

“Leave No Trace” Winter Visitor Guidelines

1. Fires are allowed consistent with Maine law. Please minimize the use of warming fires, keep fires small, use only down deadwood and cut no live trees or branches. Do not cut, remove or burn dead wood from within 25 feet of streams or shorelines as these create important shoreline fish habitat.
2. Hunting and fishing is allowed according to state laws and regulations. To protect the ecosystem, carry out all live and dead bait; do not dump it on the ground or in the water. Only temporary tree stands are allowed according to state law. Do not cut vegetation for firing lanes.
3. Ice fishing shacks may not be stored on Conservancy land for any period of time. Maine laws and penalties apply.
4. Winter camping is discouraged due to the extreme weather conditions commonly encountered. Contact The Nature Conservancy for guidelines if you plan to camp in the winter.
5. There are few latrines or facilities accessible during the winter months. Please plan to pack out solid human waste or find a location far from wetlands and areas of public use.
6. To avoid disturbing native wildlife and to prevent the introduction of invasive plant species, horses, pets, and other domestic animals are not permitted on the property.
7. Pack it in, pack it out! To preserve an enjoyable experience for you and others, please remove all trash and leave the area as clean or better than you found it



Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

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Snowmobile Use

This nature preserve is intended for the protection of the native wildlife, forest, and wetland habitats and is open for public enjoyment. Please enjoy your visit and adhere to these rules.

- Snowmobiles are allowed on designated trails only as shown on the attached map or as marked on the ground. If this map and posted trail markings conflict, the signage and markings on the ground should be followed.
- As conditions permit, additional local club trails are maintained in the area; maps and information are available from the Northern Timber Cruisers in Millinocket.
- Wildlife ranging in size from mice to moose lives in fragile balance with Maine’s harsh winter environment. Snowmobile use off of designated trails can disturb winter shelter use by deer and moose or destroy the invisible burrows of small mammals beneath the snow.
- All Terrain Vehicles (ATV’s) are not permitted on the property at any time.
- Please ride safely and follow the laws and guidelines of the Maine State Snowmobile Program:
www.maine.gov/doc/parks/programs/snowmobile/index.html

Please... Be respectful of the land, water and your fellow visitors to protect this natural resource for all of us.

For further information contact:

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The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.



Debsconeag Lakes Wilderness Area



Nestled in the shadow of Mount Katahdin, just south of Baxter State Park, The Nature Conservancy’s Debsconeag Lakes Wilderness Area (DLWA) is a vital link in nearly 500,000 acres of contiguous conservation land.

Debsconeag means “carrying place,” named by native people for the portage sites where they carried their birchbark canoes around rapids and waterfalls. The DLWA contains the highest concentration of pristine, remote ponds in New England, as well as thousands of acres of mature forest.



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Debsconeag Natural History

Nearly half the forests in the DLWA show no signs of past logging. Trees as old as 300 years are found in more remote areas. Old, undisturbed forests like these are rich in diversity and complexity. The forest floor is covered with logs and mosses and ancient trees and whether standing or fallen, provide habitat for many woodland creatures.

Portions of the DLWA support excellent examples of natural forest communities including an old-growth hemlock forest and a spruce-northern hardwood forest, with red spruce, sugar maple, white birch, American beech, and yellow birch. Towering white pines are scattered throughout the property.

To date, 215 plant species have been documented in the DLWA. Wildlife inhabiting the property's rich forests include pine marten, spruce grouse, moose, bobcat, black bear, and boreal chickadees.

The magical lakes for which the DLWA is named are home to lake and brook trout and rare freshwater mussels. Bald Eagles are a common sight along the shoreline of the West Branch Penobscot River.



Welcome to The Nature Conservancy's Debsconeag Lakes Wilderness Area (DLWA). The DLWA is a 46,271-acre Ecological Reserve that is open to the public for a variety of recreational uses. Please follow the guidelines on the back of this brochure when visiting the DLWA and consult the map for places to hike, camp and paddle.

Ecological Reserves

Ecological reserves are areas set aside for conservation and study of Maine's ecosystems. Ideally, reserves are large enough to withstand storms, diseases and other natural disturbances and to provide secure habitat for wide-ranging species like moose, fisher, bobcat and pine marten. Ecological reserves are important to scientists studying how nature responds to challenges such as climate change, forest pests and diseases, and airborne pollution.



The Katahdin Forest Project

In 2002, The Nature Conservancy used an unprecedented strategy to protect 241,000 acres in the heart of Northern Maine then owned by Great Northern Paper. The Conservancy financed Great Northern's mortgage of \$50 million in exchange for a 195,000-acre easement bordering Baxter State Park and ownership of the 46,271-acre Debsconeag Lakes Wilderness Area.

The Katahdin Forest Project was the first of its kind in the world—the first time a nonprofit organization had taken on a paper company's mortgage in exchange for conservation. This debt-for-nature swap was intended to meet the Conservancy's conservation goals while supporting the economy of Northern Maine.

In 2006, the Conservancy transferred the 195,000-acre Katahdin Forest Conservation Easement to the State, along with a stewardship endowment of half a million dollars. Except for some areas around pre-existing camp lots the DLWA remains as an ecological reserve in Conservancy ownership.

