

David Courtemanch

2017 Conservation Leadership Award, Lifetime Achievement

For his deep knowledge of and dedication to protecting Maine's waters

If you've fallen in love with one of Maine's 6,000 lakes or ponds, if you've watched an osprey plunging for a river herring during their migration, or if you've reflected on how much progress we've made since our rivers were treated like receptacles for pollution, David Courtemanch is one of the first people to thank. For several decades, Dave was Maine's leading water quality expert, as the head of the Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Assessment Division. In that capacity, Dave and his colleagues were on the front lines of understanding threats to Maine's waters and developing innovative approaches for reducing toxic pollution, nutrient runoff, and municipal and industrial discharges to Maine's precious waters. He was at the center of nearly every conversation about protecting Maine's rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters. Whether the issue was dioxin from paper mills, nitrogen pollution, upgrading river classifications, or the health of bugs in river sediments, Dave was often the first person to call. For lawmakers, advocates, and water quality experts across New England, a common refrain in the face of a new water quality issue was: "Have you talked with Dave?" He has been a hero in the crusade to protect Maine's waters, playing a key role in restoring the Kennebec and Penobscot rivers, helping design a safety net of protective rules and laws, and crafting a scientific approach that has been the foundation of good policy decisions. Although he left DEP several years ago, Dave remains one of our state's most accomplished water quality experts, and people around the state still call on him, literally, when confronting a new challenge to Maine's water quality. It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, to present David Courtemanch with our 2017 Conservation Leadership Award for Lifetime Achievement.



Natural Resources Council of Maine

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