1964

Report of Proceedings: Mt. Katahdin Tragedy Board of Review / Conducted Jointly by Baxter State Park Authority and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game

Baxter State Park Authority

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game

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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

MT. KATAHDIN TRAGEDY BOARD OF REVIEW

Held November 12, 1963, Old Town, Maine

Conducted jointly by:

Maine, Baxter State Park Authority
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game

Authorized by:

Governor John H. Reed
Mountain climbing is a sport enjoyed by many but carries with it a certain element of risk depending upon the nature of the terrain, season of the year, experience, and weather conditions. The tragic loss of the woman climber and park ranger on Mt. Katahdin in Baxter State Park the week of October 28, 1963 was most unfortunate. It was the first fatality since the Park was created in 1931.

The Baxter State Park Authority and Inland Fisheries and Game Department supported the authorization of Governor John H. Reed to conduct a Board of Review. The primary objective was to reconstruct the sequence of events and consider object lessons learned to prevent future occurrence of such a tragedy. The proceedings went smoothly with excellent cooperation from all key witnesses. A record has been made with limited copies available upon request.

The outgrowth of the review will result in: training of a team of wardens in the skills of mountain climbing, especially in the techniques of using ropes and alpine equipment; changes in Rules and Regulations; added safety factors of first aid and rescue equipment; and consideration of gate houses at entrances to the Park. Other ideas will undoubtedly come up for consideration.

Search efforts to recover the bodies will be resumed next spring, at which time a final chapter can be written to this tragedy.

Meanwhile, plans are already underway for a memorial to Ranger Ralph Heath who lost his life in the rescue attempt. Suggestions include a suitable bronze plaque at Chimney Pond and a new bunkhouse.

AUSTIN H. WILKINS, Maine Forest Commissioner
Chairman, Baxter State Park Authority
Authorization. The Board of Review was authorized by Governor John H. Reed and conducted jointly by the Baxter State Park Authority and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game.

Purpose. The main objective of the review as stated by Baxter State Park Authority Chairman Austin H. Wilkins was "to reconstruct in a chronological order what happened in the recent search work for the missing woman and Park Ranger presumably lost on Mt. Katahdin. There will be no attempt whatever to find fault or place blame for negligence. Efforts will be pointed towards "who, why, when and where" and object lessons learned to prevent future occurrence of such tragedy."

Proceedings. The meeting was called to order at 10:15 A.M. by Baxter State Park Authority Chairman Austin H. Wilkins. Wilkins began by explaining the purpose of the hearing and by expressing Governor Reed's gratitude to those who took part in the search and his sympathy to those who lost a friend or relative in the incident. He also conveyed the same sentiments on behalf of Percival P. Baxter, donor of the land which comprises Baxter State Park, and on behalf of himself and other members of the review board. He then introduced the members of the Review Board in addition to himself; Ronald Speers, Commissioner, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Game; Frank Hancock, Attorney General for the State of Maine. (These three men comprise the Baxter State Park Authority.)

Commissioner Speers began by citing the statute authority under which the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Game is designated the responsible agency for search work. The statute establishing this authority, Chapter 37, Section 26, Revised Statutes 1954, reads in part as follows:

Whenever it shall come to the attention of the commissioner or his deputy commissioner, that any person or persons known to have gone upon a hunting or fishing trip, or a trip for any other purpose, in the woodlands of the state and have not returned within a reasonable time after his or their departure, the commissioner is authorized to summon any person found within the state to assist in finding the lost person or persons, and each person so summoned shall be paid at a rate set by the said commissioner, with the approval of the governor and council, and be provided with subsistence during such service. The expenses of the commissioner in attempting to find lost persons shall be charged to the general fund. The commissioner shall have authority to terminate the search by members of his department.

Baxter Park Supervisor Helen Taylor then gave a brief resume of weather conditions during the period of this search as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weather Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>October 28 - Fair and warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>October 29 - Snow, blizzard all day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>October 30 - Cloudy, sleet and rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>October 31 - Cloudy, rain and fog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>November 1 - Rain, snow and sleet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>November 2 - Rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>November 3 - Cloudy, rain and snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>November 4 - Cloudy, showers and snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>November 5 - Clear, cloudy, clear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mrs. Helen Mower of Concord, Massachusetts, surviving member of the two-woman climbing party was asked to tell in her own words the sequence of events leading up to the tragedy.

According to Mrs. Mower, she and Mrs. Ivusic arrived at Roaring Brook Campground on the afternoon of Saturday, October 26. They were met at the campground by Ranger Ralph Heath who gave them a copy of the park rules and regulations. Because the women had driven since 5 A.M. that morning, they decided not to continue into Chimney Pond that night but decided instead to secure lodgings outside the Park and return on Sunday. On their way out they stopped at Park Headquarters at Togus Pond. Supervisor Helen Taylor was not in, however Mrs. Ivusic did go into the headquarters building and spoke briefly with Mr. Taylor's father. Mrs. Mower stayed in the car on this occasion.

The two returned to Roaring Brook on Sunday, left their car and hiked into Chimney Pond on Sunday afternoon. They found Ranger Ralph Heath and Ranger Rodney Sargent at Chimney Pond. Ranger Heath assigned them a leanto, after which the women made supper and went to bed. Mrs. Mower stated that that evening the women also talked with the two rangers regarding best routes to climb the mountain.

