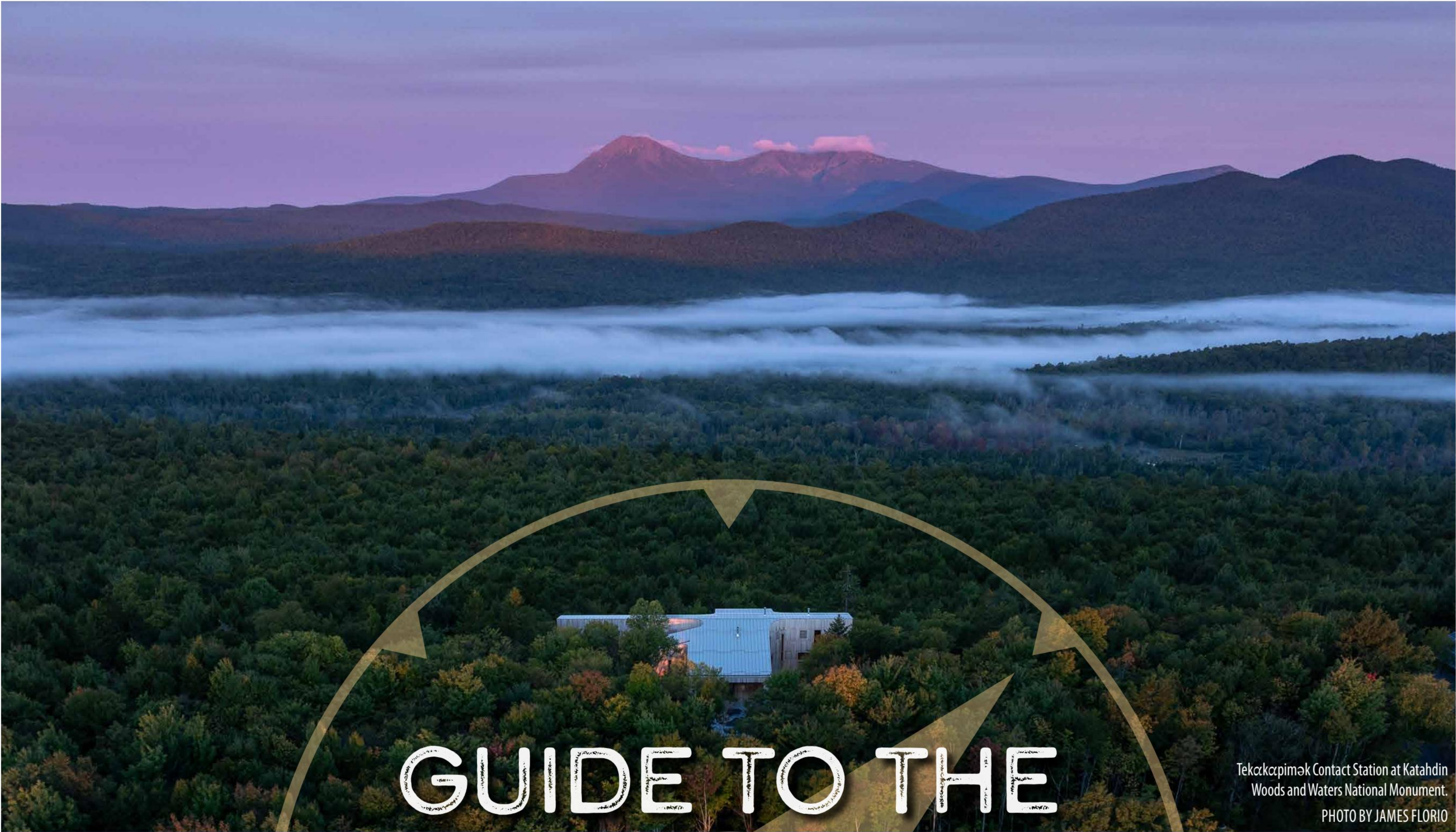




# GUIDE TO THE

Tekoccepimək Contact Station at Katahdin  
Woods and Waters National Monument.  
PHOTO BY JAMES FLORIO

