



BAXTER STATE PARK 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



To the Baxter State Park Authority

March 2026

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Section 1. Director's Summary

Kevin Adam

It's hard to believe I'm starting my sixth year at Baxter State Park and submitting my second Annual Report as Director. As I write this, we are only four months away from the opening of spring camping. Tomorrow marks the start of reservations under the new policies developed by the Baxter State Park Advisory Sub Committee, designed to ensure a fairer reservation experience for all visitors. We will continue to evaluate the impact of these changes on visitor choices and selections.

May 2025 saw the dedication ceremony for the reopening of Daicey Pond Campground. This year-long project required the campground's complete closure to visitors. Despite numerous challenges, the cabin renovations were completed to the high standards expected by Park personnel, resulting in superb details that should ensure their longevity for decades.

Following this success, we have approved similar, though smaller-scale, cabin upgrades for Kidney Pond Campground. Renovations on Cabins 6 and 7, which are scheduled to begin in December, with work on the Kidney Pond Library also planned for the winter of 2026. Future restoration needs for other Kidney Pond cabins will be addressed during the late fall and winter seasons.

The I&E department has developed more standardized signs - addressing layout, information content, consistent and key messaging, and has reduced the number of signs the Park has deployed. I&E staff also offered a number of enlightening educational programs to visitors.

The Park experienced an overall increase in SAR incidents, with most of them related to trail injuries. BSP Leadership will closely monitor the resulting statistics, looking for trends related to incident locations, types of injuries, the age of injured individuals, and other gathered data points.

The spring and summer season began with a tragedy—the deaths of father and daughter, Tim and Esther Keiderling, on June 2, 2025. They hiked to the summit via the Abol Trail on a day characterized by volatile weather, including cold temperatures, high winds, snow, sleet, and rain. The subsequent large-scale Search and Rescue (SAR) effort involved the entire BSP staff, who worked tirelessly in hazardous conditions to search, provide coverage, prepare meals, and procure necessary supplies. We are profoundly grateful for the instrumental support of our partners, including the Maine Forest Service, Maine Warden Service, Maine Army National



Briefing of Agencies/Volunteers for Keiderling Search -
Togue Pond Ranger Camp

Guard, and the Maine Association of Search and Rescue, all of whom provided specialized equipment and resources to locate Tim and Esther over several days.

Shane Miller, BSP Land Manager for the Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA), traveled to Germany with other state of Maine officials and college students. This planned trip followed in the footsteps of Percival Baxter to study German timber planting, management, and harvesting techniques. We anticipate incorporating the knowledge Miller gained into the management of the SFMA.

The State has transitioned from the MSTAMS program, which had been used for over 30 years, to a new time and attendance system called PRISM (PAY, RECRUIT, INFORM, SUPPORT, MAINE).

Policy updates are ongoing, specifically for the uniform policy and the duty officer policies and procedures. Additionally, a committee has been formed to develop a new bicycle use policy, which will include provisions for e-bikes.

Legislative

There were two Legislative Documents (LDs) for which Baxter Park staff provided testimony to the legislature:

LD 1093 *An Act to direct the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands, to prevent the use of the term “State Park” by non-state parks.* BSP originally testified against this bill. The bill was then amended to read *An Act Regarding Day Use Passes That May Be Used at Any State Park or Historic Site.*

LD 1724 *Resolve, Authorizing the Baxter State Park Authority to Convey Certain Land in Cumberland County.* This LD was put forth by Baxter State Park to authorize us to convey the Austin Cary lot to a new owner with deed restrictions.

The preceding year presented a blend of challenges, successes, accomplishments, and moments of profound sorrow. We remain committed to collaborating with our committees, partners, dedicated volunteers, and the Baxter State Park Authority to build upon the Park’s achievements and address areas requiring improvement or where deficiencies exist.

Remembrances

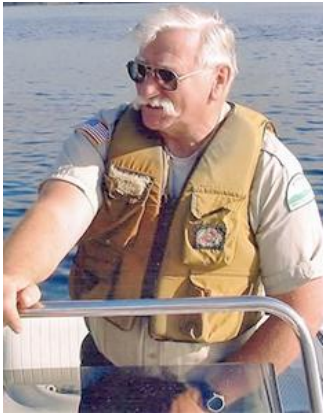
Ranger Ralph Heath

Baxter State Park staff remember Ranger Ralph Heath’s ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty that occurred on October 29, 1963, when he attempted



to rescue Margaret Ivusic on the Knife Edge during a blizzard. In honor of Ranger Heath, BSP Rangers attended the Maine Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony held in Augusta, Maine during Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Week. Additionally, District Ranger Rob Tice assisted the family of Ralph Heath and active and retired Baxter State Park employees in having a private ceremony at Ranger Heath's gravesite in Sherman, Maine. In the fall of each year, Ranger staff are assigned the honor of cleaning and preparing the gravesite for this ceremony and placing a fall-themed basket of flowers to honor his memory.

Ranger Loren Goode



Loren Goode was a US Army veteran and came to the Park in 1969, starting as an Assistant Camp Ranger at South Branch Pond. Loren worked at NES Field, Chimney Pond, and Katahdin Stream. He then became a Baxter Park Law Enforcement Ranger in the South District. Loren retired from Baxter State Park after 35 years of service. Loren passed away on August 30 at his home in Sherman.

Authority Member and Chair John Cashwell

John Henry Cashwell III passed away in November 2025. He was a US Army veteran and served as an accomplished and decorated helicopter pilot. Cashwell served as the Director of the Maine Forest Service and a Baxter State Park Authority member from 1987 to 1991. John's respect for the opinions and advice of Park Staff and the value he placed on Baxter's Wilderness First concept were shown in many ways, including his support of the steady management of the SFMA, which has provided a basis for the work we continue there today. His approach to the issues of the times was always thoughtful, measured, and deeply respected.



Among his accomplishments, John was instrumental in facilitating the Park's purchase of the area around Upper and Lower Togue Ponds, the Park's first land purchase following Governor Baxter's gifts. The purchase of the property opened many opportunities, including the Togue Pond Beach and the Park Visitor Center. Without John's influence, the Park would look very different today.

With sincere gratitude, we honor John for his leadership and service, and acknowledge, sadly, the loss of a larger-than-life, dedicated steward of Maine's forests and Percival Baxter's gift.

Section 2. Administration

Park Leadership Team

Director Kevin Adam is responsible for all activities of the Park consistent with the Deeds of Trust and the direction of the Baxter State Park Authority. Responsibilities include developing and implementing short and long-range plans and policies for Park development, operations, and administration.



L-R, Director of Administrative Services Lori Morrison, Director Kevin Adam, Chief Ranger Matt McGuire, Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak

Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak's primary responsibilities are planning and oversight of research, education, information dissemination and outreach, protection and monitoring of the Park's natural resources, and oversight of the Scientific Forest Management Area.

Director of Administrative Services Lori Morrison provides leadership over the Park's administrative operations, responsible for directing and overseeing budgetary and fiscal services, human resources, information technology, customer relations and reservations, contract administration, legislative support, and strategic planning.

Chief Ranger Matthew McGuire's responsibilities include field operations, including campground and trail management, infrastructure management, building and fleet administration and maintenance, law enforcement, the wildland fire program, and search and rescue operations.

This leadership team recognizes the important role each and every staff member plays in the day-to-day and long-term management of Baxter State Park, as is demonstrated in the accomplishments outlined in this report.

Baxter State Park Authority

The Authority is the governing body of Baxter State Park and is composed of the Director of the Maine Forest Service (Patty Cormier), the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (Judy Camuso), and Maine's Attorney General (The Honorable Aaron Frey). This Authority entered its sixth full year in 2025.



Maine Forest Service Director Patty Cormier



ME IF&W Commissioner Judy Camuso



Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey

The Authority held four public meetings in 2025, with the January and December meetings canceled. Authority **decisions** included:

- approval of Brant Miller to replace Carl Carlson (term ended) as BSP Advisory Chair, Rick Bray as Vice Chair, and Eric Hendrickson - new BSP Advisory member at the May 30 Authority meeting;
- approval of Brian Olsen for the open BSP Advisory position at the October 3 Authority meeting
- approval of the Donations Report at the May 30 and October 3 Authority meetings
- approval of the Scientific Forest Management Area 10-year Management Plan at the May 30 meeting;
- approval of the changes to the Reservation Policy at the July 9 Authority meeting (as outlined in this report)

Other key topics of discussion at the Authority meetings in 2025:

- Executive sessions were held to discuss the use of real property and the acquisition of personal property at Katahdin Lake, and the legal rights and duties of the Authority as to the leasing status at Katahdin Lake at the May 30 and July 9 Authority meetings. Authority, counsel, and staff emerged from the session having discussed the deliberations mentioned in the motion to go into executive session, and spoke only of the matter at hand (Katahdin Lake property), and no votes were taken.
- Executive sessions were held at the July 9 and October 3 Authority meetings to discuss the disposition of the Austin Cary Lot. The Authority, counsel, and staff emerged from the

executive sessions without having taken any votes and spoke only of the matter at hand (Austin Cary Lot).

In 2025, the BSP Advisory Committee worked in several subcommittees to address various objectives and projects:

The **Commercial Use Subcommittee** has been working with the Director to further refine the Commercial Use policy and permit conditions. The subcommittee has completed the guidance for commercial permits. Changes include required \$500K general liability insurance, a year-end survey for commercial permit holders, and creating a commercial or business account with BSP in the reservation system. Members of the subcommittee are Bob Baribeau, Charlie Jacobi, Carla Ritchie, Lauren Jacobs, and Ed Pontbriand.

The **Statement of Purpose Subcommittee** was formed to update the 2010 Statement of Purpose. A draft revision was formed in 2023 and required further review by the incoming Director. Starting in the summer of 2025, notable progress was achieved in updating this document, including more historical information and a clearer selection process for the Chair, Vice-Chair, and members, as well as clearer language regarding the appointment process and term lengths. This document should be ready for review and approval by the Authority in 2026. Committee members are Anne Huntington, Brant Miller, Charlie Jacobi, and Lauren Jacobs.

The **Reservations Subcommittee** reconvened in 2024 to examine reservation policies, visitor concerns, trends, and to propose solutions to improve visitor experience. See Section 3 for details. Members are Michael White, Charlie Jacobi, Ed Pontbriand, Sam Wright, Carl Carlson, Julianna Hansen, Eric Hendrickson, and staff, Lori Morrison, Bryan Buhler, and Katrina Kindead.

The **Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps Subcommittee** was formed to assist in assessing conditions and creating a vision for the rustic buildings (camps) and the surrounding area in anticipation of the potential ownership of all or part of the buildings by Baxter State Park. This subcommittee is on hold until a definitive consensus is reached regarding the ownership status of the campground. Members are Carla Ritchie, Rick Bray, and Charlie Jacobi.

In addition to the BSP Advisory Committee, there are three independent advisory committees: Investment (for the Park's Endowment and Trust funds), Research, and SFMA. The Leadership Team has made it a priority to keep our advisory committees' memberships at appropriate levels and follow the terms in the respective Statements of Purpose, where they exist, while ensuring that staggered terms allow for the continuity of institutional knowledge. Our committees continue to provide invaluable experience, expertise, and advice, and the activities of each of these committees in 2025 are described in the corresponding report sections. *(See Section 10. Appendices, Pages 62-65 for advisory committee member lists.)*

Section 3. Financials

Year-End Report FY25 / Biennial Budget FY26/27

Governor Baxter intended for the Park to remain financially independent through a trust he established in 1927. Upon his death, he donated a significant portion of his estate, which grew into an endowment capable of funding one-half to two-thirds of the Park's annual budget. Notably, the Park does not receive general funds from the State of Maine.

During the fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025), which is the second year of the FY 2024/2025 Biennial Budget, 72% of the annual revenue came from trusts established by Percival Baxter, the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund, and other donations. The remaining 28% of revenue came from Park-generated fees, including camping and non-resident visitor fees, firewood sales, canoe rentals, and resalable merchandise, as well as income from sustainable forest management. These funds are essential for the ongoing care and maintenance of Baxter State Park, ensuring its preservation for future generations to enjoy. Funds were carried over to FY26 to purchase a new backhoe and to fund the repair and refurbishment of cabins at Kidney Pond.

At its October authority meeting, the Baxter State Park Authority (BSPA) approved the FY26/27 Biennial Budget prepared and presented by Lori Morrison. Personnel Services was the only category projected to see an increase. For FY26, the projected total expenditure for this category was budgeted at \$4.5 million, with an increase to \$4.8 million planned for FY27. As an agency of the State of Maine, BSP is subject to negotiations between the State and the bargaining units, which play a crucial role in determining wage rates, benefits, and other employment-related expenses. Contract ratifications that occurred in late 2025 will lead to additional increases in personnel costs for both fiscal years of the biennial budget.

The All Other and Capital budgets are anticipated to remain unchanged, with no increases planned at this time. This decision comes as the administration assesses various areas of spending to identify opportunities for maintenance or potential reductions in the budget. It is noted that State of Maine Tort Liability Insurance Policies and the cost of Worker's Compensation insurance have increased in FY25 and will cause a negative budget variance in FY26/27.

	FY 24/25 Biennial Budget		FY26/27 Biennial Budget	
	FY25 Actual (July '24 - June '25)	FY26 Budget (July '25 - June '26)	FY27 Budget (July '26 - June '27)	
Revenue				
Park Services	\$1,843,663	\$2,093,678	\$2,384,034	
Other Trusts and Donations	\$951,046	\$734,942	\$751,604	
BNY Wealth Endowment	3,891,191	\$3,570,000	\$3,570,000	
Total Revenue	\$6,685,900	\$6,398,620	\$6,705,638	
Expense				
Personnel Services	\$4,455,906	\$4,487,133	\$4,794,151	
All Other	\$1,558,588	\$1,566,487	\$1,566,487	
Capital	\$452,185	\$345,000	\$345,000	
Total Expense	\$6,466,679	\$6,398,620	\$6,705,638	

Expense Notes

- Personnel Services: Employee Salary and Benefit Costs
- All Other: Professional and contracted services*, vehicle operation, utility services, rents, repairs, insurance, general operations, equipment and technology, uniforms, office and other supplies, statewide cost allocation

*Professional and contracted services include: building security, building maintenance, building and maintenance inspections, fire safety equipment and inspections, heating, cooling, propane services, generator, solar system, two-way radio services, phone and cellular service, employee training and development, engineering, IT Network and Infrastructure service and support, firewood processing, road and bridge maintenance, dispatch, administrative services provided by the Natural Resource and Service Center, trail maintenance, vehicle and heavy equipment maintenance and environmental services.

- Capital: Vehicle fleet, building, land, and road infrastructure

A special acknowledgement and note of appreciation go to the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund Trust for its incredibly generous donation of \$420,000 in 2025, which comprised 6% of the Park's total revenue. See Section 10: Appendices, Page 61 for information about the Trust and its founder and trustees.

Fee Structure

A review of Baxter State Park's fees is conducted every two years alongside the Biennial Budget. Previous reviews were completed in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016, 2021, and 2024. The next review is scheduled for 2026. At its October authority meeting, the Baxter State Park Authority (BSPA) approved the proposal presented by Lori Morrison to implement fee adjustments effective January 15, 2025. The updated approved fee schedule is as follows:

Baxter State Park Fees			
2025/2026			
Winter Rates effective 12/1/2025		Summer Rates effective 1/15/2025	
Entrance Fees	\$0.00	Entrance Fees (non-Maine residents only)	\$20
		Season Pass (for entrance only)	\$50
Camping Fees (per unit, per night)			
Lean-to or Tentsite	\$22	Campground Lean-to or Tentsite	\$38
Chimney Pond Lean-to	\$51	Backcountry Lean-to or Tentsite	\$25
Cabin-2 person	\$72	Bunkhouse- fee per bunk	\$15
Cabin-3 person	\$105	Cabin-2 person	\$65
Cabin-4 person	\$138	Cabin-3 person	\$95
Cabin-6 person	\$195	Cabin-4 person	\$125
Bunkhouse- fee per bunk	\$23	Cabin-6 person	\$185
Chimney Pond Bunkhouse	\$46	Group Site (per person per night)	\$10
		Group site minimum	\$60
		Canoe Rental	\$1/hr, \$8/day
		Bundled firewood	\$5
		Day Use Parking Reservation	\$10
Refunds/Transfers (Winter and Summer)			
Site Transfer			\$17
Refund Fee (refunds are only issued when requested a minimum of 14 days in advance of the camping date)			\$17

Daicey Pond Project - Final Financial Report

The project budget of \$544,093 reflected a built-in contingency estimate given the project's timing and rising labor and material costs. The budget allocation included 29% for materials, 60% for labor, 11% for general operating expenses, and a 10% contingency fund to cover potential cost increases prior to the project's start. Ultimately, the total cost of the project came in at \$484,199, which was 89% of the budget. Notably, the actual cost of materials was 32%, slightly surpassing the budgeted 29%, while labor costs were lower at 57% compared to the anticipated 60%. General operational expenses are aligned with the budget at 11%.

The project budget allocated funds for five temporary positions, which included one Crew Leader classified as a Building Maintenance Superintendent and four Construction Crew workers designated as Conservation Aids. This initiative was characterized as a unique backcountry project that presented travel challenges, which were a factor in the determination to do the work in-house vs subcontracting to a general contractor. Efforts to hire staff directly were made, but the shortage of qualified candidates necessitated a combination of direct hires, collaborations with temporary staffing agencies, and contract labor for roofing tasks.

Daicey Pond Final Project Budget Detail through 6/30/2025		
Revenue	Actual through 6/30/2025	Project Budget
Endowment Funded	\$ 273,500	\$ 273,500
BSP Funded	\$ 210,699	\$ 270,593
Total Revenue	\$ 484,199	\$ 544,093
Expense	Actual through 6/30/2025	Project Budget
*Personnel and Fringe	\$ 274,913	\$ 299,619
All Other and Capital		
Building Materials	\$ 156,497	\$ 183,104
Minor Equipment	\$ 19,076	
Safety supplies	\$ 1,173	
Supplies	\$ 18,686	
Waste Containers	\$ 2,557	
Equipment Rental	\$ 8,553	
Household Supplies	\$ 2,744	
General Operational Expense	\$ 52,790	\$ 61,370
Total All Other and Capital	\$ 209,286	\$ 244,474
Total Expense	\$ 484,199	
Total Revenue	\$ 484,199	
Financial Note:		
Personnel Expense includes Project Superintendent, SOM Conservation Aid, Tri-State Staffing, RDH Roofing		

Some additional notes:

- Project plans included the use of SFMA-sourced materials whenever possible, significantly reducing the material cost budget.
- Preference was given to locally sourced and sustainable materials, such as Timber HP Insulation from Madison, ME.

Section 4. Business Administration/Human Resources

Staffing

Human Resources is led by Jessica Wheaton, the Business Administrator, under the supervision of Lori Morrison. The Natural Resource and Service Center also provides additional support. Throughout the year, a variety of projects were completed, with the PRISM project taking top priority. Jessica took on the role of Champion for BSP, serving as the liaison with the State of Maine project team and as the onsite implementation and training resource. Recruitment during the 2025 season was successful, and retention efforts showed improvement. The number of vacant positions in 2025 was lower than in 2024, with 11 open seasonal positions compared to 18 in 2024. The reasons for vacancies were consistent with the past years and included internal promotions, lateral transfers, external career opportunities, and other performance-based reasons. This past season, we experienced a notable increase in qualified candidates, as compared to previous hiring periods. Baxter State Park remains a highly desirable employer and an attractive destination for employment, offering entry-level opportunities for new college graduates and others entering the job market. With intentional recruitment efforts, the Park has benefited from recruiting retirees for seasonal employment. During this recruiting period, two former employees returned to Baxter State Park. We continue to identify process improvements for recruitment and retention efforts, including improved and timely communication with candidates and employee feedback.

