

Geologic Site of the Month
January, 1997

Mount Katahdin, Baxter State Park, Maine



45° 54' 16.17" N, 68° 55' 20.17" W

Text by
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Mount Katahdin

The photo shows fine examples of landforms produced by glaciation.



Photo by Donald E. Johnson

Figure 1. Winter view of east side of Mt. Katahdin in Baxter State Park.



Mount Katahdin

There are two large cirque basins (Great Basin and North Basin) high on the side of the mountain crest. These cirques were originally sculpted by alpine glaciers. After much controversy over the years, it is now generally believed that the cirques originated prior to covering of the mountain by the last continental ice sheet that spread across Maine about 25,000 years ago.

During the recession of the ice sheet, the prominent ridges of the Basin Ponds Moraine were deposited around the sides of Katahdin. One of these ridges (accented by snow cover) can be seen in the lower part of the photo. The ice-covered Basin Ponds are seen to the right, and Chesuncook Lake is visible in the far distance.



References and Additional Information

Davis, P.T., 1989, Late Quaternary glacial history of Mt. Katahdin and the nunatak hypothesis, in Tucker, R.D., and Marvinney, R.G. (editors), Studies in Maine Geology, Volume 6 - Quaternary geology: Maine Geological Survey, p. 119-134.