According to Mrs. Mower, the following morning, Monday, October 28, the two women set out about 8 A.M. for the Cathedral Trail. Mrs. Mower said she had no recollection of talking to the rangers that morning, however, Ranger Sargent stated that he and Ranger Heath had talked with the women briefly describing how to reach the base of the Cathedral Trail. Following the discussion Rangers Heath and Sargent set out up the Dudley Trail to spend the day working on the Helen Taylor Trail on Keep Ridge. The women set out for the Cathedral Trail. The weather was warm and sunny.

At this point, Attorney General Hancock asked Mrs. Mower what her mountain climbing experience had been. At that time she said that she had been climbing mountains in the northeast since she was about 9 years old, although she had never climbed Mt. Katahdin before. (She later named several of the New England mountains she had climbed.)

Continuing with her account, Mrs. Mower said that the women took their time going up the Cathedral Trail and arrived at Baxter Peak at approximately 1:30 in the afternoon. Here they stopped for lunch, took some pictures and rested for quite some time. On leaving Baxter Peak, they decided to walk out onto the Knife Edge although they were not sure whether they would continue along that trail and return to camp or retrace their steps and return by way of the Saddle Trail. According to Mrs. Mower, it was not uncommon for one or the other of the women to walk on ahead of the other on these hikes. In this particular case, Mrs. Ivusic went on ahead of Mrs. Mower. They had been separated approximately 10 to 15 minutes when Mrs. Mower was hailed by her companion from somewhere to the left and below the Knife Edge trail.
According to Mrs. Mower, her companion called to her, "Helen this is a short cut. I think it is the best way to go."

Mrs. Mower said the route looked as if it might be a short and easy way back to Chimney Pond since the Pond and the Camp could be seen clearly from that point on the trail. She said that she was afraid to leave the marked trail and she and Mrs. Ivusic, although not within sight of each other, argued back and forth over whether to go down what seemed to be a short cut or continue on the trail. Mrs. Mower said, "We are both determined women." Neither was able to prevail on the other and so Mrs. Mower continued on the Knife Edge trail and her companion continued her way down the unmarked route. At that time, Mrs. Mower said there was no indication that Mrs. Ivusic had fallen or was in any difficulty. As she continued along the Knife Edge, Mrs. Mower continued to try unsuccessfully to re-establish voice contact with her companion.

Mrs. Mower eventually came to the sign at the top of the Chimney Trail which cautions only experienced climbers equipped with ropes to take that route down. At this point she was able to re-establish voice contact with Mrs. Ivusic who informed her that she was "on the wall and could not move up or down." She apparently was not injured at that time. Mrs. Mower told Mrs. Ivusic that she would continue on down the Dudley Trail to Chimney Pond and get help.

Mrs. Mower said that the missing woman's last words to her were "I'll see you tomorrow, I hope."

Mrs. Mower continued on down the Dudley Trail arriving at Chimney Pond campground at approximately 20 minutes to seven. It was dark at the time. There was no one in camp. Mrs. Mower walked to the edge of Chimney Pond in front of the campground, from where she was able, by shouting, to talk to Mrs. Ivusic. (On a calm day, shouts from the Knife Edge are commonly audible at the campground.) Mrs. Mower built a fire in front of the women's lean-to, alternately replenishing the fire and going to the edge of the pond to talk with Mrs. Ivusic.

At approximately 8:15 P.M., Ranger Ralph Heath returned alone to Chimney Pond campground, Ranger Sargent having returned to his headquarters at Abol. Mrs. Mower said that it was obvious that Heath had worked hard that day and he seemed extremely tired. After hearing her story, Ranger Heath walked to the edge of the pond and was able to talk to Mrs. Ivusic, apparently establishing that she was uninjured. He told her to remain where she was and he would try to effect a rescue as soon as it became light the next morning. Following this Ranger Heath and Mrs. Mower went into the ranger camp where they had some soup for supper. (At this time Heath made his regular radio call to Park Supervisor Taylor, giving word that the woman was stranded.) She recommended that he get some rest before he attempt to aid Mrs. Ivusic. According to Mrs. Mower, Heath was unable to rest and when he heard a storm door at the camp slaming in the wind (warning of Hurricane Ginny) he became concerned at the change in the weather and determined to set out immediately in an attempt to assist Mrs. Ivusic. Using Mrs. Ivusic's ruck sack, he placed food, parka, sleeping bag, 80 feet of rope, a piton, and extra clothing in the bag and started out just after 11 P.M.

* Times given are approximate since in many cases they were not precisely recorded as events occurred. Additionally, the change from Daylight Saving Time to Standard Time took place that weekend, so in some cases there is an hour difference in times reported by Mrs. Mower (DST) and those recorded by Taylor, who had changed to Standard Time.*
Heath arrived back at Chimney Pond at approximately 4 o'clock Tuesday morning, (October 29). He told Mrs. Mower that he had gone up the Dudley Trail and using the rope had been able to go down off the Knife Edge for a distance, the last 40 feet by rope. At that point he could talk clearly with Mrs. Ivusic although without more rope he could get no closer to her. He told Mrs. Mower that he thought the woman was near the waterfall which is a prominent landmark to the west of the Chimney Trail. Reportedly he felt that he had convinced Mrs. Ivusic to stay where she was until he could return with more help.

Heath had breakfast at that time and called Park Supervisor Helen Taylor requesting more aid. He left the campground again at 6:10 A.M. Mrs. Mower understood Heath to say that he would go around to the right of Chimney Pond and approach the waterfall from below. Mrs. Mower said that her last words with Heath were a shouted message to him that Ranger Sargent was on the way. Heath shouted back "Fine, thank you" and continued on his way. That was the last known contact by sight or sound that anyone had with Ranger Heath.

