



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument
PO Box 446
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Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument Designated as International Dark Sky Sanctuary

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PATTEN, ME - Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) are excited to announce the designation of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine as an International Dark Sky Sanctuary. The Sanctuary designation is the second of its kind in the National Park Service and distinguishes the monument for the exceptional quality of its naturally dark night skies. Katahdin Woods and Waters is the first International Dark Sky Place certified in the state of Maine and New England.

“This designation is the culmination of a long-term effort by a dedicated group of people and is an exciting event in the short history of the monument,” said Katahdin Woods and Waters Superintendent Tim Hudson. “Designation as a Dark Sky Sanctuary recognizes this incredible resource that does not in many places today in this country, much less anywhere else in New England. Experiencing the night skies here will take you back in time to the night skies first experienced by the Wabanaki 11,000 years ago and the many people who have followed in their footsteps since, including John James Audubon, Henry David Thoreau, Theodore Roosevelt, and others.”

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument was established August 24, 2016 to protect the extraordinary natural and cultural landscape of the north Maine woods, including the mountains, woods, and waters east of Baxter State Park, where the East Branch of the Penobscot River and its tributaries, including the Wassataquoik Stream and the Seboeis River, run freely. Since the glaciers retreated 12,000 years ago, these waterways and associated resources—the scenery, geology, flora and fauna, night skies, and more— have attracted people to this area. The area’s night skies are awe-inspiring, glittering with stars and planets and occasional displays of the aurora borealis.

IDA established the International Dark Sky Places Program in 2001 to encourage the protection of natural dark night skies around the globe through responsible lighting policies and public outreach and education.

The designation will be celebrated during the seventh annual Stars Over Katahdin event, scheduled for September 12, 2020. This event hosted by the Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters provides visitors an opportunity to learn about the monument’s dark skies and the continued efforts of the National Park Service and International Dark-Sky Association to preserve natural night skies. A virtual version of the event is also being prepared in case an in-person gathering is not advisable at the scheduled time.

In addition to this annual event, visitors to the park can independently experience some of the darkest skies in the Northeastern United States, measure night sky brightness and contribute to community science projects through the Globe at Night project. More information is available at <https://www.darksky.org/light-pollution/measuring-light-pollution/>.

For more information about the IDA, visit the International Dark-Sky Association's website at <https://www.darksky.org/>. For more information about night skies in national parks, visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/night/>. To learn how you can get involved in night sky preservation in Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument or to learn more about scheduled astronomy and night skies programming, visit www.nps.gov/kaww/playourvisit/stargazing.htm.

www.nps.gov/kaww

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