

Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument Loop Road Interpretive Map



View from The Lookout - Mark Picard

WELCOME to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument Loop Road, situated west of Wassataquoik Stream in the south section of the Monument. The travel route highlights cultural, biological, and geological features of significance, as well as scenic viewpoints and hiking and biking trails of differing distances and difficulty.

Officially declared a National Monument by Presidential Proclamation on August 24, 2016, the 87,500-acre landscape was donated to the National Park Service and the American people by conservationist Roxanne Quimby, founder of Burt's Bees personal care products. The Monument lands, known to Native peoples for thousands of years, have supported extensive logging operations from the time of early Maine statehood on. In addition, artists, authors, scientists, conservationists, recreationists, and others have drawn knowledge and inspiration from this landscape for nearly 200 years. The Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting the Monument, hopes you will be one of many to follow in their footsteps.

DIRECTIONS:

From I-95 Exit 244 (Medway): Travel west towards Medway approximately 0.8 miles, turning right onto Route 11 (also called Grindstone Road). Follow Route 11, also known as the Katahdin Woods and Waters Scenic Byway, for approximately 20 miles and then turn left onto the Swift Brook Road. Please use caution when making the left turn onto Swift Brook Road as there is limited sight distance; please be considerate of your speed as you pass the residential area near the junction.

From I-95 Exit 264 (Sherman): Travel west approximately 0.25 miles, turning left onto Route 11. Travel approximately 5 miles, turning right on Swift Brook Road.

Travel the Swift Brook Road approximately 9.5 miles following the signs to the Loop Road. Sandbank Stream Camping and Picnic Area will be on your left.



Boreal Chickadee

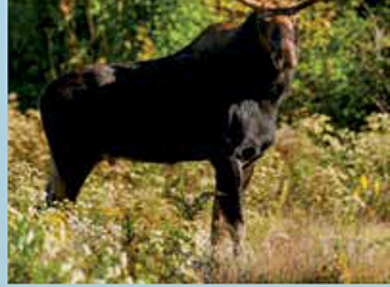
Sandbank Stream Picnic and Camping Area: The Loop Road tour begins at a repurposed sand and gravel pit. Its materials were once used for building logging roads along Sandbank Stream, where a series of beaver dams have created "dead waters" or wider, slow-moving waterways along the stream's path. Walking the short trail to the left you will arrive at the largest of these dams. Beaver dams modify the natural environment and the overall ecosystem builds upon the change, making beavers a keystone species - a species on which other species in an ecosystem largely depend. Leaving the parking area, the first half-mile of thick spruce forest provides habitat for the protected Spruce Grouse and other northern bird species including Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warbler, Boreal Chickadee, as well as both Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Loop Road Gate: The entrance gate is situated between a section of glacial esker and a mixed shrub marsh. Combined with the spruce forest you just passed through, this area is particularly rich in biological diversity. To explore this area further continue 0.3 miles past the gate to the first road on your right where you will find an abandoned gravel pit and a rustic unimproved parking area. This area is still evolving with plans for a more developed parking area in the future.



First Marsh - Loop Road Gate

STOP 1 - MILE 0.3: From the parking area, a one-mile roundtrip hike along the ridge of the esker to a second marsh begins. The trail is on the opposite side of the Loop Road just before the parking area. Prominent eskers - long, sinuous, steep-sided ridges of sand and gravel formed by meltwater streams running beneath the retreating glacier - occur throughout the Monument. Landforms such as glacially scoured bedrock and lake sediments deposited during the retreat of the last glaciers record a history of dramatic climate change, from a landscape locked in ice to the rich forests and wetlands of today. Along the first section of trail, wild blueberry provides ground cover among mature spruce. Listen and watch for Eastern Wood Pewee, Magnolia Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, and the rare Black-backed Woodpecker. At the base of the trail, below the beaver dam, early sluice cribbing from logging days of past, when logs were floated down waterways to markets beyond, is still evident. Look for Kingfisher, Red Shouldered-Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Swamp Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat Warbler, beaver, and moose. Return on the same path.



Bull Moose

An alternate hike from the parking lot is along the abandoned logging road leading from the parking area. This unimproved trail takes you through Early Mixed Successional Forest habitat past Deasey Ponds. Areas of newly generated vegetation provide excellent habitat for Ruffed Grouse, snowshoe hare, and the federally protected Canada lynx. Expect to see animal tracks and signs as this road is traveled by moose, bear, coyote, and lynx. If you encounter wildlife within the Monument please maintain a respectful distance, allowing the animal ample opportunity to retreat to a more comfortable location. Although you can hike or bike for as many as two miles along this unimproved road, plan time for the return.

