

National Park and National Recreation Area

FAQs

1. Where would the National Park and National Recreation Area be located?

The proposed National Park and National Recreation Area would be located directly east of Baxter State Park. The East Branch of the Penobscot River diagonally bisects the area; the National Park would be located west of the East Branch and the National Recreation Area would be located east of the East Branch.

2. How big would it be?

The National Park and National Recreation Area would be up to 150,000 acres total—approximately half National Park and half National Recreation Area. Elliotsville Plantation, Inc., the non-profit that owns the land, currently owns approximately 100,000 acres in the region and would like to acquire up to 150,000 acres.

3. How long will it take to drive there from Portland/Augusta/Bangor?

It takes approximately 3 ¼ hours from Portland, 2 ½ hours from Augusta, and 1 ¼ hours from Bangor to get to the proposed National Park and National Recreation Area.

4. What's the difference between a national park and a national recreation area?

National parks and national recreation areas are both managed by the National Park Service, however, the units' purpose and management schemes vary somewhat. Generally speaking, a national park focuses on protection of the land and water resources and on recreational activities such as hiking, camping, paddling, fishing, wildlife watching and scenic drives. National recreation areas, while also prized for their spectacular resources, also allow hunting and snowmobiling in addition to the activities allowed in national parks.

5. What can I do for recreation in these areas? Can I snowmobile there?

The National Park property will be available for hiking, paddling, wildlife watching, fishing, bicycling, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and other human-powered activities. The National Recreation Area will be available for all the same activities, plus hunting and snowmobiling.

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6. Could paper companies cut trees on the National Park and National Recreation Area land?

No, there will be no commercial timber harvesting in the National Park or the National Recreation Area. However, we continue to explore the possibility of some limited timber harvesting in the National Recreation Area for the purpose of improving wildlife habitat. The land is surrounded by hundreds of thousands of acres where commercial timber harvesting can continue. A National Park and National Recreation Area can easily co-exist with the existing timber based economy.

7. How will a National Park and National Recreation Area help the economy of the surrounding towns? Will it create jobs? What kinds of jobs?

An economics firm recently released two studies profiling the economic impact of national parks and national recreation areas on their surrounding communities. The reports show that areas across the country with national parks and/or national recreation areas that are of a similar size and that are located a similar distance from airports have higher personal income and more jobs than the U.S. average, as well as higher income and more jobs than Penobscot and Piscataquis counties over the last forty years. The trend is expected to continue in the communities surrounding the proposed National Park and National Recreation Area. Similarly situated regions have seen growth in the service industry, including health care and professional and technical services, and in so-called “footloose” businesses that can be located anywhere with an internet connection and proximity to an airport and that often choose to locate in beautiful areas with opportunities for outdoor recreation.

8. What needs to happen to get this park established?

Establishing a new national park and national recreation area requires an act of Congress. Successfully passing an act of Congress will require the support of Senators King and Collins and Representatives Michaud and Pingree. Securing their support will require support from residents in the region and across Maine.

9. Does NRCM support a National Park and National Recreation Area?

Yes, NRCM supports Elliottsville Plantation, Inc.’s proposal. We are excited about the myriad of conservation, environmental, and economics benefits the proposal has to offer and are proud to be working closely with EPI to make their vision a reality.

10. What’s going to be at this park that will attract people to come?

The land includes spectacular views of Katahdin and vast, undeveloped forests; about 25 miles of the East Branch of the Penobscot River, including four spectacular rapids and falls; the lower reaches of Wassataquoik Stream, which flows out of Baxter State Park; the lower reaches of the Sebois River; and several beautiful ponds. The land also provides opportunities to view many wildlife species including moose, bear, lynx, loon, bald eagle, and many other bird species.

