



# Foundation Document Overview

## Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument

### Maine



#### Contact Information

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## Park Description

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument was designated through Presidential Proclamation by President Barack Obama on August 24, 2016. The monument, which spans 87,563 acres in north-central Maine, represents the rich and storied area known as Maine's North Woods, encompassing mountains, waterbodies, and forestlands. Monument lands include a section of the East Branch of the Penobscot River and share a western boundary with Baxter State Park (the northern terminus of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.) The monument is located approximately 80 miles north of Bangor, one of Maine's largest cities, and approximately 135 miles north of Acadia National Park, the seventh most visited national park in the United States.

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is located within the present and traditional homeland of the Penobscot Nation. The land and waters hold special significance to the Penobscot Nation and is inextricably linked with Penobscot culture, ceremonies, oral traditions, language, history, and indigenous stewardship which continues the respectful relationship with the land and waterways that has gone back more than 11,000 years. It is a center of connecting watersheds, providing important travel routes for Wabanaki people of Maine, comprised of Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations.

The monument's landscape is awe-inspiring, from the breadth of its mountain-studded terrain and the channels, rapids, and quiet waters of its flowing rivers and streams to its many vantages for viewing the surrounding land. Katahdin, which translates to "greatest mountain" in Penobscot, is adjacent to the monument and the prominent visual feature in the region. The mountain holds a spiritual relationship with the Wabanaki people. The East Branch of the Penobscot River flows all the way through the monument, about 25 miles from north to south. The first 10 miles of the river drops over 200 feet, making its way over dynamic waterfalls and features such as Stair Falls, Haskell Rock Pitch, Pond Pitch, Grand Pitch, the Hulling Machine, and Bowlin Falls. The Seboeis (Se-BOW-is) River and Wassataquoik (wa-SAT-a-cook) Stream offer their own unique array of channels, rapids, and quiet waters. Together, the rivers and streams within the monument comprise one of the least developed watersheds in the northeastern United States.



Penobscot people are well-versed in this beautiful landscape and their place names help to describe the origin and importance of the region's many natural features. In the Penobscot language, Seboeis translates to "small stream," and Wassataquoik translates to "place to spear fish by torchlight." Wabanaki oral history also provides important practical instructions on navigation by identifying important portages and landmarks. In one Penobscot oral history related by Andrew Dana, Gluskabe, a key figure in Wabanaki culture, created the moose by stomping him out of a crater near Katahdin.

This area of the country is known for its dark sky and provides an unrivaled opportunity to experience the glittering stars, planets, and occasional displays of the aurora borealis. In 2020, the International Dark Sky Association named Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument an International Dark Sky Sanctuary. This designation is the second of its kind in the national park system and distinguishes the monument for the exceptional quality of its naturally dark night skies. Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is the first International Dark Sky Place-certified site in the state of Maine and the New England region.

In addition to the waters, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument protects a landscape of forests and wetlands. The forest represents a unique transition zone between northern boreal and southern broadleaf deciduous forests, including mixed hardwoods like sugar maple, beech, and yellow birch; mixed forests with hardwoods, hemlock, and white pine; and spruce-fir forests with balsam fir, red spruce, and birches. In wetland areas, black spruce, white spruce, red maple, and tamarack dominate. Many wet basins and riparian zones support important cultural materials that Penobscot people have sustainably harvested for generations. The forests, waterways, and wetlands continue to provide critical habitat and corridors for plants and wildlife, including threatened species such as Atlantic salmon, Canada lynx, and rare mussels and butterflies.

## Park Description

The area's geology provides prominent evidence of large and powerful earth-changing events that have shaped the landscape as we know it today. Geologic formations throughout the monument provide striking visual evidence that marine waters covered the area in the periods immediately following the Cambrian period (over 500 million years ago). Owen Brook limestone, an outcrop of calcareous bedrock west of the East Branch containing fossil brachiopods, is of coral reef origin. Pillow lavas, near the summit of Lunksoos Mountain, were produced by underwater eruptions. Haskell Rock, the 20-foot-tall pillar in the midst of the East Branch, is conglomerate bedrock that suggests a time of dynamic transition from volcanic islands to an ocean with underwater sedimentation. In more recent geological history, glacial landforms, glacial scoured bedrock, and the lake sediments in the area, deposited only since the retreat of the last glaciers, record a history of intense change in climate that gave rise to the modern topography of the area.

