

Inspiration and Success Await at New Hampshire's Remote Ponds

Dawn. Dewdrops dot grass enveloping the trailhead signpost. The traveler strides onward, trail emblazoned with red efts while precious moisture permits. Narrower corridors encroach, sprawling hobblebush caressing ever-limbering legs. Progressively eager paces verify his passage through gossamer nets of well-intentioned – yet unknowingly misplaced – spiders' evening works.

Staccato clanks and groans of water bottles, float tube, swim fins and fly rod case adorning this curious bipedal creature create an audible backdrop to his travels. What spectacle to prying wild eyes! Seemingly jealous, the mixed hardwood canopy begins to sing aloud, vireo and veery much so. The understory replies, proclaiming the ovenbird loudest teacher. Silent sentinels, glacial erratics sport crew cuts of lush moss and fern. Tolkienesque trees and root systems cling and sprawl impossibly.

Progress and pounding heart halt momentarily. The ruffed grouse's unmistakable escape act never fails to stun – exactly the intention.

A suitable breath-catching moment to unfold the map shows the next elevation gain should reveal his destination – a remote brook trout pond.

The traveler plays hide-and-seek with the last veils of shoreline spruce, the reclusive waterbody finally emerges...such magical, unique loneliness. What geologic sleight-of-hand allows this shimmering hermit to cling to the mountainside? Little concerned with waxing poetic, yet obliging anyway, a white-throated sparrow offers its ethereally cheerful song as a timely greeting. Hovering and darting dragonflies, by now warmed and exhibiting full predatory prowess over the pond's sunlit surface, make fools of the unwary.

The pond's red-speckled and white-trimmed denizens attempt to return the favor and claim a dragonfly breakfast, again and again launching fully airborne in the brook trout's everlasting quest for prey. The traveler can't help but grin.

The journey's main attraction clearly beckoning, the anticipative traveler morphs amphibian, slipping into waders, float tube



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Float tubes open worlds of opportunity for adventurous anglers to catch brookies (left) in New Hampshire's serene remote ponds.



(aka belly boat), and swim fins. Eastern newts – this

time as waterborne adults – again adjoin the traveler, paddling lazily in the shallows. While peek-a-boo shoreline casting is possible in many ponds, the float tube – possibly the ultimate decompression device, literally and figuratively – opens worlds of trout-catching opportunities. Effortless kicking propels the floating traveler toward numerous risers, and the first rhythmic 3-weight fly rod casts unfold.

An aggressive boil, then seasoned flick of the wrist rapidly transforms the straight rod to parabola, the angler's favorite curve. The crackle of life now splendidly energized at each end, the brook trout bulldogs feistily, occasionally displaying the char's proclivity to spin when the battle becomes serious. Soon the handsome 11-inch specimen is in hand, the first of many crimson gems radiating

brilliantly. In these less-pressured environs, stocked fingerling brook trout are afforded the opportunity to grow to such catchable size. Remote pond holdover, or naturalized, brook trout are typically encountered in the 7-12 inch range, with breathtaking specimens 14 inches and larger occasionally taken.

Hours pass as minutes, and the traveler must reluctantly return to the terrestrial realm. Leaping, eager brook trout; a cow moose and calf watchfully grazing aquatic vegetation; pond, in fact all life, are seemingly in overdrive in the fleeting northern summer. Moments of ear-ringing quiet... myriad memories forever forged in the mind's eye. Glancing back fondly at the reflective tarn one last time before the descend-

ing hike, the traveler recalls a long-admired song, "Time Stand Still," but knows it cannot. The utter wonderment of this and so many previous adventures – of being one with thoughts and wilderness – will have to sustain until the next.



Trout Take Flight



Each June, in just one day, contracted helicopter services aerially stock some fifty remote ponds "fingerling" (about 3 inches, or "finger length") brook trout raised by dedicated hatchery personnel.

Learn more about this wilderness angling experience at wildnh.com/Fishing/trout_remote.htm