# KATAHDIN

## WOODS AND WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT



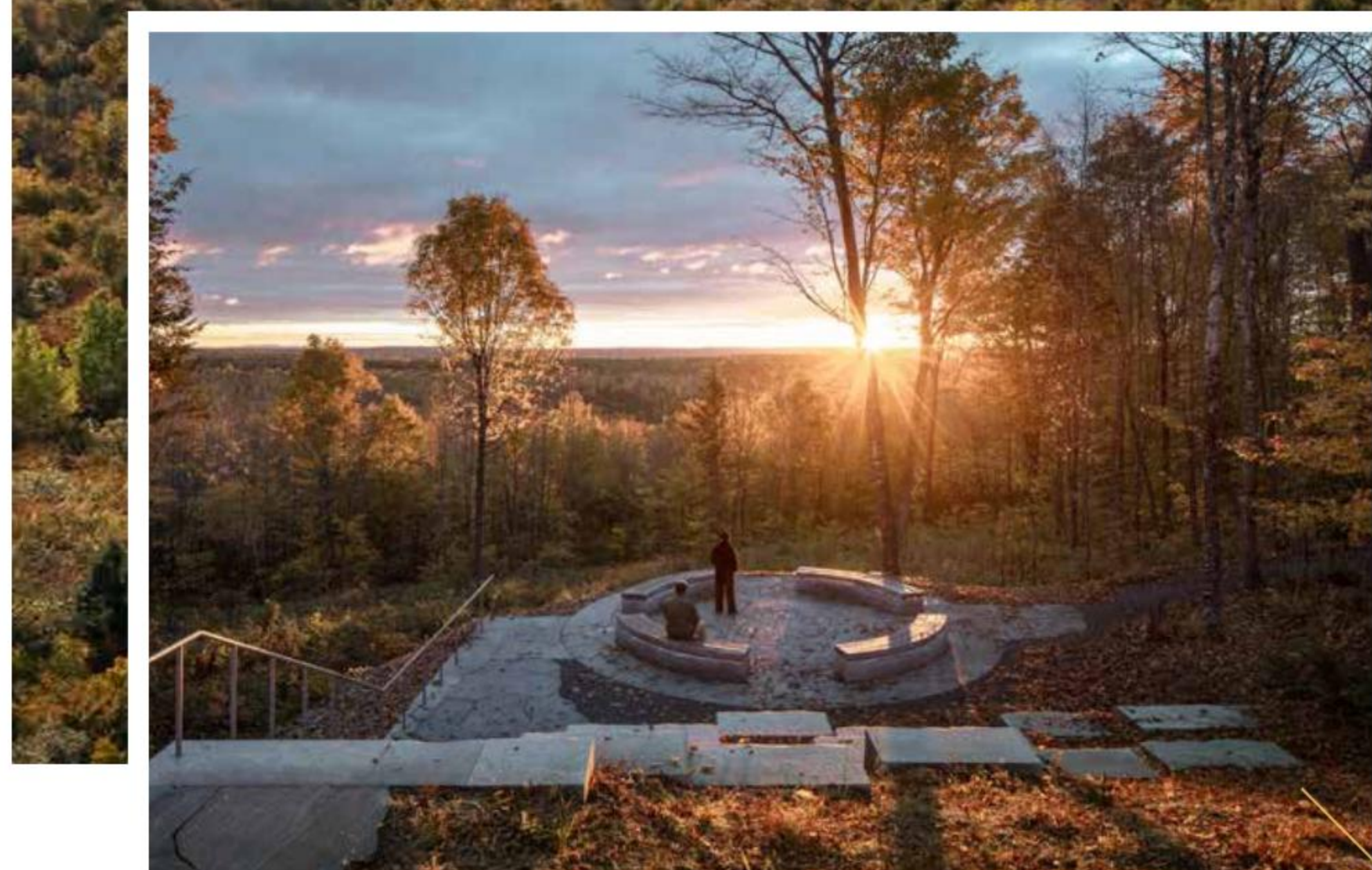
SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION OF THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS • APRIL 11, 2025

# Tekakapimək

## "AS FAR AS ONE CAN SEE"

### KWW'S NEW VISITOR CONTACT STATION

BY AISLINN SARNACKI



Set to open this year, the new visitor contact station at Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is a destination not to miss.

The stunning, modern, off-the-grid building features exhibits that introduce visitors to the landscape through the lens of the area's indigenous Wabanaki people, melding history and nature with art and culture.

"I think the contact station really fills a void in the visitor experience," said Brian Hinrichs, executive director of Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters. "The monument, rightly so, has a sort of rugged, backcountry reputation, and this is a much more accessible experience."

The contact station's name, Tekakapimək — pronounced "de gah-gah-bee-mook" — is from the language of the area's Penobscot people. Translated to English, it means "as far as one can see."

Located on the slope of Lookout Mountain at the southeast corner of the monument, this visitor hub features two lookouts. At one, you can look west, across the monument to Katahdin, Maine's tallest mountain, and up the East Branch of the Penobscot River.

At the other lookout, the view is to the east — a place to greet the rising sun. There visitors can sit on the curved benches of a granite gathering circle,

at the center of which is a symbol that represents four tribes of the Wabanaki Nations: the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Mi'kmaq Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Nation.

"Only 30 minutes off the highway, you can take a short walk, get incredible views and also learn some remarkable history," said Hinrichs. "You can also experience a building and design process that is really unlike anything else in the National Park Service."

Thoughtful planning and attention to detail has yielded a unique experience for visitors. For example, throughout the 23-acre property, granite blocks are laid out to mimic the water and banks of the East Branch, which flows through the landscape below.

Site signs are detailed with what looks like the lashing on a birch bark canoe, an important mode of transportation for the Wabanaki. No plants were brought to the site. Instead, the design fosters the growth of native seeds. And in keeping with KWW being an International Dark Sky Sanctuary, limited outdoor lighting is used.

The building itself was designed by Saunders Architecture, which worked with Wabanaki advisors to steer clear of colonial styles and create a structure in harmony with the landscape. With



This lifecycle of the Atlantic salmon exhibit includes alabaster salmon by Tim Shay, Penobscot.  
PHOTO BY JAMES FLORIO  
COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS

expansive windows and curving walls, the building is filled with natural light and places for people to sit and enjoy the views — or reflect on what they’ve learned.

In addition to serving as an introduction to the monument, the building is a celebration of Wabanaki culture, both past and present.

“Every panel, every exhibit is so rich with storytelling and science and history and mythology,” Hinrichs said. “It’s really just a combination of so many elements.”

Before or after touring the contact station building and its many exhibits, you may want to

walk the property’s easy, wheelchair-accessible nature trails. Along the way, you’ll find interpretive signs that offer information about the nature surrounding you.

“You could fill out half a day there,” Hinrichs said. “Bring a picnic.”

An abundance of information about Tekakapimək is available on the Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters website, [friendsofkww.org/tekakapimek](http://friendsofkww.org/tekakapimek).

An official opening date has yet to be announced by the National Park Service. However, monument openings, closures, and other news can be found at [nps.gov/kaww](http://nps.gov/kaww).



(Opposite page) The Tekakapimək visitor contact station, inside and out. The building was designed by Saunders Architecture, which worked with Wabanaki advisors.  
PHOTOS BY JAMES FLORIO / COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS

(Above) Tekakapimək artisan clay tiles in production. Left to right: Gabriel Frey, Passamaquoddy; Suzanne Greenlaw, Maliseet; Nolan Altvater, Passamaquoddy; and Giuliana O’Connell, Malley Weber, and Sarah Sockbeson, Penobscot.