The first documented European American exploration of the Katahdin region dates to a 1793 survey commissioned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Many of the early surveys of the area were supported by Penobscot guides. Charles Turner, with his Penobscot guide Louis Neptune led Charles Turner on the first documented climb of Katahdin in 1804. After Maine achieved statehood in 1820, Major Joseph Treat, guided by Penobscot Tribal leader John Neptune, produced the first detailed written maps of the region. Ezekiel Holmes and his Penobscot guide Louis Ketchum performed another survey in 1837–1838 that explored accessibility to the Aroostook River through the East Branch corridor.

By the early 19th century until the late 20th century, logging was a way of life throughout the area. To access the upstream forests the earliest loggers, many of whom were Wabanaki, felled enormous white pines and then “drove” them down the East Branch of the Penobscot River and its major tributaries toward Bangor. The infrastructure that developed to support the logging industry also drew hunters, anglers, and hikers to the area. In the 1830s, within 2 miles of one another on the eastern side of the Penobscot East Branch, William Hunt and Messr. Dacey (the latter now the site of Lunksoos Camps) established farms to serve loggers, which soon also served recreationists, scientists, and others who wanted to explore the Katahdin region or climb its mountains.

From the 1840s until the end of the 19th century, the favored entryway to Katahdin and the region started with a visit to Hunt or Dacey Farm. Henry David Thoreau with his Penobscot guide Joe Polis and companion Edward Hoar approached the area from the north during a visit in 1857. Theodore Roosevelt followed the route across the East Branch and up the Wassataquoik during his 1879 Maine trip. Thomas Sedgwick Steele writes about his trip to the area in his 1880 book *Canoe and Camera* which details what it was like to travel through the Maine Woods. Other notable visitors included landscape artist Frederic Edwin Church, the painter and photographer George H. Hallowell, and painter Carl Sprinchorn. In 1939, 12-year-old Donn Fendler was lost on the mountain for nine days. He beat the odds and survived by following the Wassataquoik Stream down to the East Branch, where he was ultimately spotted across from Lunksoos Camp. He later authored *Lost on a Mountain in Maine*.

The lands that comprise the monument were gifted to the National Park Service by Roxanne Quimby, a cofounder of the US company Burt's Bees, and her foundation, Elliotsville Plantation, Inc. (now Elliotsville Foundation Inc.). Quimby began purchasing the land in 2001. Following a long public debate about whether and how to preserve this part of Maine's North Woods, Elliotsville and the Quimby Family Foundation donated the land to the National Park Service on August 23, 2016. A day later, on the eve of the National Park Service's centennial, President Barack Obama proclaimed the land as the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

Today, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument provides diverse visitor opportunities throughout the year in one of the largest tracts of wildlands in the nation. The monument features miles of trails that are ideal for biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. The rivers provide diverse options for paddlers and canoers, as there are multiple opportunities for camping, fishing, and hunting. Today, the Penobscot Nation remains inextricably linked to this area and continues to hunt, fish, gather, and perform ceremonies within the monument. The National Park Service, through direct engagement with the Penobscot Nation and the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, and Passamaquoddy Nations, will help to maintain the natural ecological processes and cultural and historic resources, support scientific research and stewardship, and provide recreational opportunities for a wide variety of visitors.

## Purpose



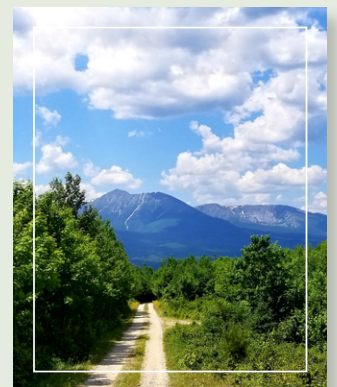
*The purpose of KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT is to preserve the nationally significant natural, cultural, and ecological resources associated with Maine's North Woods; to facilitate the shared stewardship of the resources, landscapes, and environments that contribute to the culture and identity of Penobscot Nation within their traditional homeland; to safeguard the character of the free-flowing and scenic rivers and streams within its boundaries; and to provide a broad range of opportunities for public enjoyment, recreation, and inspiration.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is located within the present and traditional homeland of the Penobscot Nation. The names of the many prominent features in the area speak to the Penobscot presence, and the historical record illustrates their influence and involvement in events that shaped the region. The land and waters are inextricably linked with Penobscot culture, ceremonies, oral traditions, language, and history. Indigenous stewardship continues the respectful relationship with the land and waterways for over 11,000 years.
- Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is at the center of connecting watersheds, which provided important travel routes for the Wabanaki peoples of Maine. The area and the immediate surrounding landscape are considered sacred by and are vitally linked with the cultural practices, ceremonial activities, and oral traditions of the Wabanaki people. Katahdin, which translates to “greatest mountain” in Penobscot, is adjacent to the monument and the prominent visual feature in the region. The mountain holds a spiritual relationship with the Wabanaki people, and the geology within and around the monument is central to oral histories, traditions, and cultural practices for each Tribal community. The land, water, plants, and wildlife continue to be inextricably linked with Wabanaki culture, traditions, and a continued respectful relationship with the area.



