



## MEMORANDUM

Date: 05-20-2026 to the Authority for the **May 29, 2026, BSPA Meeting**

From: Park Director Kevin Adam

**Subject: Park Operations Update, March 25, 2026, to the present**

### Finance:

Year-end preparation is in full swing as we approach the conclusion of FY26. Lori Morrison, the Director of Administrative Services, oversees the reconciliation and review of budgets, with particular emphasis on capital budgets. She has also coordinated capital purchases for fiscal year-end planning and has collaborated closely with both the Director and the Chief Ranger throughout this process.

During the third and fourth quarters of the year, the Director of Administrative Services oversees the renewal of insurance policies and conducts thorough policy audits. The Park acquires its insurance services primarily through the Department of Risk Management, with the sole exception being Cyber Insurance, which is managed separately. The annual insurance renewals encompass a range of essential coverage areas, including Tort Liability, which covers General, Professional, and Directors and Officers liability, as well as Employee Bonding. Additionally, the Park maintains policies for Property insurance, Vehicle and Watercraft coverage, and specialized insurance for Boilers and Pressure Vessels. Additionally, we are preparing for the annual MEMIC Workers' Compensation insurance policy audit to ensure compliance with policy terms and sufficient coverage for all employees.

As the September 1st deadline for the biennial budget draws near—required by Title 5, Part 4, Chapter 149, §1665—Lori Morrison is hard at work on budget preparations. This includes examining historical revenue and expense data. She is also gearing up for upcoming departmental meetings and collaborating with a financial analyst from the State of Maine. The State Budget is expected to release essential personnel financial data in July, which will provide the final expense projections needed to put together a balanced budget. Given the timing of this information, the draft budget will be presented to the BSPA during its October meeting.

FY26, Q3 – (January 2026 - March 2026):

#### Revenue

Revenue: \$ 1,186,698

- Revenue tracked as expected, with a slight negative variance in Park-generated revenue.

#### Expenses:

Personnel expense: \$ 840,420.25 - positive variance

- Note: position vacancies

All Other expenses: \$ 241,743

- Total positive variance, tracking to budget
- Negative variance in insurance expenditures due to an overall rate increase in all SOM Risk Management Insurance Programs.
- Negative variance in STA-CAP due to an increase in budgeted expenses

Capital expense: \$ 109,533

- Note: Includes capital expenditures for buildings, equipment, infrastructure, and the Kidney Pond
- 59% of the capital allocation has been utilized year-to-date through Q3.

**Capital Reserve Account Balance:** \$ 419,777

**Kidney Pond Project Budget**

The Kidney Pond Project, set for 2025/2026, is entirely funded by Baxter State Park. Below is a financial report comparing actual revenue and expenses with budgeted amounts as of April 20, 2026.

Kidney Pond Project Budget Library, Cabin 6 & 7 As of 4/30/2026		
Revenue	Actual	Project Budget
Revenue BSP Funded	\$ 92,274	\$ 134,915
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 92,274</b>	<b>\$ 134,915</b>
Expense	Actual	Project Budget
*Personnel and Fringe	\$ 62,474	\$ 65,000
All Other and Capital		
Building Materials	\$ 29,801	\$ 60,515
Equipment Rental	\$ -	\$ 5,400
Other Professional Services	\$ -	\$ 4,000
<b>Total All Other and Capital</b>	<b>\$ 29,801</b>	<b>\$ 69,915</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 92,274</b>	<b>\$ 134,915</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 92,274</b>	<b>\$ 134,915</b>
<b>Financial Note:</b>		
*Personnel Expense includes Limited Period Positions - 2 Conservation Aids		

**Human Resources**

As the 2026 season began, the Park successfully filled all seasonal positions, except for a single campground ranger and one trail laborer role. As of this report, we are pleased to share that offer letters have been extended and accepted for both positions. The Park welcomed five new team members, bringing fresh energy and opportunity. Additionally, we were delighted to offer several existing employees opportunities for departmental transfers, allowing them to explore new roles and contribute their skills in different capacities within the organization.

BSP once again took the lead in onboarding seasonal employees through the PRISM platform. On May 4th, Jessica Wheaton guided the onboarding process for 37 seasonal employees. This thorough initiative involved walking each employee through completion of all necessary hiring paperwork and benefits forms in PRISM, ensuring a seamless transition for every new team member.

