



MEMORANDUM

Date: 5/23/2025

To: Baxter State Park Authority for the May 30, 2025, BSPA Meeting

From: Park Director Kevin Adam

Subject: Park Operations Update March 7 to the present

Finance:

FY25, Q3 (January 2025 – March 2025)

Revenue:

- \$2,058,306

Note: The December trust disbursement was recorded in January.

Expenses:

- Personnel expense: \$743,099 – under budget by 18.5%.
Note: position vacancies
- All Other expenses: \$291,341- representing a positive 5% variance under budget.
Note: Tracking to budget.
- Capital expense: Q3 - \$69,940, YTD - \$415,504
Note: 81% of the capital allocation has been utilized year-to-date through Q3.

Dacey Pond Project Budget through May 20, 2025:

Dacey Pond Project Budget Detail through 5/20/2025			
	Actual through 5/20/2025	Project Budget	Remaining Budget
Revenue			
Endowment	\$ 273,500.00	\$ 273,500.00	\$ -
BSP	\$ 192,091.29	\$ 270,593.00	\$ 78,501.71
Total Revenue	\$ 465,591.29	\$ 544,093.00	\$ 78,501.71
Expense			
*Personnel and Fringe	\$ 261,778.50	\$ 299,618.62	\$ 37,840.12
All Other and Capital			
Building Materials	\$ 156,068.20		
Minor Equipment	\$ 19,076.27		
Safety supplies	\$ 1,172.95		
Supplies	\$ 21,318.88		
Waste Containers	\$ 2,557.02		
Equipment Rental	\$ 3,619.47		
Total All Other and Capital	\$ 203,812.79	\$ 244,474.38	\$ 40,661.59
Total Expense	\$ 465,591.29		
Net Revenue	\$ (0.00)		
Remaining Budget			\$ 78,501.71
Financial Note:			
Personnel Expense includes Project Superintendent, SOM Conservation Aid, Tri-State Staffing			

Human Resource:

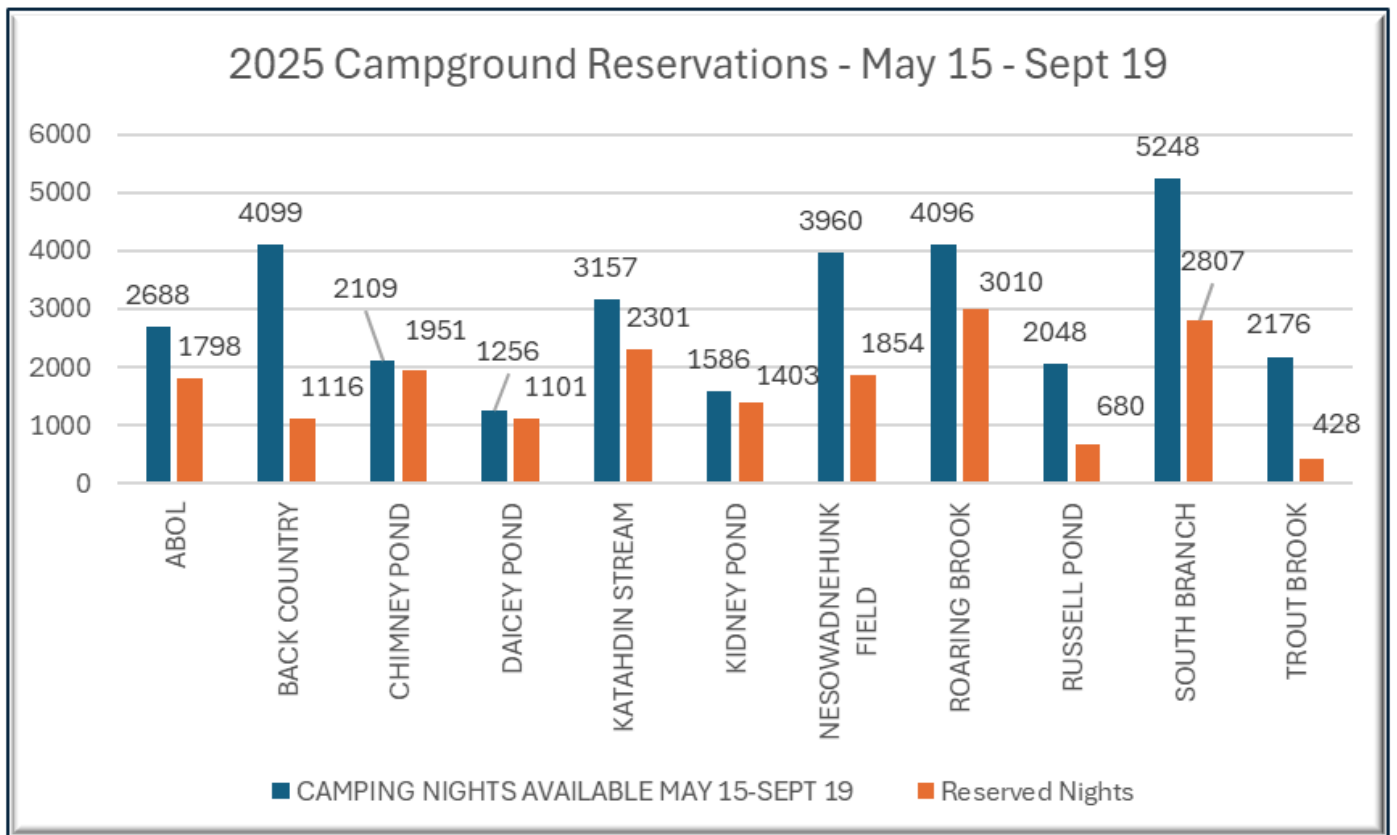
Recruitment for the 2025 season has been quite successful. After the conclusion of the 2024 season, we received 15 resignations. The accompanying chart provides a detailed overview of the vacant positions, listed by classification and location, indicating the number of new hires, the number of staff returning, and current vacancies.

