

## Camping Guidelines

- Camp only in designated campsites. Divide your group into multiple campsites if necessary.
- Camping is on a first come, first served basis. No reservations or fees required.
- Camping is limited to a two week maximum stay.
- Do not leave camping gear unattended overnight.
- Latrines have been placed at an appropriate distance from campsites and the water. Please use the latrines.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry wash water away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap only if needed.
- Pack it in, pack it out! Remove all trash and leave your campsite looking better than when you arrived.



Cover Photo: Canoeing on Debsconeag Deadwater © Susan Caldwell/TNC; Inside (top to bottom, left to right): Downy woodpecker © Vicki Nolan; Mushroom © Bill Hopwood; Canoeer © Josh Royte/TNC; White pine tree © Josh Royte/TNC; Pine marten © Vicki Nolan; Aerial of the Debsconeags © Bill Silliker Jr.; Brook trout © Rod Vogel/TNC; Moose © Vicki Nolan; Bird-watchers © Cori Kahn/TNC; sharp-leaved aster © Nancy Sferra/TNC; Measuring a white pine © Nancy Sferra/TNC; White-tailed buck © Bill Silliker Jr.; Hikers © Josh Royte/TNC; Back Cover Photo: Camping © Alex McIntosh/TNC.

## Leave No Trace Visitor Guidelines

**This nature preserve is intended to protect native wildlife, forest and wetland communities and is open for public enjoyment. Please follow these rules.**

- Hunting and fishing are allowed according to state laws and regulations. To protect the native fishery, do not dump any live bait.
- Vehicles are restricted to designated roads. All terrain vehicles and bicycles are not permitted.
- Snowmobiles are allowed only on designated trails. Maps are available from local snowmobile clubs.
- To avoid disturbance of native wildlife and introduction of invasive plant species, horses, pets, and other domestic animals are not permitted.
- Fires are allowed by Maine Forest Service permit only in existing fire rings at designated locations marked with fire permit signs. Please keep fires small.
- Use only dead and down wood and do not cut live trees or branches. Do not cut or remove dead wood from within 25 feet of streams or shorelines as these contribute to fish habitat.
- Do not collect or remove plants or animals.

**Please... respect the land, water and your fellow visitors to protect this natural resource for everyone.**

**The Nature Conservancy  
14 Maine Street, Suite 401  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
207-729-5181**

Visit us online!  
**[nature.org/maine](http://nature.org/maine)**

*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 forests.





## 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, 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 to the tune 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.