Mrs. Mower stated that the weather at that time was an icy rain, with a wind blowing "but nothing like the wind that came up later." (Hurricane Ginny)

Ranger Rodney Sargent was called on at this time to point out some of the topographic features of the South Basin and Knife Edge on a large photograph of the area. He pointed out prominent features including the Chimney Trail and the two ravines which lead from the Knife Edge to the landmark known as the Waterfall. He stated that Ranger Heath had been up to the Knife Edge through one of the ravines near the falls several times without ropes.

Christopher Ivusic, son of the missing woman, asked Ranger Sargent if there were any other falls along the Knife Edge. Sargent replied that there are, but only one that is prominent and which is known as "The Waterfall." He felt that in telling Mrs. Mower that the missing woman was near "The Waterfall," Heath was referring to this well known landmark.

Mrs. Mower was asked what clothing the women were wearing. She replied that she had a knapsack with extra clothing including some of Mrs. Ivusic's extra gear. Mrs. Ivusic, she said, was wearing "lots of clothes, and in addition had a wool shirt and an artic jacket that was tied around her waist." Both were wearing oxfords.

In answer to a question from one of the board members, it was brought out that the only warning or trail sign along the Knife Edge is the one previously mentioned at the top of the Chimney Trail.

Park Supervisor Helen Taylor was then called on to establish the chronological order of events between the time he learned of the missing woman and the time the organized search under Game Warden Priest was started. Taylor stated that the first he knew of the problem was at the regular 7 P.M. (Standard Time) radio check on October 28 when Ranger Heath informed him that there was a woman stranded on the mountain. Taylor said that at that time, "We did not consider the situation serious." At 4:25 A.M. the following morning, Taylor again received radio communication from Heath, the Chimney Pond Ranger, reporting that the woman was believed located near the waterfall and that it was starting to snow and "the sooner we get her off the better." At that time Taylor dispatched Rangers Owen Grant and Rodney Sargent to Chimney Pond to assist Heath. Later that morning Taylor notified Forest Warden Clayton Gifford in Millinocket of the search effort and also contacted Fisheries and Game Warden Elmer Knowlton.
Warden Grant arrived at Chimney Pond at 8:05 A.M., Tuesday morning (October 29). Ranger Sargent, who had received first word about 5 A.M. at Abol had arrived at Chimney Pond approximately 20 minutes before Grant. At that time Sargent reported that it was snowing and there was approximately 2 inches of snow on the ground. By the end of the day, the snow had reached the depth of 16 inches.

Sargent says that "On my arrival at Chimney Pond I talked with Mrs. Mower to try to determine Heath's route." He understood that Heath was trying to reach the woman at either to the right or left of the waterfall. Sargent snowshoed to the base of the Chimney where he spent 15 or 20 minutes shouting but was able to establish no contact. At that time there was 6 to 8 inches of snow on the ground at that point and visibility was low due to wind and snow.

Game Warden Knowlton was then called upon to establish his actions following notification of the missing parties. Knowlton said that he received a call from Taylor at 11:15 Tuesday morning (October 29). He went to Togue Pond where he consulted with Taylor regarding search actions. They then put chains on a 4-wheel drive vehicle and proceeded toward Roaring Brook. At one point along the way they pulled a Forestry pickup which had tried to make the trip earlier out of the ditch. Attempt was made to put chains on the pickup but this was unsuccessful so they left the vehicle and continued on to Roaring Brook arriving there just before dark Tuesday night. Travel conditions were poor and they had to move slowly, Knowlton said.

Knowlton continued on to Chimney Pond that night. The conditions were pretty rough going. On arriving at Chimney Pond he continued on up the Dudley Trail as far as possible, calling and flashing a light with no luck. He came back and went around Chimney Pond in the direction Heath was thought to have gone but could find no trail.

The following morning (Wednesday, October 30), Knowlton and Ranger Sargent proceeded through 2 feet of snow to the base of Chimney where they again called and shouted but established no contact. The temperature at Chimney Pond at that time was 28°, and Ranger Sargent was of the opinion that it would have been approximately 10 degrees colder up on the wall of the basin. The weather was cloudy with sleet and rain.

Warden David Priest was then asked to describe his part in the search as the man responsible for heading up the organized search efforts. Priest said that he first learned of the missing persons on the radio news on the morning of Wednesday, October 30. He rounded up several wardens and headed for the Park stopping at Togue Pond and then continuing on to Roaring Brook. At that time there was 16 to 18 inches of snow, "hurricane winds" and drifting snow. At Roaring Brook he and the other wardens started putting some packs together. Two woodsmen that had started in earlier for Chimney Pond returned to Roaring Brook reporting that they were unable to reach Chimney Pond due to the snow conditions.

Priest started out for Chimney Pond with several other wardens. They were met at Basin Ponds by Ranger Sargent who then led the other wardens back to Chimney Pond while Priest returned to Roaring Brook. It was early evening when he got back to Roaring Brook. The weather conditions were snowing and blowing. Priest went out to Togue Pond where a group of climbers from the University of Maine had arrived.

The following morning Priest returned to Roaring Brook and established headquarters there to coordinate the search. In answer to a question, Priest said that he estimated 35 people were the maximum number at Roaring Brook at any one time. He said, "Weather conditions were a tremendous factor. You can't visualize the wind and snow. Visibility was zero and that's putting it mildly."
Priest said that in addition to the search effort at Chimney Pond, a crew also went up the Taylor Trail on the assumption that the lost persons might have been able to reach the top of the mountain and return by that trail.

