## **Maine legend, Donn Fendler, returns to the Cole Museum**

### **By: Marisa Higgins**

### **September 13, 2016**

Bangor, Maine—The Cole Museum will host Donn Fendler next Saturday for a book signing and discussion of his time lost in the Maine wilderness. The museum’s annual “Donn Fendler Day” will take place September 17th in the museum’s conference room, and everyone is invited to listen and interact with the Maine legend about his Mt. Katahdin experience.

Fendler’s annual visit is one of the most anticipated days at the Cole Museum. “For me as the director it is my favorite day at the museum,” says Jim Neville. “The fact that Donn is able to bring people together from the ages of 9 to 90 is really special. Mr. Fendler speaks to every one of the people that come to get their books signed, and I know that they leave his table believing that they and Mr. Fendler are friends—I think Donn believes it too.”

This year will be Fendler’s twelfth visit to the museum, and he says, “I always enjoy the nice crowd [at the museum]. I always enjoy meeting people and meeting Maine people.” The video presentation and discussion with begin at 1 p.m. with book signing opportunities at noon and following the discussion.The events are free to attend, and admission to the museum will be offered at a discounted-rate at that time.

The story of a young, New York boy surviving alone on Maine’s most famous mountain is known by almost all of Maine’s residents, who either witnessed the search-and-rescue unfold or read his story as a grade-school student. And today, when hikers continue to become lost to the Maine wilderness in an age of constant communication, Fendler’s story remains relevant and inspiring.

“It shakes me,” Fendler says when he hears reports about lost hikers, “because I know what they are going through, and I hope they are found safe and sound.” According to the Baxter State Park website, nineteen people have died on Katahdin since 1963, and their search-and-rescue report (compiled with data from 1994–2014) showed that almost 10% of SAR operations were due to a “lost party.” In addition, the Maine Warden Service’s 2013–2014 annual report said 88 of their 391 SAR calls were for lost hikers through-out Maine.

Fendler has long expressed his gratitude for both the Maine community that searched for him and the people across the country who sent his mother and family prayers for his survival. Today, he offers various words of wisdom for those who enjoy hiking, with the two key concepts being to not get separated from your group and, if you are separated, to stay in one place. While he laughs as he advises the safest hiking practices are, “Don’t go acting crazy like I did,” he hopes the take away from his story of survival is the importance of determination and faith in even the most hopeless circumstances

### **About**

The Cole Land Transportation Museum preserves and displays a selection of Maine’s land transportation equipment in hopes to inspire today’s generation through their predecessors’ triumphs.

The museum is opened May 1 thru November 11, seven days a week 9 am–5 pm, and children under 19 are always free admission. More information can be found by visiting [www.colemuseum.org](http://www.colemuseum.org) or calling (207) 990-3600 ext. 13.

# **###**

# **Contact**

To learn more about the Cole Land Transportation Museum Donn Fendler book signing and talk, please contact

Jim Neville, Director of Operations  
405 Perry Road Bangor, Maine  
(207)990-3600  
jneville@colemuseum.org