Of the 15 positions filled, nine were new hires at BSP, two were former employees who returned, and four existing employees transitioned to new roles within the organization. Among the 11 employees who did not return, the reasons are as follows: one retired, one employer initiated, two pursued careers after graduating from college, two found full-time job opportunities, one returned to a previous nursing career, three sought new opportunities, and sadly, Customer Representative Tom Power passed away in November of 2024.

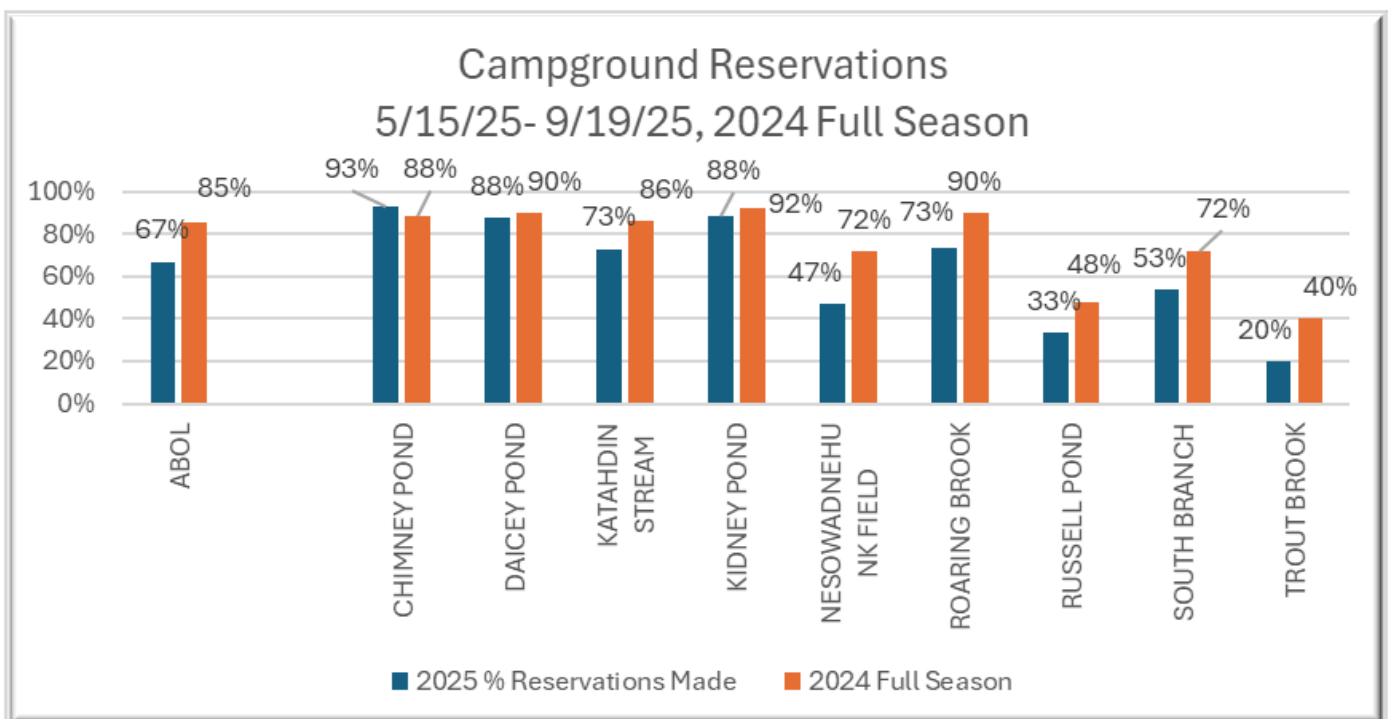
Classification	Location	New Recruit	Return	Vacant
Campground Ranger	Abol	1	1	0
Campground Ranger	Daicey Pond	1	1	0
Campground Ranger	Katahdin Stream	1	2	0
Campground Ranger	Kidney Pond	0	2	0
Campground Ranger	Nesowadnehunk	2	0	0
Campground Ranger	Roving	2	1	0