The weather on Wednesday, October 30, and Thursday, October 31, was characterized as having winds of gale force with drifting and blowing snow. A two to three hour break occurred in the weather on Friday, November 1, and then it began to rain, the rain continuing Friday night and all day Saturday, November 2. Priest said that it was impossible to use an airplane in any way, although a helicopter from Dow Air Force Base had tried on Thursday to reach the mountain but was forced back because of turbulence and high wind. The first plane put to any real use was on Tuesday, November 5, when Warden Priest, Park Ranger Grant and a pilot scanned the walls of the basin for a period of approximately 2 hours making pass after pass and observing nothing.

Captain Glenn Marks of Dow Air Force Base told the part played in the search by the U.S. Air Force. Capt. Marks said that they had received their first call at 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, October 31. At 2:20 in the afternoon they received word that it might be possible to reach the mountain and so a helicopter was sent out but returned because of turbulence. The helicopter stood by until the search mission was closed out on November 4.

Clayton Gifford commented on the part that he and his wife had played in the communications effort during the search. He stated that he felt there had been 100% communication throughout the search. It was brought out that handie-talkies were used on the mountain and that at no time was there a breakdown in search communications.

Kenneth Wetmore said that he had arrived at Roaring Brook on Wednesday afternoon and continued into Chimney Pond, joining the search there late that afternoon.

James Ross of the University of Maine related the part that he and other University of Maine climbers played in the search. He heard of the situation on Wednesday morning, October 30. He and several other climbers left Orono about 2 P.M., arriving at Togue Pond after dark. From there they went to Roaring Brook and continued on up to Chimney Pond that night (Wednesday). On Thursday, they attempted to reach the top of the Knife Edge, but weather forced them back. One team was able to reach Baxter Peak and continue almost to South Peak before being forced back. Another group went into South Basin.

On Friday, November 1, Ross related, a team reached Pamela about 1 P.M. in the afternoon and was forced back by the weather without making any contact with the missing persons. Wetmore reported that he and another individual climbed to the side of the Cathedral Trail on Thursday where through the clouds they were able to scan the wall of the basin with binoculars without seeing anything.

Maynard Marsh, Chief of the Maine Warden Service, was then asked to explain the procedure by which out of state climbers were brought into the search. Marsh said that on Thursday evening, October 31, in a talk with Warden Priest, he was informed that the big need in the search was for "experienced rock men."

Marsh said through acquaintances he heard of Mr. William Putnam of Springfield, Massachusetts who is experienced in mountain search and rescue work. Marsh subsequently contacted Mr. Putnam and arranged for he and another climber to be flown up to Maine on Friday, November 1.
Major Hennessey of the Maine State Police related the chain of events that led to bringing in a team of Vermont State Troopers and Instructors from Norwich College, Northfield, Vermont. A man named Wallace from Vermont had started the ball rolling on this by contacting Forest Commissioner Wilkins saying that a team of Vermont State Troopers was available but official request would have to be made by Maine State Police. Wilkins passed the word on to Hennessey who in turn called Col. Bowman of the Vermont State Police. Bowman stated that he had heard of the search and was standing by in case of need. Arrangements were then made to have the Vermont teams flown in by a National Guard C-47. This was accomplished Friday morning, November 1. Also on Friday morning the two-man team from Springfield (Putnam and Cormier) was flown in by the State plane from Augusta. A Fish & Game plane had started out earlier to go to Springfield but was forced back by bad weather.

These search teams reached Chimney Pond late Friday but were not able to do much that night.

William Putnam of Springfield, Massachusetts was next called upon to relate the search efforts by the experienced climbers. Putnam said that he arrived at Chimney Pond on Friday, November 1. He expressed disappointment in not having reliable data on what had gone on before. He stressed this point several times during his comments and strongly suggested that a search director and a deputy search director be appointed or established for each search and that a running log of search efforts be kept so that individuals coming in fresh would know what had gone on before.

According to Putnam the searchers were divided into several groups on Saturday, November 2. One was assigned to give the Dudley Trail a thorough going over on the chance that the ranger had changed his mind and gone by that route and had found a place to hole up. The balance of the searchers were to proceed ahead of this group, up over the top of Pamola and come down the Chimney and other ravines to the west of Chimney.

Putnam said that he arrived at the Needles Eye (top of Chimney) with three parties. He described the weather as being "ferocious." He said that at this time he found it necessary to change plans because of the weather, deciding that it would be foolhardy to try to proceed further west than the Chimney under existing wind and snow conditions. One three-man team of which he was the leader proceeded approximately 100 yards down the Chimney and then edged westward on the face about 300 yards. They spent an hour or more looking and then returned and the entire group proceeded back down the Chimney to the campground. At this time, Putnam said, he got on the radio and told those in charge of the search that they might as well close down the effort.

Putnam said that the snow above timber line on Pamola was wet for the first two or three inches. He said this was the snow that was sliding a great deal but was not particularly dangerous. Below that he said the snow was hard, dry and wind packed, leading him to say that "a mid-winter snow storm had occurred on Tuesday," October 29, and in his mind there was no doubt that it would have been impossible for anyone to come alive through the Tuesday snow storm. He said, "Those people were dead on Tuesday, there is no question in my mind." He said that no one would have lived under conditions of wind and temperature that must have existed to pack the snow in such a way.
Putnam was asked when it became apparent to him that there was no chance for the missing people to survive. He said that he knew by the time he reached Pamola that there was no hope. Putnam stated that the snow on the ledges on top of the mountain was several feet deep. He said that survival above timber line would be next to impossible in the winds that were blowing during that Tuesday storm. "It's the wind that kills you," he said.

Mr. Ivusic (son of the missing woman) was asked if he was familiar with his mother's climbing experience. He said that she had developed the hobby of climbing late in life and had not done much up until two or three years ago.

