

Baxter State Park Authority Meeting Minutes

Cross Building, Augusta, Maine

Friday December 2, 2016

10:00 am – 11:00 am



Attendees:

BSPA: Janet Mills -AG, Chandler Woodcock- Commissioner, IF&W, (Chair) Doug Denico – Director, MFS, Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

BSP Advisory: (Chair) Laurie Nale, Ann Huntington

BSP Staff: Stewart Guay, Eben Sypitkowski, Christine Theriault

Guests: Aaron Megquier, Dick Klain - Friends of Baxter State Park

The meeting was called to order by Chair Denico who asked for introductions.

Meeting Minutes for October 14, 2016:

Denico asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Janet Mills asked that the minutes be amended (Page one) where it is stated that her “children” were regaled with Donn Fendler stories. It should say “niece and nephew”.

Woodcock moved to accepted minutes as amended, seconded by Mills, all in favor.

Ann Huntington requested that the reflection Mills wrote about the Park be published. Mills thought it had been posted on the BSP website. Huntington thought it should be more widely publicized. Aaron Megquier said that he would also like to place it in the Friends of Baxter newsletter. Mills agreed to let it be used. Denico voiced his appreciation for what Mills wrote, stating that it clearly stated Baxter’s mission.

Rule revisions:

Stewart Guay read rule 1.2 current text: “Camping is permitted by reservation only and only in authorized campgrounds and campsites, May 15 through October 15 and December 1 through March 31.”

Revised text: “Camping is permitted by reservation only and only in authorized campgrounds and campsites, May 15 through **October 22 as specified by the Park** and December 1 through March 31.”

Rationale of change: Guay said we (BSP) have just ended a three-season trial on extending the camping season an additional week in three campgrounds Kidney Pond, Daicey Pond, and Katahdin Stream with only some of each campground being available for reservations. The trial went very well; therefore, from this point on all of the sites at these three campgrounds would be open the seven (7) day extension. This would also mean extending the Campground Ranger an additional week to allow that ranger time for closure of the

campground after the end of season. Theriault also commented that the Campground Ranger position that had to be extended fortunately had weeks available already budgeted so that there wasn't any additional funding needed for this change, but if future extensions are needed, then BSP would go through the steps to add this funding to the budget. There was discussion on the wording of the rule and after this discussion the revised rule was read as follows: **"Camping is permitted by reservation only and only in authorized campgrounds and campsites as specified by the Park, May 15 through October 22 and December 1 through March 31."**

Denico suggest that each rule change be voted on separately and this was agreed upon by Woodcock and Mills.

Woodcock moved to accept the changes of Rule 1.2 as last read, Mills seconded, all in favor.

Guay read rule 1.3 current text: "Persons entering or leaving the Park by way of the Appalachian Trail must register at Katahdin Stream Campground."

Read the revised text: **"Long Distance Hikers entering the Park for the purpose of hiking all or part of the Appalachian Trail must secure an AT-Katahdin Hiker Permit Card prior to hiking the Hunt Trail to or from Baxter Peak."**

Rationale of change: With the addition of non-AT day use visitors to Baxter Park having to secure a Day Use Parking Reservation to access one of the three Katahdin trailhead parking lot, and the increase in the number of AT hikers entering the Park, this rule revision will allow the Park to include AT hikers in the same limited use model as other Park visitor in order to provide consistent management in the protection of the fragile alpine resources of Katahdin and to preserve the quality of the Visitor Experience in Maine's largest wilderness.

Discussion: Woodcock asked what the consequences would be if the rule was not followed and Guay said with the rule change it would give the Baxter Park Law Enforcement Rangers the ability to issue a summons. There was discussion on where and when the hiker is to secure a card. After lengthy discussion some changes were made and the new rule text read **"Long Distance Hikers entering the Park for the purpose of hiking all or part of the Appalachian Trail must secure an AT-Katahdin Hiker Permit Card and register with Baxter State Park prior to hiking the Hunt Trail to or from Baxter Peak."**

Woodcock moved to accept the changes of Rule 1.3 as last read, Mills seconded, all in favor.

