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Governor's Promise To Lost Boy Fulfilled, 68 Years Later

Web Editor: Rhonda Erskine, Online Content Producer
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AUGUSTA (NEWS CENTER/AP) -- A governor's promise to a 12-year-old Boy Scout who emerged safely from Maine's woods after being lost for nearly two weeks was finally fulfilled Tuesday, nearly seven decades late.

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Back in 1939, Don Fendler was at the center of an amazing survival story. He's the 12-year-old boy who got separated from his dad and brother, and was lost for 12-days in what is now Baxter State Park.

After days of fruitless searching, authorities were doubting they'd find him alive. But he persevered and walked out to a sporting camp, wearing only a jacket.

After he recovered, Donn was invited to the State House, where then Governor Louis Barrows promised him a lifetime fishing license. But Governor Barrows never followed through with that promise.

Governor John Baldacci heard about the oversight from Conservation Commissioner Pat McGowan, who learned about the unfulfilled promise when Fendler happened to mention it in passing last year.

Fendler thanked Governor Baldacci for the gift, even though he said he didn't deserve it.

"I was kind of a dumb kid to get lost in the wilderness, and they made a big deal about it. But I want you to know that my heart is in Maine, it's always been in Maine," said Fendler.

Fendler, who's now 80 and lives in Tennessee, wrote a book about his ordeal and returns to Maine each summer. He often talks to schoolkids about his ordeal.

Fendler presented the governor with a copy of the book, "Lost on a Mountain in Maine." He told Governor Baldacci, "It tells you what not to do if you get lost."

NEWS CENTER & The Associated Press

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