PHOTO BY ERIN HUTTON / COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS

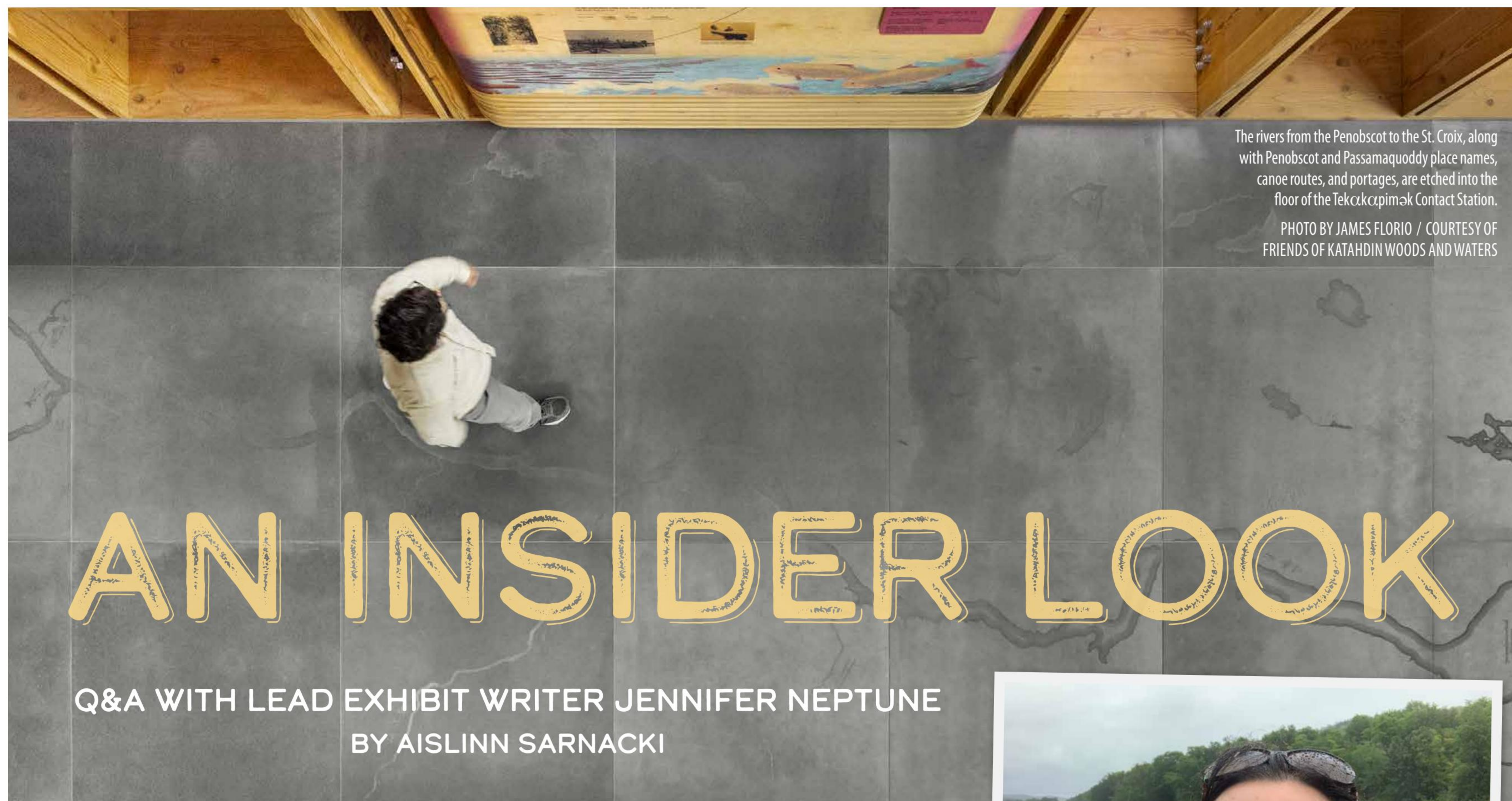
(Below) Working together to weave the Tekakapimək Welcome Desk are, left to right, Shane Perley-Dutcher, Wolastoq (Maliseet) Neqotkuk Wolasqiyik (Tobique First Nation) in New Brunswick; Geo Neptune, Passamaquoddy; Sarah Sockbeson, Penobscot; and Gabriel Frey, Passamaquoddy.

*Note: All Wabanaki Cultural Knowledge and Intellectual Property shared within this project is owned by the Wabanaki Nations.*



## AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT VISITING KWW

ALWAYS CHECK **NPS.GOV/KAWW** before starting any adventure to Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. The site provides the latest alerts and information, including which sections of the Monument are open or closed. One major note for the summer of 2025: The Loop Road's Katahdin Overlook will be closed for renovations, though spectacular views can be found at Tekakapimək and from many of the summits in the park.



**J**ennifer Neptune is a Wabanaki artist, basket-maker, outdoor guide, author, teacher, and so much more. A citizen of the Penobscot Nation, she carries on the traditions of her ancestors and is passionate about sharing the knowledge and stories of her people.

Neptune is the lead exhibit writer for Tekakapimək Contact Station in Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Her artwork can also be found throughout the building.

To give you an insider look at Tekakapimək, we sent Neptune a few questions. Here are her answers:

#### WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT PUTTING TOGETHER THE EXHIBITS?

One of my favorite things about working on the exhibits was finding creative ways to tell the story of this place through both western science and traditional knowledge. The geology of how the Penobscot River came to be reborn after the last ice age, and the Penobscot traditional story of the water famine and creation of our water clans is one example of two stories of the same event leading to a deeper understanding of place.

#### ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN THE PROCESS?

The biggest challenge was condensing down complex histories and ideas into short, relatable sentences without losing the importance, truth, and essence of the story. As a writer, I could have written essays and entire books on any one topic, so it was definitely my biggest challenge.

