



Travel Review: Baxter State Park

Ila Bumagin, Sophomore
ASSISTANT EDITOR

True nature is a rare thing. Not nature like a walk by the ocean or in the park - no. Nature: like it was before anyone built a house in it or put a boat in its waters. Nature: where land, water, and animals alike are free to do whatever they were meant to do. Something that beautiful has to be preserved - and at Baxter State Park, it is. From 1931 to 1964, the governor of Maine, Percival P. Baxter, donated a total of 209,644 acres to the state. His mission was that the park "...shall forever be retained and used for state forest, public park and recreational purposes...shall forever be kept and remain in the natural wild state." In other words, he wanted to maintain the land in its natural state while allowing visitors to experience its beauty. His legislation for the preservation of the park extends beyond that of most state and even national park systems.

After spending a week there, I would say the goal was accomplished. My family stayed at two campgrounds - Trout Brook Pond Campground and Kidney Pond. Trout Brook Pond, which is in the north, and more remote, part of the park, was a surprisingly relaxing experience. Our tent set-up was basically in a field. Now, imagine a meadow at night in the middle of acres of forest... what do you see? Do you picture stars, flowers, mist, and moonlight? If so, your image is half-way there. Add a million more stars; paint on shadows of the wildflowers because the moon is so bright; listen for the faint crackle of the campfire and the chirp of birds. Although no photo or painting could capture that magic, it is incredibly beautiful. The best thing to do from Trout Brook Campground is to canoe on Lake Matagamon. You can rent a kayak or a canoe for \$1/hour and

explore the untouched lake - just you, the sky, and the loons. At Kidney Pond, there are cabins to stay in instead of campsites. So if you're not into the whole sleep-on-the-ground thing, maybe this is a better option. There's a lot you can do in a cozy, lakeside cabin. Maybe go for a kayak... especially because there are some leeches in the south part of the park. You could wake up at dawn and go for a moose hunt. Or maybe just relax in the waterside library while playing scrabble, solving a puzzle, or reading a book. However, my family used Kidney Pond as closer access to Katahdin - the 5,269 foot mountain all New England hikers want to hike. There are many trails to choose from, but my family chose the Helon Taylor trail, a beautiful but difficult way up. From there, we crossed the Knife's Edge, which is a mile of rocky precipice to scale before you reach the summit. The whole top of the mountain is an alpine ecosystem of lichen covered scree, creating a surreal and desolate landscape. We crossed the top from the main peak, Baxter Peak, to Hamlin Peak, and went down on the Hamlin Ridge Trail.

When you are at the top of Katahdin, you feel like you are on a sleeping giant - the rocks look unforgiving and dangerous, and the sky can be ominously cloudy. But when the skies clear, the view is unreal. You can see mountains for miles and the full majesty of the park. To preserve the pristine park, only a certain number of people can be let in at a time. Therefore, you must make reservations months in advance, and use apps and maps to know where you will go and what you will do. Because the park is miles away from any town, it's carry in and carry out - this includes bringing in all your food and water, then removing all the trash. Although there is a lot of planning to be done, the stay at the park is well worth your while. I hope you get a chance to enjoy Baxter State Park as much as I did!

The First Headlight Issue of the 2021-2022 School Year!

Freshman Elections: Class of '25

Pippa Boyd, Freshman

This school year is coming on fast. Between shifting schedules, the Club Fair, crowded hallways, and trying to remember how backpacks work, students are waking up and realizing that the first few days of school weren't just a fever dream. We are settling back into routine now. One of the final pieces of the school year puzzle was put in place for freshmen on Wednesday, September 29th, as we crammed into the auditorium to listen to our classmates and place our votes on who we want to lead us into our first year of high school. Needless to say, the options were difficult to choose from. Once the audience at long last quieted down, the twelve brave souls took their turn to present their cases as to why they should be the ones to win our vote.

Beginning with the position of treasurer, the four candidates argued their budgeting skills for the student body, promising exciting fundraisers and illustrating their shrewd spending abilities. Each speech was deserving of the genuine applause that followed it, but unfortunately, voters were only permitted to check one name in the survey. At the end, the position was earned by Luke Miller. Luke said in an email Q&A that he greatly looks forward to working with the other class representatives to create fundraisers and manage school money. "I mentioned in my speech that I would like to help the class of '25 be positioned well financially so that we can have lots of great events together. I think it would be really helpful if the class could get an early start on fundraising initiatives." When asked why Luke decided to run for treasurer, he talked about the activities he partakes in to pursue his interest in math and finance, including participating in activities offered in school such as the DECA club and marketing classes to investing in the stock market on his own time. "I was interested in running for class office because I really wanted to be involved in making the decisions that would allow the freshmen to come together as a class and to have fun together during the next four years." Regarding those in the running for the second position in the student government, from the very first speech, it was clear who would be earning the votes of their peers to become the freshman class secretary. Though Rebecca Mann was the only candidate for secretary, she delivered a thoughtful and funny speech, later saying, "It was nice having the freedom to say whatever I wanted, and get my point across without having to worry about if I will be elected or not. So I can definitely say that running against no one impacted my speech, and also how I presented myself." When asked how she felt about being the only candidate for the position of secretary, she lamented that she feels

as though she was "handed the role on a silver platter." Nevertheless, Rebecca looks forward to joining the student government and expects everyone to call her by her official title, Madam Secretary. "No exceptions." Madam Secretary Rebecca promises to try her best, because, in her words, "I have mothers to make proud (looking at your mom, Talia), so you can definitely count on me doing my darndest to be the ears, or... hands (?) of the student council."

Likewise, the position of vice president only had one candidate in the running, which as they go, is a pretty sound campaign strategy. Lani Gilmore said that she was surprised to find herself the only one running for vice president, and didn't know until the last minute that she was running alone. When asked why Lani chose to run for Vice President, she said that she had been working her way up to a leadership position for quite some time, and was very excited for the opportunity. Her speech was thoughtful and well executed, but it was missing just one thing. Lani regrets that she wasn't allowed to include her signature slogan, "Lani Gilmore is on your side" to the tune of the Nationwide jingle in her speech.

Finally, the position of president was the most sought after, with half of the stage dedicated to presidential runners. After the audience got over the initial shock of hearing quiet and polite speeches as opposed to teenaged politicians yelling into microphones as Hollywood would have us imagine, it became clear that choosing a president would be the hardest task of all. From nostalgic memories of years left behind, to triumphant declarations of victory over the COVID 19 pandemic, to promises of a brighter year yet to come, our representatives left us hopeful and excited to whip out our phones and vote. Though the decision was tough, the results have been promising. And so we welcome our new president of the freshman body, Olivia Goldwater. Olivia says that it has been her dream to be elected class president since she was little, and she's always sought out opportunities to lead her class. Both Lani and Olivia have previous experience in leadership roles from their experiences in the Cornerstone Club in middle school, and Olivia said her speech was influenced by previous speeches she has written for the club. When asked what her favorite part of her speech was, Olivia singled out the Benjamin Franklin quote that she included, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn." She feels it resonates with her message of creating an involved and inclusive community. Together, Lani and Olivia share a goal to push for more spirit events at school to make up for the lost COVID years, and, if possible, a freshman dance. Overall, the freshman elections were a triumphant first step into a hopeful year. Be sure to congratulate our new leaders, and look forward to the exciting changes they will bring for the class of '25.

Meet Headlight's NEW editors for the school year!

Miranda Connolly, Talia Schwartz,
Mona Gelfgatt, Ila Bumagin (clockwise from top left)



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