Campground Ranger	South Brancy Pond	1	1	0
Campground Ranger	Roaring Brook	2	0	0
Campground Ranger	Russell Poond	0	2	0
Campground Ranger	Chimney Pond	0	3	0
Campground Ranger	Enforcement Ranger	0	0	1
Campground Ranger	Maintenance Mechanic	0	0	1
Customer Service	Togue	3	2	0
Customer Service	HQ	1	3	0
Trails Laborer	Trails	1	3	0

Reservations:

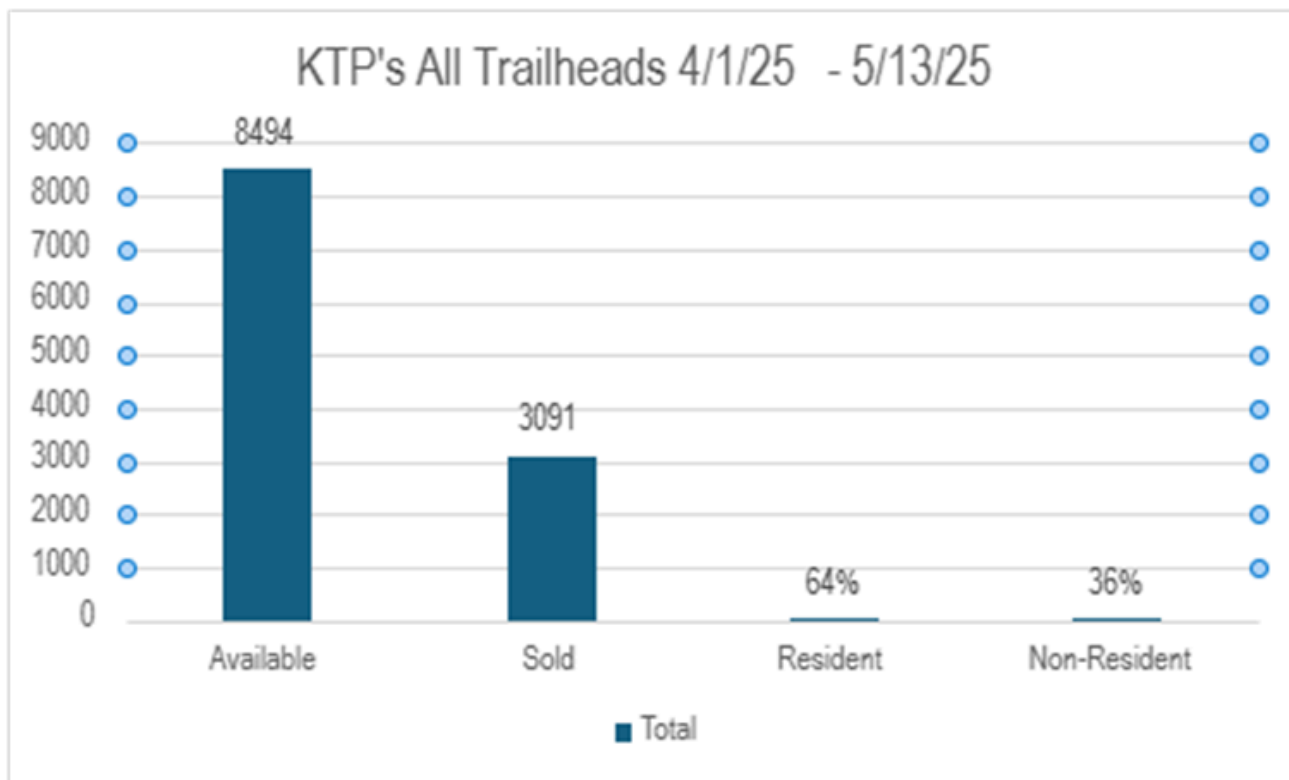
The 2025 season officially began accepting reservations on January 15, 2025, generating excitement among visitors eager to plan their trips to Baxter State Park. As of May 19, 2025, the chart below shows the total number of available nights at various campgrounds through September 19, 2025, along with the current number of reservations made for the same period. This indicates that visitors still have many opportunities to book reservations at most campgrounds.