STOP 2 - MILE 1: Just past Mile Marker 1 a small pullout on the left provides a first view of almost mile-high Katahdin at 5,267 feet above sea level in nearby Baxter State Park. The name of this rugged mountain (pronounced "ka-tah'-dan") was given by the Penobscot Indians and means "The Greatest Mountain." It is believed to be home to the evil spirit Pamola where he curses (weather) on the mountain. As early as 11,000 years ago, Native peoples began to inhabit the area. Traditionally they used the rivers as a vast transportation network, seasonally searching for food, furs, medicines, and many other resources. Wabanaki people, in particular the Penobscot Indian Nation, consider the Penobscot River and its tributaries a centerpiece of their culture and spiritual values.



Eastern Coyote

STOP 3 - MILE 1.5: This section of road provides an example of an early growth successional forest dominated by aspen, birch, and maple - the first trees to occupy a recently harvested forest. The treetops and thick understory provide nesting habitat for bird species such as American Redstart, and Black and White, Chestnut-sided, and Mourning Warblers. The berry patches here and along the disturbed roadsides throughout the Monument are indicative of areas where cut trees awaited transportation to area mills. They are foraged by black bears during berry season. Continue along the road bearing left at the fork.



Ruffed Grouse

STOP 4 - MILE 2.2: Drive 0.2 miles past Mile Marker 2 to parking for the short walk to Lynx Pond. The trail is on the opposite side of the road just before the parking area. This small pond, surrounded by a nutrient-poor Leatherleaf Boggy Fen, is home to a resident Belted Kingfisher that rattles as he flies about defending his territory. Carnivorous pitcher plants grow in the bog mat along the edge of

the pond. When insects investigate the pitcher-shaped structure that holds water, they meet a watery demise. The plant then dissolves the insect and uses it for food. Moose often feed on the opposite shore. Canada Geese, and Ring-necked and Common Goldeneye ducks are known nesters. Boreal Bird species of note including Black-backed Woodpecker, Rusty Blackbird, Canada Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler have been recorded here.

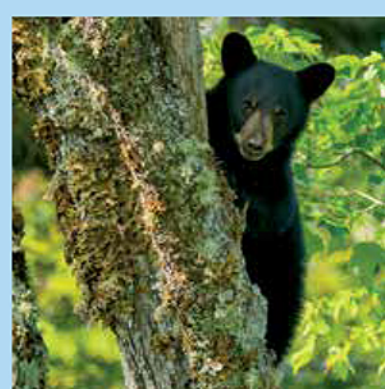


Mourning Warbler

STOP 5 - MILE 3.1: Continue 0.1 miles to parking area on corner. Walk a short distance along the roadside to where a Spruce Fir Cinnamon Fern Swamp containing Rhodora (wild azalea) and Swamp Maple as well as a variety of other ferns and bog plants can be viewed from either side of the road. Magnolia and Palm Warblers along with White-throated Sparrows are prevalent bird species.

Caution! Beginning at about Mile 4.5 the Loop Road joins a two-way log hauling road to about Mile 5.8 and then again from Mile 9 to 11.8. Drive slowly, keep to the right, and yield to oncoming trucks.

STOP 6 - MILE 6.4: Turn left to reach the scenic overlook with its expansive views. It is a great place for a picnic lunch. Millinocket Lake (meaning "many islands") is the large body of water to your left. Mud Brook Flowage and the Sandy Stream Valley flow out from surrounding mountains. The forests before you are a transitional deciduous northern hardwood and boreal spruce-fir mix - a type that does not exist anywhere else in the National Park System. Mountain tops are dominated by spruce-fir with lowland valleys full of colorful northern hardwoods. Historically, in addition to lumber - wood carvings, chips, mulch, charcoal, syrups, oils, gums, and extracts have been produced from these forests.



Black Bear

MILES 7-9: There are several scenic overlooks through this section. When stopping, park off the road and use existing pull-offs.



Red-breasted Merganser and chicks

STOP 7 - MILE 11.8: Just before Mile Marker 12 is parking for the IAT (International Appalachian Trail) and Barnard Mountain Trail. Park away from the gate ensuring access to logging equipment. Overnight parking requires a permit from the NPS.