In 2025, two full-time staff were promoted to fill positions on the BSP team after an extensive search among numerous internal and external candidates. In October, Sarah Grebleski was hired for the newly reclassified position of Baxter Park Enforcement Ranger. Previously a Baxter Campground Ranger, Sarah was a natural fit for this role and effectively enhanced the law enforcement team. In March, Jesse LaPorte was promoted to the position of Supervisory Carpenter, having previously served in a limited-period position as Building Maintenance Superintendent and as a seasonal Campground Ranger. Both employees were well-deserving of their promotions, and we welcomed them to the full-time team at the Park.

Contract negotiations with the State of Maine were still ongoing at the end of 2025. Baxter State Park collaborates with various unions and bargaining units that represent both full-time and seasonal employees. Some of the bargaining units that impact Baxter State Park, including the Maine State Law Enforcement Association (MSLEA) and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), ratified their agreements before year-end, resulting in substantial enhancements to compensation and benefits. As a result of these negotiations, law enforcement employees will be eligible for a base salary increase ranging from 4% to 10%, as well as increased longevity pay, reclassification pay adjustments, and eligibility for standby, call-out, and coverage compensation.

HR Highlights

Employee of the Year

The Governor's Employee of the Year for Baxter State Park was awarded to Office Specialist Georgia Manzo at an awards event held at the Blaine House in Augusta. She has been providing a wide range of administrative and other services to the Park for nearly 10 years, playing a key role in its operations and staff unity. She manages the Park's volunteer program and has supported four different Park Directors through a leadership transition. She is dedicated, hardworking, and inspires those around her with her positive and calm demeanor.



L-R Judy Camuso, Patty Cormier, Georgia Manzo, Kevin Adam

ME Criminal Justice Academy Graduate

Supervisory Law Enforcement Ranger Laura Whitney graduated from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in May. Laura supervises Roaring Brook and Chimney Pond Campgrounds' Summer and Winter Rangers. Formerly, Laura was a Ranger at Abol Campground.



L-R Supervisory Law Enforcement Rangers Justine Rumaker and Laura Whitney
Laura's Graduation Day - ME CJA



Laura Whitney, Graduation Day - ME Criminal Justice Academy

Years of Service Award Recipients

YEARS OF SERVICE			
5	15	20	40
Andy Borth, Campground Ranger	Deidra George, Forester I	Marcia Anderson, Customer Representative	Greg Hamer, Campground Ranger
Alex Mangus, Campground Ranger	Russ Porter, Supervisory Enforcement Ranger	Gabe Williamson, Campground Ranger	
Jesse LaPorte, Supervisory Carpenter			
Kevin Adam, Director			
Brennan Turner, Trail Supervisor			
Laura Whitney, Supervisory Enforcement Ranger			

Exemplary Service Award Recipients

Trails Laborer Brandt Brownlee:

Brandt played a unique role during the Keiderling search. On the first day of the multi-agency effort, he was assigned to lead a group of IF&W Game Wardens off-trail up Abol Slide. As they were new to their roles, he ensured their success, even sharing his own supplies. His leadership was exceptional. Through previous experience and training, he displayed a composure that was evident in his participation in the search and the recovery of one of the missing persons.

Roving Ranger Peter Michaud:

On August 8th, Ranger Peter Michaud delivered exceptional service while covering at Chimney Pond campground on short notice. At 4:49 p.m., a concerned mother called 911 for assistance after she and her 7-year-old daughter struggled to navigate a boulder field back to their vehicle at Abol campground. While on his way to help, he encountered three young men who were planning to summit Katahdin and continue along the Knife Edge. Concerned about their safety and the risk of them being stranded overnight, he encouraged them to return to Chimney Pond. As the rescue extended into the night, he carried the young girl down the Saddle Trail. At the same time, another rescue operation was underway in the Park. During this effort, he also assisted gate staff by using a radio to provide them with the Millinocket Fire and Rescue phone number; they were having difficulty reaching the duty officer and 911 due to communication challenges. His dedication and hard work throughout the summer have earned him well-deserved recognition.

Campground Ranger Sarah Grebleski and Roving Ranger Nate Cote:

On July 25th, Campground Rangers Sarah Grebleski and Nate Cote responded to a call for four hikers benighted near the Knife Edge in proximity to The Chimney. One hiker had a knee injury, and another was a juvenile. Facing challenging conditions of rain, strong winds, and temperatures in the 40s, the Rangers reached the group, stabilized the injured hiker, treated them all for hypothermia, and set up a shelter. They maintained communication with Incident Command for over twelve hours while awaiting better weather for an air evacuation, demonstrating professionalism and focus throughout the incident.

Retirements

Gabe Williamson retired on November 30, 2025, following 20 years of service at Baxter State Park. Gabe and his wife, Marcia, were campground rangers at Daicey Pond, and Gabe finished his career as a Ranger at South Branch Pond Campground. Both are professional Leave No Trace (LNT) trainers and have conducted numerous programs on the LNT principles and practices for both visitors and BSP employees. LNT is a strong



Gabe and Marcia Williamson at South Branch Pond



Marcia and Gabe Williamson at South Branch Pond Campground

part of their legacy at Baxter Park.

Training

Leadership remained committed to workforce development throughout 2025, fostering numerous opportunities for staff growth and skill enhancement. This dedication not only enriched individual capabilities but also strengthened our team overall, promoting a culture of learning and continuous improvement. Brennan Turner, Trails Supervisor, enrolled in the Maine Development Foundation's Institute for Civic Leadership program, while Park Services Manager Bryan Buhler and Maintenance Supervisor Keith Weymeyer graduated from the program.



Staff receiving snowmobile maintenance training

The Annual Spring Orientation took place from April 27 to May 10. It aimed to help new and returning staff understand the culture, policies, and expectations of the Park. The event started with introductions from key leaders and department heads, followed by the history of the BSP.

Participants took part in hands-on training sessions. These covered cash handling, using two-way radios, basic mechanics, Propane 101, reservation software, time and attendance reporting, and reporting medical and non-medical incidents. There were also educational presentations about the Park's volunteer program, the Appalachian Trail, SFMA, and the Information and Education Department.

Discussions included Park policies. Internal staff and external speakers provided information on Information Technology, Finance, and Human Resources. An extended session covering workplace and Field Safety was provided by Maine Employers' Mutual Insurance Company. Lastly, the training included BSP rules, regulations, and policies. It emphasized acceptable behavior in a wilderness setting and the importance of being a good steward, aligned with Governor Baxter's vision and the Deeds of Trust.

Some of the ongoing training programs that were provided during the season included:

- Annual chainsaw training and certification program
- Specialized training for Trails Crews on Griphoist rigging systems, and block and tackle setups for manual mechanical advantage systems
- Search and Rescue (SAR) and Wildland Fire training
- Wilderness Advanced First Aid and Wilderness First Responder
- CPR
- Low Angle Rescue
- Helicopter safety with the Maine Forest Service and the Maine Army National Guard
- Training on GPS techniques for effectively responding to 911 calls regarding the location of lost or injured visitors
- Leave No Trace principles

Organization

In 2025, BSP had 70 active positions, comprising 23 full-time and 47 seasonal roles. This staffing configuration highlights the organization's commitment to its current workforce, as the number of employees has remained steady since 2023. Following an assessment of campground operational needs, changes will be made in the upcoming 2026 season, including the relocation of a Campground Ranger from Chimney Pond Campground to Nesowadnehunk Campground and the relocation of a Campground Ranger from Nesowadnehunk/Trout Brook Farm split coverage to Trout Brook Farm/Scientific Forest Management Area split coverage. *See Section 10. Appendices, Page 83 Baxter State Park - Organizational Chart.*

Customer Relations

The services offered by the Park's 14 Customer Service Reservations, located at Headquarters, Togue Gate, Togue Visitor Center, and Matagamom Gate, are managed by Park Services Manager Bryan Buhler, with oversight from Lori Morrison. Camping reservations for the 2025

season opened on January 15, generating excitement among visitors eager to plan their trips. The Park closed for camping on October 15, except for Kidney Pond, Daicey Pond, and Katahdin Stream, which closed on October 22.

Campground Utilization

From May 15th to October 22nd in 2025, a total of 26,658 campground nights were reserved out of 39,504 available. There was an overall increase of 316 reserved campsites in 2025 as compared to the same time in 2024. The overall number of camping reservations accounted for 67% of the total nights available, demonstrating that the Park has ample capacity to accommodate visitors seeking a camping experience at BSP. *See Section 10: Appendices, Page 66, Chart 1 - Camping Reservations by Campground.*



Customer Relations Staff - BSP Headquarters - Millinocket

Katahdin Trailhead Pass

In 2025, the Katahdin Trailhead Passes formally replaced the Day Use Parking Reservation after an extensive overhaul of the system by the Reservation Subcommittee, with Advisory endorsement and Authority approval. The changes were deemed a success, with room for improvement, after the 2025 season proved to achieve the desired key objectives, including:

- Clarification of the intent of the pass through the name change. Through name clarification and a focused educational campaign, visitors became more informed about the intent and proper use of a trailhead pass.
- Management of KTP waste: Reducing the limit of KTPs from three per account per month to two helped curb over-purchasing and lowered the no-show rate by 7%.
- Starting April 1st, non-resident visitors could buy KTPs along with Maine residents. Non-residents did not purchase more than the set cap of 30%.
- Maine residents did not purchase 70%, but they did have the opportunity to purchase 70% or greater on all available hiking days.

We identified that further education is needed to ensure visitors know they must select a vehicle to view KTP availability. This confusion was not realized soon enough in the season, which contributed to the reduction in sales. KTPs intend to help manage and protect the natural resources above revenue generation. It was determined that the fee increase from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per pass was not a factor in the reduction of the overall sales. Although the total number of passes sold was lower than in previous years, the revenue exceeded the previous year's collection due to the price increase per pass. *See Section 10: Appendices, Pages 66-67*

Chart 2 - KTP Sales by Year

Chart 3 - KTP Sales - Resident/Non-Resident

Chart 4 - KTP No-Show Volume by Year

Winter Season

The winter season officially began on December 1st. This followed the Winter Lottery, held on November 3rd and 4th, for commercial users. Notably, the Park has processed over 50 additional applications so far this season, compared with 2024, indicating increased application activity early in the season. A notable update for the 2025/2026 season is the introduction of a new travel limit for winter users within the Park. From this season forward, individuals will be restricted to a maximum distance of 14 miles traveled in a single day. See *Section 10: Appendices, Page 68, Chart 5: Winter Reservations.*

Visitor Information Center Statistics

During the summer of 2025, the Visitor Information Center received 12,227 visitors, an increase of 8.38% (946) compared to 2024. The Visitor Center welcomed guests originating from 49 states, 34 countries, and 3 Canadian provinces. Visitors primarily requested assistance regarding trail information, recommendations for hiking and fishing, advice on optimal locations within the Park for wildlife observation, and purchased essential hiking gear such as water filtration kits, flashlights, and maps. Other commonly acquired items included patches, hats, calendars, and books. See *Section 10: Appendices, Page 69, Chart 6: Visitor Center Yearly Comparison Data*

Park Visitation

Park visitation has been consistent over the past two years, averaging 57,355 visitors, including both day users and overnight campers. In 2025, the overall number of visitors, 57,103 (54% resident / 46% non-resident), declined by just over 500 compared to 2024. This decrease was attributed to a drop of 1,373 day users; however, there was an increase of 869 overnight campers. The net effect was a reduction in total visitation of 504 individuals. Over the past six years, the average visitor count was skewed in 2021, when total visitors peaked at 72,198 following the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitation dropped to 59,357 in 2022 and further declined to 58,023 in 2023. See *Section 10. Appendices, Page 69, Table 7: Annual Visitation.*



Togue Pond Gatehouse

Reservations Subcommittee

The Reservations Subcommittee reconvened in January to focus on the issue of reservation “leapfrogging”. The incidence of leapfrogging (extending camping reservations up to 14 days

beyond the 4-month rolling window, then cancelling most of the reservation leading up to the desired dates) has increased over time, leading to more visitor complaints and dissatisfaction. Following a comprehensive review and analysis of reservation extensions that created inequities for visitors, a proposal for change was BSP Advisory-endorsed and Authority-approved in July.

Proposed changes will begin on January 15, 2026, and include:

- Camping reservations can be made online for up to an additional 3 consecutive nights beyond the first night in the 4-month rolling window, at the same campsite.
 - Beneficial to staff and visitors (reduces phone congestion issues).
- A change in a campground or campsite within the same campground represents a new reservation and must be made on the day it opens in the 4-month rolling window.
 - (Backcountry sites, bunkhouses, and group sites are excluded; those may still be extended for 7 days. Reservation extensions would also now be made online (or by phone or in person) for the additional 3 nights.
 - Backcountry sites, bunkhouses, and group site reservations will still be made by phone call only.
- Online reservations will open at 6 a.m. EST, 4 months before the day of the reservation.

In December 2024, the subcommittee met to thoughtfully review and analyze the data presented in the Katahdin Trailhead Pass section. The change was viewed as positive, and the committee will continue to review the data to ensure positive outcomes with the changes implemented.

Information Technology

Since 2024, Information Technology Services has been primarily managed by Tim Deetz, the IT Systems and Network Administrator at Buckeye Professional Technology Solutions, LLC, with oversight from Lori Morrison. In 2025, the continued focus was on enhancing the efficiency, reliability, and security of our network infrastructure and data management systems within Baxter State Park.

Infrastructure improvements made in 2025 include adding a Wi-Fi device to the solar gear at Togue Pond Ranger Camp to improve monitoring of the solar system. A network bridge was established between Togue Pond Ranger Camp and the Visitors Center to provide reliable connectivity. This involved trenching and installing conduit, carried out in partnership with the Maintenance Department. The Visitor Center also underwent network upgrades, including installing a network cabinet to support connectivity tools such as switches, IP phones, and laptops, enhancing communication with Baxter State Park resources. In 2026, guests will be able to utilize a computer kiosk at the Visitor Center for reservation assistance.

To enhance system performance and protect against damaging power surges, a surge suppressor was installed at headquarters to protect network equipment, and all PCs are now safeguarded by an uninterruptible power source, helping them remain operational during power fluctuations.

Cybersecurity remains a priority for enhancements and continuous monitoring. Multi-Factor Authentication has been implemented as a mandatory requirement for all Google accounts, significantly bolstering overall security.

Section 5. Operations

Maintenance Highlights

The Park's Maintenance and Transportation Department consists of the Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor, Field Heavy Vehicle and Equipment Technician, Park Supervisory Carpenter, Park Maintenance Coordinator, and Park Maintenance Worker. This department maintains and repairs all major Baxter State Park infrastructure, including structures, photovoltaic (solar) systems, 40 vehicles, 26 snowmobiles, 3 dump trucks, and all major and minor field equipment.

Buildings

In June, the Maintenance Department installed conduit and other infrastructure to support the installation of internet service at the Visitor Center. Concurrently, working with local contractor Rick Waceken, significant upgrades were made to the solar power infrastructure at the Visitor Center. An inverter was moved from Togue Pond Ranger Camp, lithium batteries were installed, and power distribution was upgraded. At Togue Pond Ranger Camp, a new, larger inverter was installed, and lithium batteries were added to replace the existing flooded lead-acid batteries. The lithium batteries installed are the first in the Park and represent an upgrade to more modern technology.

Maintenance Coordinator Matt Martin worked closely with one of the Park's propane contractors to consolidate multiple propane systems in the Park. Local contractor Bragdon Energy was willing to hike to Chimney Pond to provide propane service, which has previously been a challenge for the Park. A new, larger 120-gallon propane tank was set and plumbed at Daicey Pond to serve both the volunteer housing and Ranger Station, eliminating two separate systems that had relied on multiple 100-pound tanks.

Beginning in June, Supervisory Carpenter Jesse LaPorte replaced rotten sills on Nesowadnehunk Group Shelter No. 2 with assistance from Roving Rangers and Campground Rangers. He also led the reroofing of the garage at Togue Pond Ranger Camp, organizing Roving Rangers and volunteers to assist with the effort. Multiple layers of asphalt roofing were removed, an old chimney was demolished below the roofline, rotten trim was replaced, and new metal roofing was installed. Before this project, Jesse and Keith did extensive tree work at Togue Pond Ranger Camp to allow more sunlight and airflow around the garage and improve sun exposure to the solar panels.

Other structural maintenance and improvements of note included: replacement of the porch at Kidney Pond Cabin 5, replacement of an entry door, stairs, and a rotten rim joist on the Ranger Cabin at Nesowadnehunk Field, repairs to a bridge deck on the Roaring Brook Road, and replacement of the roof on the Lower Togue woodshed. The front wall at the Trout Brook Farm garage was rebuilt, which included the installation of a new door and window. Additionally, the workshop roof at the Hemlock camps in the SFMA was replaced. A full plumbing overhaul was conducted at North Branch Camps.

Repairs at Kidney Pond Campground included jacking, leveling, and replacement of posts, sill logs, and porch replacement on Cabin 9 and jacking, leveling, and post and porch replacement on the Library. A wall of the Library with extensive rot damage was removed and replaced with new construction. Work will continue on the Kidney Pond Library, Cabin 7, and Cabin 6 throughout the winter. Logs for the project were sourced from the Park's Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA) and were milled and peeled locally. To offset the closure of Cabins 6 and 7 for the winter, which are traditionally utilized for winter camping, two additional newly renovated cabins at Daicey Pond were opened for winter camping. This was the first year of a multi-year project to conduct significant repairs on the structures at Kidney Pond during the off-season.



Cabin 6, Kidney Pond Campground

To work with Jesse at Kidney Pond throughout the winter, the Park hired two project-limited Conservation Aides, Nate Cote and Brandt Brownlee. Both hold summer seasonal positions with the Park. They began their project positions on November 1, 2025, and will stay on until May 1, 2026.

Matt Martin placed a concrete spill containment basin under an above-ground diesel tank at the North Camps in the SFMA. A roof was built over the tank and basin. New flagpole footings and mounts at the Visitor Center and Kidney Pond were fabricated and installed, as were ten fire rings and twelve fire pits slated for the campgrounds.

The Park contracted annual pumping of waste from thirty-five outhouses and one septic system, pumping more than 10,000 gallons of waste. Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Keith Wehmeyer worked with a local septic designer to design a replacement septic system for the Katahdin Stream Ranger Camps. While this system does not need immediate replacement, it is one of the oldest in the Park and the only one without a documented plan. The new plan will be kept on file and used for planning and budgeting purposes in the future.

Roadwork

In the spring of 2025, a two-culvert road crossing of a tributary to Tracy Pond had a minor collapse of its downstream embankment. The road edge was temporarily stabilized by Park staff and contractor Acadian Timber, utilizing large rocks. An analysis of the crossing conducted by stream restoration specialist Alex Abbott provided recommendations for the replacement of the crossing. This project is expected to be completed in early summer of 2026.

Keith worked with Matt McGuire on planning and budgeting upcoming road maintenance, organizing and updating road systems (exclusive of the SFMA), and a stream crossing inventory. Keith and Lands Manager Shane Miller worked throughout the year to identify and develop solutions to a number of road drainage and crossing issues.