Guay read rule 5.5 current text: "The operation of Motorized trail bikes, and ATVs (all terrain vehicles) is prohibited within the Park except as specified in 5.8 below. The operation of Motorcycles is prohibited on unpaved roads within the Park. Unless further

restricted for safety reasons, bicycle use within the Park shall be restricted to maintained roads and the Dwelley Pond Trail.”

Revised text: “The operation of motorized trail bikes and ATVs (all terrain vehicles) is prohibited within the Park except as specified in 5.8 below. The operation of motorcycles is prohibited on unpaved roads within the Park. Unless further restricted for safety reasons, bicycle use within the Park shall be restricted to maintained roads and the Dwelley Pond Trail. **Bicycle use is allowed on the Abol Stream Trail December 1 to April 1.”**

Rationale: This revision follows a multi-year trial allowing winter bike use on the Abol Stream Trail.- The trial allowed winter bicycle enthusiasts access to the Park tote road with a special use permit. The trial allayed initial concerns regarding conflicts between skiers on the Abol Pond Trail and skiers and snowmobiles on the Park tote road.

Woodcock moved to accept the changes of Rule 5.5, Mills seconded, all in favor.

Guay read rule 5.6 current text: “Take off and landing of aircraft in the Park is prohibited except on Matagamon, Nesowadnehunk, and Webster Lakes. Persons landing aircraft on permitted waters in the Park must register with Park Headquarters or a gatehouse in advance. “Aircraft” is defined to include any machine or device capable of deriving support in the atmosphere from the reactions of the air, including, but not limited to model craft, hot air balloons, hang gliders, para-sails and para-gliders and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV’s)”

Revised text: “Take off and landing of aircraft in the Park is prohibited except on Matagamon, Nesowadnehunk, and Webster Lakes. Persons landing aircraft on permitted waters in the Park must register with Park Headquarters or a gatehouse in advance. “Aircraft” is defined to include any machine or device capable of deriving support in the atmosphere from the reactions of the air, including, but not limited to model craft, hot air balloons, hang gliders, para-sails and para-gliders and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). **The possession of a UAV on any trail, waterway or body of water within the Park is prohibited.”**

Rationale: The change was made to include possession of UAV because of the response from visitors and staff seeing You Tube videos that show people using UAVs during their hike on Katahdin. It is also for the protection of our Visitor Experience.

Discussion: Denico questioned under the Great Ponds Act (over 10 acres) where and when Baxter was given the authority by the State to prohibit the landing and take off on the waterways mentioned in the beginning of this rule. Mills was unsure and Denico asked that it be looked into.

Woodcock moved to accept the changes of Rule 5.6, Mills seconded, all in favor.

Biennial Budget:

Therault mentioned that at the Authority meeting in October the biennial Personal Services and All Other sections were covered but the Capital section was not completed. The Capital amounts have been entered in FY18 and FY19 and the balance forward amount has been entered so that the revenue and expenditures balance. The Capital items were broken down on the last page of the budget report. Denico asked if we have any big culvert replacements planned in these years. Therault mentioned that in FY19 Wadleigh Brook will be done but the project was not as big as the last one because it is being replaced with a bridge section that BSP already purchased. Therault mentioned that the engineering cost had been added to FY18 and FY19 to cover cost of planning for large projects.

Woodcock moved to accept the Biennial Budget, Mills seconded, all in favor.

Operations Update:

Guay mentioned that the weather in November was so good that BSP staff was able to get many projects completed. He also talked about the Maine Army Air National Guard training project called "Timberhook IV" that was done in November and that it was a great success. Nine black hawks flew materials to many locations in the Park for upcoming spring and summer projects. Guay gave the update of snow conditions and mentioned that the road had already been closed this year (which was a lot earlier than past years).

Denico commented about the meeting with Tim Hudson from the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and Baxter Park about access from the monument into the Park. Bissell had said that they are being very receptive to closures of trail access.

Denico congratulated the Baxter Park staff (Stewart Guay, Christine Therault, and Eben Sypitkowski) on their representation of the Park during Jensen Bissell's absence.

Mills asked to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Woodcock seconded. Therault was asked to remain.

After the Executive Session was complete everyone was asked to come back into the meeting. Denico asked if there were any comments from the visitors; there were none.

Woodcock moved to adjourn, seconded by Mills, all in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 11:20pm.

Respectively submitted,

Christine Therault, Business Manager - BSP