General comments solicited from the group included: (1) Mrs. Mower expressed her gratitude to all who helped in the search. She said that perhaps as a result of this incident the Park Ranger Stations would be better supplied and better prepared to undertake search efforts in the future. She said that she felt rigid restrictions on climbing would be sad and she was sure Mrs. Ivusic would share her hope that such restrictions do not result from the tragedy.

(2) Mr. Putnam made several suggestions including (a) Caches of supplies and equipment in strategic areas throughout the park to include tarpaulins, climbing gear, food, etc. for equipping search parties; (b) He stressed the importance of having a search director and of having it known to all concerned in the search just who that search director is. (c) He emphasized several times the desirability of a running log of events kept by the search director. (d) He suggested a need for more detailed topographic maps of the area.

(3) Putnam also commented that there was no lack of what the searchers needed, at least during the time that his group was there.

(4) Mrs. Chase, at whose home Mrs. Mower stayed following the tragedy, said that there was some confusion on the clothing worn by the missing persons. She said that on Sunday, November 3, Mrs. Mower stated that the blue jacket worn by Mrs. Ivusic was not bright and that the orange jacket supposedly worn by Ranger Heath was in the pack and he probably never took it out. Putnam in turn stated that he and his climbers had been informed that both were wearing bright colors and that this was the type of misinformation that should be avoided in the future.

(5) Supervisor Taylor answered to a question that from 25 to 35 people make the climb of Katahdin in the winter.

(6) Christopher Ivusic stated that he hoped, as did Mrs. Mower, that the incident would not result in undue restrictions on climbing in the Park.

(7) The matter of restricting climbers was discussed and Commissioner Wilkins stated that one suggestion was the establishment of gate houses at major entrances to the Park. Another suggestion was the registration of all who plan to climb the mountain including those making the trip in the winter time.

Commissioner Wilkins called on the Fish & Game Commissioner to relate how the search had been called off. Commissioner Speers said that he had gone to Millinocket on Monday, November 4, and there conferred with Commissioner Wilkins and with Warden Priest. After these consultations and after talking with Governor Reed, the Commissioner ordered the search closed. At this point in the hearing Mr. Putnam said "You continued the search far longer than any mountaineer would have considered necessary under the prevailing conditions."
Commissioner Speers, commenting on the search work of his department's warden force, said that he was proud of their work and felt that they had done an outstanding job in the search effort.

The Board of Review was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

Recorder

Richard D. Pardo
Maine Forest Service
Augusta, Maine
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approximate Time</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Late afternoon</td>
<td>Mrs. Ivusic and Mrs. Mower arrive at Roaring Brook Campground. Met and given copy of rules and regulations by Ranger Ralph Heath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women leave Park to secure lodging for night, rather than hike to Chimney Pond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Late afternoon</td>
<td>Women return to Roaring Brook, park oar and hike in to Chimney Pond Campground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women arrive at Chimney Pond, find Rangers Heath and Sargent there. Assigned leanto, have supper, talk with rangers about trails on mountain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Heath and Sargent talk briefly to women before setting out to work on Taylor Trail. Women depart for Cathedral Trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>Late afternoon &amp; early evening</td>
<td>Women arrive at Baxter Peak after leisurely hike. Eat lunch, take pictures, &quot;rest quite a while.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8:15-8:45 (estimates of time varied)</td>
<td>Women start across Knife Edge from Baxter Peak. Mrs. Ivusic goes on ahead of Mrs. Mower. About 15 minutes later Mrs. Ivusic calls from left and below trail, urging Mrs. Mower to follow her on a &quot;short-cut&quot; back to Chimney Pond which is clearly visible below them. Mrs. Mower declines &quot;afraid to leave marked trail.&quot; Two women debate, each trying to convince the other that their course is best. Each holds to own choice, so Mrs. Mower continues on Knife Edge Trail. At top of Chimney Trail Mrs. Mower re-establishes voice contact with Mrs. Ivusic who reports she is &quot;Stuck and cannot go up or down.&quot; Apparently she is uninjured. Mrs. Mower says she will go to Chimney Pond Campground for assistance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>1:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Mrs. Mower arrives at Chimney Pond after coming down Dudley Trail. No one in camp. She starts fire in front of leanto, then returns to edge of pond where she is able to talk with trapped woman by shouting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>6:40 P.M.</td>
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* Exact distance from Baxter Peak where women first parted could not be remembered by Mrs. Mower.
Ifonday  
October 28  8:15 P.M.*

Ranger Heath returns to campground after day's work, Ranger Sargent having returned to his headquarters at Abol campground. Heath is told of trouble, then talks to trapped woman from edge of pond. Heath reports situation to Park Supervisor Helen Taylor by radio at regular evening radio check. Taylor later said "We did not consider the situation dangerous at that time." Heath eats supper and tries to rest, planning to go after the woman at daylight.

Monday  
October 28  11:00 P.M.

Heath becomes alarmed at change in weather conditions and sets out to attempt rescue from Knife Edge.

Tuesday  
October 29  4:45 A.M.

Having returned to camp at about 4 A.M., Heath radios to Taylor of his unsuccessful attempt to reach trapped woman. Reportedly Heath went part way down the Chimney, the last forty feet by rope, but was unable to reach the woman. He said it was starting to snow "and the sooner we get her off, the better." Taylor calls rangers Owen Grant and Rodney Sargent and tells them to head for Chimney Pond to assist Heath. Heath reports woman is near "waterfall" west of Chimney.

Tuesday  
October 29  6:10 A.M.