Significant mowing projects in 2025 occurred in the SFMA, at Nesowadnehunk Field, along the majority of the Park Tote Road, Roaring Brook Road, and the State Road beyond the Park boundary. These efforts maintain existing road corridors, prevent damage to vehicles, assist with water run-off and erosion, and lessen fire danger.

Matt Martin and Field Heavy Vehicle and Equipment Technician Frank George spent two days in early fall hauling gravel from Nesowadnehunk Pit to an area near Windy Pitch on the Roaring Brook Road to build up a gravel supply for general road maintenance and emergency repairs. In September, Keith Wehmeyer met with Jim Foster as a part of the Maine DOT Bridge Ranger program to discuss scouring on the abutments of the Kidney Pond and Little Nesowadnehunk Stream Bridges. In early November, BSP maintenance personnel worked with contractor Acadian Timber to add six culverts on the Roaring Brook Road. In addition to the new culverts, five aging culverts were replaced, three on the Roaring Brook Road and two on the Tote Road. Resurfacing and ditching were also conducted around all the culvert work. All disturbed soil was seeded and stabilized once work was completed.

Equipment

Considerable time is spent each year servicing the Park's heavy equipment, including the York rake and Woods ditch and bank mower, which in 2025 required significant overhauling. Staff dedicated time setting up and servicing fire equipment transferred to the Park from the Maine Forest Service. Work included setting up a Type 4 fire engine, preparing a Type 6 fire engine, fabrication work on forestry water trailers, and servicing of motors and pumps. Frank also serviced both SFMA generators.

Servicing BSP's snowmobiles and vehicle fleets and performing yearly inspections of the vehicle fleet is a substantial part of Frank George's responsibilities. In all, 32 passenger vehicles, 6 commercial vehicles, and 3 trailers were inspected, and brake work and suspension repairs were completed on several vehicles. Ten chainsaws and multiple water pumps were serviced. Park-wide solar battery maintenance was performed, two fire pumps were built, and a diesel fuel transfer tank with wiring was installed in a maintenance truck. Rear leaf springs were replaced with a heavier version on four Law Enforcement Ranger trucks. This is required due to the increasing size and weight of modern snowmobiles, which are transported in the back of trucks for faster response time to incidents.

The Park has been on a regular replacement cycle for snowmobiles, purchasing Ski-Doo Skandic and Expedition sleds. These models are capable of handling the demands placed on the machines to access remote areas of the Park for hauling operations, law enforcement activities, and search and rescue. This year, two new four-stroke snowmobiles were purchased and upfitted with work boxes, emergency lights, and chainsaw scabbards for Park use prior to assignment. This brings the total fleet to twenty-seven snowmobiles.

The Park purchased two new half-ton pickup trucks to replace current vehicles that are rotating out of service for mechanical issues. One of these vehicles was set up for Law Enforcement duties, and the other truck was assigned to the SFMA Lands Manager

The Park also purchased and received a new Case 890SN backhoe and a 10-foot snow pusher blade. This new backhoe will replace the 1996 Ford backhoe as a primary piece of equipment; the Ford backhoe will be detailed to the north end of the Park to reduce the transport of equipment. During the winter months, the Case backhoe will be stationed at the Abol Bridge

winter parking lot and used to plow and maintain the visitor and staff parking lots. Due to proposed increases in contractor pricing and other logistical factors, the Maintenance Department will assume snow plowing responsibilities at Abol Bridge in addition to their plowing duties at Park Headquarters. A local contractor continues to plow the winter lot at Matagamon.

Daicey Pond Project

At the beginning of 2025, the multi-year Daicey Pond capital renovation project was well underway. All cabins were structurally complete, whether from repairs or complete rebuilds. 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 completed before winter. In all, 360 gallons of Permachink were used. Cabin doors and door trim, as well as porch railings, stairs, and shingling on the cabin's gable ends, were completed.



Cabin 1 - Daicey Pond

Mercer Windows finished the custom window order on April 7, three days ahead of schedule, and the windows were delivered to Park Headquarters on April 8. On April 9, all 54 windows were hauled from Togue Pond Gate to the Daicey Pond Campground on what was the final day that snowmobile travel was practical on the Tote Road. Local contractor Thomas Cummings was hired to plow and flatten large snowdrifts with a skid steer along the Tote Road at Togue Pond, Abol Pond, and Stump Ponds to facilitate the hauling.

Following the window delivery, the crew worked quickly to install and trim windows in eight cabins. Closets were installed in Cabins 6, 7, and 8. In late April, Mercer Windows finished the nine screen doors ordered for the cabins. Painting, site cleanup, woodstove installations, window screen and hardware installations, and a long list of other items were slated for completion prior to re-opening the campground. In Late April, the floors in Cabins 2 and 4 were sanded and finished with linseed oil.

Matt Martin set propane tanks, installed regulators, piping, and lights in each cabin in March and April. He then coordinated with local contractor Dead River to complete the final connections, inspection, and certification of the work. As the 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 Highlights

Baxter State Park has more than 220 miles of trails. In 2025, 62,296 people signed in at trail registers across the park, highlighting the popularity of trail use. *See Section 10. Appendices,*

Pages 70-72, *Trail Use Statistics - May-Oct, 2025*, & Page 73, *Five-Year Cumulative Trail Statistics* for a monthly breakdown of trail register sign-ins and annual comparisons. The department is led by the Trail Supervisor Brennan Turner, who coordinates projects and planning with the Trail Specialist Kristen English. The work of a small seasonal four-person crew is supplemented by contracted trail companies, organizations, and volunteers. The Baxter Youth Conservation Corps (BYCC, see below), generously funded and run by the Friends of Baxter State Park, assists with trail projects annually and provides an opportunity for the Trails Department to teach and mentor youth who may seek employment at Baxter State Park or pursue other conservation careers in the future.



Clearing blowdowns

Brennan and Kris successfully completed all of their winter hauling tasks, with the exception of Katahdin Stream Falls Bridge, which will be replaced in 2026. In May, the BSP seasonal Trail Crew arrived to begin training for the upcoming season. This year's crew included returning crew leader Emily Long and returning crew members Brandt Brownlee and Mia Hayes. The Trail Crew was joined this year by new crew member Nick Nagy.

Seasonal Trail Crew staff began their annual blowdown patrol in mid-May following the completion of the BSP C-Level Chainsaw Operator certification. The first two months of the season included blowdown patrol, the Keiderling SAR event, Maine Basic Fire training, and the Smith Pond Fire mop-up, the annual SAR training, as well as the annual repair

of alpine string fencing on Katahdin's Tablelands. The Trail Crew patrolled the lowland trails in the vicinity of Togue Gate, including Rum Pond, Kettle Pond, Cranberry Pond, Abol Pond, and Abol Stream Trails, as well as popular fishing-access trails in the Kidney and Daicey Pond region of the Park and Doubletop. The clearing of blowdown trees on trails is conducted 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.

Trail Crew staff also carried out trail improvements in between blowdown patrol assignments, including the realignment of the Little Abol Falls Trail to improve a confusing 90-degree turn in the trail, as well as the improvement of several junctions on the Pogy Notch Trail. Brennan Turner finalized the revision of BSP chainsaw protocols and refined the B & C-level courses and evaluations. Turner led three chainsaw instructional classes, including two B-Level courses and one additional C-Level course.

Trail Crew staff then turned their attention to the Upper Saddle Brook Bridge replacement project on the Chimney Pond Trail. This was a three-week project that included the removal

and dispersal of the old bridge, the deconstruction of last year's attempt at a stone retaining wall, the improved reconstruction of the retaining wall, and the installation of the new bridge.



Upper Saddle Brook Bridge Replacement



Upper Saddle Brook Bridge Retaining Wall

It was during the first week of this project that the Russell Pond Rangers learned that the North Peaks were effectively closed, given the numerous blowdowns that had occurred this past winter, in addition to the overgrown corridor. The plan had originally been to have the Trail Crew complete an 8-day hitch on the North Peaks trail after the completion of the Upper Saddle Brook bridge project, but given the amount of work that would be necessary to reopen the trail the decision was made to send a three-person team out there ahead of time to locate a backcountry spike site and to begin clearing blowdowns from the trail.

While Kris, Emily, and Mia began the first of two 8-day hitches on the North Peaks Trail, Brennan, Brant, and Nick continued their work on the Upper Saddle Brook Bridge. Upon completion of the Upper Saddle Brook Bridge, Nick and Brandt joined Emily and Mia on the North Peaks Trail to continue their efforts to reopen the trail.

Following the completion of the North Peaks clearing project, the Trails Department began two concurrent projects: the replacement of the broken sections of the Sandy Stream Boardwalk, as well as the extension of the Elbow Pond Boardwalk.



Sandy Stream Boardwalk before

Both boardwalk replacement projects concluded in mid-August. The Trail Crew resumed clearing blowdowns in the north end of the Park, including the Traveler Loop, South Branch Mountain, and Horse Mountain. The crew also completed an 8-day hitch on the Frost Pond Trail, conducting a thorough round of blowdown removal, corridor brushing, and blaze painting.

Trail Crew spent the end of the 2025 season replacing the flood and beaver-damaged section of elevated



Sandy Stream boardwalk after

Bog Bridging on the South Branch Mountain trail in the vicinity of the Upper South Branch lean-to.

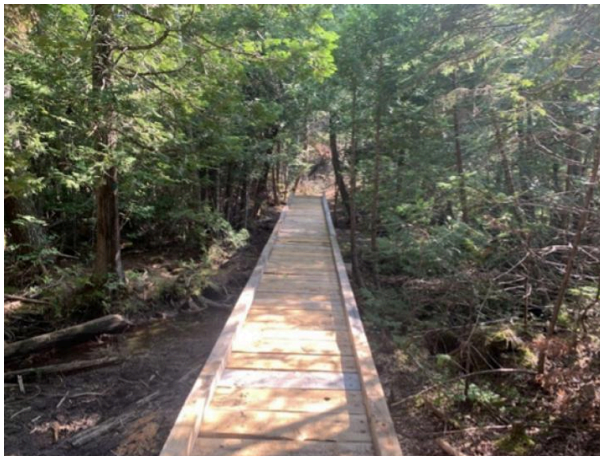
Trail Crew members received an extension until November 1st. The crew worked on the installation of a stone staircase and drainage for the South Branch Falls Trail. The crew took time to combine the South Branch Falls project with a highline rigging training. The crew spent three days learning about working load limits of highline rigging equipment, practicing the setup of highline systems, and reviewing and practicing mechanical advantage systems. The month of October was also spent accomplishing some final construction projects, sourcing timber supplies for winter hauling, and winterizing Trails Department buildings, including North Branch Camps, Kidney Pond Stream Camp, and Trails End.

After the seasonal crew's departure at the end of October, Kris English began working on the replacement of the Baxter Peak summit sign, as well as a series of other alpine trail signs on Katahdin, and the Daicey Pond Nature Loop trail network signs. Brennan also spent this time building the new frame for the Baxter Peak Summit Sign and staging 12' cedar signposts for December's scheduled flight delivery onto Katahdin, the Owl, North and South Brother, Mt. Coe, and Double Top.

The Federal Government shutdown during October and November prevented the Maine Army National Guard from conducting a planned hauling flight to deliver three spruce logs to the Katahdin Stream Falls area of the Hunt Trail. The logs were intended to be used as bridge stringers for the scheduled 2026 bridge replacement. Brennan was able to locate three spruce trees in the vicinity of the project site to be used as alternative stringers. He worked with Kris and Roving Ranger Alex Mangus to drop and prepare the bridge stringers to be dragged uphill to the project site during the coming winter.

Baxter Youth Conservation Corps

The Baxter Youth Conservation Corps (BYCC) is a job training and service-learning program hosted by the Friends of Baxter State Park. Employing area high school students and recent graduates, the BYCC provides the Park with trail work to assist Baxter State Park.



Completed OJI Boardwalk



Baxter Youth Conservation Corp working on OJI Boardwalk

The Baxter State Park Trails Department was supported by the Baxter Youth Conservation Corps for six weeks during July and early August. The BYCC assisted Brennan Turner in the completion of the OJI realignment project and the construction of the new boardwalk as part of the realignment. They also replaced an extensive amount of bog bridging on the Sandy Stream Trail, cleaned drainages on Abol and Chimney Pond Trails, and assisted with the Elbow Pond boardwalk.

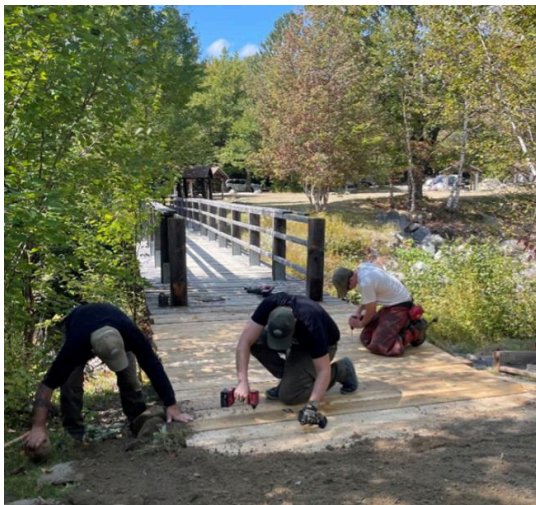
Field Operations and Law Enforcement

Baxter State Park field and law enforcement operations are overseen by two District Rangers and four Law Enforcement / Supervisory Rangers. From May to October, these six year-round rangers supervise a seasonal staff of twenty Campground Rangers, three Roving Rangers, and the Appalachian Trail Ranger. The Park operates eight roadside and two backcountry campgrounds during these months. Additionally, from December through March, the Park has three Winter Rangers, two based at Chimney Pond and one based at Abol. At the end of 2025, the Park filled a newly reclassified Baxter Enforcement Ranger position, bringing the Park's total Law Enforcement staff to seven.



New gate at Matagamon

In addition to their regular duties, Campground Rangers worked on many projects this season, including: scraped and painted buildings, constructed picnic tables, repaired and replaced worn and damaged signs, cut blowdowns and hazardous campground trees, log oiled lean-tos, re-built the Katahdin Stream footbridge ramps, constructed canoe racks, replaced the porch at



Repairs to Katahdin Stream footbridge ramps

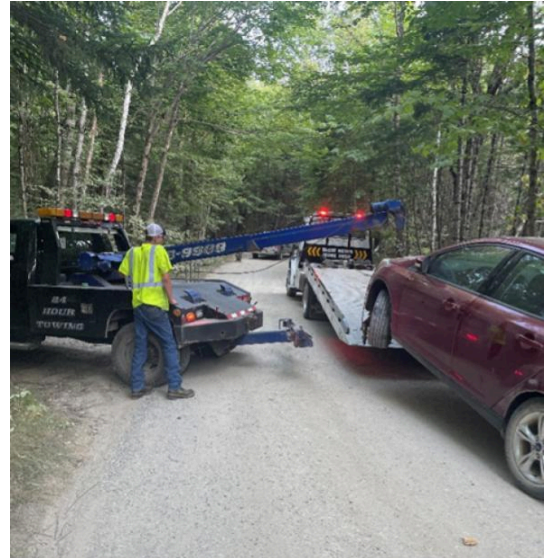
Kidney Pond Cabin 5 and window at Cabin 13, assisted with new roofing on the Togue Pond Ranger Camp garage, cut firewood, repaired shelters at Slide Dam and Nesowadnehunk Field, constructed a new gate at Matagamon, conducted blowdown patrols, performed water level monitoring, installed storm windows at Daicey Pond, Kidney Pond Cabin 9 porch rebuild and Cabin 6 crib work, constructed a replacement lean-to at Nesowadnehunk Field, burned debris and brush piles at Nesowadnehunk Field and Rum Pit, hauled in supplies for construction projects at Kidney, Daicey, Nesowadnehunk Field, Abol, and Trout Brook Farm, staged supplies at Russell Pond, cleared blowdowns along the Park road system, maintained boundary line corridors, installed winter use signs, maintained trail cameras, completed

roofing projects, relocated equipment, and installed snow fence on the lower Chimney Pond Trail. Staff wrapped up their seasons by conducting seasonal winterization of Park buildings and water systems.

A significant amount of firewood was delivered by the Park's firewood vendor to Abol and East Branch pits. Winter wood for camper use was also delivered to Kidney and Daicey Ponds. Staff and volunteers stacked firewood at Kidney and Daicey as well. *See Section 10. Appendices, Page 77 for Firewood bundles and ranger firewood delivered to campgrounds in 2025.*

Rangers have played a vital role in providing Preventive Search and Rescue (PSAR) and responding to calls for service for late/overdue and injured hikers. Campground Rangers and Roving Rangers have participated in Mountain Patrols throughout the season. They assisted with disabled vehicles, changed flat tires, and controlled traffic (this season has seen a significant number of these incidents).

Supervisory and Law Enforcement Rangers prepared for and coordinated the Summit Project and the K100, led monthly "Toolbox Talks" focusing on safety in the workplace and proper tool use, conducted motor vehicle crash investigations, assisted with disabled vehicles, supervised SAR incidents, provided logistical support, provided escorts for oversized vehicles, and provided assistance to campgrounds and gates as requested. In May of 2025, Laura Whitney completed the 18-week Basic Law Enforcement Training Program at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.



Staff assisted with numerous disabled vehicles
In the Park in 2025

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 worked to break the trail and hauled supplies to Russell Pond and bridge materials for the Pogy winter bridge.

Lands Manager Shane Miller has been building a Park-wide GIS system for field applications for Rangers and other field staff, including, most recently, the collection of fire plan-related data. District Ranger Rob Tice, Brennan Turner, and Keith Wehmeyer have been working with Shane and receiving training on field applications and data entry for the new Park-wide system.

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.

Law Enforcement Rangers have additionally been conducting motor vehicle crash investigations and patrolling for fishing, hunting, and trapping activities. Staff completed state-mandated law enforcement training in case law, breath testing device recertification, and Criminal Justice

Information Services (CJIS).

The Park once again hosted the Mitchell Scholars in late fall, who volunteered to help complete a number of projects, including spreading gravel at Daicey Pond, stacking firewood at Kidney Pond, and organizing children’s books at the Kidney Pond Library. The event was organized and led by Supervisory Ranger Bruce White and had the participation of several Park staff.

Warnings and Summonses

In 2025, the Law Enforcement Rangers issued 27 warnings and summons for violations in Baxter State Park.

BSP Rule 1.2	Camping without a reservation	USAC
BSP Rule 1.2	Camping without a reservation	USAC
BSP Rule 5.7	Snowmobiling on a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 5.7	Snowmobiling on a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 5.7	Snowmobiling on a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 5.7	Snowmobiling on a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Fishing without a license	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 5.5	Use of UAVs in the Park	Warning
BSP Rule 3.2	Violation of ME Fishing Law	USAC
Title 29A Section 2057-7	Failure to stop at a stop sign	VSAC
BSP Rule 1.2	Camping in unauthorized area	USAC
BSP Rule 1.2	Camping in unauthorized Site - wrong reservation	USAC
Title 29, Section 2073	Speeding	Warning
Title 29A, Section 2057	Failure to stop at stop sign on the outbound lane	Warning

Title 12, Section 903	Capacity violation at KP (by 1 person)	Warning
Title 12, Section 903	Failure to register upon entering	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking a closed trail	USAC
BSP Rule 1.3	Failure to register	W
BSP Rule 2.2	Hiking Katahdin w/o a Permit	USAC
Title 12, Section 13107	Operating MV on a groomed snowmobile trail	USAC
Title 12, Section 13107	Operating MV on a groomed snowmobile trail	USAC

Law Enforcement Rangers also investigated vandalism discovered on the Katahdin summit sign. The defacing of the sign generated public outcry, and the investigation is still ongoing.