**Spring Staff Training**

On May 4th, the Park welcomed its returning and new seasonal employees and began two weeks of staff

training for the upcoming season. Spearheaded by Deanna Madore (Inventory & Property Associate II) with assistance from Brennan Turner (Trails Supervisor) and other year-round staff, the training included a wide variety of topics. Bryan Buhler (Park Services Manager) provided a robust track of training for new and returning Customer Service Representatives, who staff the reservations office, Park gates, and the Visitor Center. New Campground and Roving Rangers and the Interpretive Intern received training from the Park's Operations team (Supervisory Rangers, Trails, Maintenance, Inventory), with supplements from Administrative Services, Information & Education, and Natural Resource staff. Additional training by partner groups included the Maine Forest Service for fire training, Wilderness Medical Associates, MEMIC, the Maine National Guard, and the



Park staff practice unloading a patient from an Army National Guard helicopter

Maine Forest Service for Search & Rescue. Representatives from the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (KWWM) joined customer service representatives to learn more about Baxter State Park and share information about KWWM.

Park staff greatly appreciated the presence and personal introductions to the Park by all members of the BSP Authority and Assistant AG Lauren Parker, as well as Brant Miller from the Park's Advisory Committee and Aaron Megquier of Friends of BSP. Georgia Manzo (Office Specialist I) coordinated many meals for the staff in training, and several volunteers assisted in staffing the reservations office and phone lines during the training. The Park's leadership team is grateful to all for the significant effort in planning and

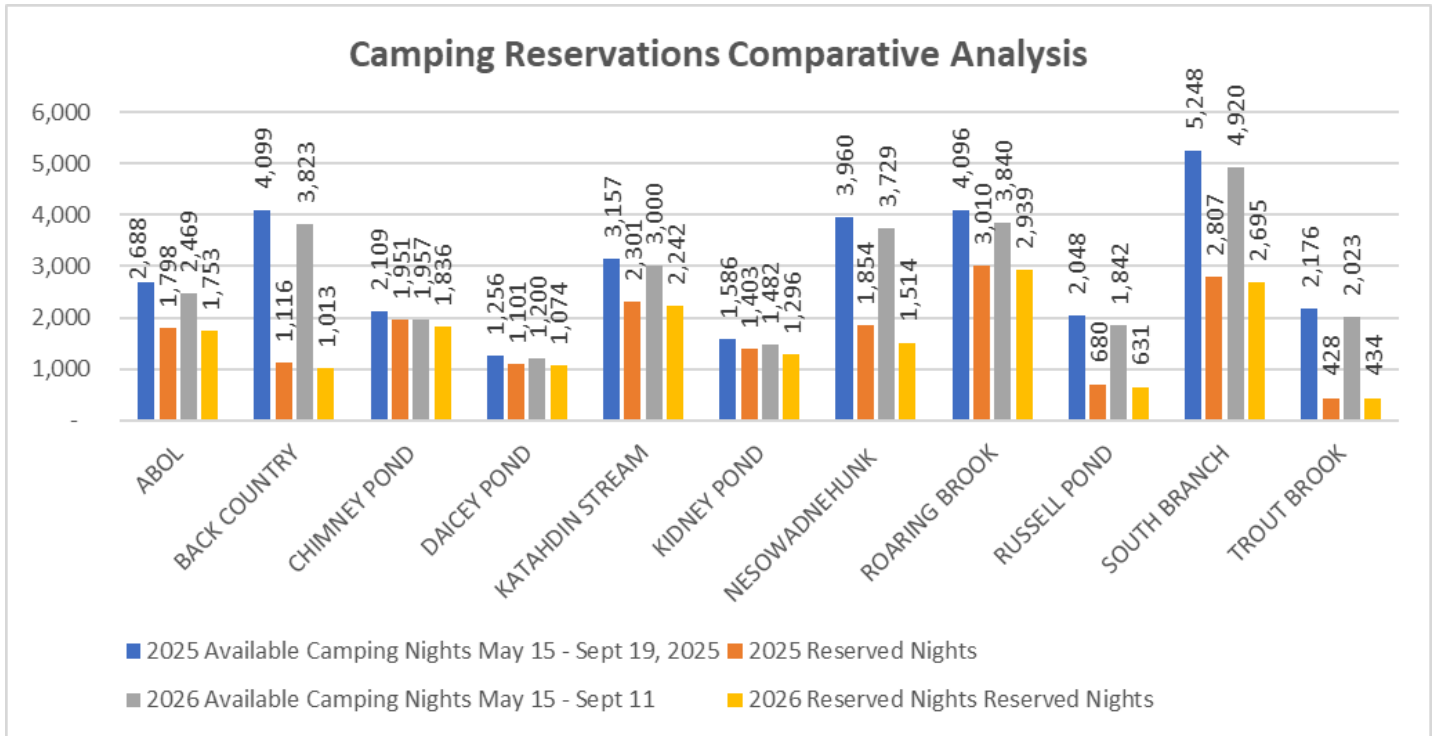
executing another successful spring training, and to the seasonal staff for their engagement in the work. Additional training will be provided to staff throughout the summer season.