The chart below displays the current percentage of campground reservations from May 15, 2025, to September 19, 2025. It illustrates current data against the 2024 full camping season. While the periods differ, this information is still relevant, indicating that reservations are trending to meet or exceed last year's occupancy percentages.



Katahdin Trailhead Passes (KTPs) went on sale on April 1st for use starting June 1st. The system is functioning well, and visitors have not complained. From June 1st to October 15th, 63% of KTPs are still available for residents to purchase, ensuring that no more than 30% are allocated for non-residents. Currently, for all Trailheads, resident purchases stand at 64%, which is slightly below the target of 70%. However, Katahdin Stream and Roaring Brook have not yet met the threshold, with 65% and 63% of passes, respectively, going to residents. In contrast, to date, Abol has successfully maintained the ratio of 70% for residents and 30% for non-residents. We will continue monitoring this data and provide another report at the close of the season in October.



Information and Technology:

The top priority for the IT and Networking department is preparing for the Park's opening. Network wiring in the Reservations Office was redone to accommodate workstation changes made over the winter to improve efficiency and the updated office remodeling. Matagamon Gate and Togue Pond Gates were inspected and remodeled to improve technology use. IT equipment was installed at all remote locations.

We've enhanced Wi-Fi security at all gate locations by hiding SSIDs. This prevents visitor inquiries and assumptions about guest access, reducing visitor and staff frustration. For employee convenience, we've implemented QR codes for easy Wi-Fi access. A removal from inventory process was completed for old cell phones, monitors, tablets, printers, and laptops, which were then recycled. Batteries, memory, and hard drives were removed to prevent data retrieval before leaving BSP.

An evaluation of the Park's networking gear was conducted to begin financial and replacement planning for

equipment nearing the end of its life.

Spring Orientation & Training:

Spring orientation took place from April 28th to May 9th. New staff began their orientation on April 28th, followed by returning seasonal staff, who joined for the second week starting May 5th. Training and educational sessions were provided by all park departments, including Information and Education, Natural Resources, Field Operations, Administration, Reservations, SFMA, Maintenance, Trails, and Information Technology.

The training covered a variety of topics, including basic GPS usage, maintenance introduction, radios, propane, the history and mission of the BSP, Park geology, natural resources, Leave No Trace (LNT) principles, rules and regulations, Park policies, the ranger first concept, cash handling, medical and non-medical report procedures, the Appalachian Trail, the volunteer program, and customer service basics.