#### THE CONTACT STATION IS FULL OF STUNNING AND MEANINGFUL ARTWORK, INCLUDING SOME OF YOUR OWN. WHEN PEOPLE ARE VIEWING YOUR ART, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THEM TO KNOW?

The artwork that I contributed was inspired by, and meant to honor, our ancestors who called this place their home for thousands of years before us, and who protected our language, stories, and culture through incredibly hard times. Because they cared about our future, we are still here and able to share with visitors, as well as keep our traditions strong for future generations after us.

I used designs from birch bark etchings, root club carvings, beadwork, and carved powder horns for the



designs on the panels above each of the fireplaces. The design for the beadwork on the river panel came from a beadwork design on a traditional Penobscot women's peaked cap, which I elaborated on to represent the plants along the riverbanks.

#### WHAT'S ONE THING IN THE BUILDING THAT YOU HOPE VISITORS DON'T MISS?

The view of Katahdin from the western balcony is beautiful and ever changing depending on the time of day and weather conditions. It's awe-inspiring and hard to miss.

Something a bit more subtle that I hope visitors don't miss would be the floor. The rivers from the Penobscot to the St. Croix, along with Penobscot and Passamaquoddy



(Left) Jennifer Neptune poses with her beadwork at Tekocxpimək Contact Station.  
(Opposite, inset) Neptune paddling the East Branch of the Penobscot River.  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF JENNIFER NEPTUNE

*Note: All Wabanaki Cultural Knowledge and Intellectual Property shared within this project is owned by the Wabanaki Nations.*

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place names, canoe routes, and portages, are etched into the floor. One of my favorite things is seeing the surprise when visitors notice and then watching them look for the places that are special to them.

#### OUTSIDE THE BUILDING ARE NATURE TRAILS WITH MORE EDUCATIONAL DISPLAYS. WHAT WERE YOU HOPING TO SHARE THROUGH THOSE TRAILSIDE PANELS?

The trailside panels are meant to orient and introduce visitors to the history, landscape, trees, animals, and birds they can see and experience in Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

#### IN WHAT WAYS DID TRIBAL MEMBERS THROUGHOUT MAINE HAVE INPUT ON THIS PROJECT?

An advisory board with representatives from the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations was formed early on in the project to contribute, advise, and make decisions on all aspects of the building, including landscape,

exhibits, and art. The Wabanaki Advisory Board, as it came to be called, was also instrumental in protecting all intellectual property of tribal nations and Indigenous artists (language, stories, cultural knowledge) used in the building.

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES THIS CONTACT STATION SPECIAL?

There are many reasons this Visitor Contact Station is special — the building is entirely off grid and has many environmental features meant to reduce its impact on the natural world. Many local builders and businesses worked on the construction of the building and roads. Local materials were used as much as possible.

The building in itself is a work of art. But I think what makes the Visitor Contact Station unique is the opportunity to learn about Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument from the worldview of the people who have lived here and loved this place for as long as there have been people in this landscape. Through language, stories, and artwork, the love for this place shines through.



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New tent sites at Lunksoos Campground are conveniently located to access the East Branch of the Penobscot River and Tekoccpimək Contact Station, and just a 40 minute drive to many of the Monument's signature hikes along Loop Road.

PHOTO BY TAYLOR WALKER

COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS

## PLAN AN OVERNIGHT ADVENTURE AT KWW

BY KATIE SMITH

**W**ith camping season around the corner, it's time to plot and plan your next adventure. Whether you're craving a casual family camping trip or a solo vacation to explore one of Maine's most idyllic spots, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (KWW) is a sanctuary like no other. While trips to KWW will help you get back in touch with nature, like any camping trip to a remote area, they require planning.

### A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER WHILE PLANNING YOUR TRIP:

Although you can camp all year round, reservations for campsites can only be made between Memorial Day weekend

and Oct. 31 on recreation.gov, and they are highly recommended. There are a few campsites you can drive to, including Sandbank Stream Campground, Lunksoos Campground, and Upper East Branch Campsite.

If you're craving more of an adventure, or these sites are full, be prepared: the rest of the campsites require some hiking, paddling, or biking to get there. If you're looking to request a drive-up campsite, be sure to make a reservation in plenty of time.

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument currently offers 18 campsites, 4 three-sided lean-tos, and 2 huts. The 2 huts are only reservable during

the winter. Camping in non-designated sites is not permitted.

All campers are required to carry out all trash and supplies.

KWW also requires that all firewood burned on the site for campfires is supplied by a local vendor less than 50 miles away. Campfires can only be kindled with a valid Maine Forest Service campfire permit and only in designated locations such as established campsites and lean-tos. You can obtain a free permit before you visit by contacting the Maine Forest Service at (207) 435-7963.

There are bear boxes to keep all your food safe from the wild animals, and it's important to make sure that you bring

plenty of drinking water, or a way to filter water, since there are no sites at KWW with potable water.

Also, plan on bringing some yummy food to cook while you're enjoying the Maine woods. There are no restaurants on site, but there are plenty of picnic tables to sit and enjoy a family meal or quiet snack.

And if you tire of cooking over the fire, there are restaurants in towns nearby. A list is available on the Katahdin Chamber of Commerce website at [katahdinmaine.com](http://katahdinmaine.com).

The camp sites are spacious, clean, and there's plenty to do to explore the outdoors such as dipping your toes in the water, hiking, and biking.

# CAMPFIRE FOIL PACKETS

NEED INSPIRATION FOR A HEARTY CAMPING MEAL? TRY THIS RECIPE



**INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken meat, cubed
- 2 onions, diced
- 1 (8 ounce) package sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and sliced into strips
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and sliced into strips
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 4 small potatoes, cubed
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced

**DIRECTIONS:**

Build a campfire and allow the fire to burn until it has accumulated a bed of coals. Rake the coals into a flatbed on one side of the fire.

