

# Roundtable on Maine People and the Environment

January 20, 2011

## Comments of Jeff Reardon

Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Reardon, I live in Manchester, and I am a lifelong angler and hunter. When my father left the Army in 1974, he had two job offers in the insurance industry—one in Portland Maine, and the other somewhere in the Midwest. I'm here today because my father grew up dreaming about fishing in the North Woods for brook trout, and he jumped at the chance to take a job where our family could do it on his days off.

He picked the right place. A few years ago the Eastern Brook Trout Venture collected data to assess brook trout populations and habitat from Maine to Georgia, and determined that "Maine is the last true stronghold for brook trout in the eastern United States"; Maine has more "intact" brook trout streams than the other 16 states combined; and that Maine contains more than 96% of the remaining wild lake and pond populations.

Brook trout fishing is an important part of Maine's economy, from Rangeley to Jackman to Greenville to Ashland. Some of Maine's oldest businesses are sporting camps where the prime attraction from May to September is brook trout. The Libby family has been running their camps on the headwaters of the Aroostook River for four generations—and they are just one of dozens of similar lodges

The future of these businesses—and of traditions like the Registered Maine Guide and the bush pilot—depends on our continued stewardship of Maine's brookies—and that depends on our stewardship of Maine's North Woods. Programs like the Land for Maine's Future grants are essential to that. So are rules for culverts that allow brook trout to get into their spawning streams.

Maine governors since at least Percival Baxter have stewardship of the North Woods—and brook trout--a priority. Please make it part of your legacy, too.

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