After eating breakfast and putting sleeping bag, rope, piton, food and extra clothing in rucksack, Heath sets out to attempt rescue of woman from below, planning to go around right side of pond and approach Basin wall from below. Mrs. Mower hears radio message and calls to Heath that Ranger Sargent is on his way. Heath replies "Fine. Thanks," and continues on his way. That is the last that is seen or heard of him.

Tuesday  
October 29  7:40 A.M.

Sargent arrives at Chimney Pond. Grant arrives some twenty minutes later. After learning from Mrs. Mower of Heath's plan of approach, Sargent sets out on snowshoes to follow Heath. There is about two inches of snow on the ground at Chimney Pond. Sargent reaches base of Chimney Trail, where the snow is 6-8" deep, with gale winds blowing. Sargent tries unsuccessfully to establish voice contact with missing persons, then returns to campground.

* There is a discrepancy of reported times, due probably to fact that Taylor was on Standard Time and Heath still on Daylight. Change had been made on Sunday, October 27th. Due to the strain of the situation, Mrs. Mower could not be certain of exact times.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 29</td>
<td>11:15 A.M.</td>
<td>Game Warden Elmer Knowlton in Millinocket receives word of trouble from Taylor. He sets out for Togue Pond in 4-wheel drive vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 29</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Knowlton drives through snow to Roaring Brook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 29</td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>Knowlton makes way to Chimney Pond. Snowshoes to base of Dudley Trail, shouting and flashing light with no luck. Tries to follow Heath's last known route around pond but is able to find no trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Oct. 30</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Knowlton and Sargent snowshoe to base of Chimney where they are unable to establish any contact with missing persons. Approximately two feet of snow on the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Oct. 30</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Warden Supervisor David Priest of Winn hears of missing persons on radio. Rounds up several other wardens and proceeds to Togue Pond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Oct. 30</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Priest and other wardens drive to Roaring Brook through 16-18&quot; of snow and &quot;hurricane winds.&quot; Start for Chimney Pond. Met at Basin Pond by Sargent who leads wardens in while Priest returns to Roaring Brook and then to Togue Pond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Oct. 30</td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>University of Maine climbing team arrives and makes way to Chimney Pond that night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, Oct. 31</td>
<td>Morning &amp; Afternoon</td>
<td>Teams of Maine climbers, wardens and Park rangers continue search in vain. Weather continues rainy and windy. One team reaches Baxter Peak via the Saddle, but is forced back by the weather. Another group scanned Basin wall from Cathedral Trail with binoculars but saw nothing. A search team also combed the Taylor Trail on chance that the missing pair might have tried to come out that way. Air Force helicopter attempts to reach scene but forced back by weather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, Oct. 31</td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>Arrangements are made through Maynard Marsh and the State Police to have outside help in the form of experienced mountaineers brought into search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>A National Guard C-47 flies to Barre, Vermont to pick up State Troopers and Norwich University climbers. State Executive airplane flies to Springfield, Massachusetts to pick up two more climbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>1:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Team of University of Maine climbers reaches Pamola, but is forced from proceeding onto the Knife Edge because of weather conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Late afternoon</td>
<td>Out-of-state climbers arrive at Chimney Pond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Climbers are divided into teams. One assigned to thoroughly cover Dudley Trail while three others precede it to Pamola in an effort to search ravines leading down from Knife Edge. Weather, described as &quot;ferocious&quot; by the climb leader, stopped teams at the top of Chimney. Lead team goes down Chimney about 100 yards, then moves westward on the face about 300 yards and searches in vain for an hour. At the end of this time the climb leader brings all three teams back to camp via the Chimney, reporting that any further search would be useless and foolhardy under existing weather conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Weather remains windy, with rain and snow. Out-of-state climbers leave for home. Search at standstill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Commissioner of Fisheries and Game Speers calls off ground search after conferring in Milburnocket with Warden Priest and Forest Commissioner Wilkins. Governor advised of end of search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warden Priest, Ranger Grant and pilot scan Basin wall from a light plane for &quot;a couple of hours&quot; without seeing any trace of missing persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Governor John H. Reed announced Wednesday that a Joint Board of Review will be convened Tuesday, November 12, in Old Town on the Mt. Katahdin tragedy in which two people were apparently lost.

The Review will be conducted by Baxter State Park Authority Chairman and Forest Commissioner Austin Wilkins, and Inland Fisheries and Game Commissioner Ronald T. Speers. Speers is also a member of the Authority as is Maine Attorney General Frank Hancock.

The Governor said that the Board will interview the principals who participated in the search efforts for the missing persons, including personnel of the Maine Forest Service and Fish and Game Department, and other cooperating agencies.

Governor Reed said the Board of Review, which will meet at the Forest Service Headquarters in Old Town, is standard procedure in such cases.

The Governor said also that observer participants in the review will be representatives of the Maine Forest Service, the Fish and Game Department and other interested parties.

Governor Reed indicated the purpose of the review would be "to reconstruct the events of the tragedy as nearly as possible in an effort to prevent a recurrence of the same."

Governor Reed said he expected the Board of Review to cover such subjects as a description of the Mt. Katahdin ground and weather conditions, the initial report of the missing person and the action taken, the followup action, the agency responsible for the search work, the handling of communications, logistics on supplies, equipment and manpower.

The Governor expressed hope that conclusions could be drawn to improve safety factors in the use of Baxter State Park. Such conclusions could well result in a revision of Park regulations and also better control of the public use of the Park, the Governor continued.