# Significance

- The hydrologic features that define the monument include nationally significant river segments, streams, and ponds with high ecological, cultural, scenic, and recreational values. The East Branch of the Penobscot River system, including its major tributaries, the Seboeis River, and Wassataquoik Stream, is at the center of the monument’s cultural landscape and is a major recreational attraction. The East Branch of the Penobscot and Wassataquoik Stream met the criteria for inclusion in the NPS wild and scenic rivers system. The streams and rivers within the monument provide important habitat for spawning and rearing federally endangered Atlantic salmon, while several ponds within the monument (including five that are designated as “heritage ponds”) contain wild populations of brook trout.
- The Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is an International Dark Sky Sanctuary, distinguishing the monument for the exceptional quality of its naturally dark night skies. This designation was only the second of its kind in the national park system and the first International Dark Sky Place to be certified in the state of Maine and in New England.
- Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument has diverse and extraordinary scenic resources and views that are accessible to visitors from rivers, trails, overlooks, and woods roads. The scenic landscape in and around the monument has inspired writers, artists, and conservationists, including Henry David Thoreau, Frederic Edwin Church, a young Theodore Roosevelt, and Governor Percival Baxter, among others.
- The Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is part of Maine’s North Woods, a region that comprises approximately 11 million acres of largely unbroken forestland spanning over two-thirds of Maine. The monument plays an important conservation role by connecting Penobscot Tribal lands and other public and private conservation lands, including Baxter State Park, the Appalachian Trail, the Debsconeag Wilderness, the 100-Mile Wilderness, and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, and to lands protected from development by conservation easements to the south and west of the monument.

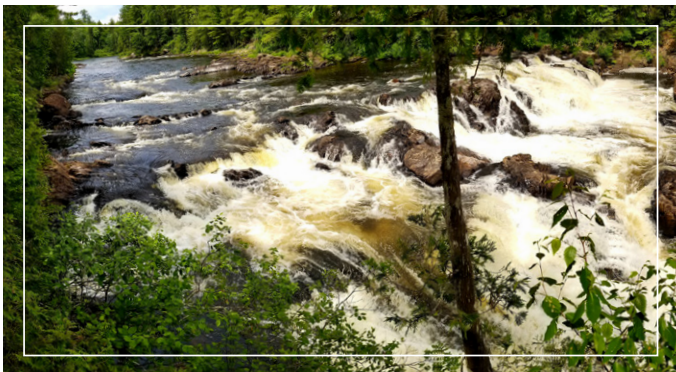


- Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument possesses significant ecology and biodiversity. The land is interspersed with a mosaic of forests, riparian habitat, rivers, and wetland areas that provide critical habitat for federally listed Canada lynx and Atlantic salmon. The patchwork of forests and wetlands and the predominantly native flora provides prime habitat for boreal and migratory forest birds.
- The geology within the monument showcases the large and powerful events that helped shape the landscape, including the rise of the Appalachian Mountain range and nearby Katahdin (ktàtən – Penobscot). Katahdin is held sacred by the Maliseet, Mi’kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations, and the geology within and around the monument is central to oral histories, traditions, and cultural practices for each Tribal community.
- Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument represents Maine’s history of logging, which dates back to the early 1600s. The rivers and streams in the monument provided critical transportation moving logs from the woods to the mills. Temporary logging camps were constructed throughout the monument.
- Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument protects the legacy of Maine’s open land tradition and the variety of year-round recreational activities that often occur upon these large tracts of productive forest land. Here, visitors will continue to have access to world-class canoeing, kayaking, camping, mountain biking, hiking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, and solitude in one of the most remote areas in the eastern United States.

# Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Penobscot Nation Homeland.** Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument exists within the Penobscot Nation's traditional territory.
- **Relationship to the Wabanaki People.** As an important travel corridor, the waters and immediately surrounding landscape are considered sacred by, and are vitally linked with, the cultural practices, ceremonial activities, and oral traditions of the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot peoples.
- **East Branch of the Penobscot River System.** The 1982 Maine Rivers Study found that the East Branch, Wassataquoik Stream, and Seboeis River ranked in the highest category of natural and recreational rivers, with nationally significant resource values. The East Branch of the Penobscot River system has a stunning concentration of nationally significant hydrological, geological, and ecological features and offers outstanding river recreation in an undeveloped setting. The main stem of the East Branch drops over 200 feet in about 10 miles through a series of rapids and waterfalls within the monument. Wassataquoik Stream drops over 500 feet in its 14-mile wild run from the border of Baxter State Park to its confluence with the East Branch. In 1977, the Department of the Interior determined that the East Branch of the Penobscot River and Wassataquoik Stream met the criteria for inclusion in the wild and scenic rivers system.



- **Tree and Plant Species of Wabanaki Cultural Importance.** Traditional tree and plant species important to the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot in their cultural and spiritual practices, including medicinal plant species, are found within the monument. It is important to the Wabanaki that they remain able to gather these plants and resources to continue their cultural practices into the future.
- **Mosaic of Ecological Communities.** The monument lies within the larger Northern Appalachian–Acadian Ecoregion. The area is a transition forest with temperate broadleaf deciduous and northern boreal species. The monument's forests, ponds, streams, and river systems provide landscape-level connections for a wide variety of wildlife. The change in elevation, location, and geologic history has resulted in a complex mix of microclimates and ecosystems. Notable communities include rock outcrop ecosystems, hardwood river terraces, and silver maple floodplain forests.
- **Archeological and Historic Resources.** Based on limited archeological surveys within the monument and records from nearby areas, there is a rich archeological record within the monument that likely spans the entirety of human occupation of this region, since at least the time of the last Ice Age. Archeological research conducted by the National Park Service in collaboration with the Penobscot Tribal Historical Preservation Office, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and other independent cultural resources management firms confirms more than 11,000 years of continuous habitation of this area. Other archaeological and historic resources related to the lumber industry (including the areas of historic logging camp locations) and early exploration of the area likely date back to the early 1800s.
- **Cultural Landscape.** The sacred sites or places that are part of Penobscot culture, locations of log-driving dams and campsites, existing historic structures, logging roads, campsites, and many other resources that are part of the historical activities that occurred within the monument and on surrounding lands are considered elements of a cultural landscape that provide access to and use of the area's natural resources and scenic beauty.

## Fundamental Resources and Values



- **Dark Sky.** The monument has exceptional quality of starry nights. Night sky readings within the monument and surrounding communities have consistently shown to be some of the darkest skies east of the Mississippi River. Due to its remote location and undeveloped character, the monument has unparalleled opportunities for viewing the night sky, without the effects of smog or light pollution from urbanized areas.
- **Geology.** The oldest rock in Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument comes from the Cambrian period, more than 500 million years ago, and can be observed along the banks of the East Branch of the Penobscot River. Haskell Rock, the 20-foot-tall protrusion in the middle of Haskell Rock Pitch in the East Branch below Haskell Deadwater, is conglomerate bedrock that suggests a time of dynamic transition from volcanic islands to an ocean with underwater sedimentation. Prominent eskers occur along most of the East Branch of the Penobscot River and Wassataquoik Stream. The geology of the monument is also part of the foundational stories of Wabanaki people, and lithic raw materials were used, and continued to be used, for cultural practices.
- **Broad Range of Visitor Experiences.** Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument offers canoeing, kayaking, hiking, bird watching, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling on designated trails. Hunting is allowed on lands east of the East Branch of the Penobscot River.

## Other Important Resources and Values

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **International Appalachian Trail.** Approximately 30 miles of the International Appalachian Trail traverses the monument. This hiking trail connects elements of the unique geology and landscape within the monument.
- **Sporting and Logging Camp Sites.** Lunksoos Camps, the Hunt Farm property, and other camp sites are part of the identity of the monument and represent the historical activities within the monument.
- **Old Growth Timber Areas.** A small percentage of the forest in Maine is considered “old growth.” These areas of old-growth forest are primarily in the higher elevations or wet areas of the monument.
- **Adjacent Working Forest.** The monument borders lands that are actively logged by various timber companies. Deeded road access for the monument requires the sharing of the roads, requiring monument staff, the public and logging trucks to use the same roads. Traditionally, logging trucks have the right-of-way on these roads with important signage necessary to remind the travelling public. Maintenance responsibility is also shared on some roads.
- **Heritage Ponds.** Several of the monument’s ponds are classified as State Heritage Fish Waters, ponds that support wild, self-sustaining populations of native brook trout and have either never been stocked or have not been stocked for at least 25 years. Maine is the only state with extensive intact populations of wild, self-reproducing numbers of brook trout.



# Park Map