## Reservations

Camping reservation data is displaying trends that closely align with those of the previous year. Although this report was submitted earlier than last year, creating an 8-day difference in the analysis period, the findings still suggest a comparable reservation pattern for 2026 to that of 2025.

Maine residents account for 58% of total reservations during this period. Reservations at cabin campgrounds have significantly higher percentages of Maine residents, with Daicey Pond at 72% and Kidney Pond at 66%.

Visitors are responding positively to this year's changes in the extension policy. Early results indicate that these changes are successfully increasing site availability by reducing the number of sites booked 14 days beyond the booking window. Furthermore, the modifications introduced for 2026 aim to alleviate phone congestion and enhance the visitor experience. Currently, we have reduced the volume of calls related to securing reservations and extensions by 10% while increasing online reservations. This improvement is directly related to the option of allowing reservation extensions online.



### Information and Technology

After receiving a notification from the State of Maine Risk Management that BSP was deemed ineligible for coverage under its cyber insurance due to its independent network, BSP has successfully obtained a Cyber Insurance Policy from Alliant Insurance Services, Inc., underwritten by CFC. This insurance policy provides essential protection for the Park against potential financial losses arising from cyber threats and vulnerabilities, including cybercrime, data breaches, and system disruptions.

The Park is currently seeking to fill the position of IT System Network Administrator, which has been reclassified as Public Service Coordinator I. The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found. Although Tim Deetz from Buckeye Technologies, LLC remains contracted with the Park and serves as a resource, the primary responsibility for this role has shifted to Lori Morrison, the Director of Administrative Services. Additionally, S.J. Rollins Technologies is providing contracted services, including an expanded on-site presence and remote support.

### Information & Education (I&E)

Interpretive Specialist Cassandra Knudson and Supervisor Ranger Bruce White organized BSP's tabling for 3 days at the Eastern Maine Sportsman's Show in Orono in March. They were assisted by additional BSP staff and volunteers in staffing the table. Hundreds of attendees of the show enjoyed BSP's displays and activities, sharing both happy memories and future plans for visiting the Park. BSP Advisory Committee Member Ed Pontbriand represented BSP at the annual 4000 Footer Club event in New Hampshire, speaking with many attendees about their plans to climb high peaks in BSP. Cassandra also provided educational programming about BSP at a local school, in collaboration with Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

A new insert to the Wildnotes publication (Wildnotes News 2026) is currently being printed. It features an article about how a change of elevation listed on a new sign for Baxter Peak has come about (the elevation will be changing from 5267' to 5268' on the new sign). Several additional new kiosk signs are in their final draft and awaiting printing. Cassandra has set up a new project in iNaturalist for 2026 and will encourage staff to focus

on submitting observations for different groups of organisms each month this season. I&E staff have begun sorting and labeling books at the Kidney Pond library, using an inventory created last year by volunteer Ellen Manzo.

The Park has selected Faith Lane as its first Visiting Writer; Faith will be in residence at Kidney Pond for a week starting June 15th, and will offer a poetry workshop and readings. Kaitly Metcalf has been selected as this year's Visiting Artist and will be in Residence at Kidney Pond in September. The I&E team is pleased to welcome Emmet Schmeuling (a former member of the Park's trail crew) as the Interpretive Intern for 2026. We also look forward to welcoming Madeleine Murnick as the Writing & Trails Intern starting in June.

Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak has completed working with Map Adventures LLC to update the Park's map (which is sold alone and included in the Park's Guidebook). The new map includes corrections and updates to trail locations and distances, day use canoe locations, and campground and campsite updates; a new trail category indicating trails that are lesser used (e.g. in the SFMA, Twin Ponds Trail); notation of the location of gates along the tote road (that are used to describe closures in the Park's public communications), and an updated magnetic declination.

Nava has been assembling a small select group of volunteers as a pilot program to supplement staff efforts at providing a presence on Katahdin (i.e., summit stewardship). She will be providing online training for these "mountain patrol" activities. A similar training was already provided by Nava and Chief Ranger Matt McGuire to technical Search & Rescue Volunteers who will be based at Chimney Pond some weekends this year.

