that would allow the partnership to continue.

Finally, it is also our hope that the Park will undertake assessment of the donated buildings that will lead to eventual repairs and restoration of those that are able to be saved, and that the camps will again be used for recreational use by the general public and/or a programmatic use that expands upon the vision that Charles and the Maine Woods Conservancy have in mind for his retained buildings.

I want to thank Lauren Parker for her work in drafting and refining the lease and donation documents proposed for approval, and I look forward to working with you both to finalize them should the Authority vote in the affirmative on Friday. As always, I am happy to answer any questions between now and then or at the meeting.

# KATAHDIN LAKE WILDERNESS CAMPS



Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument

Katahdin Lake

Katahdin

Beach

Boathouse

Purgatory Lodge

Turner Camp

Cobb's Camp

Freezout Camp

Lodge

Spring

Windy Pitch Camp

Benam

Traveler Camp

Woodshed

Guide Camp

Avalanche Field

0.5 MI



O - Outhouse

Not to scale

JAS sketch Aug 15, 2023

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