The Park received ten new Glock sidearms. This purchase was made to align with upgrades to firearms being conducted by the Maine Warden Service. In early December, all seven Park Law Enforcement Rangers participated in two days of annual firearms qualifications and training in conjunction with the Maine Warden Service. Law Enforcement staff are all qualified with the new handguns and 12-gauge shotguns; select staff also qualified with long guns.

Harvesting Operation on BSP Boundary Line

On December 10, 2025, Acadian Timber's contractor, A&A Brochu, was harvesting wood along the Park's Thistle Pond (western) boundary line. Brochu's harvester operator inadvertently cut trees over the boundary line on Baxter Park property. The contracting forester established two lines - the boundary line and the buffer line - and the harvester operator confused the lines as they appeared on the GIS/GPS. Discussions with Acadian Timber and Brochu representatives were initiated, and Director Kevin Adam, Chief Ranger Matt McGuire, District Ranger Rob Tice, and Lands Manager Shane Miller visited the site. Six hardwood trees of sawlog quality and one spruce tree were cut, and the harvester went approximately 260' into the Park. The trees cut on Park property were delivered to a Park contractor, and the sawlogs will be kept for special projects for the Park. Acadian and Brochu will be continuing to cut in close proximity to the Park boundary line for the next several years. Director Kevin Adam and Acadian Timber's Vice President, John Steward, will keep communications open and have discussed cost-sharing on boundary line maintenance in that area.

Matt McGuire and Rob Tice are re-establishing the goal of three miles per Ranger per year on boundary line maintenance and identified three areas of priority, including the Thistle Pond area, the area around Nesowadnehunk near the old western entrance, and the Camp Phoenix area - all where there are active abutters. Some of the designated boundary trees are gone; young coniferous growth will require clearing and marking.

Canoe Inventory

In 1994, Baxter State Park placed a moratorium on new private watercraft being stored on

ponds within the Park in order to control impacts such as cutting of live vegetation, construction of canoe racks and security devices, and erosion associated with unauthorized trails. A policy was developed limiting private canoes in the Park to only those existing at the time of the moratorium and requiring watercraft owners to annually register their canoes with the Park. The registrations are non-transferable with the intent that, over time, all private watercraft will be removed from Park waters.

In an effort to enforce this policy, District Ranger Rob Tice worked with Summit & Trails Intern Daniel Tamburro to conduct an inventory of permitted private canoes located on a number of ponds throughout the Park. Tamburro verified the number of current permitted watercraft (13) and the number of watercraft with expired permits (17) for Tice and Chief Ranger McGuire to review. Watercraft without a current Baxter State Park watercraft registration will be removed from the Park. In addition to the Park providing canoes on many bodies of water, the Park also currently issues temporary private canoe passes valid for up to two weeks. These temporary passes are issued through the Chief Ranger.

2025 Road & Trail Openings and Closures

Trail Openings

Abol and Hunt Trails: May 30, 2025

Roaring Brook, Helon Taylor: June 6, 2025

Saddle Trail: June 10, 2025

Trail Closures

Above tree line trails closed: October 17, 2025

Tote Road Openings

Tote Road fully open for motor vehicle travel from Togue Gate to MTG: June 6, 2025

Tote Road open to snowmobiles from Togue Gate to MTG: Jan 24 2025

Appalachian Trail

In 2025, Appalachian Trail (AT) hiker numbers were down overall through most of the summer by approximately 18%, with 1,287 AT hikers having registered with the Park through August. This decline in hiker numbers was likely due to damage caused by Hurricane Helene during the fall of 2024 along the southern portion of the AT corridor. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) conducted early and wide-reaching messaging regarding damage to the trail, with the recommendation that people either hold off hiking this year and hike in 2026 or start north of the damage and hike the south in the fall, giving the ATC time to clear the trail. Depending on how hikers adjust their 2025 plans, 2026 may be a big hiking year on the AT.

AT trends noted in 2025 at Baxter State Park included a number of incidents involving hikers over the age of seventy finishing the AT and requiring assistance by Park staff and southbound (SOBO) hikers starting their hike at Roaring Brook, going “up and over.” This meant these hikers were taking on the most physically demanding section of the AT, fully burdened with gear and

not in top physical shape. All but one of these six parties were rescued or turned around and directed to Katahdin Stream or to the AT Hostel in Millinocket for a gear “shake down.”

There were a total of 2,012 AT hikers in the Park in 2025, with the majority being Northbound hikers (1,655). The Park continues to see the most AT hikers in August and September annually, averaging 603 and 570 per month, respectively. *See Section 10. Appendices, Page 74, Northbound vs Southbound Appalachian Trail Hikers - 1994-2025.*

Type of Hike		
Thru-hike N	Northbound	857
Thru-hike S	Southbound	199
Section N	Northbound	636
Section S	Southbound	106
Flip Flop N	Northbound	156
Flip Flop S	Southbound	52
IAT	North and South	6
	Total Hikers	2,012

The ATC was able to secure funding and approved the hiring of a Ridgerunner who was stationed at the Abol Kiosk, where the AT enters BSP, and served in a supplemental capacity to the Baxter State Park AT Ranger. This position began in early July. ATC Abol Ridgerunner Hailey Lynch and Baxter State Park AT Ranger Don Bolduc provided information to AT hikers as they entered the Park so they were better informed about the Abol Bridge area and Baxter State Park’s rules.

Katahdin Stream Campground Rangers Pete Sweeney and Corey James conducted “Finish Well” talks to AT hikers staying at the Birches every night during the summer and fall camping season. This talk prepares hikers for their summit hike, finishing the AT, and has a strong emphasis on respect: for themselves, for others, for the Park, and for Katahdin and the Indigenous people for whom the mountain is sacred.

Communication was effective this season between Monson Visitor Center Manager Wendy Weiger and Baxter staff. Through regular emails, Weiger provided the Park with a “summit calendar,” suggesting when the Birches might fill. ATC Abol Ridgerunner Hailey Lynch and Baxter State Park AT Ranger Don Bolduc were able to provide suggestions for alternative arrangements for hikers heading to the Park when the Birches were filled. Weiger kept the Park apprised of large groups headed towards the Park as well.

On October 23rd, the Park hosted an end-of-season meeting with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC). This annual “lessons learned” meeting continues to provide valuable information for all involved parties. Topics discussed at the meeting included educating hikers regarding “slack-packing” and eligibility to camp at the Birches, educating northbound hikers (NOBOs) about the potential for the mountain to close in October, and considering “flip-flopping” from Monson to Katahdin to reduce the chance that hikers might not finish due to a weather closure on the mountain. “Flip-flopping” may eliminate the pressure to finish in mid-fall adverse conditions, which places motivated hikers at risk. The Park closed the mountain on October 17th for the 2025 summer season. The day prior, October 16th, was designated a Class 4 day, with harsh and potentially dangerous weather conditions above tree line.

Search and Rescue (SAR) Program

District Ranger Rob Tice and Chief Ranger Matt McGuire coordinate search and rescue (SAR) activities for the Park, and work with the Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) teams to schedule volunteer Park-wide SAR coverage and volunteer and staff training focusing on basic search and rescue procedures, technical rescue techniques, and emergency medical skills. Ongoing communication and training with MASAR teams and partnering agencies ensure interoperability and are a focus of this department.



Staff at Introduction to SAR training

District Ranger Rob Tice and Chief Ranger Matt McGuire presented at this year's (MASAR) Conference, held at Camp Kieve in Nobleboro. Rob and Matt discussed the history of SAR at Baxter State Park and provided a summary of the 2024 SAR Operations Report, with statistics and trends from last year's incidents. For the *2025 SAR Operations Report*, See Section 10. Appendices, Page 78 - *BSP Search & Rescue Summary*, Page 79 - *Air Operations*, Pages 79-80 - *Frequency and Location of SAR Incidents*, Page 80 - *SAR Incidents by Location*, Page 81 - *Preventive Search and Rescue*, and Page 82 - *Partners*

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 was utilized for PSAR purposes and helped standardize weather recording for mountain patrol reporting.

The beginning of the summer 2025 SAR season was punctuated by the search and recovery of Tim and Esther Keiderling, father and daughter, who succumbed to injury and the elements in early June on Katahdin. The three-day incident demonstrated effective coordination between Baxter State Park and its cooperating partners, including the Maine Warden Service, the Maine Forest Service, the Maine Army National Guard, and the Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR).

Park staff responded to 75 SAR incidents in 2025, a 39% increase over the number of SAR incidents in 2024 (46 incidents). The preponderance of SAR incidents this season is due to falls, lower-extremity injuries, dehydration, exhaustion, and exceeding ability. Of these incidents, 35% (26 incidents) occurred in August alone. This is the first time since 2016 that August has been the busiest of the primary summer months (June, July, and August) for SAR incidents. The Chimney Pond and Hunt Trails had the most incidents this season, with 9 each, followed by the Saddle Trail with 8, and the Abol Trail with 7. The Park saw several older AT section hikers who needed assistance or had overnighted on the mountain.

7 incidents involved the use of helicopters: 2 separate knee injuries on the Knife Edge, a double ankle sprain/fracture at Chimney Pond, severe dehydration on the Hunt Trail, a forearm fracture at Russell Pond, and the Keiderling search and recoveries. Air operations were conducted with the assistance of the Maine Forest Service and the Maine Army National Guard. Two incidents garnered significant media attention this year: the Keiderling incident and the Kosciuszko incident, which involved a helicopter rescue off Knife Edge. The Park Leadership Team, Information & Education Department, and Administrative staff all contributed to effective communication with media outlets in order to allow field operations to accomplish the recovery and rescue efforts. Also of note this year has been the Park's response to iPhone-generated pre-programmed distress messages inadvertently sent by Park visitors. The Park responded to four of these calls dispatched through Houlton RCC: a forest fire, an airplane crash, and two motor vehicle accidents. None of these incidents occurred as reported, but required staff effort and resources to respond and verify. These inadvertent SOS emergency calls are becoming more prevalent throughout Maine and the country.

Park Rangers and MASAR teams continue to conduct Preventive Search and Rescue (PSAR) talks with hikers at ranger stations, trailheads, campsites, and on the trail. Seven MASAR teams provided a total of 2,409 standby and 463 active SAR hours. A substantial number of the active hours were generated during the Keiderling search and recovery in June. These teams were recognized during the Park's Annual Volunteer Banquet held on November 2nd. This banquet, organized by Office Specialist Georgia Manzo and Supervisory Ranger Bruce White, with support from District Ranger Rob Tice, and Inventory and Property Associate Deanna Madore, is an opportunity to recognize and thank these SAR teams and our partnering agencies for their continued assistance.

Rob Tice generates the MASAR Park SAR coverage calendar, and Rob and Chief Ranger Matt McGuire work with MASAR teams for joint training opportunities for Park staff, volunteers, and partnering agencies.

Wildland Fire Operations

The Park made significant progress in wildfire preparedness in 2025. A Type 4 engine was received on loan, and a second Type 6 engine was acquired, both from the Maine Forest

Service. Three skid tanks with pumps were set up for insertion into truck beds in the north and south ends of the Park, and additional poly water tanks were staged throughout the Park. Pumps and parts to supplement existing pumps and increase the Park's capacity were donated from the Maine Forest Service and the Millinocket Fire Department.

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.



Annual Fire Training

High fire danger statewide put the Park at Level 2 preparedness for part of August and September. Matt McGuire and Rob Tice attended daily online briefings with the Maine Forest Service, and a two-week backcountry fire ban was put in place in the Park. Due to very high fire danger, an elevated KBDI, and drought conditions, a Park-wide fire ban was instituted for the weekend of August 23-25, 2025. During periods of high fire danger, Rangers have been proactive in educating visitors about fire danger and vigilant for any unattended fires. Fire equipment has been routinely tested and appropriately staged for initial attack to any wildland fire. In early August, the Braley Ridge Road Fire was detected in the north end of the SFMA. Started by a lightning strike, it burned primarily through duff and the root system. The Maine Forest Service and Park staff responded swiftly with hand crews who contained it to approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ acre over the course of a few days. Additionally, Park staff responded to a fire on the Park boundary off the Millinocket Lake Road and worked helitack air operations with the Maine Forest Service out of Old Town.

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 feet 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 Tice and 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.

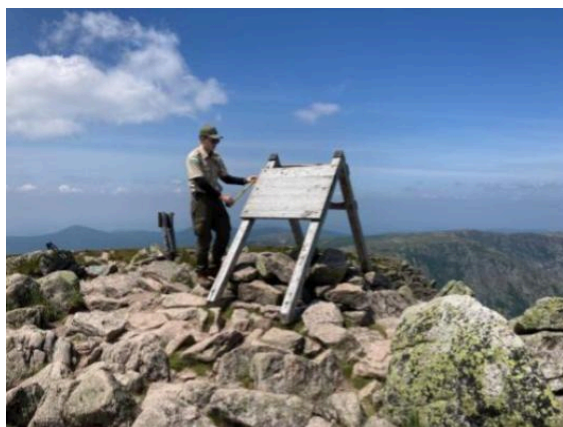
Section 6. Information & Education (I&E)

Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak, Interpretive Specialist Cassandra Knudsen, and Interpretive Intern Tzevi Aho accomplished a variety of projects and activities in support of educating and engaging visitors, staff, and organizational partners about the Park's natural resources, history, and operations. Daniel Tamburro served as the Summit & Trails intern during July and August, assisting with these efforts along with special projects.

Education in the Park

Following many hours of planning, research, writing, and design, new wayside-style kiosk signs were installed at Abol Campground, Daicey Pond Campground and Day Use Area, Foster Field, The Birches, Katahdin Stream Campground, and the Hunt Trailhead. This first version of the wayside signs is printed on laminated paper and, in time, will be replaced with printing on more permanent materials. Interpretive Specialist Knudsen continues to draft signs for other kiosks throughout the Park, in some places coordinating with Park staff to add or improve the kiosk structures for these interpretive signs. I&E staff also produced and distributed new, standardized signs for lean-tos and outhouses throughout the Park, for the purpose of reducing signage and consistently and effectively conveying key messages.

Summit and Trails intern Dan Tamburro completed an inventory of signs and signposts on Katahdin's tablelands and alpine areas on the Traveler Range, Doubletop Mountain, and South Turner. This inventory is informing ongoing work by Trails staff to make new signs, and a collaborative effort among BSP teams to strategically use improved signage to more effectively protect alpine areas and trails above treeline.



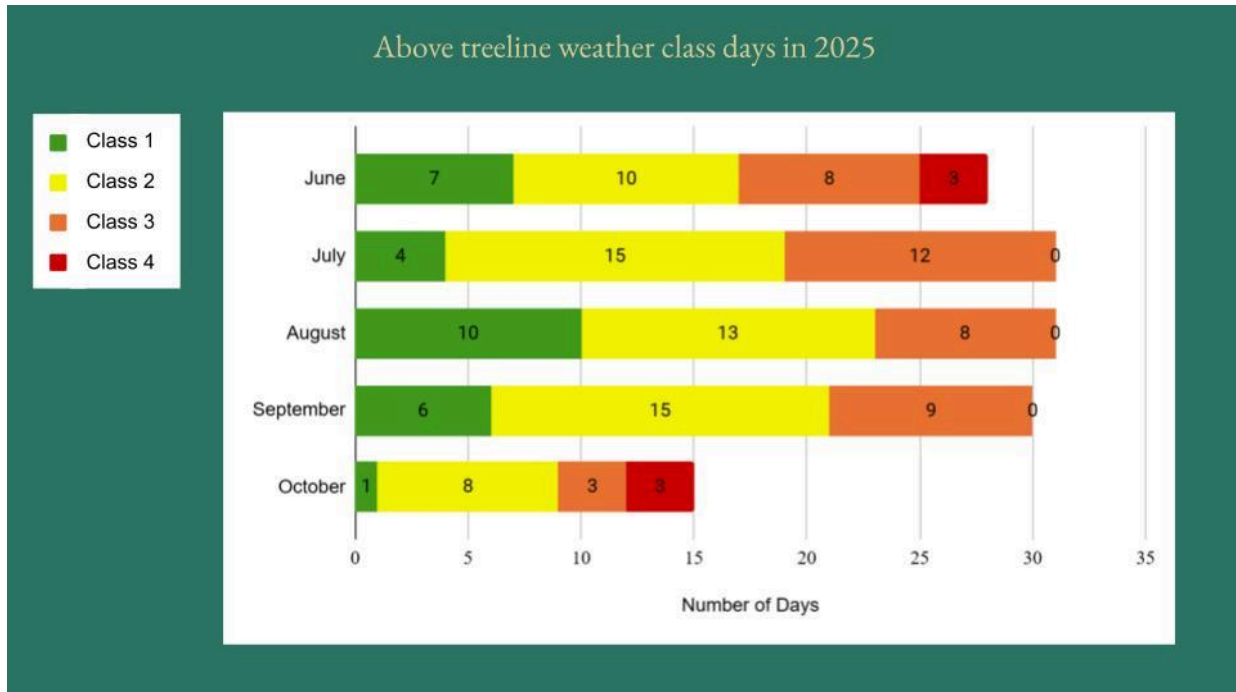
Dan Tamburro, Katahdin Sign Inventory

Fourteen educational programs and guided walks were offered to Park visitors during the summer and fall of 2025, including a wide range of topics. Attendance varied greatly, but patterns related to the date and time of the programs were not readily apparent. Highly attended programs included the Dark Skies and Stargazing, Paleo in the Park, Bats of BSP, and a Forest Ecology and Tree ID walk. *See Section 10. Appendices, Page 75, Educational programs presented in the Park in 2025.*

Eleven Park staff and interns provided a presence on the various Katahdin trails during 86 days of the summer and fall hiking season, an increase from 73 days of "mountain patrols" in 2024. Over 60% of the staff's hikes to patrol Katahdin trails included a visit to Baxter Peak, the Park's most popular backcountry destination. The staff's presence on Katahdin's tablelands provides protection for natural resources through limiting off-trail use, preventing and cleaning up food and other litter, and following other Leave No Trace practices. During these patrols, staff are

also well-placed to provide preventative Search and Rescue information and to respond to rescue needs on Katahdin.

To support planning and safety for hikers intending to travel to the Park's alpine areas, the Park piloted an above-treeline weather class system. This system differs from the Park's previous weather class system (which was popular among visitors but discontinued several years ago) in its exclusivity to above treeline weather and different class definitions. Chimney Pond



Campground Rangers used forecasts to choose the weather class days, reporting it to duty stations throughout the Park early each day.


Visiting Artist Lauren Richelieu spent two weeks in September based at Kidney Pond. She presented a program at the Kidney Pond Library about her work as a science illustrator and hosted an open studio displaying her artwork at the library during the final days of her residency. Artwork from Lauren's residency was incorporated into BSP's 2025 winter holiday greeting card.

