

Maine Environment

Natural Resources
Council of Maine

Winter 2010

Top 10 Environmental Victories of the Decade 2000-2009

Over the past decade, NRCM has been involved in a long list of efforts to protect what is special about Maine's environment. We have helped deliver big victories both inside and outside of the Legislature. We have worked to pass a string of first-in-the-nation environmental bills, and we have teamed up with broad-based coalitions to protect our forests, promote clean energy, restore healthy rivers, and reduce toxics.

As we move into a new decade, it is helpful to look back—to remind us of what we have achieved together. With the help, support, and involvement of our members and activists, we have taken many big steps forward. Here are 10 of our biggest moments of the decade for Maine's environmental protection.

Katahdin Lake Protected—Former Governor Percival Baxter's vision for protecting key parcels around Mt. Katahdin was realized in December 2006, when the 4,119-acre Katahdin Lake parcel, including 649-acre Katahdin Lake, was given to the Baxter State Park Authority by the Trust for Public Land. This magnificent addition to the public trust was made possible through a multi-year fundraising and political campaign, involving many heroes. Governor Baxter's original intent was documented in maps and communications, and now that plan is a reality. Spectacular Katahdin Lake and its surrounding lands are now part of Baxter State Park, to be enjoyed as protected lands today and forever.

Stopping Liquidation Harvesting—During the 1990s and early 2000s, Maine was experiencing a serious problem with "cut and run" timber liquidators who would buy forestland, strip the land of its trees, then sell the land for development. In 2004, the Legislature passed a bill by a one-vote margin directing the Maine Forest Service to develop rules designed to limit liquidation harvesting. The new rules have forced timber liquidation companies to stop this egregious practice, which was scarring the land and fueling speculative real estate development.

Protecting North Woods from

Development—Many very big land conservation deals were completed over the past decade, permanently protecting more than 1.8 million acres of Maine's North Woods from development. Most of these lands are protected through working forest easements, and the lands, which remain in private ownership, are being managed for forestry. Some of the areas, including lands at Grafton Notch, Seboomook, Debsconeag Lakes, and Grand Lake Stream, have passed into public or non-profit conservation ownership.

Penobscot River Restoration

Agreement—This historic, internationally significant agreement was signed in 2004 by the Penobscot Nation, PPL Corporation, state, and federal governments, NRCM, the Penobscot Trust, and several other conservation organizations. It removes two dams and bypasses a third to significantly improve access to nearly 1,000 miles of habitat for 11 species of native sea-run fish, including endangered Atlantic salmon and shortnose sturgeon. The agreement, which resolves decades of disputes, also maintains energy generation on the river. The National Academy



KATAHDIN LAKE BY NRCM/MISSING LYNX

of Sciences deemed this project the last best hope for the restoring a population of Atlantic salmon to Maine's rivers.

Clean Energy Leadership—During the past 10 years, Maine has become New England's leader in producing clean renewable energy from wind power. NRCM contributed by serving on the Governor's Wind Power Task Force, and by helping get a major wind power bill adopted in 2008. The bill was approved unanimously in the Maine House and Senate, putting ambitious goals into place of developing 2,000 megawatts (MW) of wind by 2015, and 3,000 by 2020.

Nearly 300 Maine businesses have been involved in the construction of the wind projects now operating in Maine, and clean electricity from these projects is helping reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, improve energy security, reduce harmful global warming pollution, and provide economic and environmental benefits to Maine people.

E-waste Recycling—In 2004, Maine passed a first-in-the-nation electronic waste (e-waste) recycling law, requiring manufacturers to help pay for safe recycling of computers and other electronics at end-of-life. Since then, the program has prevented millions of pounds of toxic materials from going into Maine landfills, and has resulted in more than 20 million pounds of formerly wasted materials being turned into new products. Maine's law has been emulated across the country, with 18 other states and municipalities following our lead.

Safer Products—Another first-in-the-nation bill, adopted in 2008, requires systematic identification and removal of toxics from consumer products sold in Maine. This bill was passed in response to the federal system's failure to safely regulate chemicals in consumer products. The Safer Products Law has already become model legislation for reducing the hazardous chemicals too often contained in everyday products, including toys and other products used by children.