Combine chicken, onion, mushrooms, peppers, garlic, and potatoes in a large bowl or a large re-sealable plastic bag. Pour in olive oil and lemon juice and toss to coat.

Evenly divide the mixture between 4 large sheets of aluminum foil. Top each with another sheet of foil and roll up the edges tightly. Double wrap each packet with another sheet of foil.

Cook over the preheated coals until chicken is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear, about 40 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).

Maine Outdoor Properties Team

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The movement of firewood significantly accelerates the spread of destructive forest pests. For example, about three-quarters of the early infestations of **emerald ash borer** in Michigan were directly tied to this mode of spread. Some domestic spread of the invasive **Asian longhorned beetle** has also been traced to the movement of infested firewood.

**The next time you head out on an outdoor adventure, follow these firewood tips**

- Leave firewood at home.
- Buy firewood from as close to your destination as possible. Find sources at [firewoodscout.org](http://firewoodscout.org).
- If you've already transported firewood, don't leave it or bring it home – burn it! Try to burn it within 24 hours, and burn any small pieces of bark and debris that may have fallen from the wood.

Help prevent the spread of insects and diseases that harm our forests by choosing heat-treated firewood or firewood from close to your destination. **Find more tips at [maine.gov/firewood](http://maine.gov/firewood).**

**Certified, heat-treated firewood is the best choice. Buy firewood with a state seal certifying the wood has been Heat-Treated to 160 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 75 minutes.**



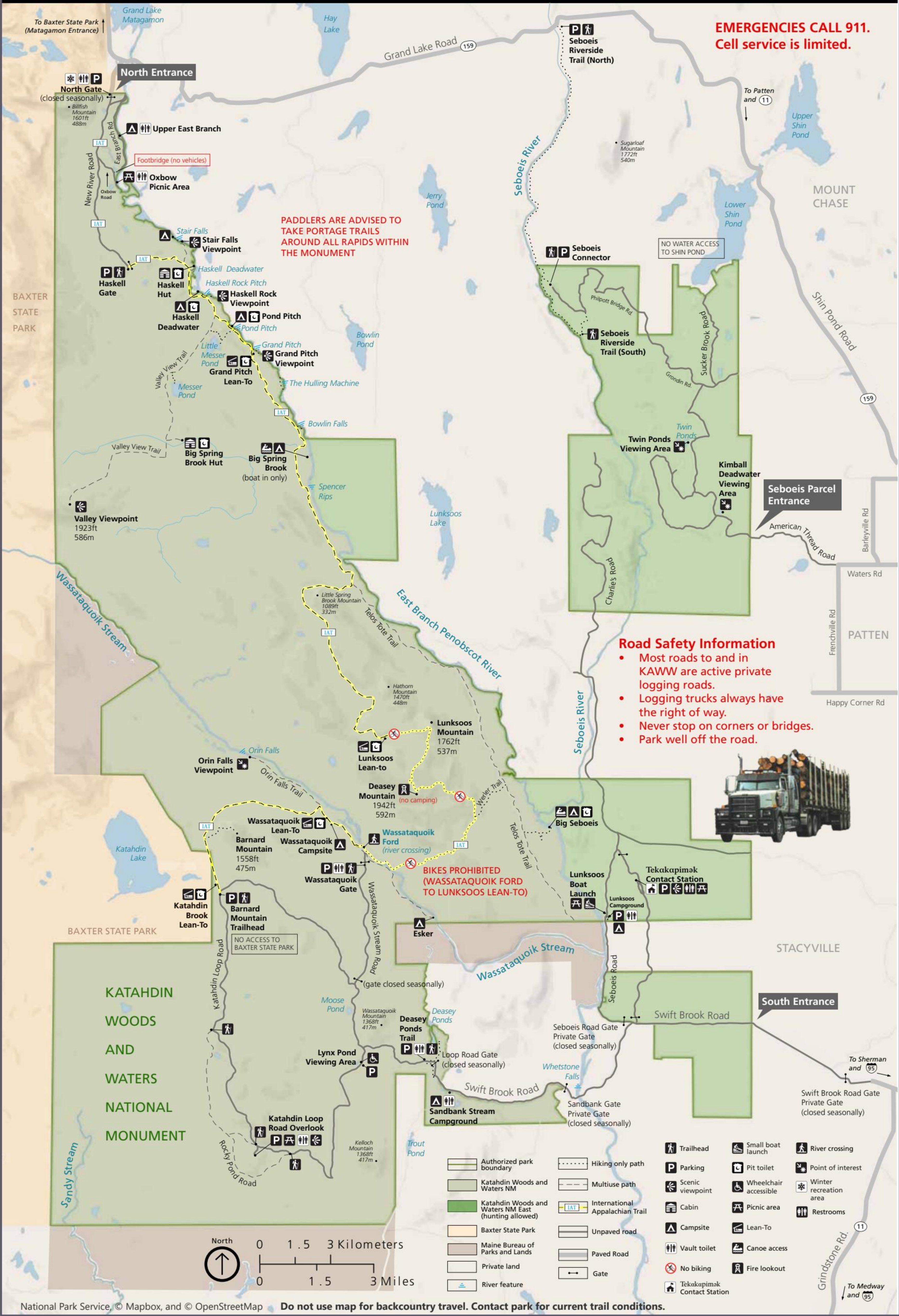
**What exactly is local?**

When it comes to untreated firewood, 50 miles is too far, 10 miles or less is best.



# Katahdin Woods and Waters

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Monument  
Maine



For the most up-to-date information, download the **National Park Service App** for interactive maps, including points of interest, roads, trails, and other information to plan your trip. Cellular service is limited in many areas of the monument. In order to make use of the app, follow these simple steps prior to your arrival.

1. Download the app.
2. Search “Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.”
3. Below Alerts banner, click the toggle next to: “Save this park for offline use.”

Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters is another great resource. Staff at the organization are available to help you plan a trip. Donations to the organization help to support the national monument and surrounding communities:

**[friendsofkww.org/donate](http://friendsofkww.org/donate)**





## A ROUND-UP OF THE EASIER HIKES AT KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS

BY CRYSTAL SANDS | PHOTOS BY AISLINN SARNACKI

Located on 237 square miles of mountains and forested land, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument offers something for everyone who loves nature and the great Maine outdoors. Always a hiker and lover of nature, I was devastated last year when health problems kept me from summer and fall hikes, but as I make progress in my health, my longing for Maine's nature has me interested in beautiful hikes that wouldn't be too difficult for me as I work to get my health back and my feet under me.

While there are certainly some fantastic challenging hikes for more advanced hikers in the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, I was pleased to

learn there are easier hikes as well. So, if you are like me and have had some health struggles or are hiking with children who are not yet able to handle more strenuous hikes, there are many options available for easy hikes that allow you to enjoy nature and take in some of the scenic views within Katahdin Woods and Waters.

Elise Goplerud, the Education Coordinator for Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters, said, "With over 50 miles of trails, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is a wonderful place for hiking and offers many hikes that highlight the beauty of the land without too much challenge."

Some easy hikes to consider include the Lynx Trail, Deasey Pond Trail, and

Orin Falls. The Lynx Trail is very short at .2 miles and is ADA accessible. Goplerud said she has seen moose and beaver from the viewing platform on this trail. Both the Deasey Pond Trail and Orin Falls hike are longer and not ADA accessible but still not strenuous hikes. The Deasey Pond trail is just over a mile and does have a slight elevation but ends with a view of beautiful Deasey Pond. The Orin Falls hike is a bit more challenging and is listed as a moderate hike, rather than easy, but this may be because of the length. It is six miles round trip but is a flat, wide trail, and if the water levels are high, the falls are spectacular.

Another longer hike with a wide, flat trail without many obstacles is the International Appalachian Trail to Stair Falls or Haskell Rock. Both of these hikes are listed as easy hikes at the Katahdin Woods and Waters site. They are each about 4 miles round trip, and Goplerud emphasized they are both “mellow” hikes.

Goplerud also emphasized the importance of using the Katahdin Woods and Waters site at [nps.gov/kaww/planyourvisit/hiking-at-katahdin-woods-and-waters.htm](https://nps.gov/kaww/planyourvisit/hiking-at-katahdin-woods-and-waters.htm) to check for the ease level of any trail.

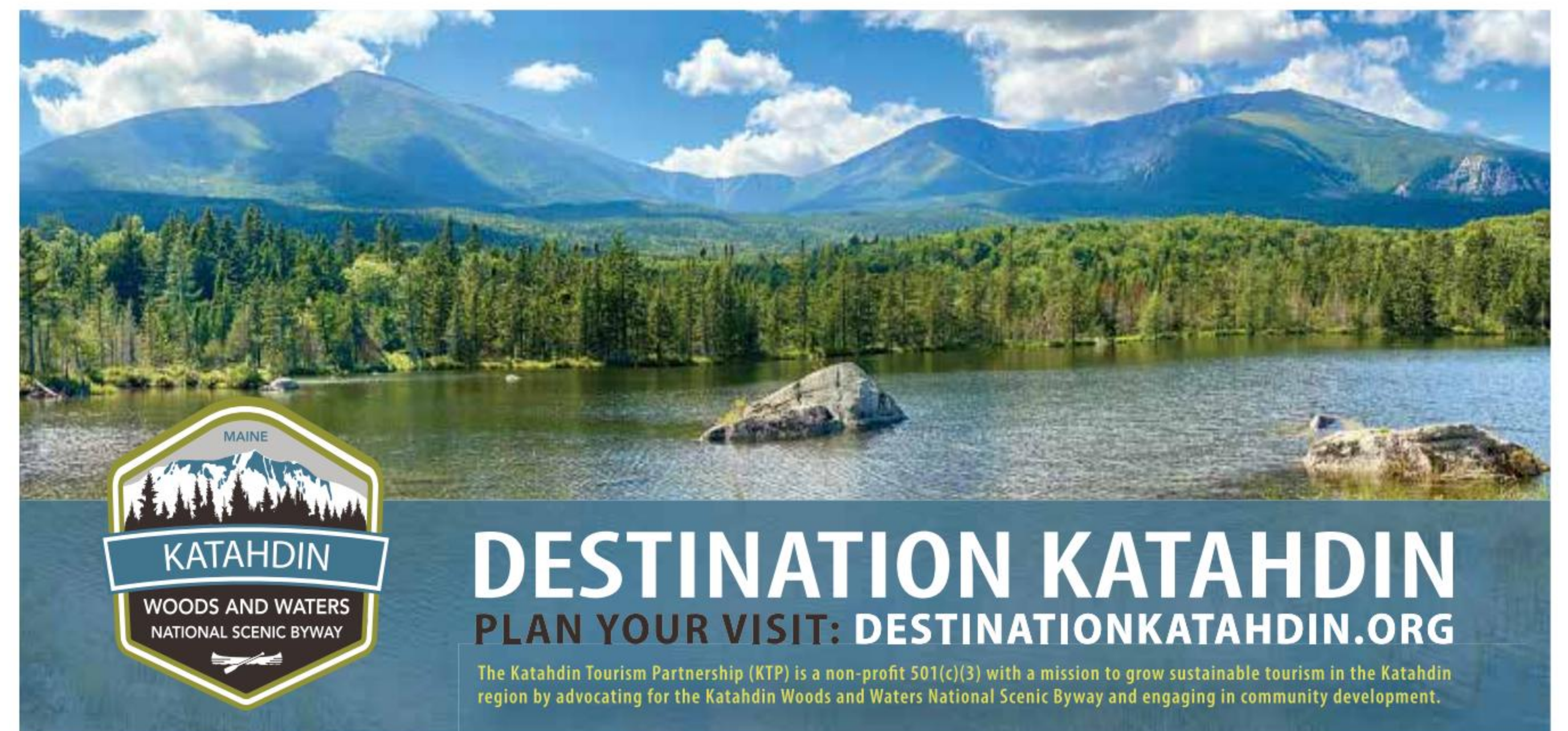
If a hiking trail is marked as easy, there are certain things visitors can expect.