In March, the Park released a request for proposals for designing and launching a new BSP website, along with ongoing site hosting and maintenance services. Nava has been fielding many questions and requests for additional information, and has received a robust response of proposals as the submission deadline (5/20) nears. In the coming weeks, staff will review and rank the proposals and begin working on a new design depending on contractor availability. Cassandra and Emmet are focusing on creating and updating the website content.

### **Natural Resources and Research**

A research proposal, which was considered in March of 2025 and 2026, to include Katahdin in a regional study of the influence of microclimates on alpine plant diversity (by the Universities of Maine and Vermont), will be resubmitted with a reduced scope. This scope is anticipated to eliminate elements of the research methods that raised concerns about impacts to alpine natural resources during its review.

Following the gathering of useful data in 2025, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W) has provided BSP with 3 additional boxes for disseminating and collecting angler surveys in the Park. Natural Resource Director Nava Tabak has been facilitating planning (including permits) for the season's acoustic bat surveys, Mountain Birdwatch surveys, IF&W's fish surveys (which this year will include stream surveys), and long-term forest health monitoring, along with activities for research projects approved this winter.

### **Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA)**

The SFMA Advisory Committee held a hybrid format meeting in April (due to poor weather). Lands Manager Shane Miller provided a summary of the Annual Allowable Cut operations for 2025/2026 (which consisted of the winter harvest of ca. 2,500 cords). The committee discussed the current wood market and silvicultural challenges faced in the SFMA, and encouraged staff to focus SFMA spending on pre-commercial thinning while deferring expenses on infrastructure that supports harvests (roads, bridges). Staff will also continue to focus on herbicide application and inventory work. Shane has been planning for a summer harvest of a mature Norway spruce plantation at the Mt. Chase Lot. This project requires planning and raises challenges that are outside of

the norm for SFMA operations due to its location outside of the Park (and the specific stand conditions). Two SFMA Management Mile signs were replaced along the Tote Road in May.



New Sign :)



Old Sign

The Park staff was saddened to learn of the permanent closure of the Lumbra hardwood mill, which has long been a consistent wood buyer for the SFMA and many other timber producers in the region. Along with much of Maine's timber industry, we share concern for the staff of and responders to the fire at the Robbins Lumber Mill (which occasionally does business with the SFMA and has been an important white pine mill in the state).

## Maintenance

During the report period, Field Heavy Vehicle and Equipment Technician Frank George, Maintenance Coordinator Matt Martin, and Acting Maintenance Mechanic Cameron McIntosh spent most of their time in the maintenance garage preparing the Park's vehicle and equipment fleet for the upcoming season. Work included body work, fire truck outfitting, new vehicle upfitting, tire changeover and repairs, brake jobs, trailer modifications, and much more. Over 40 inspections for vehicles, trailers, and equipment were completed.

Snowmobile work continued early in the report period. Repairs included the field replacement of a battery in a Chimney Pond snowmobile and the replacement of a radiator in a Maintenance snowmobile. Once snowmobile season ended in early April, all Park sleds were winterized and stored for the season.

Martin and George opened the Park's Togue Pond and Abol Field Camp area buildings. Water systems were put into operation at Lower Togue, Trapper John, Field Camp, Trails End, and Pine Camp. Additionally, propane systems were leak tested per NFPA 54 and returned to service at all the above buildings. Martin worked with propane contractor Dead River Company to make propane repairs at several locations, including Hemlock Camps, Kidney Pond, and Daicey Pond.

Wehmeyer, George, and Martin have all contributed efforts to clear sections of the Park roads in preparation for opening. Wehmeyer inspected the Tote Road from the South to North Branch camps on 4/26, clearing many

blowdowns on the Roaring Brook Road on 5/4. Martin made efforts to clear blowdowns from Lynx Road South towards North Branch camps on 5/13. Martin and George are continuing to make stick raking efforts to open interior sections of the Tote Road. Contracted grader operator Gil Morneault began grading on the South end of the Park on 5/12.



Kidney Pond Cabin 7

Supervisory Carpenter Jesse LaPorte, along with Conservation Aides Brandt Brownlee and Nate Cote, continued work at Kidney Pond Cabin 7. Both porches and porch roofs have been fully rebuilt, Pemra-Chink installed between logs on both the interior and exterior, and installation of new windows and trim has been completed. New door installation for Cabin 7 and the Library will occur soon, along with window installations in the Library.

## Trails

Trail Department staff spent the second half of March making trail signs, training the Outdoor Sports Institute (OSI) staff in BSP chainsaw operations, interviewing trail crew candidates, and finalizing tool purchases. Trail Specialist Kris English completed the new Baxter Peak Summit Sign, and it is currently waiting for installation later this summer.