Speakers from MEMIC and the office of the Maine Attorney General provided education on workplace safety and service animal policies. Scenario-based learning, which simulates real park situations, was also included, making it a favorite among employees for its engaging and educational nature. Customer Service Representatives also received a guided tour of part of the Park during this training period.

Water rescue training at Togue Pond was new to the training roster this year. Additionally, Wilderness Advanced First Aid (WAFA) training was provided for new campground rangers, while existing staff underwent recertification training.

We were honored to welcome BSP Authority Chair Patty Cormier (Director of Maine Forest Service), BSP Authority member Aaron Frey (Maine Attorney General), and Director of Friends of BSP Aaron Megquier to welcome and address all of the staff. Joe Mints delivered the keynote address, sharing insights from the Forest Commissioner's report on the fires in 1904 and 1977. Irving "Buzz" Caverly, the former Park Director, was our special guest one evening. Buzz shared captivating stories and insightful reflections from his tenure as Park Director, recounting his experiences and the park's rich history. He also offered a personal glimpse into his time with the late Governor Baxter, highlighting their interactions and the significant events that shaped his time. His reminiscing provided a deeper understanding of the Park's legacy.

Special recognition goes out to Justine Rumaker, Supervisor Enforcement Ranger, and Deanna Madore, Inventory and Property Associate II. They did an excellent job co-chairing the spring training committee, leading the organizing and planning of this two-week event.

Information & Education (I&E):

In March, Interpretive Specialist Cassandra Knudsen collaborated with Supervising Ranger Bruce White to coordinate staff and volunteers to table at both the Eastern Maine Sportsman's Show in Orono (3 days) and the Aroostook Sportsman's Sport Show in Presque Isle (2 days). I&E staff provided table materials to Ed Pontbriand (Park Advisory Committee member) to represent the Park at the



Park Volunteer Mary Ellen Lessard speaking about the Park with visitors to the Eastern Maine Sportsmen's Show

4,000-Footer Club's annual event. Cassandra Knudsen and Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak taught an Oregon State University class (led by a former UMaine professor) about BSP and SFMA stewardship and management.

Cassandra coordinated the staff review of applications for the 2025 Visiting Artist program, and we look forward to hosting illustrator Lauren Richelieu for two weeks in September. She also planned for a robust schedule of education programs in the Park for the summer and fall camping season. I&E staff completed another (final) version of Wildnotes and produced a Wildnotes News 2025 insert. Working with Friends of BSP, Cassandra helped to select photographs for the 2025-2026 calendar and authored photo captions. I&E staff reviewed an updated version of Friends of BSP's "Know Before You Go" brochure, and online guides that are being produced for destinationkatahdin.org (which is promoting the Katahdin Woods & Waters National Scenic Byway). Cassandra Knudsen continued to provide updates on the Daicey Pond cabins project progress on the BSP website and drafted documentation of the entire project (incorporating information from other staff). I&E staff also made progress on new interpretive signage and maps for the Park.

Natural Resources and Research:

The Research Committee held its annual meeting on March 7th and reviewed 5 applications for new research and monitoring projects in the Park. New projects approved for the 2025 summer/fall season are a study to clarify the taxonomy of the rare Roaring Brook Mayfly, a survey of rare stoneflies, and rare plant surveys (representing part of a "reportcard" project on the conservation of Maine's rare plants). A regional study on microhabitats and genetics of alpine plants is still undergoing review, following a request to the applicant for additional information. Returning researchers and those conducting annual surveys have been obtaining research special use permits on a rolling basis.

Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA):

At the end of February, Acadian Timber bought assets from A&A Brochu and assumed its regional contracts, including those for timber harvest and road work in the SFMA.

The winter harvest in the north end of the SFMA continued seamlessly, and SFMA staff have worked with Director of Administrative Services Lori Morrison to draft new contracts with Acadian Timber (with an anticipated beginning date in June).

