



BAXTER STATE PARK ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
IF&W BUILDING, BANGOR
APRIL 16, 2015
10:00 A.M.

ATTENDEES:

BSP ADVISORS: Rick Bray, Laurie Nale, Anne Huntington, Robert Baribeau, Tom Goetz, Erica Kaufmann, Darrell Morrow, David Buccello, Doug Callnan, Tom Bradbury, Rosemary Hastings.

BSP STAFF: Jensen Bissell, Christine Theriault, Jean Hoekwater, Ben Woodard, Eben Sypitkowski, Bruce White.

GUESTS: David Wilson

Bray called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Following introductions, Bray thanked everyone for attending.

2/24/15 ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES:

Baribeau noted that his name was misspelled under the Meeting Minutes section. Bissell will make the necessary corrections. It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes. The vote was unanimous.

FY16 BUDGET

Bray asked Theriault to present the FY16 Park Budget. Theriault reviewed the budget development process, including a review by the BSP Advisory prior to presentation to the Baxter State Park Authority for consideration at the May meeting. Theriault then provided a review of the budget summary page, including considerations for the major revenue lines. Bissell described the process of working with the BSP Investment Committee to determine the revenue from the Park endowment fund(s). Theriault continued with the process for building in the remaining revenue estimates with a conservative bias. Once the revenue estimates are finished, the administrative team then works to build the expense side of the budget to match the available revenues. Bissell described the positive budget effects, in perpetuity, resulting from the recent significant expansion of the quarterly contributions of the Baxter Park Wilderness Fund – scheduled to provide \$260,000/year in undirected and unrestricted donations to BSP.

Theriault then moved to a review of the expense lines of the Park budget with explanations of significant changes including the trail maintenance model (BSP Interns to MCC contract crews), plans to continue with HQ siding replacement work, the upgrading of the solar systems at Togue Pond Gatehouse and if possible, Togue Pond Camp, the continued work on the replacement of the Kidney Pond Ranger Camp, and the planned expansion of the BSP Warehouse facility on the HQ campus in Millinocket.

SAR DATABASE REVIEW

Bissell then described the recent work (summer 2014) by Chris Welter. Several years ago, Chief Ranger Ben Woodard instituted the use of Medical Directors to the BSP system. The Medical Directors (there are now two co-directors) serve as volunteers and provide review of wilderness medical training, protocols and active assistance and advice to on-scene staff during a SAR event.

Welter, a medical student at Tufts, was steered to the Park by BSP Medical Director Dr. Matt Scholls. Tufts, as a project for his education, worked with the Ranger staff to develop a current and effective database to record SAR incident data. Welter then entered data from 2 years (900 incidents) into the database. Finally, Welter analyzed the data to provide insight useful for understanding and preparing for SAR incidents in the Park. Bissell reviewed a number of slides from the analysis detailing SAR demographics and probability of rescue need. Discussion ensued regarding the data analysis and the Park's plans to employ the analysis and record data from SAR events in the future.

ADVISORY ROSTER CHANGES

Bissell discussed the upcoming terming-off of Advisory member Dave Bucello. Bissell noted the substantial value of Dave's experience, expertise and judgment as a BSP Advisor. Bissell was joined by the attending Advisors in thanking Dave for his service to the Park.

Bissell then noted that guest Dave Wilson's name had been forwarded to him by BSPA Chair Doug Denico. Bissell described Wilson's long association with BSP and asked Wilson to provide the Advisors some background. Wilson described his first camping experiences in BSP as dating back to the 60's and 70's and that he had been a winter user for approximately 30 years.

Bissell thanked Wilson for taking the time to attend the meeting and will be recommending Wilson to the BSPA at the May 29 meeting for addition to the BSP Advisory roster.