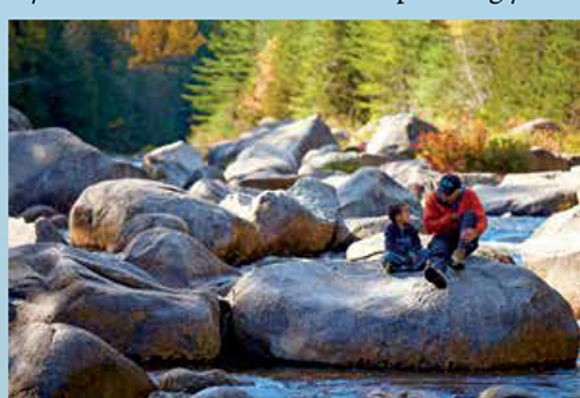
The IAT continues the Appalachian Trail that runs from Georgia to Maine. The IAT follows the ancient Appalachian Mountains, created far back in geologic time and now separated by the North Atlantic Ocean. The ancient mountain chain was built when continental plates drifted together to form a single continent, Pangaea, or "all land." Parts of those plates began to drift apart more than 200 million years ago, and now form North America, Europe, and Africa. The IAT links traces of these mountains around the arc of the North Atlantic. The section of the trail that runs through Maine starts here and continues through the Monument for 30 miles, to continue another



Katahdin from Barnard Mountain

100 miles to Fort Fairfield, Maine, and then on into Canada, Greenland, and Europe, ending in Morocco.

BARNARD MOUNTAIN: The hike begins on a brief section of the IAT, for about 1.5 miles up the gravel logging road frequented by moose, bear, mountain bikers, hikers, and occasionally logging trucks carrying wood harvested from adjacent lands. Within the first few minutes of the hike you will cross Katahdin Brook and pass the first IAT campsite. Continue up the long hill and the trail head sign will be on your right. This first portion of the trail can be biked as well as hiked. From here you leave the logging road and hike through a section of thick young hardwoods before ascending through a mature softwood forest over switchbacks and stone steps built in 2014 by the Maine Conservation Corps. Bring your lunch and enjoy the views from the top.



Orin Falls

Watch for moose signs near the summit where they hang out in the cool breezes of summer.

STOP 8 - MILE 15.5: Turn off the Loop Road onto the road to Orin Falls. Travel approximately 2.5 miles to the parking area. Orin Falls is a great six-mile round-trip hike (or bike) for families and fishing enthusiasts looking to access Wassataquoik Stream, which is translated as "place where they spear fish." Most of the trail is former logging road that is wide and avoids steep slopes. A portion of the IAT also follows the same path for a short distance. The trail begins by following a glacial esker above Wassataquoik Stream before dropping to cross a bridge over Katahdin Brook (the outflow from Katahdin Lake inside Baxter State Park). Just beyond the bridge there is a large campsite as well as a lean-to shelter. The trail passes through a section of Hardwood River Terrace Forest where the lush carpet of herbs below changes from spring ephemerals such as trillium and trout lily to dense fern cover in summer. Continue going straight at the next junction where the IAT heads left towards Barnard Mountain. Along the next section of trail, the forest changes to a Spruce-Northern Hardwood Forest that provides nesting habitat for many bird species, including Sharp-shinned Hawk, Scarlet Tanager, Spruce Grouse, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Parula, Ovenbird, and Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Blackburnian Warblers. The final few hundred feet of trail approaching the falls are on a recently built, narrow trail.

The Wassataquoik was a center of activity in the 19th and early 20th centuries with visitors coming from afar to approach and climb Katahdin, many by way of Katahdin Lake. These included the mountain guide, Rev. Marcus Keep as early as 1846, and the artist Frederick Church as early as 1855. Henry David Thoreau had hoped to climb the mountain via the Wassataquoik when he descended the East Branch in 1857 - he had previously climbed most of the way up Katahdin from the south in 1846 - but had to give up the idea because one of his companions had injured his feet. In 1879, the young Theodore Roosevelt was guided up the mountain by William 'Bill' Sewall from Island Falls. To the dismay of his guide, he lost a boot crossing the stream, making it necessary to hike in his spare moccasins. The Appalachian Mountain Club held their August camps in the area in 1887 and again in 1916, using the Wassataquoik for their approach. A party including Percival Baxter visited in 1920, before he became governor of Maine. In 1939, young Donn Fendler was lost as a twelve-year-old boy on the mountain for nine days, beat the odds, and survived by following the Wassataquoik, where he was ultimately spotted downstream across from Lunksoos Camp. He later authored Lost on a Mountain in Maine. Wassataquoik Stream also has a rich logging history beginning in the 1840s with 11 million board feet of logs sent down river during peak operations. Log drives on the Wassataquoik were abandoned in about 1915 with the completion of the Draper pulpwood operations. In modern times, a vast network of logging roads has taken over as a means of transporting wood to area saw and paper mills.

Return to the Loop. Travel past Mile 16 where you will see a left-hand turn to exit the Loop Road.

A NOTE ABOUT ACCESS: The Loop Road is typically open to vehicle traffic beginning Memorial Day weekend through the first weekend in November. However, visitors should check www.nps.gov/kaww/playourvisit for the latest updates as access is weather dependent. The Swift Brook and Loop Roads are gravel roads passable to passenger cars with normal clearance. Low-clearance vehicles should exercise extreme caution. Be advised that this is a new National Monument. Amenities are limited and signage is sparse. Cell phone reception can be spotty or non-existent. There are no services or concessions within the Monument.