The Governor said he strongly supported the proposal of Inland Fisheries and Game Commissioner Ronald T. Speers that certain personnel of state agencies concerned with search and rescue work, be trained in techniques of mountain rescue.

"We want to make sure that no aspect is left unexplored that could help prevent a tragedy such as we have just experienced on Katahdin. This is why I have directed that a Board of Review be convened to study this matter," The Governor concluded.
Outline for Board of Review on Mt. Katahdin tragedy, to be conducted jointly by Baxter State Park Authority and Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, authorized by Governor John H. Reed.

Place - Maine Forest Service headquarters at Old Town airport, Old Town, Maine, Tuesday, November 12, 1963, at 10:00 a.m.

Purpose
The main objective is to reconstruct in a chronological order what happened in the recent search work for the missing woman and park ranger presumably lost on Mt. Katahdin. There will be no attempt whatever to find fault or place blame for negligence. Efforts will be pointed toward "who, why, when, and where" and object lessons learned to prevent future occurrence of such a tragedy.

1. Responsible agency for search work.
2. Establish location, season of the year, and weather conditions.
3. Party climbing the mountain.
4. Initial report of missing woman and rescue effort.
5. Second day effort by Ranger Heath.
6. Agencies participating in the search work and coordination.
7. Communications.
8. Subsequent ground and weather conditions.
9. Supplies, food, and equipment.
10. Search effort by expert mountain climbing teams by authorization, and techniques of search.
11. Number of trips, man days, and number of persons participating.
12. Termination day of search.
13. Costs

Note: Needs for safety factors, training in mountain climbing, equipment, new regulations, control of park through gatehouses.

Witnesses should come prepared to relate their particular part in the search effort. Maps will be provided as a helpful visual aid.

15. Adjournment.
Board of Review
of
MT. KATAHDIN TRAGEDY

Old Town, Maine
November 12, 1963

Register of Those in Attendance

Austin H. Wilkins *
Frank Hancock *
Ronald Speers *

William L. Putnam
Charles M. Washburn
Owen M. Grant
Jim Ross
Mrs. Dean Chase
Mrs. Helen M. Hower
Christopher W. Ivusic
Maynard F. Marsh
Paul A. Knaut
Ken Wetmore
Allan Polluck
Parker F. Hennessey
E. Elihu Plum
Glenn M. Marks

Mrs. Helen Gifford
Clayton Gifford
Rodney H. Sargent
Elmer Knowlton
David Priest
Helon N. Taylor
George Redpath
Charles R. Moltrum
James B. Mitchell
Willard Wight
Richard Pardo

Forest Commissioner
State Attorney General
Commissioner, Department of Inland Fisheries & Game

WWLP-TV, Springfield, Massachusetts
Bangor Daily News
Baxter State Park Ranger
University of Maine, President of Maine Outing Club
Bangor News & A.P., Millinocket
Concord, Massachusetts
Northampton, Massachusetts
Chief Warden, Fish & Game Dept., Augusta
Photographer, Dover-Foxcroft
Searcher, Houlton
University of Maine
Maine State Police, Augusta
U. of M., Vice-President Maine Outing Club

Dow AFB, Maine, Commander, Detachment 42, Eastern Air Rescue Center
Reservation Clerk, Baxter State Park
Chief Warden, Maine Forest Service, Millinocket
Ranger, Baxter State Park
Game Warden, Millinocket
Fish & Game Warden Supervisor, Winn
Baxter Park Supervisor, Togue Pond
News Director, WABI-TV, Bangor
Maine Outing Club, Great Works
U. of M., Estabrook Hall, Maine Outing Club
Maine Forest Service, Old Town
Maine Forest Service, Augusta

* Member of Review Board
Partial List of Those Participating in Search

Maine Warden Service (Department of Inland Fisheries and Game)

- David Priest, Winn, Supervisor
- Elmer Knowlton, Millinocket
- Blaine Rideout, East Millinocket
- Robert Thomas, Lincoln
- Francis Cyr, Ripogenus Dam
- Warren Hassan, Lincoln
- David Rowe, Lincoln
- Sherman Clement, Patten

Baxter State Park

- Rodney Sargent
- Owen Grant
- Frank Darling
- Elisworth Damon
- Ida Damon
- Helon Taylor
- Irvin Caverly, Jr.

Maine Forest Service

- Clayton Gifford
- Helen Gifford
- Owen Cowan
- Joe Lanzara
- George Rossignol

University of Maine

- James Ross and a group of six climbers

Vermont and Massachusetts

- William Putnam and a group of 14 climbers

State Parks

- Myrle Scott, Lily Bay, Transportation
- Ed Werler, Two Lights, Climber

Volunteer Climbers

- Kenneth Wetmore, Houlton
- Frank Braley, Caribou
- Weldon Astle, Millinocket
- Roland Anderson, Millinocket
- Clarence E. LeBell and 2 others, Peabody, Mass.
- Munroe Robinson, Millinocket
BAXTER STATE PARK
Rules and Regulations
Revised 1963

1. SEASON. The park campgrounds shall be open to the public from May 15 to October 15. As a safeguard against accidents, no person shall camp, snowshoe, or ski in the park or climb any mountain in the park at any time between October 16 and May 14 until he has procured a permit to do so, and no permit shall be issued until sufficient proof has been presented to the park supervisor as to the competency of the party.

2. TRAFFIC. All vehicles shall be left in those areas provided or designated for parking. No person shall operate any vehicles in any campground area at a speed in excess of 15 miles per hour; Togue Pond Road to Roaring Brook, 25 miles per hour; Abol Pond to Trout Brook Crossing, 20 miles per hour; and Trout Brook Crossing to park line, 25 miles per hour. No person shall operate a motor vehicle within the limits of the park area in such a manner as to endanger any person or property.

