

October 05, 2009

Russell Pierce receives 2009 Environmental Award from the Natural Resources Council of Maine

One of the State's leading environmental organizations, the Natural Resources Council of Maine, has presented Russell Pierce with a 2009 Environmental Award. The award is presented each year to individuals who have taken leadership roles in advancing an environmental cause in Maine. Through the award to Russ, the Natural Resources Council of Maine also acknowledges the extraordinary support of Norman, Hanson & DeTroy in the pro bono representation of NRCM throughout the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission proceedings on Plum Creek's real estate development application in the Moosehead Lake region. The Maine LURC proceeding was the largest of its kind ever in the State of Maine. From the years leading up to the 4-week evidentiary hearing, to the highly contested hearing itself, Russ represented NRCM as a joint intervenor with Maine Audubon, mounting formidable opposition to the scope and intensity of Plum Creek's proposed development plans in this treasured area within Maine's North Woods. The hearing involved scores of expert witnesses, on topics as diverse as forestry practices, wildlife biology, recreational and scenic impact studies, water quality, land use standards, traffic impact science, and tourism industry economics. Russ and NRCM were instrumental in compelling the Commission to require Plum Creek's massive revision of proposed Conservation Easements (currently, the largest connected conservation easement ever undertaken in Maine, at nearly 400,000 acres), and forced critical amendments to the plan, scaling back development on remote ponds and other environmentally sensitive areas. The hearing was simultaneously broadcast over the internet, while often nearly a hundred people were in attendance during key cross-examinations.

The conservation issues at stake were of both state-wide and national significance – and remain so. Maine's North Woods is the largest expanse of undeveloped forest left in the eastern United States. The Commission's final decision on Plum Creek's 30-year development plan was issued last week. In its findings, the Commission noted that, by the time the evidentiary hearing had ended, Plum Creek had conceded – in recognition of the case presented by the opposing intervenors – that the plan still had deficiencies requiring denial at that time. Post-hearing, LURC consultants rewrote Plum Creek's own plan, with an eye toward ultimate approval of a dramatically scaled-back version. The successful outcomes of the pro bono efforts of Russ and the firm include the significant relocation of development and strengthened conservation easements to ensure true and enforceable conservation values where the easements are in place. While aspects of the proceeding still continue – nothing has been built yet, no permits have issued – the 2009 Environmental Award acknowledges the key achievements that have been won date.

Other Firm News

September 01, 2010 Juror Removed From Trial After Facebook Post [read article](#)

August 04, 2010 Summer 2010 Newsletter [read article](#)

August 02, 2010 Ready Seafood Profiled in August Issue of Maine Ahead [read article](#)