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Plum Creek Update

NRCM staff and legal team continue to work on our appeal of the Land Use Regulation Commission's decision to allow Plum Creek's huge Moosehead Lake development. In late January, we asked the court to allow us to add information to the record. The new information

pertains to discovery of tens of thousands of dollars paid by Plum Creek to interveners supporting the company. We also requested additional information. We expect the court to rule on these requests some time this month. Our next step is to write our legal brief. NRCM believes that LURC violated the laws and rules that govern how Plum Creek's application should have been reviewed, and as a result, the Commission approved a final concept plan that was substantially written by its own staff and consultants, who acted as advocates for the plan. A decision by the court on our appeal is likely in late spring or early summer. To learn more about our appeal, visit www.nrcm.org/plum_creek_appeal.asp.



NRCM is appealing LURC's approval for a huge development in the Moosehead area.

JERRY AND MARCY HICKMAN/NRCM

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An Extraordinary Opportunity

The last few months have given birth to a new cooperative effort that holds promise for landscape-scale land conservation in Maine's North Woods. Last July, Secretary Salazar of the Department of the Interior visited Maine at the invitation of Senator Susan Collins. While he was here, a group of people interested in protecting the future of Maine's forests (including NRCM's then board president, Eleanor Kinney) met with the Secretary.



Before that meeting, the Secretary had little knowledge of the vastness, beauty, and economic, ecological, and recreational value of Maine's North Woods. He did not know that Maine is home to the largest unfragmented forest east of the Mississippi River. As a result of the visit, he invited landowners, conservationists, and others to work together to craft a landscape-scale conservation proposal that could qualify for federal support.

Since then, representatives of the Baldacci Administration, landowners, conservation NGOs, the Maine Forest Products Council, and others have been meeting to develop a shared vision for Maine's North Woods that keeps the forest intact and enhances its economic, ecological, recreational, and community values.

In November, members of this working group traveled to Washington to meet again with Secretary Salazar, Secretary Vilsack of the Department of Agriculture, and Maine's congressional delegation. Like Salazar, Vilsack expressed strong interest in the possibilities for forestland conservation in Maine. He asked our group to submit a specific pilot project proposal in February 2010.

Since those November meetings, NRCM has worked with other participants to identify regional landscapes on a scale of 500,000 to 2 million acres that would serve as candidate pilot project proposals. We are reaching out to a larger set of conservation organizations to discuss potential areas, talking with landowners about their potential interest in participating, exploring a broad range of possible sources of funding, and assessing the kinds of tools that might be used to protect our forested landscape on a large scale.

Our efforts are very much a "work in progress" as I write this column, but each proposed pilot project will likely have three components: 1) Acquiring from willing sellers high-value ecological and recreational areas through fee purchase and/or conservation easement; 2) Maintaining as sustainably managed forest the areas surrounding the high-value ecological and recreational areas; and 3) Compensating land owners for improved management of water resources, wildlife habitat, and the quality of the forest.

What area or areas of the North Woods will be chosen as candidates for this first pilot remains to be decided. But all involved with this process understand that this is a unique opportunity to create a new partnership of private land owners, the state of Maine, and the federal government to conserve the North Woods. This endeavor is a multi-year effort. We expect that, if we are successful with our pilot proposal this year, success will lead to future opportunities.

For years, federal funding for land protection has gone primarily to the western U.S. We are excited about this new opportunity and cautiously hopeful that Maine is finally going to receive our fair share.

Everyone involved in this important initiative is investing tremendous energy in a cooperative venture to help secure the future of Maine's northern forests. We recognize that future generations of Maine citizens will derive many benefits from the North Woods as a sustainably managed working forest, a world class recreation destination, and a healthy, intact ecological system.

This enterprise will need the full and enthusiastic support of Maine's congressional delegation. If you are writing or speaking with any member of the delegation, be sure to remind them how spectacularly beautiful Maine's North Woods are, how important they are for habitat for moose, deer, lynx, migratory songbirds, and many other plants and animals, and how vital they are for jobs in the outdoor recreation economy.

Much work remains to be done, and the outcome of our collective efforts is uncertain. But we have been offered a great opportunity, and we must seize it! As this project moves forward, we will keep you informed of our progress.

—Brownie Carson, Executive Director

A glimpse at where NRCM staff have been working in communities around Maine.



Lisa Pohlmann (left) and Dylan Voorhees (right), with Walt Elish, President, Aroostook Partnership for Progress, and Virginia Joles, President, LEAD.

