

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument General Management Plan Public Scoping FAQs

The National Park Service Launches Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument's General Management Planning Process

What is a general management plan (GMP)?

Each unit of the National Park Service (NPS) is required have a GMP that provides broad direction for park management, addresses four statutory requirements identified in 54 USC 100502, and is consistent with NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Director's Order 2: *Park Planning*, and other NPS guidance. A GMP articulates a unit's long-range vision to guide management within the established park boundary.

New guidance in 2022 streamlined the development of GMPs by focusing on designating management zones and establishing desired conditions for each zone that can be managed by NPS unit staff over time. It guides the development of broad management strategies for natural and cultural resource preservation as well as types and intensities of park development to support resource management and visitor uses (without specific development proposals).

GMPs also address visitor carrying capacities in NPS units. If necessary, a GMP indicates the need for potential modifications to the NPS boundary to achieve the unit's purposes. GMPs must be developed with substantial involvement of the public and Tribal Nations, and GMPs must also follow National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. More detailed implementation plans addressing specific unit needs are developed separately from, but remain consistent with, the high-level management direction of the GMP.

Why is Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument developing a GMP now?

As a relatively new unit of the national park system, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (designated in 2016) does not yet have an existing comprehensive management plan. New NPS units typically require several years to develop the management planning documents required for consistency with 54 USC 100502 and NPS policies.

In the years immediately after Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument's designation, key partners helped the National Park Service develop a broad draft management framework.

The draft management framework was completed in 2021, although its release was delayed by NPS staff changes and other issues. The current GMP effort builds on that work, as well as on a 2025 scoping exercise called Preliminary Project Planning (or a P3 report), to identify the unit's comprehensive planning needs. Identified needs are based on current conditions of monument staffing. To keep up-to-date on the monument's comprehensive management planning issues and opportunities, NPS staff have prepared for public scoping.

How is this different from the 2021 draft management framework?

The 2021 draft management framework outlined management areas throughout the monument (e.g., gateways, developed recreation areas, river corridors, nonintensive use, backcountry, future planning overlays) and near-term organizing concepts. The current GMP will expand on the good work already accomplished with leadership from key partners and will take into consideration knowledge about the unit's resources that the National Park Service developed from 2022 through 2025.

The Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument GMP will align with comprehensive planning requirements for all NPS units. The management zones and desired conditions outlined in the 2021 draft management framework are not consistent with the most recent NPS guidance for GMPs, and the draft management framework's acknowledgement of visitor carrying capacity commitments and potential boundary modifications were inconsistent with 54 USC 100502. No boundary modification proposals exist at this time.

While the draft management framework was developed with significant input from key partners and local stakeholders, the process did not include broad public involvement, which is expected for an NPS GMP. Further, the draft management framework could not have considered 2026 conditions and how the monument's operations have matured over time. The current GMP will articulate the National Park Service's high-level management direction for the monument, consistent with statutory and policy requirements, and will include broad public involvement.

What topics is the National Park Service asking the public to weigh in on?

During scoping, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument seeks public input on:

- overarching management vision and guiding themes;
- desired conditions for natural and cultural resource preservation, the visitor experience, and types and intensities of development for public enjoyment; and
- management zoning or area concepts.

How can I comment?

You may participate in live virtual or in-person public meetings. You may submit comment cards via email or via the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website. NPS strongly encourages citizens to submit written comments to be added to the project record through the PEPC project page. The PEPC link is available below.

When and where are the meetings?

- **Virtual:** April 29 & 30, 2026; 5–6 p.m. ET
Meeting link posted online at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/KAWWGMP>
- **Open House:** April 29–30, 2026
Drop-in hours and location posted online at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/KAWWGMP>
- **In-person meetings:** May 5 & 6, 2026; 5:30–7:30 p.m. ET
Locations posted online at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/KAWWGMP>

How will Tribal Nations be involved?

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument conducts ongoing Tribal consultation under established agreements, including those with the Penobscot Nation, and in accordance with applicable federal laws and policies. Through consultation, Tribal Nations have ongoing opportunities to share feedback and Wabanaki cultural knowledge with the National Park Service. Tribal Nation participation and input will continue to be vital in shaping a long-range vision for management of this NPS unit.

What happens after scoping?

The planning team will review public input and develop a draft GMP. The public will have a chance to review and comment on this draft plan before it is finalized.

Will this plan change current recreational access or uses?

Possibly. If the plan proposes any changes to recreational access, the changes would not go into effect until after (1) public review of the draft GMP in a second round of public comment, (2) the GMP is finalized, and (3) implementation guidance is made publicly available. The GMP project is now in the first public scoping phase, when NPS employees ensure the public knows about the GMP effort and solicit public comments to shape the draft GMP. Any proposed changes will appear in the draft GMP and/or other implementation plans consistent with the GMP, which the public will get a chance to review and comment on prior to finalization.

How will public input influence the GMP?

Public input is essential for informing the National Park Service about ideas from the public about the GMP. Individuals can shape the contents of the GMP by submitting written comments to the National Park Service. Individuals can also participate in the current public meetings listed above, as well as public meetings later in the planning process when a draft GMP is ready for public review.

How does the GMP relate to local communities and partners?

The GMP will consider how the public currently uses or experiences the monument’s resources and how the public may or may not want current uses to change. It will consider community connections, recreation patterns, adjacent landowner concerns, and partner roles. Throughout the GMP process, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument will continue to collaborate with local organizations, the Penobscot Nation, landowners, and regional partners.

Will the GMP address infrastructure or visitor services?

The GMP process welcomes discussion about both infrastructure and visitor service needs that may require facilities investments, although the GMP will not include specific, long-term NPS investment proposals requiring construction. Any such proposals will be developed separately; these may include investment concept evaluations and compliance pathways. The GMP may include potential actions to address investment needs, and other plans consistent with the GMP will focus on specific implementation actions.

How long will the GMP take to complete?

Typically, GMPs take 2–3 years to complete. The timeline depends on the complexity of issues facing the park, the volume of comments received, and the NEPA compliance pathway. Public scoping, which starts now, is the first step. There will be more opportunities for the public to get involved in this GMP process in the future.