“These trails are more accessible, with relatively flat or gently rolling terrain, well-marked paths, and shorter distances. Many of them have minimal elevation gain and avoid technical features like steep scrambles or rocky sections,” Goplerud said.

While it’s important to be prepared any time you head out on a hike, if you are recovering from health issues or hiking with little ones, being prepared and knowing where you are going is critical. Wearing sturdy shoes, bringing plenty of water and snacks, and downloading maps are all good strategies. Because cell phone service is spotty at the monument, Katahdin Woods and Waters recommends a GPS, especially for longer trips,

and downloading trail maps, which can be viewed on your phone even if you are offline. In the summer, bug protection is a must, and during hunting season, wearing blaze orange is important.

Even if you are not the most experienced hiker, there is so much at Katahdin Woods and Waters to explore and enjoy. Learning about easier hikes gives me hope that I can spend this summer and fall back in nature — which is good for both my physical and mental health.



## Discover the Katahdin Region

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Stars rotate in the night sky over the East Branch of the Penobscot River, in this time exposure at the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

AP PHOTO/ROBERT F. BUKATY, FILE

# LOOK UP AT THE STARS OVER KATAHDIN

## EXPLORE THE EXCEPTIONAL NIGHT SKY AT KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS

BY EMILY BAER

For thousands of years the nighttime skies over New England were an unfettered spectacle. These days, not so much. Over time, increased light pollution at night has meant our night skies are often clouded with artificial lights, glare, and sideglow. But northern Maine's Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, which covers approximately 87,500 acres, is a rare nocturnal exception — and an extraordinary one at that.

Soon after the monument was established in 2016, a dedicated group of community members, dark sky advocates, and local stakeholders began organizing the effort to recognize and protect the skies above Katahdin.

In 2020, the monument was certified as a Dark Skies Sanctuary by the DarkSky International. This rare certification is only the second of its kind in the National Park Service and a testament to the rare beauty of our northern forests. Without commercial power sources within the monument's territory, it is the only place in the northeast where you can look up at

the night sky and see it the way the Wabanaki have since time immemorial. It is the same sky that Henry David Thoreau, Theodore Roosevelt, and countless other visitors to the region have quietly admired for hundreds of years.

"When you look up at the skies, there is a really incredible sense of time travel. You're connecting to nature and connecting to your place within it," said Brian Hinrichs, executive director of Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters (FKWW). "It is a wonderful feature of being able to spend time there when it gets dark."

According to DarkSky International specifications, each sanctuary must meet or exceed three key criteria: the Milky Way is readily visible to the naked eye, no artificial light sources yield significant glare, and light domes are dim or otherwise restricted. Each year, the National Park Service does night sky recordings to ensure that lighting standards within the monument are maintained, and each fall, Hinrichs and his colleagues invite the public to help celebrate the achievement.

"Our annual Stars Over Katahdin event is a great opportunity for people to experience dark skies for themselves and to learn alongside expert astronomers and night-sky educators," Hinrichs said.

The event is free and open to the public but registration is required. Festivities usually kick off in the late afternoon but Campfire Chats and guided night sky viewing with state-of-the-art telescopes start just after dusk.

"It is a family friendly event," Hinrichs said. "We're in a big field at night, so it may be challenging for little ones, but we welcome everyone."

While the event is a unique opportunity to gather with fellow-stargazers, it is far from the only chance you'll have to take in the magnificence of sanctuary skies above Katahdin. In fact, summer is considered by many to be the best time to view the Milky Way. A new moon will provide for the darkest skies, and seasonal weather patterns may impact what you can see.

But regardless of when you visit the monument, it'll be an adventure so it is critical to do a little research beforehand.

"It is a rugged and rustic landscape," Hinrichs said. "It is really important to prepare appropriately and map out your plans in advance."

That is especially true if you plan to explore at night. Hinrichs recommends exploring the National Park website which contains detailed information about road conditions, trail closures, and local weather. They also have simple, easy-to-access information about stargazing for all ages.

"Whether you're camping in the monument or just spending a little bit of time there at night, you can really feel the peace and the magnitude of having those pristine dark skies," he said.

It may just be something you have to see for yourself.

To learn more about Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters and their upcoming events and educational opportunities, please visit [friendsofkww.org](http://friendsofkww.org).