Winter harvest operations were completed on March 24th. Approximately 400 cords of spruce and hardwood pulp from the harvest are piled down roadside in the SFMA (to be trucked when operations resume in summer/fall), and another ca. 300 cords of hardwood pulp are at the Acadian Timber yard in Millinocket and are being trucked gradually based on delivery quotas from the Sappi mill. SFMA staff worked with Ruff Cutters to slash hardwood logs to specifications that increased their value as hygrade sawlogs. Land Manager Shane Miller was successful in marketing high quality logs for clapboard, tonewood, and tool handles.



Spruce logs for clapboard at the Ruff Cutters Yard

The SFMA Advisory Committee held its spring meeting on April 4th in Bangor. Primary topics were a review of the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) year 2024 (June 2024-March 2025) and a discussion of wood markets and related challenges with hardwood management. The total harvested volume for AAC 2024 was nearly 5,400 cords, slightly below the cut limit of 5,600 cords (owing mostly to the contractor's equipment-related delays). The committee discussed various options to operate in the SFMA in the coming year, while wood markets (particularly hardwood) are poor, and staff continue to address deferred silvicultural and harvest-related infrastructure needs. Staff continue working with a subset of advisors to identify specific activities and decision points to best navigate this challenge.

LD 1724, a bill to enable the transfer of the Austin Cary Lot (in Harpswell, Cumberland County), received a public hearing by the legislative Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, and two subsequent work sessions. With support from Director Kevin Adam, Assistant Attorney General Lauren Parker, and Nava Tabak provided three amendments for the bill, testimony on behalf of the Park, and additional information in the work sessions. The current (as of 5/20/2025) status of LD 1724 in the legislative committee is Ought to Pass Amended.

Maintenance:

In March, Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Keith Wehmeyer, along with Chief Ranger Matt McGuire and Business Administrator Jessica Wheaton, conducted interviews for the vacant Baxter State Park Carpenter position. Out of six initial candidates, two final candidates were selected for a second round of interviews. Jesse Laporte was selected as the strongest candidate. Jesse had previously been a Campground Ranger and Daicey Pond and Abol and has been serving in an acting capacity as the Daicey Pond Project Crew Leader.

During this period, Field Heavy Equipment and Vehicle Tech Frank George assisted with hauling materials into Russell Pond by snowmobile. In the shop, Frank continued servicing snowmobiles and began performing yearly inspections of the vehicle fleet. In all, he inspected 32 passenger vehicles, 6 commercial vehicles, and 3 trailers, and additionally had to complete several brake jobs and suspension repairs. He also swapped 22 sets of snow tires and spent extensive time setting up fire equipment and vehicles. Frank has kept the Headquarters pellet boiler system up and running and diligently made sure the pellet silo was run empty to help facilitate cleaning prior to the next heating season. As the new season approached, Frank was able to get multiple water pumps back into service, began to overhaul several chainsaws, and serviced all of the Parks flooded lead acid solar batteries.

Maintenance Coordinator Matt Martin traveled to Chimney and Russell Ponds to perform the annual service on propane appliances and swap multiple propane tanks at both locations. Matt did multiple metal fabrication projects in the shop, doing work on forestry trucks, tote sleds, and the forestry water bull tank trailer. He also did an emergency hot water heater replacement in the shop with assistance from Frank. Matt and Frank worked together throughout the winter, snowplowing and carrying out storm cleanup around Park Headquarters.

In April, Keith graduated from the Maine Development Foundation's Institute for Civic Leadership. The program began in September 2024 and met twice per month in locations throughout the state. This program is an experiential, eight-month program during which participants develop and practice the necessary skills to lead effectively. Keith was able to successfully carry out all of his full-time duties and responsibilities, including leading the Daicey Pond Project, while participating in this program.

Daicey Pond Project:

During this period, the Daicey Pond crew of Dawson McKenny, Alex Mangus, and Josh Roedder finished the interior Permachinking on all cabins and, as the weather warmed, shifted to finishing exterior Permachinking on five cabins that had not been chinked before winter. In all, 360 gallons of Permachink were used. Park Carpenter Jesse Laporte focused his attention on cabin doors and door trim, as well as porch railings and stairs. Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Keith Wehmeyer worked to complete cedar shingle work on the cabins' gable ends.