ALPINE STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE

Hoekwater briefed Advisory members on plans for Baxter State Park to host the 2015 Northeast Alpine Gathering on November 6-8, 2015 at Twin Pines resort on Millinocket Lake. Although Baxter has sent representatives to these biennial events since the 1990's, the Park has never hosted this event until now. The 2015 Gathering sponsored by Baxter State Park, the Friends of Baxter and The Waterman Fund . The format will include pre-conference field trips in the Park and nearby area, Friday afternoon check-in, social hour and dinner, with David Little speaking on the Art of Katahdin afterwards. Saturday will consist of an introduction to the natural history and current issues of Baxter State Park, a plenary session on wilderness, a panel session on stewardship initiatives, afternoon panels and concurrent sessions on research and more. Following a poster session, social hour and dinner, the conference will feature a special keynote speaker, tentatively the very popular Theodore Roosevelt reprints, Joe Wiegand. On Sunday after breakfast, participants will have a choice of local hikes with the option to take bag lunches with them. Wrap up on Sunday is planned for no later than 2 PM. Participants for Alpine Gatherings typically include a wide range of professionals, individuals and students interested in protecting alpine zones and learning more about these special areas in Northeastern America. The conference draws representative landowners, associated non-profits and academics from the Northeast and Canada. Seasonal Wilderness Educators will help Morgan and Jean with the organization of this event. Advisory Chair Rick Bray expressed his support and willingness to assist as the event draws near. Interested Friends of Baxter and BSP Advisory can contact Jean or Morgan if they want to help with conference details.

TRAUTMANN INITIATIVE

Bissell returned to the recent substantial increase in annual unrestricted donations from the Baxter Park Wilderness Trust. The BPWT, enabled primarily by Frank Trautmann and significantly increased after Frank's death in 2014 by the inclusion of the remainder of his estate, now provides a significant addition to

the annual revenue stream of the Park. In recent years, the Park had turned attention to the institutionalization of annual upgrades to road and structure upgrades (large culverts, bridges and Ranger camps). Recent work has included the replacement of the Black Brook culvert, the Kidney Pond Bridge abutments and the Kidney Ranger Camp. The Park also recognized the need for hiking trail upgrades, specifically relocations, to alleviate difficult to maintain and eroded fall-line sections or hazardous sections of the Park's 225 mile hiking trail system. Recent efforts in this regard include the relocation of the OJI trail and a section of the Marston Trail and more recently, a section of the Freezeout Trail. Both the Trail Relocation efforts and the road and building infrastructure efforts are needed and warranted, but funding both at an adequate rate to address the existing issues was difficult with the Park available revenue. The addition of the BPWF revenues has made it possible for the Park to fund the hiking trail improvement efforts and to apply planning efforts to institutionalize this work in the annual work of the Park. Bissell referred Advisors to the "***Trautmann Trail Improvement Initiative***" as the first step in beginning a more formal planning process to begin significant, regular and continuing work to upgrade and improve the Park's hiking trail system. The naming of the initiative provides the Park a way of continuing to recognize the selfless and generous gift of Frank Trautmann to the protection and recreational opportunities of the Park for current and future generations.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Bray then asked Bissell discuss the Climate Change text included in the packet. Bissell described the training that administrative staff members had completed regarding this complex and changing issue facing the Park. Bissell discussed the complexity and continuing evolution of our understanding of climate change summarizing by the recommendation that in general, Park administration would be best served at this time to address avenues for creating greater flexibility in management and administration of the Park so that operational and administrative activities could be more directly tied to actual conditions on the Park landscape and less tied to pre-determined dates or time periods. Discussion ensued regarding climate change, the potential obstacles in achieving operational flexibility etc.

PARK UPDATE/2015 OPS PLANS

Woodard provided an update on training, construction, trail work and current Park conditions. Theriault provided an update on current seasonal vacancies and the transition activity for human resource specialist position recently vacated by the retirement of Jean Howes.

ADVISORY VOLUNTEER AND HIKING DATES

White provided an overview of the current Park Volunteer Program. Bray discussed the past volunteer events by Advisory in the Park including the assembly of picnic tables, the construction of canoe launch(es) and the removal

of invasive plants. Bray has worked with Bissell and White to plan another picnic table assembly event. Bissell, Bray and White have also discussed another event for the fall involving the clean-up of an old dump near Camp Phoenix. Possible dates were discussed, including a September 9 date for the fall project. Bissell will work with White and Bray to confirm a date soon for the spring picnic table project, likely in early June at Katahdin Stream. Bissell also suggested a August or early September Advisory hike to view the work on the Abol Trail Relocation Project.

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS

Dave Wilson thanked the Advisors for the meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Bray adjourned the meeting at 2:25pm.

Rick Bray, Chair, BSP Advisory