CREDITS

This interpretive map was made possible by the Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters in cooperation with the National Park Service.

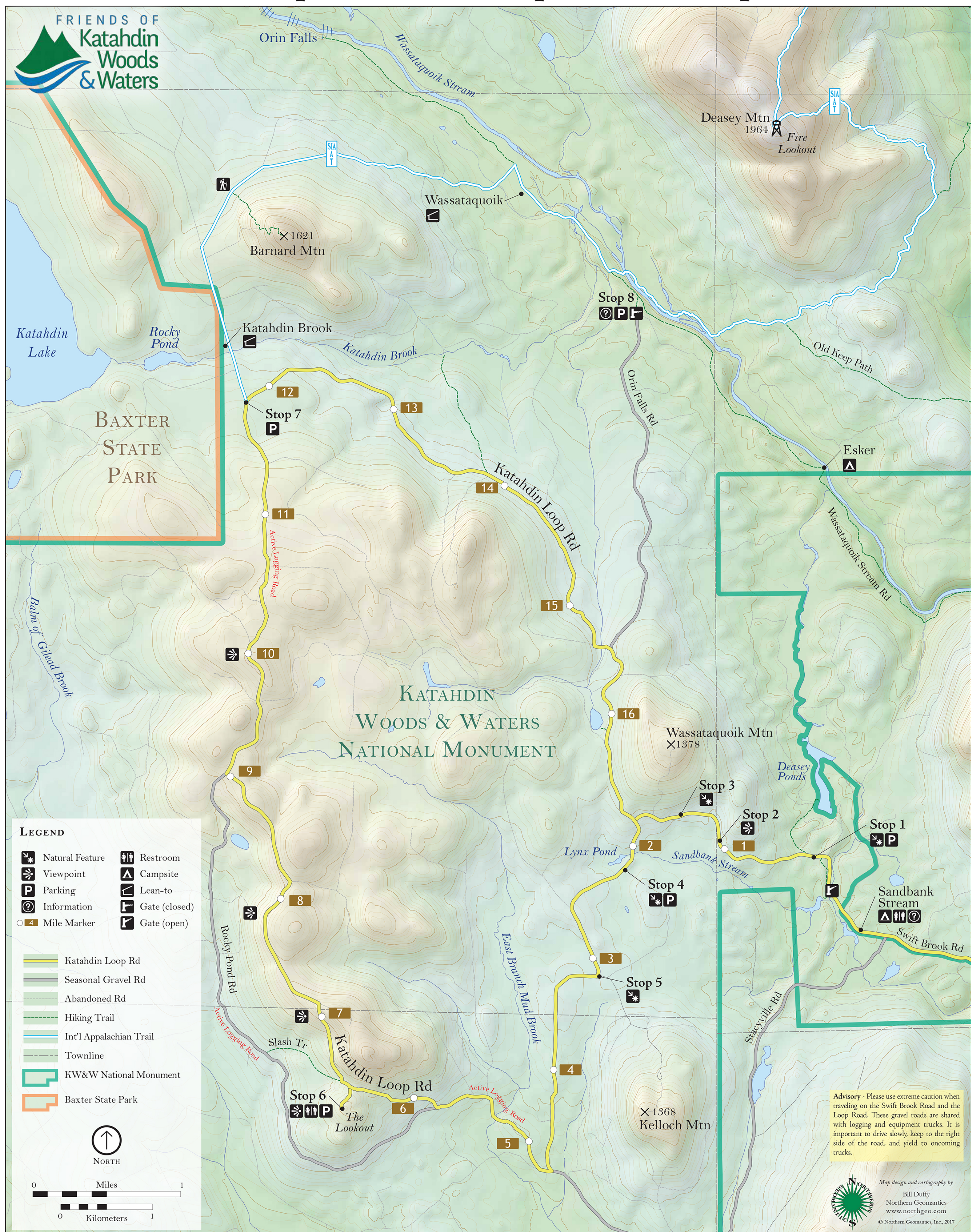
Special thanks to the Maine Chapter of the International Appalachian Trail for providing information and data, as well as Maine Woods Forever and Ellipsisville Plantation, Inc. for information and guidance. All photographs are by Anita Mueller, Mark Picard and Cathy Johnson. The text was written by Anita Mueller, with contributions from Bart DeWolf, Cathy Johnson and Don Hudson.

Please send all questions, corrections, and comments to Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters, PO Box 148, Portland, Maine 04112. (207) 518-9462.

To join the Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters in their efforts to help preserve, promote and protect this wonderful resource visit: friendsofkatahdinwoodsandwaters.org



KATAHDIN WOODS & WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT Loop Road Interpretive Map



Black Spruce Bog - Mark Picard