Publications


This year's version of the Park publication "Wildnotes" was expanded to a total of 12 pages (adding 4 pages to the previous version), which the Park now intends to maintain as its standard format for the future, with only minor changes as needed. The Wildnotes News insert in 2025 focused on presenting changes to the reservations system (from the Day Use Parking Reservation to the Katahdin Trailhead Pass), while also providing information on upcoming educational programming and seasonal trail closures. Knudsen and Aho produced monthly newsletters for BSP staff from June to October, covering a variety of natural resource and education topics relevant to the Park. An educational brochure about the geology of the Park, authored by Katie Fink (Interpretive Intern in 2024), was finalized and made available. Cassandra Knudsen collaborated with the Friends of BSP on the production of the BSP

calendar for 2026, participating in photo selection and authoring the captions for all of the photographs within. I&E staff also assisted Friends of BSP in making revisions to the popular “Know Before You Go” brochure.

In 2025, staff prioritized efforts to update various maps. They contracted with Community Geographics to create new digital maps for the Park, including a full Park map and 7 section maps. These were made available on the Park’s website, and staff plan to also provide them freely to the public on the Avenza application. Various staff provided edits to Map Adventures, LLC, which published an updated version of its BSP map (which is also sold by BSP) in 2025. Staff also provided in-depth reviews of both text and map features to cartographers working to update the National Geographic map that includes BSP, with an anticipated publication of that revised map in early 2026.



Wildnotes News 2025




**So Long, DUPRs!
Hello, Katahdin Trailhead Passes!**

Since 2010, Baxter State Park has made use of a parking reservation system at the three parking lots with access to Katahdin Trailheads (See Option 2 below). This system has been effective in helping visitors plan their trip in advance. In 2025, this system has undergone the following updates to make it even more effective and accessible for our visitors:

1. **Name Change to Katahdin Trailhead Pass.** Formerly called Day Use Parking Reservations (DUPR) these passes only apply to parking areas at Katahdin Trailheads. Even those dropping off hikers or arriving at these trailheads by other means than car must still have a KTP. *Note: Other trails departing from these parking lots (like The Owl and South Turner Mountain) also require a KTP.*
2. **KTPs cost \$10 and are limited to 2 per month.** These modest changes in price and purchase limitations aim to minimize over purchasing and increase the availability of passes for those intending to use them.
3. **All visitors have access to reserve on April 1st through the rest of the season.** Non-Maine residents, who previously could only reserve parking up to 2 weeks in advance, may now reserve up to 30% of a given day’s KTPs starting on April 1st.
4. **KTPs have a new look.** Additional information is included about what visitors need to know before they come to the Park.

Updated Option 2 (from Wildnotes): Obtain and Print a Katahdin Trailhead Pass
 Visitors can reserve a spot in one of the three mountain parking lots by getting a Katahdin Trailhead Pass (KTP) by visiting our website or by calling our reservations line at 207-723-5140. **KTPs are limited** and should be booked early. They are available for the entire season beginning April 1st. To make the process quicker at the gate, **please print your KTP in advance.** Having it on your phone is not a substitute. **KTPs expire at 7:05 a.m.;** if you have not registered at the gate by then, your spot will be given away to someone in the first come, first served line. We recommend that you plan to arrive at the Park when the gates open at 6 a.m.

For other options to secure parking for hiking Katahdin, see pg. 7 of our Wildnotes publication.



Want to learn more about these and other changes in BSP in 2025? Visit our “What’s New This Year” web page at the following link, or scan the QR code!

<https://baxterstatepark.org/whats-new-this-year/>

Psst! More news on the back!

Outreach (Education Outside of the Park)

The “What’s new this year” page of BSP’s website (which was created in 2024 to provide the public with information about changes and conditions specific to a given year) featured detailed information about changes to the reservations system (primarily focused on Katahdin Trailhead Passes). Along with posts on social media, this was a primary communications strategy that was developed in collaboration with the Park’s administrative services and reservations staff. I&E staff also created numerous thematically designed social media posts designed to provide education about the Park’s natural resources and prepare for visits to the Park.

I&E staff delivered education through a variety of events and educational programs. In collaboration with Supervising Ranger Bruce White, Knudsen coordinated BSP’s table/displays at the Eastern Maine Sportsman’s Show for three days and the Aroostook Sportsman’s Spring Show for two days. Knudsen also tabled at the Winter Festival event at the Lumberman’s Museum in Patten, and BSP Advisor Edward Pontbriand represented the Park at the Appalachian Mountain Club Four Thousand Footer Club’s annual awards event. With assistance from the Reservations staff, the Park staffed a table at the three-day Trail’s End Festival in Millinocket during the summer.

In April, Tabak joined an expert discussion panel focused on climate change at the Friends of BSP's annual meeting. Knudsen delivered programs during two Winter Camps for Katahdin region youth (organized by Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument), and Knudsen and Tabak hosted a class from Oregon State University (led by a former UMaine professor) to learn about BSP and SFMA stewardship and management.

Section 7. Natural Resources & Research

The preservation of natural resources is the primary goal of Baxter State Park, and efforts to do so are made across the organization. The Natural Resource Director oversees work focused on natural resource monitoring, research, and specific conservation measures for priority resources. It is often arbitrary to distinguish between monitoring and research efforts, and there is also considerable overlap in this work with the I&E team, especially in community science projects. The Park has a long-established Research Committee, which works with the Natural Resource Director to approve or deny shorter-term, focused research projects that are proposed to the Park by outside researchers. While several longer-term monitoring efforts have been ongoing for many years and were not reviewed by the Research Committee at their onset, new long-term monitoring efforts are typically directed to the Committee for review and approval.

Natural Resource Monitoring

Cassandra Knudsen organized volunteers for Maine Audubon's annual loon count on July 20th. Forty-five volunteers surveyed 27 lakes and ponds (mostly within the Park), tallying 61 adult loons, 8 chicks, and 4 nests. This represents an increase from the number of adults, chicks, and nests counted last year on the same number of waterbodies (40, 5, and 3, respectively in 2024). These are encouraging results, though continued surveying is necessary to provide a more meaningful picture of the long-term population trends of this iconic species. We are grateful for another year with high volunteer participation in this event, matching the record high effort of last year's survey.

BSP staff created a 2025 Baxter State Park Observations iNaturalist project, which was active from May 10 to November 1st. Nearly 4,500 observations were submitted to the project by BSP staff and visitors, representing nearly 900 species. There were many observations of fungi and insects this year, and approximately 50% of the observations in this project had attained research grade by the end of the year. Many of the observations from the iNaturalist project provide data points on alpine species that are targets for a regional phenology tracking project led by Appalachian Mountain Club researchers.



Alpine plant phenology plot



Bat detector installation -
Wadleigh Mtn

In addition to the iNaturalist observations, BSP staff completed 29 surveys at 5 established plots on Katahdin, which provide more detailed phenological data on target species for this research project.

BSP staff installed acoustic bat detection equipment from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) at a total of 10 sites in the Park, including two new sites in the Scientific Forest Management area and two new sites in the vicinity of Chimney Pond. Despite a software malfunction that cut down on the recording time at some sites, it was a very productive year, with acoustic detections of all 8 species of bats that occur in Maine, including federally and state-listed rare species. Maine IF&W staff also conducted two mobile acoustic bat detection surveys on a route including the northeasternmost section of the Tote Road.

Natural Resource Director Tabak conducted a Katahdin Arctic butterfly survey on Katahdin on the 30th of June. Survey conditions were not ideal for detecting Katahdin arctics, with some cloud cover, light to moderate winds, and a trace of rain measured at Chimney Pond the previous day. Still, two butterflies were detected during the survey, and three additional butterflies were observed on Katahdin by BSP staff on other days this summer.



MNAP Ecological Reserve monitoring

A variety of ongoing natural resource monitoring was conducted by BSP partners in 2025. Staff from the Maine Natural Areas Program completed 6 ecoreserve monitoring transect surveys (a doubled effort from the typical 3 transects surveyed annually in BSP, since no surveys were completed in 2024). Water quality surveys were completed by Maine Department of Environmental Conservation staff at Lower South Branch Pond, as part of an ongoing, regional study to detect the impacts of climate change on lakes. The Maine Forest Service completed 5 Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plots in the Park for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's long-term monitoring. Volunteers for the Vermont Center for Ecostudies surveyed high-elevation breeding birds in the spring for the regional Mountain Birdwatch project. For the first time since 2010, all five of the established routes in BSP were surveyed by three volunteers, who detected a total of 36 species, including all 10 of the target high-elevation breeders.

In July, staff from the Department of IF&W completed standard fish surveys on Abol, Celia, Rocky, Round, and Foss & Knowlton Ponds. They followed up on a report of the occurrence of common shiner in Kidney Pond, which would have represented a new record for the species at this locality, and did not detect this minnow in their survey. They also installed data loggers that measure flow rates at the Nesowadnehunk Lake dam and at the existing USGS stream gauge downstream from the dam, starting in June. BSP staff subsequently collected depth gauge readings at the dam, USGS gauge, and the bridge at Nesowadnehunk Campground throughout the summer and early fall, to provide correlates to the flow readings. IF&W biologists removed the partial remains of an abandoned beaver dam from just downstream of the USGS gage, as the dam material was pooling water at the gage. The same team from IF&W collaborated with Natural Resource Director Tabak to develop an angler survey form for the Park. IF&W supplied survey boxes to house and collect filled forms, and BSP staff installed these boxes at 11 sites

throughout the Park. One hundred and seventy-six (176) surveys were submitted from 41 fishing locations throughout the season, greatly increasing the number of surveys and sites in the Park from those submitted through the existing statewide volunteer angler program. The surveys showed that angler use of streams such as Nesowadnehunk and Trout Brook was higher than expected, and that catch rates were high throughout the sites. Park and IF&W staff plan to provide the surveys to Park visitors again in future years.

Natural Resource Director Tabak provided input on various operational projects or plans in the Park. These included preferred times and locations for non-emergency helicopter flights (e.g., materials and equipment drops or pick-ups, training) in alpine areas, minor trail and bridge relocations, and relocation of a lean-to campsite at Abol Campground.

Invasive Species

Continuing the effort from previous years, Park staff completed multiple surveys for invasive knapweed (*Centaurea* spp.) populations, and repeatedly hand-pulled the plants in localities in both the north and south ends of the Park. While the populations still persist, they are reduced in size, and no new populations have been detected in 2025. Staff plan to continue this effort, which aims to exhaust the existing seedbank, with the aim of eradicating these populations from the Park.



Removing bristly locust

Staff also continued efforts to manually remove bristly locust (*Robinia hispida*) from 4 known sites in the southeast part of the Park. Interpretive Intern Aho focused individual efforts on the Togue Pond and Rum Pit sites, and organized two volunteer work events to remove plants at the Mountain View site (near Togue Pond Gate) and an old gravel pit off of Roaring Brook Road. This is the first year that the latter site has received a manual control effort. Bristly locust appears to be spreading strictly vegetatively in the Park, but the roots and rhizomes are prone to breaking when pulled or dug. At the three sites where manual removal efforts have taken place consistently each year since 2022/2023, the populations continue to decrease, and staff are encouraged by the trend and will plan to sustain the effort in future years.

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 were a study to clarify the taxonomy of the rare Roaring Brook Mayfly, a survey of rare stoneflies, rare plant surveys (representing part of a “report card” project on the conservation status of Maine’s rare plants), and targeted water quality monitoring. Maine IF&W led five (multiday) survey trips to collect mayfly larvae from various streams in the vicinity of Roaring Brook, and Maine Natural Area Program staff spent three full days surveying areas on the Katahdin Tableland and around Chimney Pond. The stonefly survey and the water quality monitoring projects did not take place in 2025 due to logistics and may instead be launched in 2026.

After an extended review (including written responses to questions raised by the Research Committee and staff), Park staff declined the proposal for a multi-year regional study on microhabitats and genetics of alpine plants. Staff had concerns about its potential level of impact as compared with benefits to the Park, and outstanding questions about the methodology (particularly for data analysis). Study sites for this project were installed at other northeastern alpine areas (including Saddleback Mountain in Maine), and Park staff plan to follow the progress and results of the study.

Researchers continued work on several ongoing research and monitoring projects in the Park. As part of their multi-year study on the glacial history of BSP, University of Maine Geologists collected samples from the northern ridge of Katahdin's North Basin for surface exposure dating. They also produced a 3D carved model of the Katahdin massif based on high-resolution elevation data, painted to highlight glacial geomorphological characteristics. The model will be provided to the Park for display at the Visitor Center in 2026.

Botanist Arthur Haines of the Native Plant Trust continued his work to locate rare plants in BSP, and, when feasible, to collect seeds for their long-term conservation. This year, he focused his efforts on confirming and newly describing an alpine willow hybrid, which he named *Salix x brumbackii*. In the United States, this plant is currently known to occur in only a single colony of plants on Katahdin.

Andrea Tirrell of the University of Maine returned to Katahdin in 2025 to complete seed collection for a regional study of alpine plant adaptation to climate change, which was initiated in 2024. Seeds from six species of alpine plants collected on Katahdin will be germinated and grown in common garden experiments alongside plants from 10 other alpine sites in the northeastern U.S. The study will also examine the genetic diversity among these plants using DNA extracted from leaf tissue collections.

In the winter of 2025, IF&W staff completed another round of camera trap surveys in the Park, as part of an effort to monitor and study mesocarnivores across the state. Survey sites along the Tote Road in the Park, which are surveyed every other year, continue to prove highly productive for detections of martens and fishers, providing a good baseline for the statewide study. The cameras also detected a wide variety of additional species.



Roaring Brook Mayfly Survey

Section 8. Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA)

The Scientific Forest Management Area covers nearly 30,000 acres in the northwest of the Park with a distinct mission. In the SFMA, the primary goals set out by Governor Baxter are to produce a continuous supply of forest wood products using scientific forestry and to demonstrate these forestry practices, while also providing wildlife habitat and public access for recreation. The SFMA is managed by Shane Miller, Lands Manager, with support from Forester I Deidra George and oversight by Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak. The SFMA relies on contracted labor for performing harvest operations and some silvicultural treatments. Its operations are also supported by other Park staff who build and maintain infrastructure and manage Park visitors. SFMA staff also manage the Austin Cary and Mount Chase Lots- two relatively small outlots that are separate from BSP and the SFMA.

Administration & Management Plans

In the early months of 2025, the ten-year SFMA management plan for 2025-2035, written by Miller, was reviewed by the SFMA Advisory Committee, presented publicly for comment, and approved by the BSP Authority. This plan emphasizes investments in various Timber Stand Improvements (TSIs)(including herbicide treatments following the policy for use of herbicides in the SFMA approved in 2024) and forest inventories and analysis. The SFMA Master Plan, which is envisioned as a long-term living document covering the philosophy, principles, and overarching goals of the SFMA, remained in outline form in 2025. Staff efforts were directed towards drafting standard operating procedures for the SFMA (with a baseline document expected to be completed in 2026).

Early in 2025, Acadian Timber Company acquired assets in the region from A&A Brochu, including equipment and facilities used in harvest operations and road work in the SFMA. The existing SFMA contracts were assigned to Katahdin Forest Management (KFM), a part of the Acadian company in Maine. Personnel working in the SFMA were rehired by KFM, resulting in a smooth transition for operations on the ground. In June, the SFMA executed new harvest and road maintenance contracts with KFM.

University of Maine forestry students Will Grange and Eli Stephenson joined the SFMA staff as interns from June through August. They assisted staff with a wide range of activities, including different types of inventories, laying out and marking future harvests, performing timber stand improvements, and refreshing boundary lines. Horizon Forestry crews brushed, blazed, and painted boundary lines on the eastern side of the SFMA, totalling a distance of approximately 6.8 miles.

Lands Manager Shane Miller completed the transition of SFMA GIS data and work to the State's ESRI platform and created Field Mapper files that SFMA staff now use for work in the field. There is ongoing work to fully utilize the state's servers to host all of the Park's GIS data.

Harvest & Operations

With the adoption of the 2025-2035 management plan, and based on updated analyses of forest inventory data, the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) was increased to 7,100 cords (from the previous AAC of 5,600 cords). Concurrently, the plan calls for a re-balancing of harvest volumes to better reflect the current forest cover types in the SFMA and ensure future sustainable harvests (primarily reducing the volume of spruce and fir harvests).



Hygrade sort

The SFMA's harvest operations are planned in timeframes from June to May of each year. Portions of the Annual Cut years of June 2024-May 2025 and June 2025-May 2026 are included in the calendar year 2025. A harvest took place in the north end of the SFMA during January, February, and March. A summer harvest was not initiated due to a lack of market for hardwood pulp and a relatively depressed market for other wood products at that time. A second harvest in the north end was initiated in November and was ongoing at the end of 2025.

Approximately 2,000 cords were

harvested in January-March, and another ca. 700 cords from a harvest completed in the south end in late 2024 were trucked from the SFMA¹.

SFMA staff have responded to the combined fiscal challenges of poor (and in some cases non-existent) wood market conditions and overdue infrastructural upgrades in various ways. To maximize revenue for re-investment in the SFMA's infrastructure and silviculture, they worked with the harvest contractor to plan the late 2025 harvest to be more temporally compressed, including additional harvest equipment and work shifts. At the same time, staff are using several criteria to determine the timing and initiation of harvests to ensure that they can achieve silvicultural goals



Tonewood sorting

¹ Volumes reported are based on trucking trip tickets; the volume harvested during November and December of 2025 was not yet trucked at the time of this report and thus cannot be reported.

regardless of revenue. To address the underutilization of high-quality sawlogs, the SFMA contracted Ruff Cutters, a company based in Millinocket, to slash and grade hardwood to maximize its marketability. Miller was successful in marketing high-quality logs for clapboard, tonewood, and tool handles. *See Section 10. Appendices, Page 76, for a complete list of the SFMA's wood buyers in 2025.*

Silviculture

Contractor Horizon Forestry completed Pre-Commercial Thinning (PCT) on 56 acres in the SFMA. Staff performed approximately 5 acres of PCT and crop tree release in softwood stands that were too mature for Horizon to thin. In the summer and fall, Forester I George oversaw two types of herbicide application methods on American beech and striped maple on approximately 17 acres. Staff found that drilling and directly injecting stems with the herbicide was more effective and efficient (both in terms of labor and chemical quantity) than cutting stems and applying the herbicide to the stumps.

Miller and Tabak worked with SFMA Advisory John Bryant and Robert Seymour to explore a range of options for managing two silviculturally challenging conditions that are prevalent in the SFMA. In mature mixed stands with undesirable regeneration, the recommended approach is to chemically treat the undesirable regeneration in as much of the area in this condition as possible, and then wait for the establishment of desirable regeneration before removing the mature overstory. Failure to treat the undesirable regeneration would result in a site conversion from spruce-dominated mixedwood to diseased beech and striped maple stands. In stands that were harvested in the 1980s and are now composed primarily of hardwood of pulpwood quality, chemical thinning should be used, any potential sawlog quality hardwoods allowed to mature to be harvested in groups in the future, and the resulting gaps planted with red spruce and white pine. The planting is intended to reverse the conversion of these stands from softwoods to hardwoods resulting from the 1980s harvests. Both of these approaches require a large investment in herbicide applications (which is beyond the SFMA and BSP's current fiscal and labor capacity) and long waiting periods, while one also requires planting, which would represent a novel activity in the SFMA.

Comprehensive inventories of forest types and their conditions are needed in order to optimize investments in the necessary silvicultural treatments that will maximize returns in the future. SFMA staff prioritized the continued development and implementation of a forest inventory protocol that was initiated in 2024, are working to develop a covertype map for the SFMA, and are planning for analyses of these data to optimize harvests, silvicultural treatments, and other SFMA goals. They have identified pre-commercial thinning and herbicide treatments as the highest priority silvicultural investments.

