

Sun Journal

Lawyer wins national award

Friday, June 6, 2008

LEWISTON - Peter Brann of Lewiston has been selected as the National Wildlife Federation's 2007 Affiliate Volunteer of the Year. He received the award because of his volunteering in the name of nature.

One of only three volunteers nationally to receive an award, Brann was honored at a banquet on May 17 during the organization's annual meeting in Keystone, Colo.

"It's the dedication and commitment of people like Peter Brann that helps ensure a wildlife heritage for our children," said Larry Schweiger, president of the National Wildlife Federation. "Peter's volunteer efforts have had a major impact on his community, and the National Wildlife Federation is grateful for his continued support and determination to make our world a better place."

Brann, partner in the law firm of Brann and Isaacson, was nominated for the Volunteer of the Year Award by NWF local affiliate, the Natural Resources Council of Maine, for the exceptional pro bono legal work that he and his firm have provided to their organization.

Brann and several colleagues invested more than a thousand hours of lawyer and paralegal time working to restore Edward Muskie's river, the Androscoggin, so that it meets the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

Brann also represented the council when it intervened in the mercury auto switch lawsuit, which the large automobile manufacturers brought against the state of Maine in response to a law passed here requiring them to pay to recycle mercury-activated electrical switches in cars. Brann's role in that case was critical to the court's upholding Maine's first-in-the-nation mercury switch law.

The Androscoggin River has long been polluted and provided the inspiration for Ed Muskie to draft and fight for the passage of the Clean Water Act. Brann led the lawsuit against International Paper in the effort to force improvements at its paper mill in Jay to reduce the pollution going into the river.

When they did not prevail in that litigation, Brann crafted the legal and scientific appeal of that mill's water pollution discharge license before the Board of Environmental Protection. They are awaiting BEP's decision on the appeal.

"Peter Brann understands the important connection between conservation and community which has made his contributions so successful," concluded Schweiger.

The National Wildlife Federation is America's conservation organization protecting wildlife for the future.