

# BAXTER STATE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT 2026

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Between 1931 and 1963, former Maine Governor Percival Baxter created Baxter State Park through 28 gifts of land to the people of Maine totaling more than 200,000 acres. Baxter transferred these lands to the State through Deeds of Trust describing the lands and how they were to be managed, citing consistently three criteria: shall forever be kept and retained and used for state forest, public park, and recreational purposes; shall forever be kept and remain in its natural wild state; and shall forever be kept and remain as a sanctuary for the wild beasts and birds. Thus, the Park is legally a Trust governed by a set of instructions, and the people of Maine are its beneficiaries.
- B. Governor Baxter, in his Deeds of Trust, recognized the need for long-term management of these lands that would be insulated to some degree from politics. He accomplished this in 1939 through the Maine legislature to create the Baxter State Park Authority (Authority) to jointly administer and have full control of the management of the Park. The Authority consists of three appointees: the Maine Attorney General, the Director of the Maine Forest Service, and the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The Authority serves as the Trustee. It oversees Park operations through the Park Director (Director) and is accountable for adhering to the Deeds of Trust and safeguarding trust funds.
- C. In 1970, the first Baxter State Park Advisory Committee (Advisory) was appointed. At the time, turnover in the three State offices that comprise the Authority justified the establishment of the Advisory Committee, which, although its role is purely advisory, could provide continuity in conjunction with Park staff and consistency with Governor Baxter's wishes and the directives of the Authority. The Advisory provides for wide public input in various aspects of Park management and is uniquely situated to provide Park leadership and the Authority with support and information concerning public perception, historical perspective, and their various areas of expertise, education, knowledge, and experience as it relates to the Park.
- D. The Advisory is one of four committees serving the Park. It joins the Scientific Forest Management Area Advisory Committee, the Research Committee, and the Investment Committee. These committees were created by the Authority to provide related expertise, independent thinking, and advice in support of the Park. Committee members are volunteers who share their time, energy, and expertise to help orient, educate, and assist the Authority and Park staff, as well as to offer valuable input to decision-making. The four Advisory committees also add an element of continuity through changes in administration.

## II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of the Advisory is to provide the Authority and the Director with the benefit of the experience and knowledge of persons familiar with Baxter State Park affairs and Governor Baxter's intentions in creating the Park. Issues and opportunities are referred to the Advisory by the Authority or the Director, or the Advisory itself may raise issues for review. These issues may include short and long-term management planning, policy review, rules and regulations review, and maintenance and infrastructure priorities, among others. The Advisory provides advice, knowledge, and research on these issues, but the responsibility for decisions rests with the Authority and the Director.
- B. Since the Committee's inception in 1970, the duties and responsibilities of the Advisory have reflected the needs of the Authority and the Director. The Advisory works closely with the Director and other Park staff. The Director serves as a communication link between the Advisory and the Authority. With permission from the Authority, the Advisory may communicate directly with the Authority at official Authority meetings or other times as needed.
- C. The role of Advisors is to be grassroots-level communicators and ambassadors with visitors, the public, and specific activity groups or organizations. Advisors listen to these groups and bring back comments to the committee and /or the Director as necessary. Advisors provide information about Park operation, policies, deeds of trust, vision, and future projects.
- D. The Baxter State Park Director will submit candidates under consideration to serve on the Baxter State Park Advisory to the Baxter State Park Authority. The Authority will decide to approve or deny candidates. The Baxter State Park Authority will also approve or deny candidates for the Chair and Vice Chair positions.
- E. The Baxter State Park Director will provide informational updates to the Baxter State Park Authority about Advisory meetings, the creation of subcommittees, and any other pertinent information.
- F. The Baxter State Park Director is authorized to implement policy revisions, update, or standardize changes necessary to maintain the efficient operation of the Advisory. Those are listed in the Core Components of Membership section below.

***This Baxter State Park Advisory Committee Governance Document was approved by the Baxter State Park Authority (ME Forest Service Director Patty Cormier-Chair, Acting ME Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Commissioner Tim Peabody, and Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey) at the May 29, 2026 meeting. The Vote was \_\_\_ in favor (\_\_\_ opposed).***

## CORE COMPONENTS OF MEMBERSHIP

### MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

- A. The Authority will strive to appoint Advisory members who represent a diversity of voices, perspectives, backgrounds, and geographic regions of Maine.
- B. The primary criteria for appointment to and continued service on the Advisory are a passion for and commitment to Baxter State Park and Percival Baxter's intent. Other criteria include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Ability to attend and actively participate in meetings, field trips, and other work of the committee.
  - 2. Knowledge of the Park's inception, geography, ecology, history, mission, management plan, operations, and infrastructure.
  - 3. Experience, talents, skills, and expertise useful to the Park in areas such as, but not limited to, trail maintenance, law enforcement, biology and natural resource management, emergency medical services, and historical knowledge of Baxter State Park and Percival Baxter's intent.
  - 4. Preference will be given to Maine residents.
- C. Any person serving on the Advisory will not appear to, or in fact, have a conflict of interest of a financial, political, or personal nature that could influence their recommendations to the Park. Committee members will not appear to or, in fact, be using their association with the Park for financial, political, or personal gain.
  - 1. No person can serve on the Baxter State Park Advisory and be actively employed by Baxter State Park.
  - 2. A prior employee can serve on the Baxter State Park Advisory after a continuous break in service of three (3) years.
- D. Advisory Leadership Selection Process (Chairperson and Vice Chairperson).
  - 1. When the Chairperson position becomes vacant, the first selection option is the current Vice Chairperson, who will be named Chairperson by the Director.  
If the Vice Chairperson is unable to accept the position, the Director will follow Steps 2 through 4 to select a current Advisory member for the Chairperson position.
  - 2. When the Chairperson position and or Vice Chairperson position becomes vacant, the Director will seek nominations from Advisory members for the open position.
  - 3. Once the nomination period ends, the Director may seek feedback from Advisory members.