The Maine Adaptive Silviculture Network (MASN) is a program of the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU), which monitors and assists researchers in evaluating silvicultural treatments at various sites across Maine. Following the establishment of an MASN site in the SFMA and the initiation of baseline surveys in 2024, a MASN crew returned to complete the baseline surveys. SFMA staff will plan and execute silvicultural treatments to be included in the MASN site in the coming years.

Monitoring

SFMA staff and interns completed surveys of 4 of the Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) plots. An emphasis was placed on completing inventories of understory vegetation over the summer, in order to plan for herbicide treatments. In total, approximately 1,300 acres were inventoried in 2025 (including full and understory inventories).

George installed water temperature sensors in the spring and retrieved data that were submitted to the US Geological Survey in the fall. Miller collected samples for spruce budworm L2 (larval) monitoring at sites in the SFMA and throughout the Park, which were analyzed by the spruce budworm lab at the University of Maine. While spruce budworm is known to occur in the Park, the results of this sampling show that its populations are well below outbreak levels at this time. Park staff added two new sites in the eastern portion of the SFMA for acoustic bat surveys (see Section 7- Natural Resource & Research).

Outlying Forest Lots

BSP forest management is also applied at the Austin Cary Lot in Harpswell (ca. 228 ac), and the Mount Chase Lot in Mount Chase Plantation (ca. 200 ac). These properties were acquired in the early 1970s by the Maine Forest Authority to fulfill Governor Baxter's wish that additional reforestation, forestry demonstration, and wildlife sanctuaries be acquired in the state outside of Baxter State Park. Not long after their purchase, the management responsibility for both lots was transferred to BSP (and the Maine Forest Authority was abolished in 1984).

Baxter State Park has long recognized that managing the Austin Cary Lot (ACL) in Harpswell presents many challenges for its staff, primarily due to its remoteness from the SFMA and its considerably different management needs. Maine's constitution and statutes require legislative approval for the conveyance of state-managed lands, including the Austin Cary Lot. With approval from the BSP Authority and support from Assistant Attorney General Lauren Parker and Park Director Adam, Tabak worked with Harpswell State Representative Cheryl Golek to introduce to the legislature LD 1724: Resolve, Authorizing the Baxter State Park Authority to Convey Certain Land in Cumberland County. Following public hearings and work sessions of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, and resulting amendments, the bill received the full legislature's approval and was enacted by Governor Mills in June of 2025. Subsequently, the Park has assembled a list of entities that have expressed interest in the future stewardship of the ACL, and will work in the coming year to plan for the property's conveyance.

Tabak attended the annual meeting of the Long Reach Road Association (LRRA), which is composed of five private landowners with rights-of-way over the primary road in the ACL and one additional neighbor. The group continues its efforts to manage the road in accordance with a maintenance agreement with BSP and in the face of recurring damage caused by tidal flooding.

The Mount Chase Lot includes a planted stand of mature Norway Spruce. In the fall of 2025, SFMA staff began planning for a harvest of this and potentially additional stands on the Lot. Flagging along the property's boundary line was refreshed, and the riparian zones were demarcated. Park volunteers also worked over the summer to clear the publicly accessible trail at the property.

SFMA Advisory Committee

The SFMA Advisory Committee held its spring meeting on April 4. Agenda items included discussions about market conditions and the new Acadian/KFM contracts, a review of the previous cut year and the next year's timber budget, and updates on SFMA operations, the 10-year management plan, and finances. There was consideration of how to operate in the SFMA in the coming year, while wood markets are poor and staff continue to address deferred silvicultural and infrastructure needs.

In the fall (October 10th), the Committee met at the SFMA. They visited and compared sites treated with two different methods of herbicide application to understories of beech and striped maple, and examined a first entry on a block that was reclassified from a reserve to operational in 2022, and Irregular Group

Shelterwood treatments completed in 2024. Staff provided updates on operations, markets, and the Austin Cary Lot, and committee member Allison Kanoti updated the group on the results of the first year of an Early Intervention Strategy in the state for spruce budworm. The committee discussed the silvicultural options for hardwood management presented by Miller, Bryant, and Seymour (see Silviculture section), and there was general agreement on their recommendations. Staff shared the long-term challenges faced by the SFMA and the significant



SFMA advisors and staff at fall field meeting

silvicultural and infrastructure investments needed to overcome them. The committee agreed with the considerations staff proposed to use to determine whether or not to initiate harvest operations in a given year or season, in light of these challenges and the currently depressed wood markets.

BSP extends its gratitude to Rob Bryan and Aaron Weiskittel, who retired from the SFMA Advisory Committee in 2024.

Demonstration & Partnerships

Baxter State Park is a member of the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU), which conducts and funds applied research that provides information to guide sustainable forestry practices and science-based forest policy. In 2025, the CFRU did not solicit new grant proposals but continued to manage and support existing projects and updated its membership fee structure. Tabak continues to serve as the vice-chair of CFRU's executive committee while Miller serves as a voting member of the group's advisory committee.

SFMA staff collaborated with Interpretive Specialist Knudsen to develop new signs for the SFMA kiosk along the Tote Road. They have also drafted a comprehensive update of the self-guide for the Forest Ecology & Management Trail accessed from the Park Tote Road.

In November, Miller joined foresters (and students) from the University of Maine and the Maine Forest Service on a trip to Germany, where local foresters showcased a wide variety of forest types and silvicultural treatments. The group learned about silviculture, harvest methods, and climate-adaptive strategies that can be applied (sometimes with modification) in Maine's forests.



Germany group

Section 9. Volunteer Program

Introduction

The Baxter State Park Volunteer Program has a long tradition of promoting stewardship and service. This valuable resource utilizes 100 - 200 volunteers per year, not including the Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) teams that are on standby in the Park from late spring to late fall to assist with search and rescue events when called upon to do so.

Volunteer Coordinators Supervisor Bruce White and Office Specialist Georgia Manzo, along with Trail Supervisor Brennan Turner, work closely with the Chief Ranger, District Rangers, Campground Rangers, the Park Services Manager, and other staff to implement the volunteer program and utilize volunteer resources to accomplish a myriad of tasks. When recruiting volunteers, the considerations are the project's priority, the scope of work, the volunteer's skills, experience, interests, and availability, the training and oversight needed, housing needs, and, often, the weather is a determining factor.



Eastern Maine Sportsmans Show, Orono Maine



Mitchell Scholars Cataloging Books - Kidney Pond Library

2025 Highlights

In 2025, Baxter's dedicated volunteers provided **2,590** hours of service assisting with the maintenance and improvement of Park facilities and infrastructure, the protection and monitoring of its natural resources, the enhancement of more than 220 miles of trails within the Park, visitor outreach, education, staff training, and clerical support. Our volunteers' unique talents surface in many ways, and this year they included the planning and construction of an educational game for use at BSP's booth at

Library, and graveling sites at Daicey Pond Campground. In total, 120 hours of volunteer work was provided by these enthusiastic volunteers.

Additional projects included: trail maintenance, affixing patches on uniforms, cleaning ditches, limbing, brushing, raking along the Matagamon Gate Road, splitting/stacking firewood, planning and building an education game for I&E, hauling supplies, scraping/staining lean-tos, mowing, applying log oil to furniture, cleaning the libraries, sorting files for archiving, purchase order data entry, painting survey boxes (fisheries), assisting with the loon count, moving bundled wood, painting floors, hauling and spreading gravel on sites, seedling survey (SFMA), clearing blowdowns, assisting with supplies inventories and organization, painting hiking registers, radio relay, cooking for events, assisting with staff training, sign installation, scraping/painting picnic tables, bulletin board/kiosk updates.



Firewood stacking at Kidney Pond

the Maine Forest Service, the Maine Warden Service, the Maine Army National Guard, Millinocket Fire and Safety, and the seven MASAR teams that provided standby and active search and rescue assistance throughout the year.

All Baxter volunteers receive a year-end letter from the Director, thanking them for their service and providing them with a volunteer decal, patch, and year rocker, as well as encouraging those who signed up and did not have an opportunity to volunteer to reach out again the following year, starting with the mandatory completion of the current year's online application.

Baxter Park staff held a volunteer appreciation banquet at Jeff's Catering in Brewer, Maine in November for those volunteers with 25 or more hours of service in 2025, as well as for representatives from



BSP Advisory, present and past - bristly locust removal day



ME Youth Wilderness Leadership Volunteers - Friends of Baxter State Park

Section 10. Appendices

Baxter State Park Wilderness Fund Trust

Founded by the dedicated and caring Margery and Frank Trautmann in 2007, the Baxter State Park Wilderness Fund Trust (BPWFT) is an independent, tax-exempt entity whose sole purpose is to make periodic unrestricted cash distributions to Baxter State Park.

Frank Trautmann spent countless, joyful hours volunteering in Baxter State Park over several decades. His inspiring legacy encourages others to get involved and support the Park's well-being.

The Trust is also designed as a vehicle for others to make unrestricted, unconditional gifts to what is, in effect, a permanent endowment to support Baxter State Park, and is managed by three highly-qualified trustees (volunteers) appointed by the Baxter State Park Authority, who serve staggered three-year terms.

Baxter State Park Wilderness Fund Trustees
John Loyd - Chair
Jensen Bissell
William (Chip) Weickert

Advisory Committees

BSP Advisory Committee

This active and dedicated committee provides the Park Director the benefit of the experience and knowledge of persons familiar with Baxter State Park affairs and Governor Baxter's intentions in creating the Park. The BSP Advisory serves at the pleasure of the Baxter State Park Authority and the Director and provides critical input on important projects, policies, and issues.

In 2025, BSP Advisory member and Chair Carl Carlson stepped down after completion of his third consecutive term. Vice Chair Brant Miller stepped into the Chair position, and Rick Bray was appointed Vice Chair. Both were appointed at the May 2025 Authority Meeting. New members in 2025 are Eric Hendrickson (May 2025) and Brian Olsen (October 2025).

BSP Advisory Committee	
Rick Bray (Vice Chair)	Brian Olsen
Herb Fithian	Edward Pontbriand
Julianna Hansen	Carla Ritchie
Eric Hendrickson	Cameron Trubey
Charlie Jacobi	*R. Michael White
Lauren Jacobs	Sam Wright
Brant Miller (Chair)	Wabananaki Seat (not yet filled)

*Baxter Family Member

Investment Committee

Boston Safe Deposit & Trust was appointed sole trustee for the Percival Baxter Trust on July 2, 1927. BNY Mellon has served as the investment manager for the Endowment since 1990. This fund portfolio is carefully managed to generate stable long-term revenue that supports Park operations. The Park participates in managing the fund through an Investment Committee, which serves at the pleasure of the BSPA. The Investment Committee is comprised of individuals with significant knowledge and experience in financial and wealth portfolio management.

BSP Investment Committee	
Jeremy Baker	Scott Kenney
James Bennett	John Loyd
Edward Creedon	Jessamyn Larabee-Norton
Michael Daley	Brian Noyes - Chair
Steve Hutnak	*Rupert White

*Baxter Family Member

Research Committee

The Research Committee was formed in the mid-1980s after an increase in research requests in the Park from the late 1960s through 1985. These accomplished biologists, ecologists, researchers, and professors are convened annually by the Natural Resource Director to evaluate research proposals and make recommendations about them to the Park staff with the long-term best interest of the Park in mind.

Research Committee	
Ron Butler	Laura Kenefic
Don Cameron	Malcolm Hunter
David Courtemanch	Gabe LeMay
Charlene Donahue	Glen Mittelhauser
Dykstra Eusden	Aaron Putnam
Gary Fish	Shevenell Webb
Don Hudson	Paula Work

Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA) Advisory Committee

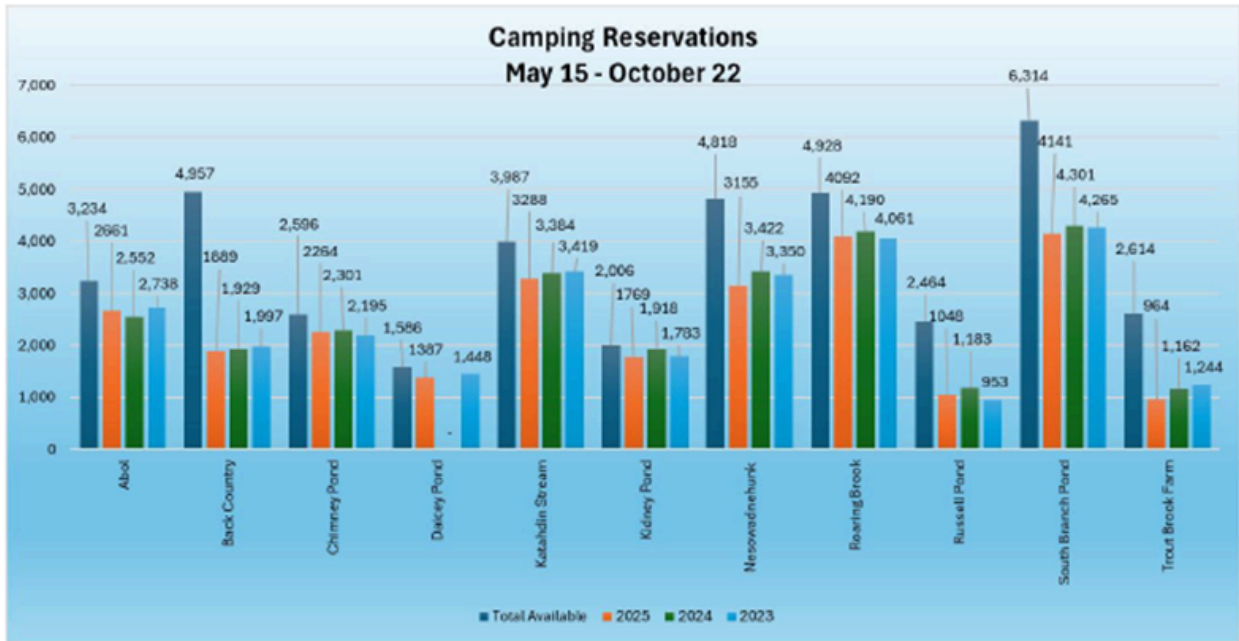
The SFMA Advisory Committee is composed of highly experienced forestry and other natural resource professionals. This group has served since the 1980s to advise SFMA staff on conducting exemplary, sustainable forest management operations and navigating challenges related to the practice of forest management.

Scientific Forest Management Area Advisory Committee	
Philip Ahrens	Kenneth Laustsen
Barrie Brusilla	Chuck Loring
John Bryant (Chair)	Jim O'Malley
Andy Cutko	Robert Seymour
Shawn Fraver	Craig Troeger
Allison Kanoti	Joseph Wiley

Reservations Statistics

Campground Reservations by Campground:

Chart 1:



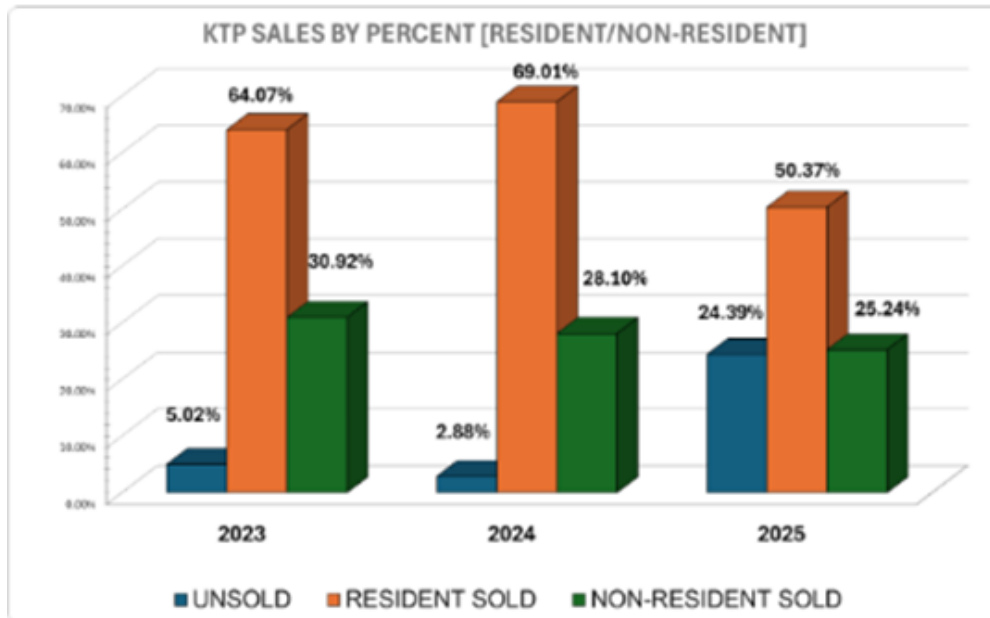
Katahdin Trailhead Pass (KTP) by Year:

Chart 2:



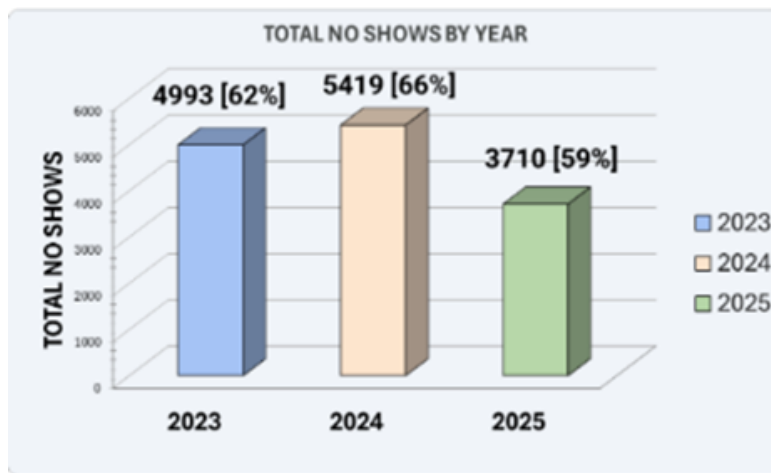
KTP Sales - Resident/Non-Resident:

Chart 3:



KTP No-Show Volume by Year:

Chart 4:



Winter Reservations:

