

Joan Benoit Samuelson

Thank you for being here and I'm equally humbled and honored to be among such fine company and people who really care deeply and passionately about our great state. I had logged close to 150,000 miles on the roads and trails of the state of Maine, and that's not even mentioning the miles I've logged on ski and on my bicycle. Maine has numerous programs in place to promote health and wellness. Unfortunately, our citizenry doesn't know too much about these programs.

I think as an athlete I have a real appreciation for the natural resources and the air quality in the state. I feel as though I've been a human barometer for climate change over the many miles of my career. I've noticed such things as changing ambient air quality, erosion, runoff, development; things that perhaps our state should look a little more carefully at and for producing. I think that we have a brand that needs to be protected, promoted, and embraced. From Aroostook County, where we have potato fields, and Maine winter sports facilities in place, to Kittery Point, where we have a seafood industry and shipbuilding industry married closely and living harmoniously, we need to protect all of this. We have resources that no other state has, and I believe that these resources and the people of our state, we can tie the two areas together and promote health and wellness through promoting and protecting our natural resources. I think the two – I think sustainability in health and wellness is inextricably tied with sustainability of natural resources, and we have a lot to be proud of.

To me, being a Maine citizen means having great pride in the Maine people of our state, the work ethic practiced by these people, and the natural resources that can lend themselves beautifully to better health for all people. We have 3,000 miles of coastline. We can let that coastline erode, or we can take charge and be on the cutting edge of environmental, social, and educational change. We can be the model, we are at the helm of the continent and we can be a model for change in all these areas.

Thank you.

Remarks at "Maine People and the Environment" roundtable with Governor LePage
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