

Ray “Bucky” Owen

Governor I appreciate you taking the time to meet with us gentlemen; I'd like to talk about the economic values of fish and wildlife to the state of Maine: in essence, it's about a 1.8 billion dollar industry, it creates thousands of jobs, over a 110 million dollars of tax revenues, over hundreds of millions of dollars in retail sales, and is supported by almost no general fund money; in fact, the budget says it's 2.1 million, and since this year it's been zero. It's an economic engine that is spent greatly in rural Maine, places where it's needed, and I would offer that it could be increased significantly with additional dollars, not a lot, to work on the economic development within the department.

I'd also like to talk about river restoration for a minute: the Kennebec, as you probably know, is coming back in leaps and bounds, the Penobscot we're just starting with, and these are investments in the future, for local economic activity, and will increase. And I hope that you will encourage and where appropriate support river restoration.

And lastly, just to comment on one fish that comes up our rivers, which is somewhat controversial, it's the alewife... throughout the inshore ground fish fisheries it's a major lobster bait, it's important to the ecology of the lower rivers, and I would hope that you support reintroduction of alewives to our systems, where appropriate, because again, it's so important to the economy of Maine.

I appreciate it.

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