NRCM Deputy Director Lisa Pohlmann, and Dylan Voorhees, Clean Energy Project Director, traveled to Aroostook County in January to present our clean energy and federal climate policy work

to community and business leaders. They presented to the Presque Isle and Caribou Rotary Clubs and the LEAD board, an affiliate of the Northern Maine Development Commission. They also visited with leaders from the local university and community college, hospitals, agriculture, and various northern Maine businesses and with Aroostook County NRCM members. Lisa says, "We look forward to collaborating with more folks from Aroostook County and featuring their stories in the months ahead."



Judy Berk, NRCM advocacy communications director, spoke at the Belfast Garden Club in mid-January. Since 1989, Judy and her husband have gardened at their home in Northport and for the last 10 years have experimented with sun-heated cold frames, home built greenhouses, and pre-fab greenhouses that supply many varieties of fresh greens year-round. Judy shared her gardening secrets, successes, and failures in a presentation entitled, "Growing Greens in Maine All Winter Long." Says Judy, "It's heartening to see so many Mainers who want to grow their own healthy, fresh greens year-round instead of buying food trucked across the country. It is one way we can cut our impact on global warming."



Beth Dimond with Brownie Carson at the New Year's Eve Polar Plunge.

Public Affairs Coordinator Beth Dimond was one of many staff and supporters who participated in NRCM's second polar plunge on New Year's Eve at Portland's East End Beach. Local television stations shared video and interviews from the event—and so did CNN, The Weather Channel, and NBC's "Today Show." The event raised more than \$5,000 in support of NRCM's clean energy work. "We're already gearing up for next year's plunge," says Beth.



EPA Proposes Stricter Smog Rules

The Environmental Protection Agency last month proposed stricter smog standards. Sources of pollutants that result in smog include power plants and vehicles. Because smog can move hundreds of miles from its source, Maine is at risk. According to the EPA, the new standards could prevent as many as 12,000 premature deaths annually from heart or lung diseases, along with thousands of cases of bronchitis, asthma, and nonfatal heart attacks. They would replace standards put in place by the previous administration, which ignored science panel recommendations and have been challenged in court. NRCM weighed in to support the new EPA standards.

Maine Environment

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Maine Environment is provided four times a year to more than 12,000 members and supporters of the Natural Resources Council of Maine. NRCM is a Maine-based nonprofit membership organization working to protect, conserve, and restore our land, air, wildlife, and water, now and for future generations. Membership starts at \$28/year. Join online at www.nrcm.org.

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Banner: My Maine This Week photo, Baldpate Mountain by Linda Woods



Natural Resources Council of Maine

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Tip of the Day



Turn It Down. Turning down your thermostat by just one degree can save as much as 10 percent annually on heating bills.

For a Tip of the Day every day, visit our website at www.nrcm.org. Have our tips sent directly to your home page through our RSS feed!



LISA POHLMANN

Removal of the Fort Halifax Dam—Removal of the Ft. Halifax dam in 2008 opened up five miles of some of the most productive shad habitat in the state and resulted in the Sebasticook River

(a tributary of the Kennebec) becoming what is probably the largest alewife run in the U.S. Millions of alewives now surge up the Kennebec, then up the Sebasticook, providing an awe-inspiring surge of life. As one state biologist put it: “After the dam came out, I could hear the Sebasticook River breathe for the first time.” The dam had blocked fish passage for more than 100 years, and the dam’s owner decided it was no longer economically feasible to operate.

Tackling Climate Change—With passage of “An Act to Provide Leadership in Addressing the Threat of Climate Change” in 2003, Maine became the first state in the nation to pass a law that establishes global warming pollution reduction goals. The bill required Maine to develop a climate change action plan, produced in 2004 after a lengthy and creative stakeholders process. That plan has served as a blueprint for cutting emissions of climate-changing pollutants. The legislation requires Maine to reduce global warming emissions to 1990 levels by 2010, 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and by as much as 75-80 percent over the long term, as agreed to by the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. Maine has made significant progress implementing top recommendations in that plan, including the enactment of a bill to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which put Maine and the Northeast on the map for creating the first regional “cap-and-trade” program to reduce climate-changing pollutants.

Banning Toxic Deca—Big, out-of-state chemical companies that manufacture a harmful flame retardant named “deca” launched a massive campaign to defeat a bill in the Maine Legislature aimed at banning the use of deca in computers, furniture, and other products. But they lost, and Maine became the first state to take regulatory action restricting the use of deca. This significant victory built on a record of prior successful efforts by the Maine Legislature to phase out mercury-containing thermometers, thermostats, and other products.