4. The Director will then make a selection for the open position. A recommendation to the Authority will be made, and the Authority's approval will be required.

E. Candidate Selection Process for Reserved Seats:

1. Baxter Family Seat

- a. Members of the Baxter family have served on the Advisory since its inception. They include John Baxter, Rupert White, Eric Baxter, and R. Michael White. The current Baxter family representative on the Advisory, or the Baxter family in his/her absence, will submit a candidate's name to the Director. From there, the candidate selection process is outlined in Section III.

2. Wabanaki Seat

- a. A Wabanaki seat for tribal member representation was established in a motion by the Authority in its March 2, 2023 meeting. The Wabanaki seat can be filled from any one of Maine's tribes. A candidate's selection for this seat would go through the same process as outlined in Section III. F.

F. Candidate Selection Process for Open Advisory Seats:

1. Recommendations for candidates can come from the Authority, the Advisory, BSP Staff, or any individual interested in serving on the Advisory by contacting the Director.
2. Candidates will receive a questionnaire from the Director when openings become available.
3. The Director reviews questionnaires and selects the best candidates for interviews based on their ability to meet the criteria in Sections A, B, and C above.
4. Candidate(s) who have not previously served are usually required to attend at least two (2) meetings before being recommended to the Authority.
5. The Director and candidate(s) will meet to discuss obligations in Sections A, B, and C, and to ensure they are prepared to meet them.
6. Selection(s) are made, and candidate(s) are recommended to and appointed by the Authority.

## **APPOINTMENTS & TERMS**

A. Appointments:

1. Membership. Members of the Advisory shall be appointed or removed by the Authority. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Advisory are appointed or removed by the Authority. The Chair should have served as Vice Chair for at least one year prior to appointment as Chair.

2. Timing of Appointments. Appointments to the Advisory and the Chair and Vice Chair positions by the Authority will typically take place at the spring and fall meetings.

B. Terms:

1. The Advisory may consist of as many as 13 members, not including one (1) representative from the Baxter family and one (1) Wabanaki representative. This comprises a 15-member Advisory at full complement.
2. Members shall serve two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. A person may be reappointed after a break in service of at least one year. Members of the Baxter family and the Wabanaki representative serve without term limits.
3. The Chair and Vice Chair may serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms.
4. When a new Advisory member or a previous Advisory member is appointed mid-term, the remaining partial term does not count toward the term limits.
5. Staggered terms should be used to provide continuity.
6. The Director or the Director's designee shall serve as needed in full committee or subcommittee meetings of the Advisory.
7. Advisory membership changes will be discussed at both Advisory and Authority meetings to ensure they are recorded in meeting minutes.

## **EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADVISORY MEMBERS**

A. Advisory members are expected to:

1. Understand the history and mission of Baxter State Park.
2. Stay informed about Park issues through a variety of means, including, but not limited to, visiting the Park, reading historical documents or reviewing current documents, participating in Advisory field trips and volunteer activities, talking with Park staff, and asking Park visitors about their experiences.
3. Raise issues of concern to the Director first, and if necessary, the Authority.
4. Meet at least six times per year in full committee (either remotely or in-person) and as needed for the business of any subcommittees.
5. Report subcommittee recommendations to the full Advisory for discussion and approval before presentation to the Director and Authority.
6. Conduct themselves with a high level of professionalism. Meetings may be audio recorded for minutes-taking.

B. Responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair:

1. The Chair will set dates and agendas for Advisory meetings in consultation with the Director, and with the Vice Chair as needed.
2. The Chair will conduct meetings of the Advisory, including calls for votes on issues as needed. The Vice Chair will conduct meetings in the absence of the Chair.
3. The Chair will consult with the Authority and Director. The Vice Chair will consult with the Director at the request of the Chair.
4. The Chair and Vice Chair will consult on relevant matters.
5. The Chair and Vice Chair will attend subcommittee meetings as needed.
6. The Chair will attend Investment Committee meetings.
7. In the absence of Park staff to record and transcribe the minutes, the Chair will ensure a record of the meeting is kept.
8. The Vice Chair will assume the position of Chair if, for any reason, the Chair can no longer fulfill the position.

### **MID-TERM RESIGNATIONS, TERM EXPIRATIONS**

- A. Occasionally, Advisory members need to leave the committee before their term expires. When that occurs, the Advisory member shall inform the Chairperson and Director.
- B. Term limits will be reviewed in preparation for the replacement of committee members and to ensure that terms are staggered.
- C. If the Advisory member is not the Chair or Vice Chair, the Director will follow the Advisory Candidate Selection Process in Section 3.F.
- D. If the Advisory Member is the Chair or Vice Chair, the Director will follow the Advisory Leadership Selection Process in Section 3.D.

### **REVIEW**

- A. This document should be reviewed by the Baxter State Park Advisory every five (5) years or sooner if necessary.
- B. If the Advisory decides revisions are to be considered, a subcommittee should be convened to address the subject(s) at hand.