Baxter State Park - Natural Resource Director - PSM II

Millinocket, Maine, United States | Parks and Recreation | Full-time

Apply by: No close date

Pay range: 30 Confidential - $71,926.40 to $97,843.20 annually (Includes 16% non-standard pay).

Baxter State Park, a 209,644 acre wilderness Park in north-central Maine, seeks an experienced manager and excellent communicator with a science background to lead its Natural Resource and Visitor Experience Department, responsible for natural resource monitoring and management, information and education and visitor use management. This leadership-level role is critical as an advocate of the Park’s mission and as a key proponent for wilderness character, values, and visitor experience. The position contributes to policy development and decision-making as part of the Park’s leadership team and is based out of our headquarters in the nearby town of Millinocket. The successful candidate will be a seasoned supervisor, an experienced science communicator, and a proven leader.

As the leader of the Natural Resources and Visitor Experience Department, the Natural Resource Director reports to the Park Director and supervises the Park’s Lands Manager, Interpretative Specialist, and Office Associate II Supervisor (Reservations). The Lands Manager leads the management of the Scientific Forest Management Area in the northwest corner of the Park and is responsible for the Park’s road maintenance and improvement program and GIS. The Interpretive Specialist leads the development and delivery of informational and educational materials, programming, and social media for the Park. The Office Associate II Supervisor is a working supervisor in the Reservations office which fields informational and reservation inquiries to support and inform our 65,000 annual visitors.

A major focus of work for the incumbent will be to design and implement a comprehensive natural resource monitoring program that will increase scientific knowledge of the Park and facilitate better communication of the natural history to visitors and others. Multiple research and monitoring efforts have contributed to current knowledge of the Park’s natural history; the work now is to organize and synthesize that information, identify knowledge gaps, and work with researchers, staff, volunteers, and others to design a natural resource monitoring program that will support the needs of future Park management while capitalizing on the Park's position as a unique research venue.

The incumbent will also supervise and support the park information and education program including all informational resources and systems, interpretive programs, education and outreach, and related training and orientation for park staff. The Park’s interpretive philosophy, led by the Interpretive Specialist, focuses on integrating our unique wilderness concept into place-based education, borrowing from outdoor and environmental education curricula. Our gentle approach to education aims to foster a connection to nature and allow a sense of personal discovery, with the hope that appreciation follows and inspires a sense of kinship with the natural world. We seek to balance visitor safety information with enabling visitors to make choices within their tolerance for risk.

The role will contribute to high-level wilderness management decisions and policy making as a member of the Park’s leadership, which includes the Park Director, Chief Ranger, and HR Director. This will include significant contributions to the next iteration of the Park’s management plan. Policy and decisions often concern achieving the balance of wilderness preservation and recreational opportunity that Governor Baxter articulated in his Deeds of Trust. Understanding and effectively communicating these nuanced, sometimes difficult issues to staff, advisory groups, Park
visitors, and the public is an essential function for the incumbent, who will represent the Park to the outside world of natural resource, visitor use, and information and education professionals.

REPRESENTATIVE TASKS

Natural Resources Monitoring and Management

- Design and implement a comprehensive natural resource monitoring program that includes research, inventory, monitoring
  - Catalog past efforts to understand the natural history of the Park from all angles and forms, from peer-reviewed publications that may concern the dynamics of Fir waves to Park-led efforts to monitor Katahdin Artic butterflies, to determine and articulate the state of our natural history knowledge
  - Identify and prioritize gaps in the state of our knowledge
  - Promote or encourage science and research projects that meet Park needs by developing and cultivating a network of external partners
  - Work with the Research Advisory Committee and other recognized experts to define goals, scope, and content of monitoring efforts and lead or coordinate volunteers, staff, advisors, and/or researchers in related projects
  - Articulate the state of the Park’s natural resources to inform Park management, educate the public, and engage with the wider conservation community
  - Shape and management actions and management plan directions based on natural resource understanding
- Chair Park Research Committee to review applications based on park mission; administer and monitor approved research projects to ensure compliance with permit conditions and submission of reports/results (guidelines)
- Supervise and support the Lands Manager natural resource management and monitoring efforts in the Scientific Forest Management Area
- Lead natural resource monitoring and management portions of management plan revision