BETH DIMOND

To learn more about NRCM’s long history of environmental success, visit our website at www.nrcm.org.



Meet NRCM Member and Activist Ed Robeau

Ed Robeau became a member of NRCM 30 minutes after moving to Maine in 1993 and has been active ever since. A regular at our annual Citizen Action Day and a member of our *Partners in Maine’s Future* monthly giving program, Ed sets a great example for anyone interested in taking steps to protect Maine’s environment. We spoke recently with Ed.

What made you decide to get involved in environmental advocacy?

It started with the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973. I was a 25-year-old officer in the U.S. Air Force, driving a Corvette and Buick. The fuel shortages led me to study the impact of oil consumption on the environment, foreign policy, relations with the Middle East, and wars. I sold both gas-hogs in 1973 and bought two VW’s getting 30mpg. I became aware of climate change in the mid-1980’s. This led to intensification of my effort to reduce fossil fuel consumption overall. From these issues, I became aware of many additional issues, and realized that our long-term survival and the incredible natural beauty and interconnected web of life depended on changes in human activity.

What actions have you taken to help protect Maine’s environment?

*The first was joining NRCM 30 minutes after moving to Maine in 1993. I crossed the New Hampshire border and stopped at L.L. Bean, where a table was set up for an NRCM membership drive. I joined on the spot. I have been a regular financial supporter since (and am currently a member of the NRCM monthly giving program, *Partners in Maine’s Future*). I attend NRCM’s Citizen Action Day nearly every year, have discussed various issues and specific bills with legislators over the years, served as a local team leader for advocates and helped with a phone tree, and I practice environmentally sound activities as much as possible (carpooling, driving high efficiency vehicles, bicycling, walking for errands, maximizing energy efficiency of my homes, etc.)*

Can you tell us a little about your experiences attending Citizen Action Day at NRCM?

At first I worried about saying the correct thing, and felt bad about taking up the time of busy legislators. Each year, it gets easier, and I have shifted my attitude to “The environment, the people of Maine, and I deserve the attention of our legislators. They owe us the consideration that is deserved.”

What advice do you have for people who are considering becoming more environmentally active in Maine?

DO IT! Our lives and those of our children and fellow creatures depend on it. Like so many major issues before, it is the sheer number of people that organize and push for change that makes the difference. Also, look at the big picture, while avoiding getting overly focused on one small environmental issue. And a final recommendation: work with NRCM, as this organization has its finger on the pulse of what matters, and will coordinate and advise what actions are most helpful at a given point in time. Citizen Action Day is a good example.

To become a Partner in Maine’s Future, see page 4.

WASHINGTON WATCH

From Copenhagen Back to Congress: Senate Action on Climate Needed Now

Leaders from 193 nations—the largest single meeting by world leaders in history—came together in Copenhagen in December to negotiate an international agreement to reduce global carbon emissions. With America’s leadership, the countries forged an Accord that marked a significant step forward in tackling global climate change.

The summit laid the foundation for a binding international climate change treaty later this year (to be held in Mexico City), including emissions targets, a mechanism for international climate finance, and transparency with regard to international commitments. While the Accord did not deliver everything some hoped for, there were several key developments that should create strong momentum for additional international and domestic action on clean energy and climate protection. It is now imperative for the U.S. Congress to build on that foundation. The Senate must pass its version of a climate and energy bill soon.

Senator Susan Collins has stepped up in a leadership role by co-sponsoring the CLEAR act with Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA). This bill features new ideas to consider in the structuring of the climate bill and will join others advanced by Senators Kerry, Lieberman, and Graham. Senator Olympia Snowe has been actively soliciting support among her colleagues for international climate finance to be included in the FY11 federal budget to help meet the U.S. commitments in the Copenhagen Accord.

At press time, Senators Snowe and Collins had declined to join efforts in Congress to weaken EPA’s authority to limit global warming pollutants. They continue to demonstrate their commitment to take action on climate and we are

counting on them to help move the debate forward.

Here in Maine, NRCM is working with a coalition to communicate regularly with the delegation, bringing our members’ voices forward, and meeting with community leaders all over the state to discuss the benefits of federal climate legislation for Maine’s economy, job growth, natural resource protection, and energy independence. We all must stay focused! There is no greater act we could take this year to protect Maine’s environment.