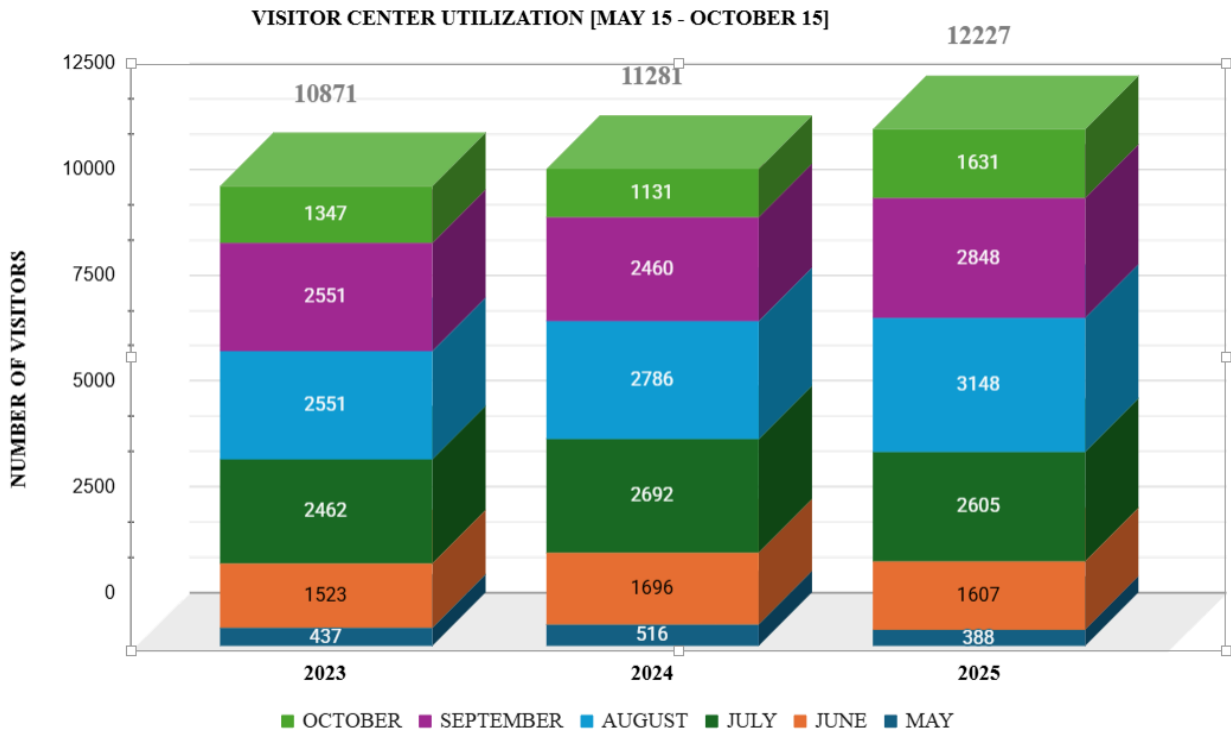
Table 5:

Year	Lottery Winter Reservations	In-Person	Received by Mail
2025	197	92	105
2024	141	89	52
2023	174	91	83

Year	Commercial Use Reservations
2025	7
2024	3
2023	13
Revenue [includes commercial]	
2025	\$ 101,289
2024	\$ 77,362
2023	\$ 88,779

Visitor Center Yearly Comparison Data:

Chart 6:



Source Data: Chart/Tables 1-6: Reservation Software/files

Annual Visitation:

Table 7:

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Day Users	35,328	47,176	37,328	36,925	36,391	35,018
Overnight Camping	22,217	27,740	25,248	23,236	23,670	23,945
Total Park Users	57,545	74,916	62,576	60,161	60,061	58,963
Residents	61%	52%	51%	51%	53%	54%
Non Resident	39%	48%	49%	49%	47%	46%

Source: Stats: Gate Master Comparative Data

Trail Use Statistics - May-Oct, 2025

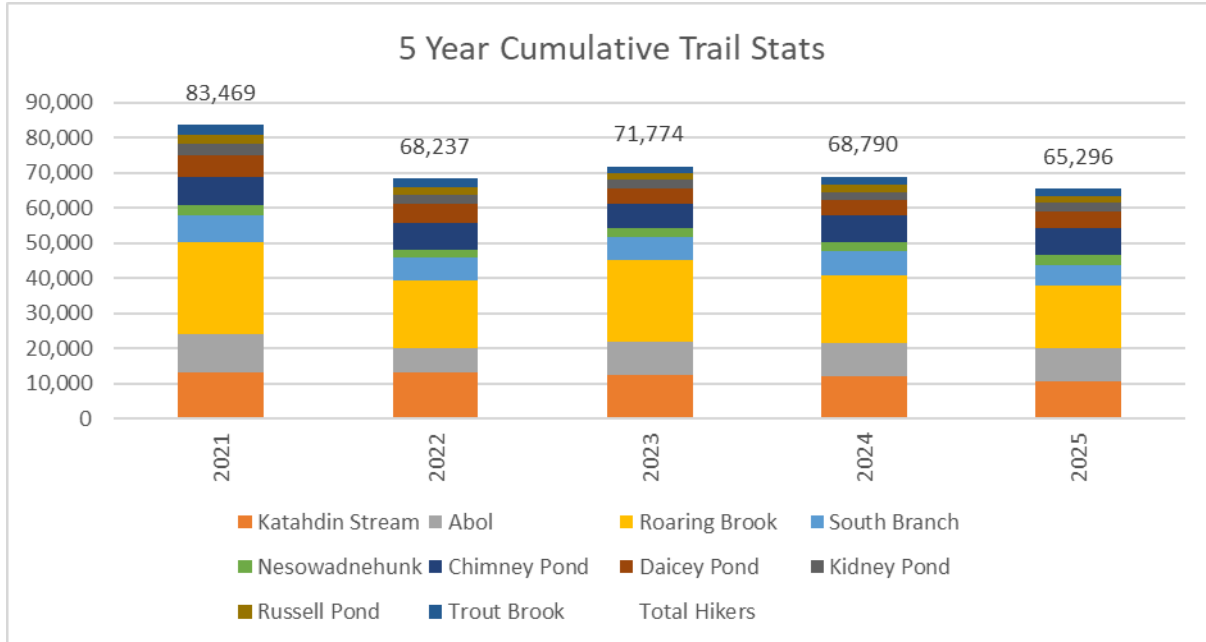
Trail statistics are collected at the trail sign-in sheets located at the trailheads. Although signing at the trailhead is strongly encouraged, usage may not be fully reflected in these statistics.

Abol	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Abol Trail	17	672	1,138	1,189	824	340	4,180
Abol Falls	39	44	53	125	101	79	441
Abol Stream/Pond	34	29	70	66	44	79	322
Blueberry Ledges	70	155	643	778	151	30	1,827
AT North	21	144	308	466	328	133	1,400
Foss & Knowlton	5	4	14	4	9	8	44
Kettle Ponds	19	24	34	66	43	28	214
Crandberry Pond	36	92	133	196	176	111	744
Abol Totals	241	1,164	2,393	2,890	1,676	808	9,172
Chimney Pond	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Dudley	0	210	282	395	239	135	1,261
Cathedral	0	472	822	941	705	266	3,206
Saddle	0	495	883	808	592	219	2,997
Hamlin	0	45	53	65	51	35	249
North Basin	0	12	14	14	16	18	74
Northwest Basin	0	7	49	22	13	4	95
North Peaks	0	7	0	0	4	0	11
Chimney Pond Totals	0	1,248	2,103	2,245	1,620	677	7,893
Daicey Pond	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Niagara Falls	206	578	885	1,152	658	376	3,855
Daicy Pond Nature Trail	41	103	96	133	77	49	499
Lost Pond Trail	18	6	18	14	29	17	102
Sentinel Mt. Trail	2	0	0	8	0	0	10
A.T. to Katahdin Str.	2	6	7	36	34	37	122
Daicey to Grassy	3	13	7	15	12	5	55
Daicey to Elbow	6	3	12	14	4	1	40
Daicey to Kidney	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kidney/Lily Pad	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Daicey Pond Totals	278	709	1,025	1,373	814	485	4,684
Katahdin Stream	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Hunt	30	1,255	1,793	2,241	1,808	840	7,967
Owl	9	60	150	165	88	71	543
Grassy Pond	70	224	223	210	228	110	1,065
OJI	1	32	135	99	101	82	450
AT South	8	156	96	55	26	11	352
Blueberry Ledges	12	38	82	122	56	37	347
Katahdin Stream Totals	130	1,765	2,479	2,892	2,307	1,151	10,724

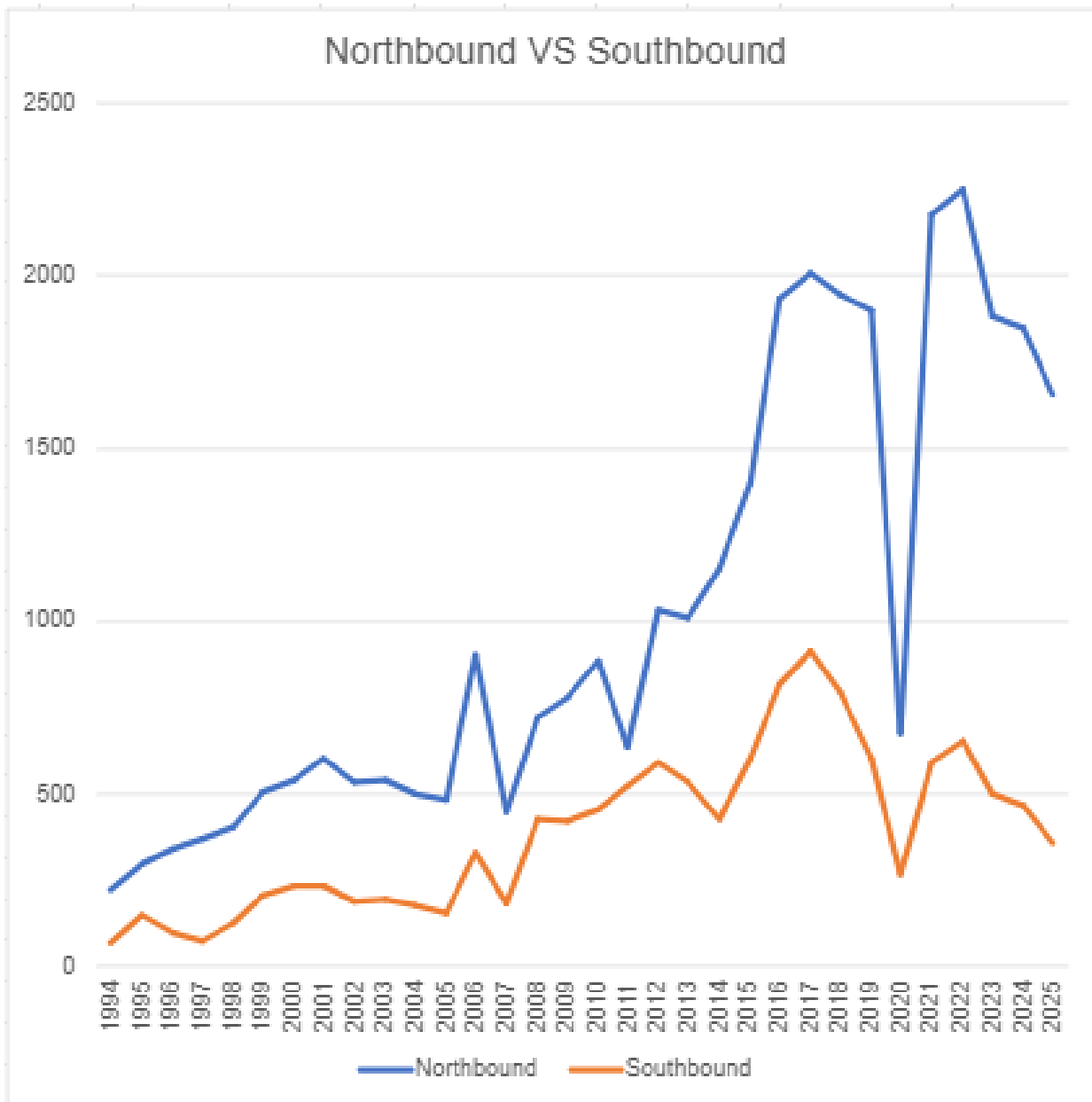
Kidney Pond	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Double Top	13	54	60	46	62	58	293
Sentinel Mountain	47	103	210	241	214	162	977
Rocky Pond	62	64	106	110	94	86	522
Draper Pond	15	20	43	26	18	22	144
Kidney Pond Circuit	1	11	11	14	27	18	82
Celia & Jackson	18	41	39	35	19	57	209
WindyPitch/Niagara/ Lily	7	9	51	21	24	18	130
Slaughter Pond	9	14	11	16	25	19	94
Kidney Pond Totals	172	316	531	509	483	440	2,451
Nesowadnehunk	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Double Top	63	164	250	265	180	135	1,057
Marston	37	173	167	323	211	152	1,063
Wassataquoik Lake Trail	0	50	76	76	69	33	304
Dwelley Trail	0	38	30	77	41	18	204
Center Pond	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
Nesowadnehunk Totals	111	425	523	741	501	338	2,639
Roaring Brook	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Chimney	0	1,383	2,047	2,227	1,649	694	8,000
Helon Taylor	0	460	721	925	812	307	3,225
Sandy Stream	331	878	1,206	974	1,070	602	5,061
South Turner	54	95	97	110	84	40	480
Russell Pond	10	44	127	180	129	50	540
Nature Trail	16	22	16	12	24	11	101
Katahdin Lake	12	30	86	149	81	31	389
Martin Ponds	6	23	2	22	4	13	70
North Katahdin Lake	2	9	4	5	5	1	26
Rum Pond	4	4	2	0	4	13	27
Roaring Brook Totals	435	2,948	4,308	4,604	3,862	1,762	17,919
Russell Pond	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Russell Pond Trail	4	25	113	31	11	0	184
Wassataquoik Stream	16	51	125	179	87	0	458
Pogy Notch Trail	10	20	35	45	30	0	140
Wassataquoik Lake	10	83	123	163	94	0	473
North West Basin Trail	2	36	114	87	65	0	304
Grand Falls Trail	10	32	54	50	26	0	172
Lookout Trail	2	7	25	17	16	0	67
North Peaks	0	4	61	47	32	0	144
Russell Pond Totals	54	258	650	619	361	0	1,942

South Branch Pond	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
South Branch Falls	29	113	239	334	166	86	967
Ledges	5	55	145	161	124	52	542
Howe Brook	8	188	418	628	251	107	1,600
North Traveler	0	64	239	310	112	114	839
Center Ridge	0	12	38	33	52	10	145
Traveler Loop	0	73	111	202	107	93	586
South Branch Mountain	17	32	42	180	133	71	475
Pogy Notch	48	105	91	119	84	46	493
Middle Fowler	1	18	25	20	29	32	125
Burnt Mountain	0	33	37	100	29	26	225
South Branch Pond Totals	108	693	1,385	2,087	1,087	637	5,997
Trout Brook Farm	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Horse Mountain	10	10	63	79	68	50	280
Five Ponds	47	44	135	167	139	48	580
Fowler Pond	49	60	71	81	121	42	424
Freezeout	0	7	19	36	40	27	129
Frost Pond	2	9	13	19	15	4	62
Trout Brook Mountain	14	22	71	155	56	45	363
Wadleigh Brook	0	2	7	7	12	9	37
Trout Brook Farm Totals	122	154	379	544	451	225	1,875
Monthly Totals	1,651	9,680	15,776	18,504	13,162	6,523	65,296
% of Total	2.53%	14.82%	24.16%	28.34%	20.16%	9.99%	100.00%

Five-Year Cumulative Trail Statistics



Northbound vs Southbound Appalachian Trail Hikers - 1994-2025



Educational programs presented in the Park in 2025

Program	Date	Presenter	Affiliation
Cold Water Fish	6/13/25	Zach Glidden	Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Guided Bird Walk	6/21/25	Chelsea Ehret	Maine Master Naturalist
Guided Bird Walk	6/22/25	Chelsea Ehret	Maine Master Naturalist
Freshwater Bioblitz	6/28/25	Sara McQuarrie	Maine Master Naturalist/BSP Ranger
The Bats of BSP	7/5/25	Cassandra Knudsen	BSP Interpretive Specialist
Look Out for Loons	7/18/25	Robin Stevens	BSP Ranger
Tree ID & Forest Ecology	8/1/25	Lauren Ouellette & Kenny Fergusson	Maine Forest Service
Wildflower Walk	8/2/25	Sara McQuarrie	Maine Master Naturalist/BSP Ranger
Nocturnal Wildlife	8/9/25	Serena Sanborn	Maine Master Naturalist
Paleo in the Park	8/16/25	Tzevi Aho	BSP Interpretive Intern
Dark Skies & Stargazing	8/23/25	Heidi Hummel	Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument
The Predators of BSP	8/30/25	Cassandra Knudsen	BSP Interpretive Specialist
Paleo in the Park	9/5/25	Tzevi Aho	BSP Interpretive Intern
Geology Walk	9/6/25	Tzevi Aho	BSP Interpretive Intern

SFMA wood buyers

2025 Wood Buyers and Products		
Buyer Name	Mill (Delivery) Location	Wood Products
Bourgeois Guitars	Lewiston, ME (Millinocket)	Tonewood (spruce)
Daquaam (Lebel)	St. Juste, Canada	Spruce/fir sawlogs
D&G Forest Products	St. Aurelie, Canada	White pine and spruce/fir sawlogs
Columbia Forest Products	Milo, ME	Hardwood sawlogs
Lie-Nielsen Toolworks	Warren, ME	Hardwood
Lumbra Hardwoods	Milo, ME	Hardwood sawlogs
Pleasant River Lumber	Dover/Enfield, ME (Millinocket)	Spruce/fir sawlogs and fir studwood
Ruff Cutters	Millinocket, ME	White pine sawlogs, hardwood firewood
Sappi North America	Skowhegan, ME (Millinocket)	Hardwood pulp
Ward Clapboard	Moretown, VT (Millinocket)	Spruce/fir sawlogs

Firewood Bundles and Ranger Firewood Delivered to Campgrounds in 2025

BUNDLED WOOD

Campground	Hardwood Totals	Softwood Totals	Total Bundles
Abol	416	1,081	1,497
Daicey Pond	49	544	593
Katahdin Stream	494	1,216	1,710
Kidney Pond	84	658	742
Matagamon Gate	0	0	0
Nesowadnehunk	676	1,134	1,810
Roaring Brook	554	1,390	1,944
South Branch	1,339	1,641	2,980
Trout Brook Farm	536	502	1,038
Other (blanks)	2	0	2
Totals:	4,150	8,166	12,316

Pit Withdrawals

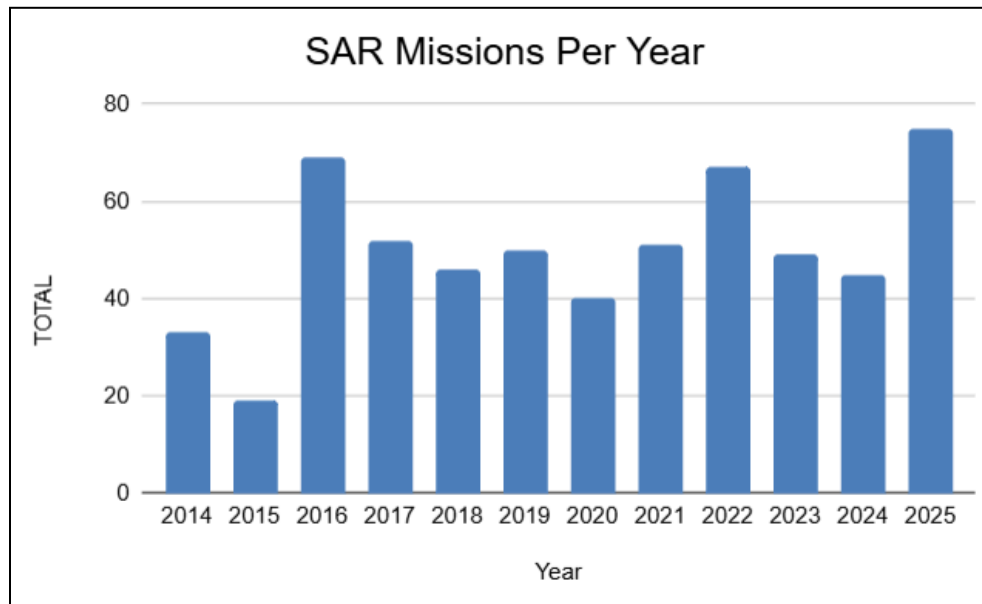
Abol Pit	2,130	5,965	8,095
East Branch Pit	2,020	2,203	4,223
Totals:	4,150	8,168	12,318

RANGER FIREWOOD

Kidney, Daicey, Chimney Pond	31.5 Cords	0 Cords	31.5 Cords
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Baxter State Park 2025 Search and Rescue Summary

Baxter State Park Rangers responded to 75 reported Search and Rescue (SAR) incidents in 2025. This reflects a 39% increase from the 2024 total of 46 incidents, and is higher than Baxter State Park's current 5-year average (2021 - 2025) of 57.6 SAR incidents per year. A SAR incident is generated when known facts indicate that a person or group may be in distress and unable to make their way to safety on their own. This includes lost, stranded, injured, or drowned persons.



