

# Baxter State Park's Scientific Forest Management Area



*"In my travels in foreign lands I have seen beautiful great forests that for centuries have been producing a crop of wood without depletion. In Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Chile, Russia and elsewhere what has been done by scientifically controlled forestry can be done in Maine. I now make it possible for the state to try a major experiment here at home, an experiment that can mean much for our future timber supply, which all admit is the chief natural resource of our State." Percival P. Baxter, 1955*

## What is the Scientific Forest Management Area?

By creating Baxter State Park, Percival Baxter demonstrated his commitment to sound land stewardship. His commitment included not only the preservation of wild lands, but the application of scientific management to the forests of Maine. Travels throughout the world convinced Percival Baxter that sound forest management was both possible and of vital importance to Maine. In donating the land now known as the SFMA, he said:

*"I want this township to become a showplace for those interested in forestry, a place where a continuing timber crop can be cultivated, harvested, and sold, where reforestation and scientific cutting will be employed, an example and an inspiration to others. What is done in our forests today will help or harm the generations who follow us."*

## Facts and Figures

The 29,587 acre SFMA (14% of the park) is located in Township 6, Ranges 9 and 10, in the northwest corner of Baxter State Park. In contrast to the steep, mountainous terrain found around Katahdin, the SFMA is mostly gently rolling terrain lying between

800' and 1000' elevation. Forest covers 92% of the SFMA and consists mostly of softwoods and softwood/hardwood mixes. The remaining 8% is taken up by lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands and land management roads.

## What is the History of the Area?

The SFMA forests of today are the result of a mosaic of human disturbance and natural processes. The 1800's saw the first wave of logging for large white pine. Later harvests focused first on spruce logs, then on pulpwood, continuing until the early 1950's. Evidence of past logging activities is still apparent throughout the area. Intermixed with the logging activities were natural processes, such as wildfire and insect outbreaks, which further shaped the forest into the pattern it holds today.

## What are the Management Goals?

The Baxter State Park Authority's goal is to manage the SFMA in compliance with Percival Baxter's Deeds of Trust. We hope that by sensitive, scientifically sound intervention, we can develop a forest which will produce high value forest products growing within a healthy and diverse forest landscape.

The vision we hold for the SFMA will take generations of diligent effort to achieve. One of the more difficult concepts in forest management is that although very dynamic, the forest responds to change over a much longer time frame than human perceptions can accept. Many of the benefits of current management won't be evident for several generations. Our efforts today are to provide a solid foundation of high quality, sensitive and planned forest operations, to maintain a sound database to track and measure forest development, and to provide the opportunity for demonstration and education for those interested in forestry.

### How is the SFMA Managed?

In the SFMA, as with all of Baxter Park, the Baxter State Park Authority has responsibility for policy and decision-making. The Park Director works with the Resource Manager and staff to develop & implement policy, and coordinate & direct operations.



The SFMA Advisory, a standing committee of citizens with expertise in

forest resources and other natural sciences, greatly assists with policy development.

Most forest operations, including harvesting and road construction and maintenance work are performed by independent contractors.

Field management is carried out by the Park Resource Manager, a BSP Ranger assigned specifically to the SFMA and a seasonal Forest Technician.

### Outside Perspectives



The SFMA is certified as well-managed by the Forest Stewardship Council. (www.fscus.org) The FSC is a non-profit organization devoted to encouraging sustainable management of the world's forests. High standards are set to ensure forestry is practiced in an environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable way. The certification process involves closely scrutinizing SFMA management against regional standards developed by a wide range of stakeholders.

The SFMA has also been named a model forest by the Forest Guild.



(www.forestguild.org) The Forest Guild is a national organization promoting ecologically, economically and socially responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Guild has designated a series of model forests to promote and demonstrate exemplary forest management across the country.

### Recreation Opportunities

Over 30 miles of hiking trails cross the SFMA and, based upon itinerary choices, a loop hike of about 30 miles can be done from Trout Brook Farm campground. The SFMA also has several picnic areas and backcountry campsites.

Forest management roads extend into the SFMA from two access points along the western boundary of T6 R10. Visitors to the SFMA should be prepared to travel on narrow, gravel-surfaced forest roads.

Vehicle traffic for public recreation is limited to two primary trunk roads, the 7 mile-long Brayley Brook Road (north of Webster Lake and Stream)



and the 13 mile-long Wadleigh Mountain Road (south of Webster Lake and Stream). Other roads are open to foot traffic. SFMA roads are named and signed and maps are available from the Park office. Vehicle access to the area may be restricted at times to protect public safety, roads and resources.

Signs within the management area offer some information on different stand management activities and forest history. Harvest operations may be underway during every month of the year (except April) and visitors should always be prepared to meet log trucks when visiting the SFMA.

The SFMA is one of two areas in Baxter State Park where hunting and trapping are permitted (with the exception of moose hunting and animal baiting). Forest management activities on the SFMA are generally favorable to game species and the area is a popular destination for hunters.

Webster Lake is the site of frequent ice fishing activities and Webster Stream provides some of the only white water canoeing in the Park. Canoeing Webster Stream requires at least one overnight camping reservation –

contact Park Headquarters for more information on this trip.

For whatever reason you visit the SFMA please register at the SFMA entrance. As in any part of Baxter State Park, pets are not permitted. Overnight camping is permitted only with reservations and only at designated campsites. Overnight roadside camping is not permitted.

### **How Can I Learn More?**

Individuals or groups interested in more information or field tours of the area should contact the Resource Manager at park headquarters.

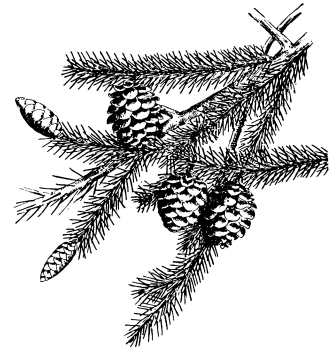


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### **Need More Information?**

Please visit our website:

[www.baxterstateparkauthority.com](http://www.baxterstateparkauthority.com)



### **Contact**

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