— Lisa Pohlmann, Deputy Director

NRCM is promoting the following key issues for the final federal climate bill:

- A cap on carbon that reduces emissions at least 20 percent over 2005 levels by 2020, and 80 percent by 2050. Science tells us this is the minimum requirement to reduce the rate of climate change.
- Investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy from revenues generated from a climate bill, as well as investments to reduce the impact on low-income households and to mitigate climate change impacts on natural resources.
- Maintain or strengthen existing authority under the Clean Air Act for the Environmental Protection Agency to establish limits for global warming emissions from coal plants.

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IN MAINE'S FUTURE



**Help Protect the Maine You Love.
Become A Partner in Maine's Future**

Partners in Maine's Future members are people who have taken an exceptional step to show their love of Maine. They donate directly each month, automatically, from their credit card or checking account.

Easy and Affordable

For as little as \$5 a month, you can

- Add value by providing NRCM with predictable monthly revenue.
- Save trees because there are no renewal forms. No checks. No postage.
- Save money, since there are no bank fees for you, and no processing costs for NRCM.

A minimum of \$10 makes you a Landmark Member. Landmark members receive quarterly updates from our executive director, Brownie Carson, and invitations to special events. Threats to Maine's environment often come without warning. You can help safeguard against them by becoming a Partner in Maine's Future today! **For more information or to enroll, call Joyce Gracie at (207) 430-0128.**



**Join Us for Citizen Action Day
Tuesday, February 23, 2010**

Join us at NRCM's headquarters in Augusta for our annual Citizen Action Day. Learn first-hand from NRCM staff about our environmental priorities for the upcoming legislative session. Participate in the legislative process by meeting with your legislator during our visit to the State House one block away. Meet other NRCM members and activists who care about Maine's environment. Register online today or contact Leisa Dennett at leisa@nrcm.org or (207) 430-0111.

Left: NRCM supporters Jennifer Stone and Chris Adler meet with Rep. Walter Gooley during Citizen Action Day 2009.



NRCM Film to Air on Public Television

MPBN will air our documentary film, "Protecting the Nature of Maine," on **February 28, 2010, at 10:30 p.m.** (the final of three showings) on the stations of the Maine Public Broadcasting Network. For those of you who haven't had a chance to get to one of our movie screenings, here is an opportunity to see our film in the comfort of your own home. The documentary features some of Maine's most important environmental victories and the people who helped make them possible. Mark your calendars, stock up on popcorn, and invite your friends!

**NOW SHOWING
AT THE NRCM INSIDER**

**Tune in to watch these new
NRCM Insider video shorts:**

NRCM on MPBN - watch our movie trailer about the film we produced in celebration of our 50th anniversary in 2009, then mark your calendar to tune it to watch it on MPBN.

NRCM's 2nd Polar Plunge - Watch interviews with NRCM staff and supporters, kids who braved the icy waters of Portland's East End Beach, even a reporter from the *Lewiston Sun Journal*. Hear Brownie Carson's inspiring words leading the charge into Casco Bay, and watch the chills and thrills when we charged from the bay to our blankets! The effort raised more than \$5,000 for our clean energy work. Thanks to those of you who participated or donated to this good cause.

✓ Vote for NRCM!

Please vote for the Natural Resources Council of Maine at the Bangor Savings Bank Community Matters More program. If you live in Maine, your write-in vote for NRCM could help us win \$1,000 or \$5,000. Please visit the Bangor Savings website at <http://www.bangor.com/youmattermore/voting.aspx> and write in your vote for NRCM today—and encourage your friends and family to do the same by posting to your Facebook page and Twitter account!

**\$5,000
Raised in
Second
NRCM
Polar
Plunge**



We did it! We survived our second polar plunge and have a video to prove it. (You can watch it at the NRCM Insider.) The effort raised more than \$5,000 for our clean energy work, and the great press coverage (all of the local TV stations, plus CNN, The Weather Channel, and the NBC "Today Show") helped raise awareness about global warming. We're already planning our next plunge. Want to join the fun and great cause? Drop a note to Stacie Haines at shaines@nrcm.org and we'll keep you informed as plans firm up for next winter's plunge.

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Send Us Your "My Maine This Week"



"The blueberry field is in Appleton beside the Appleton Ridge Road, off of 105. The brilliant red of the field was enhanced by the misty atmosphere, creating a luminosity not seen on sunnier days." - Lionel Libson of Camden, Maine

Do you have a photograph you'd like to share that shows your love for Maine? A poem? Send your submissions to beth@nrcm.org. Visit our website often at www.nrcm.org to see how others are enjoying Maine.