The beginning of the summer 2025 SAR season was punctuated by the search and recovery of Tim and Esther Keiderling, father and daughter, who succumbed to injury and the elements in early June on Katahdin. The three-day incident demonstrated effective coordination between Baxter State Park and its cooperating partners, including the Maine Warden Service, the Maine Forest Service, the Maine Army National Guard, and the Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR).

Two incidents garnered significant media attention this year: the Keiderling incident and the Kosc incident, which involved a helicopter rescue off the Knife Edge. The Park Leadership Team, Information & Education Department, and Administrative staff all contributed to effective communication with media outlets in order to allow field operations to accomplish the recovery and rescue efforts. Also of note this year has been the Park's response to iPhone-generated pre-programmed distress messages inadvertently sent by Park visitors. The Park has had to respond to four of these calls dispatched through Houlton RCC: a forest fire, an airplane crash, and two motor vehicle accidents. None of these incidents occurred as reported, but required staff effort and resources to respond and verify. These inadvertent SOS emergency calls are becoming more prevalent throughout Maine and the country.

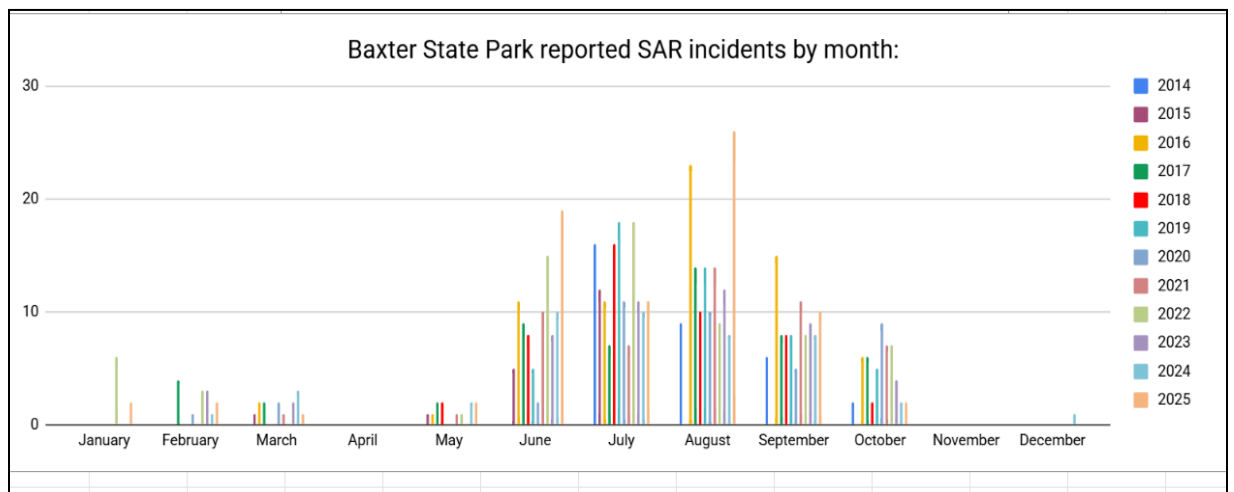
Air Operations

Seven (7) SAR incidents required the use of helicopters in 2025. Baxter State Park currently averages 1-3 helicopter evacuations annually in the park, utilizing the Maine Forest Service (MFS) short-haul program and the hoist capabilities of the 126th Aviation Regiment of the Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG). In 2025, the National Guard and Maine Forest Service jointly conducted one (1) rescue and two (2) search and recoveries, and the Maine Forest Service conducted four (4) rescues as the aviation asset:

- One (1) 58-year-old male died due to exposure in June on the Tableland. (MEARNG, MFS)
- One (1) 28-year-old female died due to blunt force trauma in June, north of the Cathedral Trail. (MEARNG, MFS)
- One (1) 19-year-old male suffering from vomiting, exhaustion, and lock jaw in June on the Hunt Trail. (MFS)
- One (1) 24-year-old male suffered bilateral sprains/fractures on both ankles in July on the Chimney Pond Trail. (MFS)
- One (1) 47-year-old female sustained a knee injury and became immobile in July on the Knife Edge. (MEARNG, MFS)
- One (1) 20-year-old male suffered a left patella dislocation in August on the Knife Edge. (MFS)
- One (1) 68-year-old female suffered a left forearm fracture after falling at Russell Pond in October. (MFS)

Frequency and Location of SAR Incidents

Annually, June through October are when the majority of SAR incidents occur at Baxter State Park. Of these incidents, 35% (26 incidents) occurred in August alone.

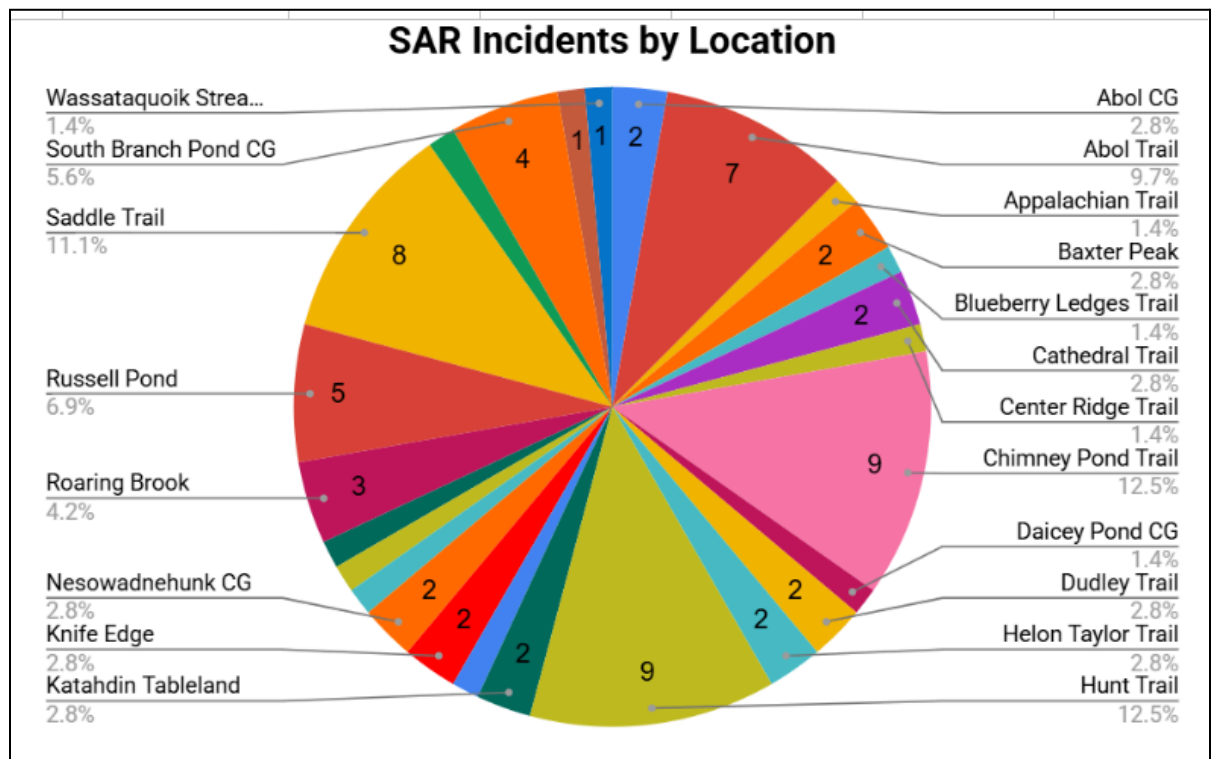


This is the first time since 2016 that August has been the busiest of the primary summer months (June, July, and August) for SAR incidents.

Consistent with multi-year trends, the vast majority of SAR incidents in Baxter State Park are rescues from a known (or approximately known) location. The most common causes of incidents were exhaustion and overexertion, in many cases leading to secondary issues, including dehydration, malnourishment, hypothermia, exposure, and several instances where one or more of these conditions contributed to a slip, trip, or fall, causing additional injuries. The second most common cause of SAR incidents was lower extremity injuries, which is consistent with past trends. The Park saw several older Appalachian Trail (AT) section hikers who needed assistance or had overnighted on the mountain.

SAR Incidents by Location

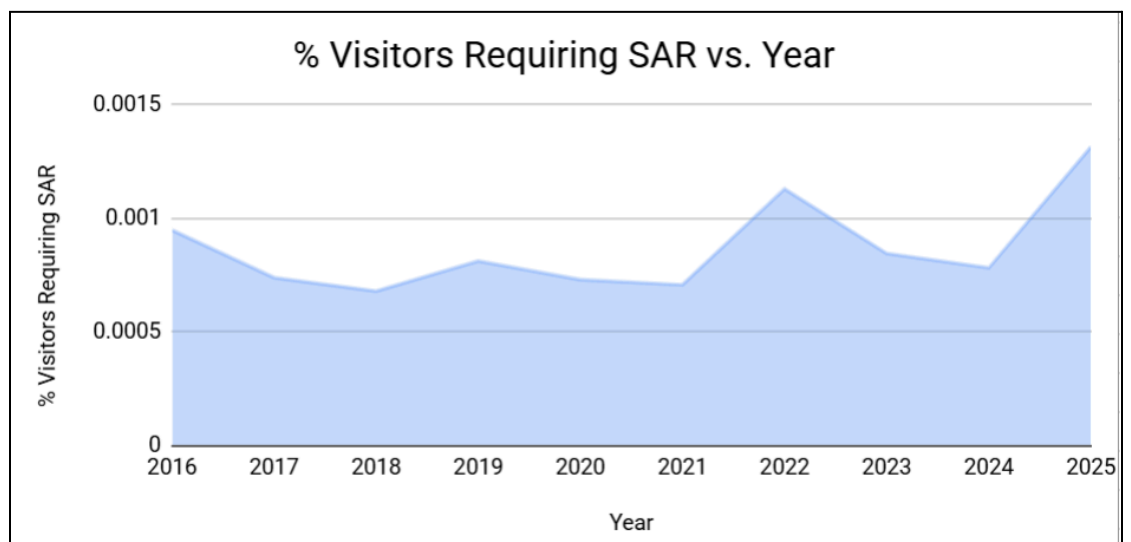
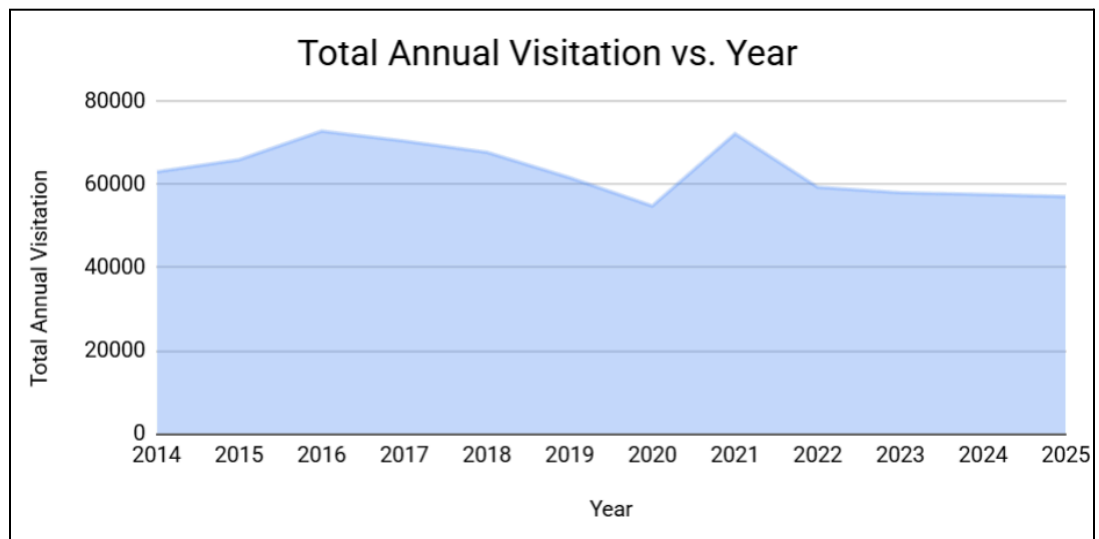
The following graph illustrates that mountain trails and associated areas continue to account for the majority of SAR incidents that occur in the park. These mountain trails and associated areas are Saddle, Pamola Peak, Knife Edge, Katahdin Tableland, Hunt, Abol, Baxter Peak, Chimney Pond, Doubletop, Dudley, Hamlin Ridge, and Helon Taylor. The Chimney Pond and Hunt Trails had the most incidents this season, with 9 each, followed by the Saddle Trail with 8, and the Abol Trail with 7.



Preventive Search and Rescue

Baxter State Park is visited by campers and hikers with a wide range of outdoor experience, including those with limited to no experience. Additionally, there is increased use of phone Apps by visitors that sometimes provide false, inaccurate, or misleading information regarding the Park's trails. To better serve the public, staff receive annual introductory and refresher SAR training, enabling the Park to conduct preventative search and rescue (PSAR) activities. Staff helped to intercept and prevent numerous incidents from occurring through the use of PSAR techniques. Staff also conduct mountain patrols on a rotating basis. During peak hiking days, staff were able to assist hikers experiencing physical issues and provide sound advice to hikers on Katahdin. During 2025, the Park recorded 65,296 hikers using all of the trails in Baxter State Park.

The percentage of visitors requiring SAR assistance is generally low when compared to overall trail users (see graphs below). Since a rescue can involve multiple staff, numerous volunteers, and outside agency resources, PSAR measures are critical to help mitigate incident occurrence.



Partners

Baxter State Park partnered with the Maine Warden Service, Maine Forest Service, Millinocket Fire and Rescue, Millinocket Regional Hospital, Maine Army National Guard, and certified volunteer teams from the Maine Association of Search & Rescue (MASAR) to conduct SAR operations in 2025. Houlton Regional Communications Center (Maine Department of Public Safety Emergency Communications Bureau) continues to provide emergency dispatch services for Baxter State Park.

Search and Rescue patrols and stand-by coverage at peak visitation times in Baxter State Park are supported annually by volunteer MASAR-certified teams. MASAR-certified teams are placed on stand-by at Togue Pond and Chimney Pond for weekends, holidays, and peak times throughout the year to be available to respond as a professional volunteer resource to assist Baxter State Park Rangers during rescue operations.

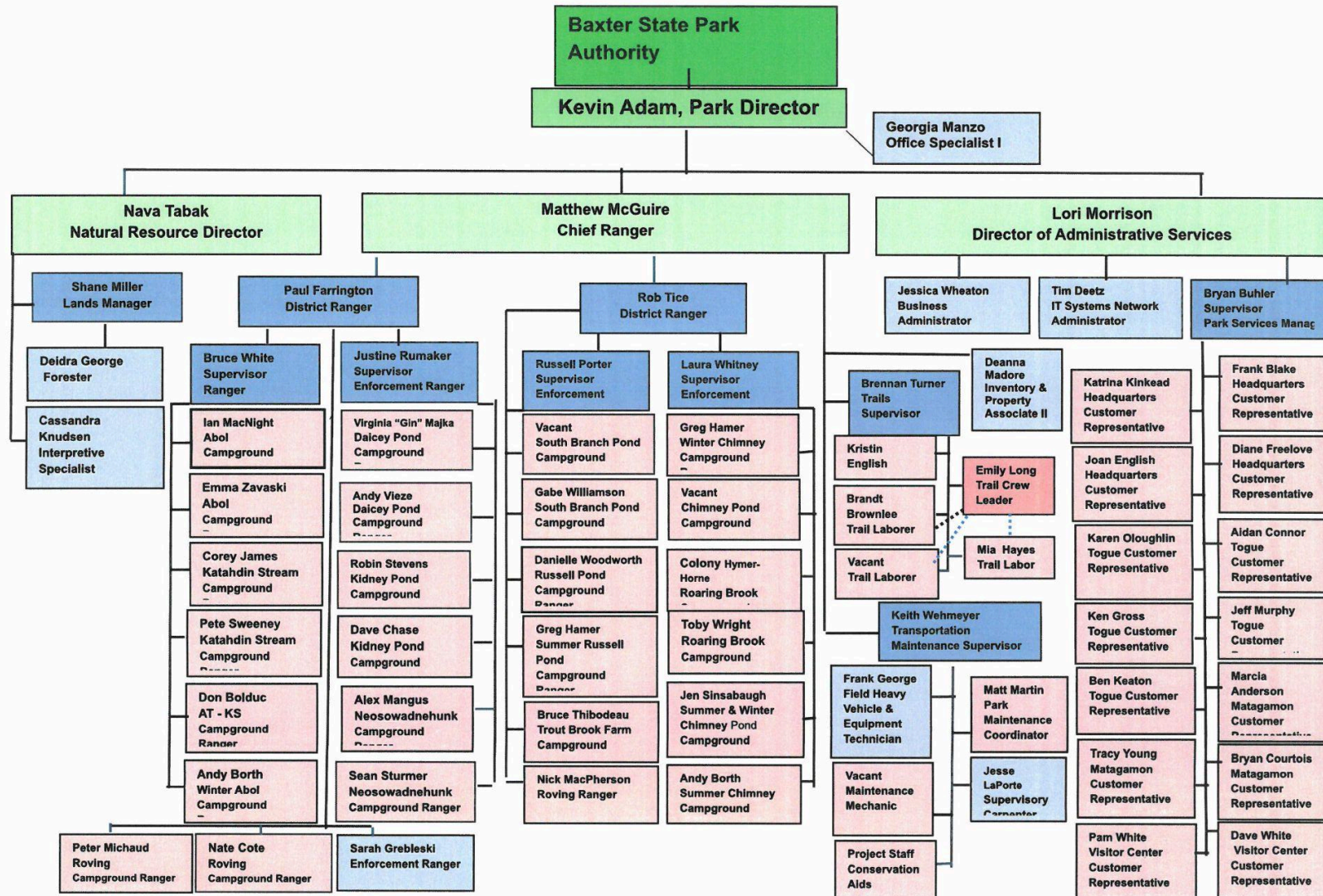
In 2025, seven (7) MASAR teams contributed a combined 2,409 hours of volunteer stand-by time and 463 hours of active service time assisting with SAR incidents in the park. The majority of active hours were associated with the Keiderling search and recovery. MASAR teams provide Baxter State Park with trained wilderness responders who are knowledgeable in mountaineering, technical rescue techniques, and backcountry medical protocols.

Below is the breakdown of stand-by and active hours for MASAR teams that provided coverage in Baxter State Park during 2025:

MASAR Team	Stand-by Hours	Active Hours
North SAR	586	89
Franklin SAR	264	78
Coastal Mountain SAR	103	0
Mahoosuc Mountain Rescue Team	458	64
MDI SAR	257	52
Pine Tree SAR	192	18
Wilderness Rescue Team	549	162
TOTAL:	2,409	463

Baxter State Park Organization Chart

Baxter State Park – Organizational Chart



Season End 10-31-2025