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POLARIS GENERAL 4 XP 1000



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# KATAHDIN

## WOODS AND WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT



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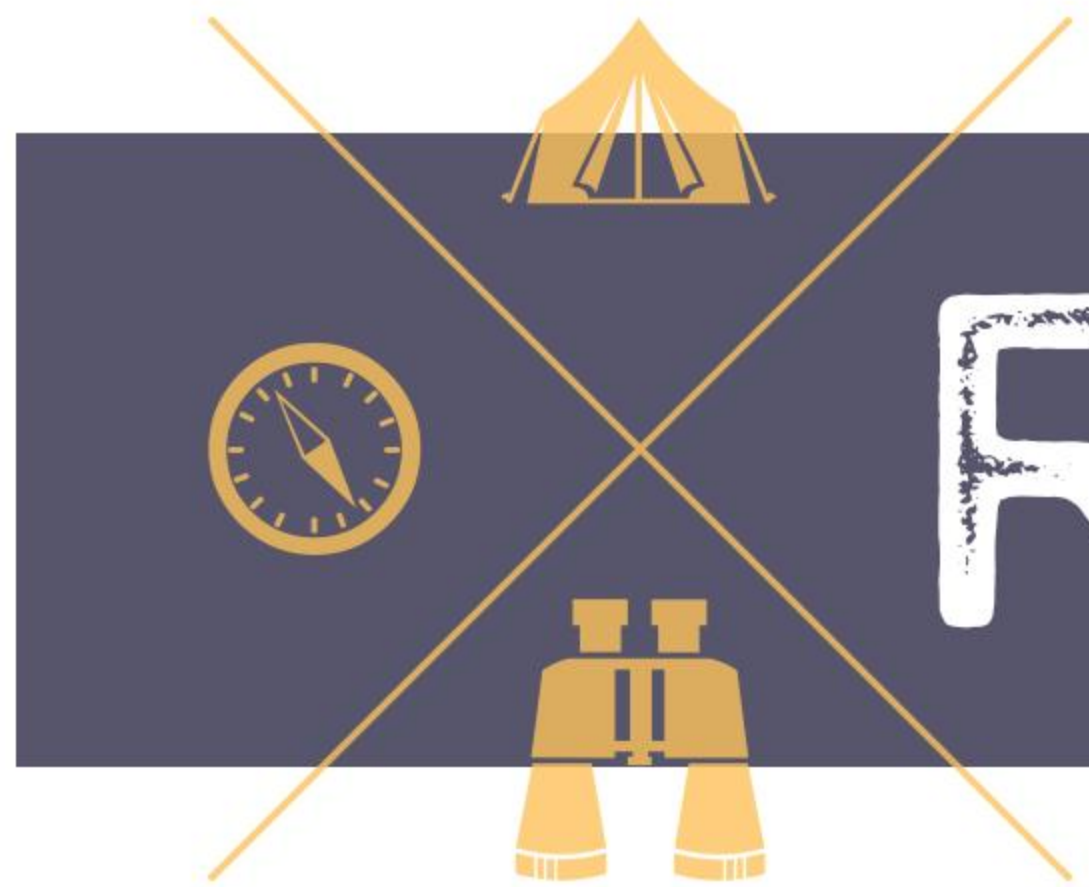
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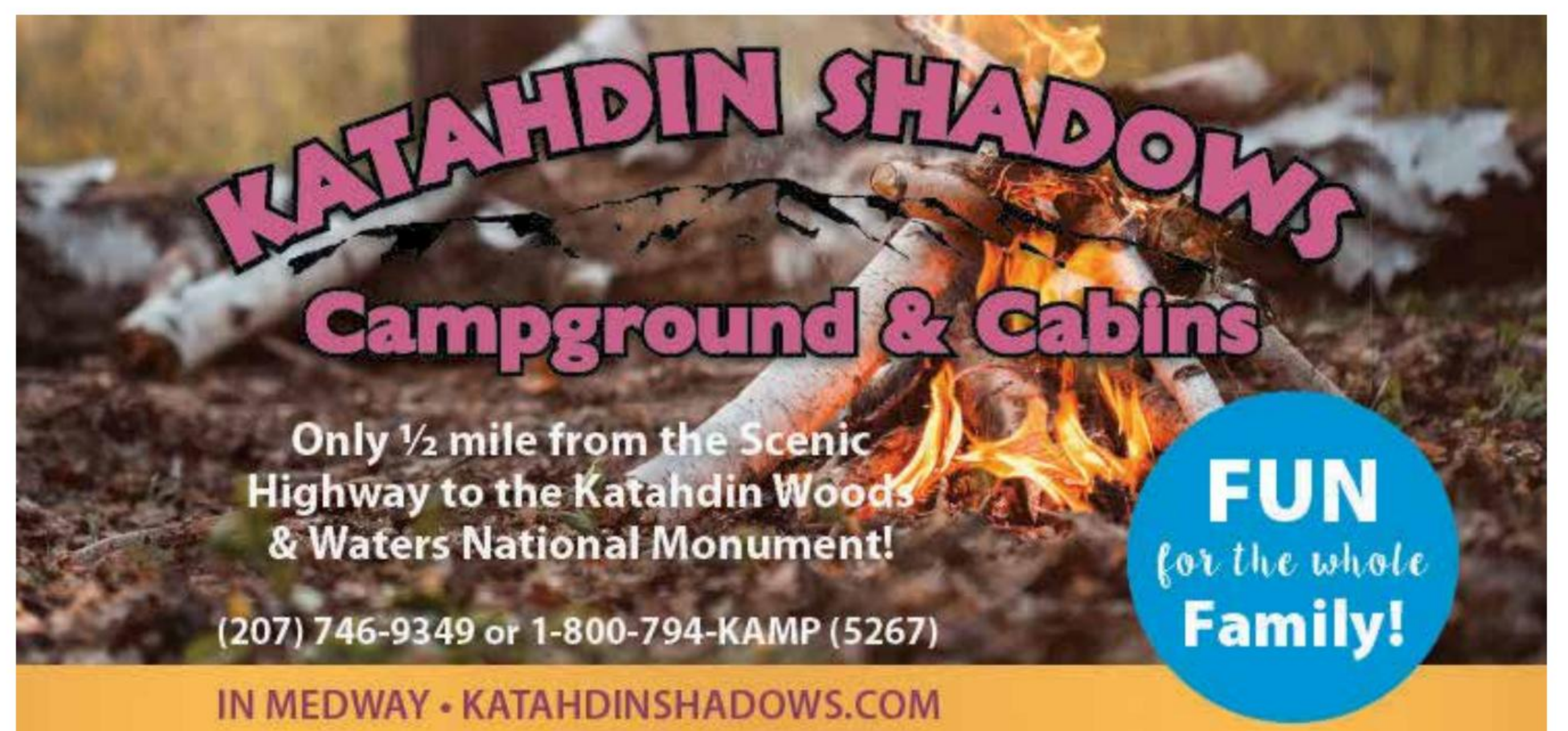
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