3. CLOSED AREAS. During periods of critical forest fire conditions or any other emergencies, the park, or portions thereof, shall be closed at the discretion of the Park Authority and no person shall enter or remain in the park or the closed portions thereof except park personnel or law enforcement officers or other persons in the line of duty.

4. CAMPING. Campers in organized campgrounds must register with the ranger and pay fees in advance before making camp. Check in time - before 10:00 p.m. Check out time - by 3:30 p.m. No person shall camp in any area except at authorized campsites, and then only in those places provided or designated for such camping. Camping, or the use of fires along the trail, on the tableland, or the summits of Mount Katahdin are strictly prohibited.

5. FIRES. Any fire not confined as herein provided shall be reported to the nearest park ranger at once. No person shall build a camp, cooking, or other fire or use an abandoned camp, cooking, or other fire except at authorized campsites and then only in those places provided or designated for such purposes and shall, before leaving such fire, totally extingush the same.

No person shall throw away, or discard, any burning cigarettes, cigars, matches, or any other burning material along any road or trail, or in or adjacent to any woods in this park.

6. REFUSE. All trash and waste shall be placed in the containers provided and no person shall throw away or discard any can, bottle, paper, or any other waste or trash in any spring, stream, or pond, or along any road or trail.

7. BATHING AND WASHING. All bathing and washing shall be restricted to those areas provided or designated for such purposes, and no person shall bathe, or wash any article, in any spring, stream, or pond used as a source of drinking water.

8. PETS. No pets allowed.
9. **FIREARMS AND HUNTING.** The use of any firearms, bow and arrow, sling shot, air rifle or air pistol except by park personnel or law enforcement officers on official duty, within the boundaries of the park is prohibited. Firearms can be transported through the park by hunters or others; however, they must be enclosed in the car trunk or in a case. Firearms may be kept for protection by the sporting camps located in the park provided a record of them is kept open at all times to inspection by the park rangers and the Inland Fish and Game wardens. Hunters staying at sporting camps within the park may have firearms at such camps provided they are registered with the sporting camp owner. Hunting and trapping are prohibited.

This regulation shall not apply to the area north of Trout Brook in Township 6, Range 9, in Township 6, Range 10, or Township 2, Range 9, where hunting under general laws will be allowed.

10. **AIRCRAFT.** No person shall land an aircraft on the ground or on the waters in the park except park personnel or a law enforcement officer in the line of duty and in emergency cases. This shall not apply on Mattagamon Lakes or Webster Lake.

11. **OUTBOARD MOTORS.** No person shall operate, or attach to any boat, canoe, or other craft any outboard motor while on the waters of the park excepting on Mattagamon Lakes or Webster Lake.

12. **PROPERTY.** No person shall remove, damage, or destroy any structure, or any tree, shrub, plant, wildlife, or any other natural feature of the park.

13. **FISHING.** Maine state fishing licenses are required for fishing, and the state angling laws are in effect. Non-resident fishing licenses may be obtained from the headquarters at the following campgrounds: South Branch Pond, Nesowadnehunk, and the supervisor's headquarters at Togue Pond.

14. **LIQUOR.** No intoxicating beverages may be brought into or consumed within Baxter State Park.

15. **RESERVATION REFUNDS.** No refund request on a late cancellation will be honored unless a good, valid reason or unusual situation is given in writing within 30 days to Baxter State Park, P.O. Box 540, Millinocket, Maine with the return of unused receipts. A week's notice of a cancellation on a reservation will be favorably considered for a refund. This will permit the possibility of filling the cancelled reservation with another party.

16. **INSPECTION AND PERMISSION TO CLIMB MT. KATAHDIN.** Permission will not be granted to climb Mt. Katahdin or any other peak in the park during the off season under hazardous conditions without adequate equipment and proper wearing apparel. Adequate equipment shall also be required during the regular season. Final decision shall rest with the park rangers. This shall apply to individuals not associated with outing clubs as well as outing club members.

17. **USE OF PARK FACILITIES BY STATE OFFICIALS AND SPECIAL FRIENDS.** There shall be no exception for state personnel requesting park facilities without fee unless on official duty. Special friends of the park rangers or state personnel on vacation, whether during the week or on holiday weekends, will be required to pay the required use fee.

It is expected that visitors will be quiet and orderly in camps, shelters, and bunkhouses.
18. FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bunkhouse Shelters (Leantos)</th>
<th>$1.50 per person per night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenting or trailer space</td>
<td>$0.75 per person per night - min. $1.50 per site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$0.25 per person per night - min. $1.00 per site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boats or canoes</td>
<td>$0.50 per hour, or $2.00 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>$0.50 per bundle, when available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| between season rate - Oct. 16 - May 14 | $15.00 per party per day in addition to above fees.

No charge for children under 6 years of age.

19. VIOLATIONS. All persons found guilty of violating the rules shall be punished as provided in the Revised Statutes of Maine, 1954, Chapter 36, Section 43:

"Whoever violates any of the rules and regulations of said park authority promulgated in conformity with the provisions of this section, shall be punished by a fine of not more than $50 and costs, or by imprisonment for not more than 30 days, or by both such fine and imprisonment."

"Whoever willfully mutilates, defaces or destroys any structure, monument or marker lawfully erected within the boundaries of said park, or any notice, rule or regulation of said park authority, posted in conformity with the provisions of this section, shall be punished by a fine of not more than $50 and costs, or by imprisonment for not more than 30 days, or by both such fine and imprisonment."