Mercer Windows finished the window order on April 7, three days ahead of schedule. Contractor Brian Johnson delivered the windows to Headquarters on April 8. On April 9, Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Keith Wehmeyer, Trails Supervisor Brennan Turner, Chief Ranger Matt McGuire, and Maintenance Coordinator Matt Martin hauled all 54 windows from Togue Pond Gate to the Daicey Pond Campground on what may have been the final day that snowmobile travel was practical and long before hauling by truck would have been possible. In anticipation of this hauling mission, Keith worked with local contractor Thomas Cummings, who used a skid steer to plow and flatten large snowdrifts along the Tote Road at Togue Pond, Abol Pond, and Stump Ponds.



Following the window delivery, Keith, Jesse, and the Daicey crew worked quickly to install windows in eight cabins. Keith then trimmed the interior of each window and framed and finished the closets in Cabins 6, 7, and 8. In late April, Mercer Windows finished the nine screen doors ordered for the cabins. Jesse then installed these screen doors while finishing the door trims. The remainder of the crew shifted its attention to painting, site cleanup, woodstove installations, window screen and hardware installations, and a long list of other items to complete in anticipation of opening. In Late April, Alex took a lead role in finishing the floors in new Cabins 2 and 4. Using a rented floor sander, Alex worked tirelessly to clean and sand both floors before applying a linseed oil finish.

Matt Martin worked diligently in March and April to set propane tanks, install regulators, piping, and lights in each cabin. He then coordinated with local contractor Dead River to do the final connections, inspection, and sign off on the work. As opening approached, the crew came together with assistance from volunteers and other available staff to turn the campground from a jobsite to one fit for campers. On May 15, the first campers returned to Daicey Pond.

Trails:

Trail Supervisor Brennan Turner and Trail Specialist Kris English successfully completed all of their winter hauling tasks, with the exception of Katahdin Stream Falls Bridge, which will be replaced in 2026. Brennan finalized the revision of BSP chainsaw protocols and refined the B & C-level courses and evaluations. Kris spent much of April away from work, but continued her efforts, making routed wood signs for other departments, including campground signs for South Branch Pond, Daicey Pond, and the reservations staff. In May, the BSP seasonal Trail Crew arrived to begin training for the upcoming season. This year's crew includes returning crew leader Emily Long and returning crew members Brandt Brownlee and Mia Hayes. The Trail Crew is joined this year by new crew member Nick Nagy.

The BSP seasonal Trail Crew has completed Spring Training as well as their BSP C-Level Sawyer certifications, and has begun their annual Blowdown Patrol. The Trail Crew has patrolled the lowland trails in the vicinity of Togue Gate, including Rum Pond, Kettle Pond, Cranberry Pond, Abol Pond, and Abol Stream Trails. Their efforts continue as they patrol popular fishing-access trails in the Kidney and Daicey Pond region of the Park and Doubletop. Blowdown Patrol will continue into June, and the crew will patrol trails in the order of the following priorities:

1. Early season fishing access trails throughout the park.
2. Katahdin and other mountain trails.
3. Backcountry and long-distance trails.

While the crew continues their Blowdown Patrol, Trail Supervisor Brennan Turner will host three additional chainsaw instructional classes, including two B-Level courses and one additional C-Level course. Specialist Kris English will support the Trail Crew's efforts on Blowdown Patrol. All six Trail Department staff will begin three weeks of bridge replacement and general maintenance at Chimney Pond starting in the last week of June.

Field Operations and Law Enforcement:

District Ranger Rob Tice worked on several wildland firefighting projects during this period, including donations of fire equipment from the Maine Forest Service (MFS) and Millinocket Fire Department (MFD). These donations include 1700' of fire hose, MFS Homelite pumps, BB4 pumps for parts, and a second MFS Type 6 engine. Loan agreements were established with MFS for the use of a Type 4 engine and LMTV military water trailer. Rob and Maintenance Department staff Frank George and Matt Martin worked on this equipment to bring all pieces to safe, functional conditions, now ready for the 2025 fire season.