Information and Education

- Champion Governor Baxter’s wishes as stated in his Deeds of Trust, prioritizing natural resources over recreational access and advocate for wilderness values with staff, visitors, and the public
- Oversee the Office Associate II Supervisor in all administration of the reservations policies, procedures, and system updates; ensure information is consistently communicated to the public between reservations, gates, campgrounds, rangers
- Supervise and support the Interpretive Specialist in administration, development, and implementation of all informational, educational, and interpretive programs and materials, including those related to the SFMA: park signs; printed materials; website and social media; exhibits and displays; bulletin boards; visitor programs for a wide range of audiences; community outreach programs including schools; Katahdin Guidebook; phone, mail, and email inquiries and interpretive trails
- Supervise and support Interpretive Specialist to develop basic visitor use survey tools to assess visitor use patterns, preferences, and attitudes
• Develop and analyze data to better understand visitor use trends and the effectiveness of core messages and pre-visit information effectiveness in collaboration with the Interpretive Specialist and Office Associate II Supervisor
• Train park staff and partners regarding park mission, policies, and management
• Lead visitor use management planning as part of management plan revision

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The position requires a strong background and literacy in a broad range of natural resource sciences and management. A bachelor’s degree and six years experience in a natural resource or recreation management field, as well as three years’ supervisory experience, are required. Directly related experience may be substituted for educational requirements on a year-for-year basis.

Preference will be given for candidates with significant experience in formal media and external communications or similar responsibilities.

Preference will be given to those with an advanced degree in a scientific discipline and research experience.

Skills, knowledge, and abilities essential to the position:

• Humility to lean into a small team where we all must wear multiple hats
• Passion for natural history and science, with at least basic familiarity with several natural history topics such as botany, ecology, ornithology, zoology, geology
• Understanding of scientific and research principles
• Strong broad background in science and research, with literacy across multiple disciplines
• Ability to communicate complex concepts to a wide range of audiences
• Ability to scope, plan, and set a direction to achieve goals
• Skill in strategic relationship building and development
• Knowledge and understanding of visitor use needs, perceptions, trends, and demographics, and a passion for understanding and cultivating the best possible wilderness experience
• Ability to understand and analyze data as it pertains to visitor use and perceptions, effective messaging and feedback
• Excellent communication skills, especially in the sciences
• Knowledge of forest management principles
• Ability to lead, support, and delegate work to subordinates
• Knowledge of wilderness management principles
• Knowledge of data management and organization principles
• Knowledge of archiving techniques and general practices
• Knowledge of interpretive techniques and principles
• Familiarity with Leave No Trace principles

Benefits:
Baxter State Park, while independently-funded, does share the same benefit packages as the State employee system. For this position, that includes health and dental (state pays $14.60 biweekly, no employee deduction) as well as contributions to Maine Public Employees Retirement System. Vacation and sick time accrue at increasing rates with seniority in the state system.

To Apply:

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and apply through this post.

If you are unable to apply online, please contact Noreen Hart @ 207-624-6396 or via email at noreen.hart@maine.gov

More about the Park:

An amazing experience awaits you here! Baxter State Park is an iconic four-season wilderness park, home to Katahdin, the tallest peak in Maine. Some of the most remote, rugged country in the Northeast US lies within the 200,000-acre park, including 47 mountain summits, more than 50 pristine lakes and ponds, and over 200 miles of hiking trails. The park offers over 300 sites for camping and primitive lodging in rustic private cabins, shared bunkhouses, lean-tos, and tent sites. Our headquarters is in the gateway town of Millinocket.

As an independent public trust, donated to the state of Maine by former Governor Percival Baxter for the benefit of Maine’s people, Baxter State Park is a distinctive and special place. The Park has its own unique governance structure, is self-funded, and boasts an incredible landscape, recognized for its sanctity and power since humans first walked Katahdin’s rugged slopes. Park staff manage this iconic topography according to Governor Baxter’s wishes as he described them in his Deeds of Trust and other writings, which together shape a complex conservation vision. Central to the Park’s foundational principles is the directive that opportunities for recreation remain subordinate to the protection of the Park as “Forever Wild”. The Park is managed with limited and concentrated use models, mainly as a wilderness with a patchwork of recreational and land management uses draped over portions of the landscape.

You’ll find working at Baxter State Park is not just a job, it’s an adventure. We want you to bring your skills, experience, and your sense of wonder to Baxter State Park. By joining our hardworking team, you can inspire current and future generations to love and appreciate spending time in the wilderness.

Join us to preserve the wildness and protect the experience in this wild, rugged landscape.

Click Here for a Map of Baxter Park

The State of Maine does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in the provision of services, programs, activities, or employment. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), any qualified individual with a disability is eligible to participate in or benefit from any service, program, or activity provided by the State, or any of its departments or divisions. Likewise, the ADA requires equal employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities.
Baxter State Park is an equal opportunity employer.