

**Cold Stream Forest Celebration Remarks**  
**Sen. Susan M. Collins**  
**May 5, 2016**

Thank you, Wolfe. I am glad to be here with you to celebrate the conservation of Cold Stream Forest. Thanks to the commitment of so many organizations and individuals, more than 8,000 acres of forest, ponds, and streams will provide for public recreation, forestry, and wildlife habitat for generations to come.

They say that one picture is worth a thousand words. That was never more true than with the photograph that accompanied the announcement of this achievement: an angler casting a line into sparkling waters, a magnificent forest lining the banks, and a brilliant sky above. That extraordinary photograph by Jerry and Marcy Monkman captures the natural beauty that defines our state.

The partnership that made this possible also defines Maine. I commend the Trust for Public Land, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Trout Unlimited, the Forks Fish and Game Association, Somerset Woods Trustees, the Maine Division of Parks and Public Lands, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Weyerhaeuser, private donors, and so many others for joining together. It is significant that the Cold Stream Forest Project is also known as the Central Maine Sportsman's Access Project, highlighting the diversity of partners and the values that brought them together.

The people of Maine have always been faithful stewards of our environment because we understand its tremendous value to our way of life. Maine's natural resources are an important part of our heritage and have helped to shape the economic, environmental, and recreational character of our entire State. All of the partners in this effort deserve praise for helping to uphold this great tradition.

Efforts such as this, here in Maine and throughout our nation, require strong partners in Washington. I worked to secure \$5.5 million in federal Forest Legacy funds to ensure the success of this endeavor. The Forest Legacy Program is focused on multi-use land preservation and aims to conserve working forests to protect the forest products industry, water quality, habitat for biodiversity, and opportunities for public recreation. This is consistent with the tradition of Maine's woods.

Forest Legacy has clear criteria and a national ranking system that ensures the most deserving projects with multiple benefits receive federal funding. Ranked fourth in the nation, Cold Stream Forest clearly passed the test.

The Forest Legacy Program is funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which marked its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of conservation successes in 2014, the same year that Cold Stream Forest was named a priority project. At the time, this project was called an "outstanding model for successful federal, state, and private partnerships."

Congress is making progress on the promise that was made to the American people a half-century ago when LWCF was established to take the proceeds from natural resource development and invest a small portion in conservation and outdoor recreation. Last September, I joined a bipartisan coalition of Senators, including Senator King, in calling on Senate leadership to permanently reauthorize and adequately fund the LWCF. The final fiscal year 2016 spending bill that was signed into law at the end of last year provided \$450 million for LWCF, a 47 percent increase for this landmark conservation program. I was pleased to announce with Senator King that more than \$900,000 for local projects in Maine is being provided through the LWCF stateside program.

And, finally, I am delighted to report that just two weeks ago the Senate voted to permanently reauthorize LWCF in the bipartisan Energy bill. From places of scenic majesty to an oasis of quiet in a noisy city, from critical wildlife habitat, precious watersheds, and productive forests to community playgrounds and Civil War battlefields, it is essential that Congress plays a lead role in protecting our national heritage.

Maine's heritage is to share the outdoors and to respect other users. We reject the false choice of pitting the environment against the economy because, here in Maine, the environment is the economy. They are inextricably linked.

They will remain so as long as government, recreational groups, businesses, private landowners, and committed individuals work together. Your efforts continue that great tradition. The people of Maine are grateful for your important work to safeguard our State's natural treasures and our way of life.