Rob and Chief Ranger Matt McGuire attended the NOAA Spring Fire Weather Ops meeting in Old Town with National Weather



Service and MFS personnel. Rob and Matt also attended the Maine Army National Guard Sync Ops meeting in Bangor. This multi-agency meeting was held to review the 126th Aviation Wing's capabilities and other agency resources and needs. Rob additionally attended a fire meeting with local partners hosted by MFS and MFD. Rob and Law Enforcement Supervisory Ranger Justine Rumaker flew over the Park with MFS pilots to provide an orientation to the Park's landscape and make observations of early spring conditions on trails and the Tableland.

Staff continued to haul supplies and SAR teams to Chimney Pond into March. District Ranger Paul Farrington, Law Enforcement Supervisory Ranger Russ Porter, and Supervisory Ranger Bruce White hauled supplies to Russell Pond and bridge materials for the Pogy winter bridge.

Interviews for summer staff were conducted, radios were updated to include the new MFS TAC channels and three new radios were installed into Supervisor's trucks, speed radars for LE trucks were calibrated and certified, gate combinations were updated for the 2025 season, staff attended the KWWNM "Get Outdoors in Winter" event held in Patten, LE Rangers assisted the Maine Warden Service with a dead dog on a snowmobile trail and attended MARC training, and staff spent considerable time preparing, instructing, and participating in Spring Orientation.

The Park hosted a two-day RT 130 refresher course for wildland firefighting led by the MFS. The course reviewed nationwide updates to the Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG), case reviews of fireline deaths and injuries, equipment/pump/hand tool use and operation, and helicopter operations. Three staff members also completed the Pack Test to qualify for their Red Card. A one-day Wilderness Advanced First Aid and Wilderness First Responder refresher course was conducted by Wilderness Medical Associates for year-round Park staff.

Two summons were issued during the period for hikers who summited Katahdin (BSP Rule 2.2) via the Abol and Hunt Trails.

Staff participated in the annual remembrance of Ranger Ralph Heath, who gave his life during a rescue attempt on Katahdin in October 1963. This memorial coincides with National Police Week and Peace Officers Memorial Day each year.



Appalachian Trail:

Abol Campground Rangers Emma Zavaski and Ian McKnight, along with Cape Elizabeth High School student volunteer Alden O'Brien conducted a mountain patrol on the Abol Trail in mid-May. There was still snow on the trail, and conditions were such that the trail remained closed. The ATC has, with significant encouragement from Supervisor Bruce White, secured the funding for and approved the hiring of a ridgerunner who will be stationed at the Abol Kiosk and will serve in a supplemental capacity to Ridgerunner Don Bolduc. This position will begin in early July.

Search and Rescue:

District Ranger Rob Tice has finalized the 2025 volunteer Search and Rescue schedule. Teams from the Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) will provide weekend coverage from May to October,

conducting volunteer project work, Preventive Search and Rescue (PSAR), and emergency response for medical and missing person incidents. In 2024, seven MASAR teams provided 2,675 standby hours and 200 active hours of SAR coverage for the Park.

Rob and Chief Ranger Matt McGuire presented at this year's MASAR Conference, held at Camp Kieve located in Nobleboro. Rob and Matt discussed the history of SAR at Baxter State Park and the 2024 SAR Operations, providing statistics and trends from last year's incidents.

Rob, Matt, and Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak have worked together to initiate a Weather Class Day system for areas above treeline. This system utilizes NOAA weather forecasts, the heat index, and Chimney Pond mountain weather observations to provide weather and environmental conditions to aid climbers and hikers in making informed decisions surrounding their trail plans.

This system will be utilized for PSAR purposes and will help standardize weather recording for mountain patrol reporting.

**Today's Weather Class
for Hiking Above Treeline Is:**

3

CLASS 1 (Green): Excellent

Sunshine or clouds, low or no chance of precipitation
warm/comfortable temperatures, calm or light winds.

CLASS 2 (Yellow): Fair

Sunshine or clouds, possible precipitation, cool
temperatures/*caution* level heat index, moderate winds.

CLASS 3 (Orange): Poor

clouds, precipitation likely, cool to cold temperatures/
extreme caution level heat index, moderate to strong winds.

CLASS 4 (Red): Hazardous

Clouds, precipitation, cold temperatures/*danger* level heat
index, strong winds.

TRAIL CLOSURE

Due to hazardous weather, hiking above treeline is
prohibited.