Trails Supervisor Brennan Turner and English spent much of April in training, completing a full Wilderness First Responder course as well as their RT-130 Wildland Safety Training Annual Refresher. Turner also graduated from the Institute of Civil Leadership. The OSI staff began clearing blowdowns from trails in the southwest corner of the Park.

May saw the arrival of our four seasonal Trail Crew staff. The finalized roster of the 2026 Trail Crew is Crew Leader Emily Long, as well as Crew Members Mia Hayes, Tzevi Aho, and Christian McPherson. While the seasonal staff has been in Spring Training, Turner and English have begun field work and project planning for the season. They completed a round of project planning on the OJI trail and got a head start on the Katahdin Stream Falls bridge replacement by beginning the process of dragging the bridge stringers up through the woods to the job site. Additionally, Turner and Director Adam began communications with engineer Charlie Trautman, who is assisting the Park with the assessment of the Freezeout Bridge at Trout Brook Farm.



A retired canoe and Griphoist rigging system transporting bridge stringers to Katahdin Stream Falls

The remainder of May will see the Trail Crew getting into the field to complete remaining blowdown patrolling, beginning the water diversion project on the OJI trail with English, and assisting Turner at Katahdin Stream

Falls. Brennan will also spend the week of May 18th completing chainsaw training and recerts for new and returning staff.

## Field Operations and Law Enforcement

Park activity has been slow as Katahdin trails closed for the winter climbing season on April 1. Despite the trails being closed, several groups of hikers have attempted to hike Katahdin. Four different groups of hikers, totaling 11 people, have been apprehended accessing Katahdin while trails were closed. Violations encountered have been failing to register upon entering the Park, hiking closed trails, operating a motor vehicle in a closed area, camping without a reservation, and possession of alcohol by a minor.

Ranger Supervisor Bruce White, Supervisory Enforcement Rangers Justine Rumaker, Russ Porter, and Laura Whitney have been busy with end-of-winter activities including closing down winter use campgrounds, removing and storing winter signs, hauling in last-minute supplies by snowmobile, and prepping snowmobiles, tote sleds, and other winter equipment for summer storage.



White and Rumaker repairing  
Togus Pond Gate

The month of April was busy for staff with numerous days of training, including recertification as Wilderness First Responders over 5 days, plus approximately 20 hours of pre-course work and Wildland Fire S130 refresher. The Park held the annual Earth Day litter pick-up, involving volunteers picking roadside trash from the Millinocket Townline to Togus Pond Gate. Staff have also participated in the two-week annual Spring Training program and onboarding seasonal staff. Law Enforcement Rangers participated with the Maine Warden Service in qualifying with handguns and shotguns, employing new red dot optical shotgun sights. District Ranger Rob Tice took part in an Emergency Vehicle Driver Training course to be able to operate the Type IV fire engine.

Work has been conducted opening campgrounds for summer use, getting waterlines established for seasonal residences, clearing blowdowns, and hauling larger construction supplies by truck. Porter and Campground Ranger Greg Hamer completed the shingled roof on the new Trout Brook Farm lean-to. Rangers White, Rumaker, and District Ranger Paul Farrington fixed the main gate at Togus after part of it failed.

One notable incident occurred outside the Park. Rangers Bruce White and Russ Porter found a man experiencing a major medical event at a local rest area. They provided aid and started EMS, which transported the man to a local emergency room. The actions they performed were critical in getting the individual the help he needed.

Rangers participated in the memorial service for Ranger Ralph Heath on May 16th. This annual tribute honors Heath, who perished attempting to save the life of a stranded climber in October of 1963.

## Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is once again providing a Ridgerunner position to assist the Park with educating AT hikers on rules and camping opportunities. Hailey Lynch, who held the Ridgerunner position in 2025, will be returning for this season.

The Park has seen the first few southbound hikers of the 2026 season, with those opting to begin their hike

without being able to start on the summit of Katahdin. Information regarding northbound hikers who are a concern for law enforcement has also come to light.

### **Search and Rescue**

Volunteer MASAR teams began summer weekend Search and Rescue (SAR) coverage at the Park during the first week of May. Teams have initially been assisting with scouting reports on trails to assess blowdowns and erosion.

Two southbound AT hikers were assisted out of the Park, one individual for overexertion and one for dehydration.

Chief Ranger Matt McGuire met with MASAR President Kylie Coons to review the MASAR Social Media Policy. The Park will review and approve or deny the release of information concerning SAR activities that occur in the Park that teams wish to highlight on social media. McGuire has also been working with District Ranger Rob Tice to finalize SAR team coverage and Mountain Patrol responsibilities at Chimney Pond this summer.