

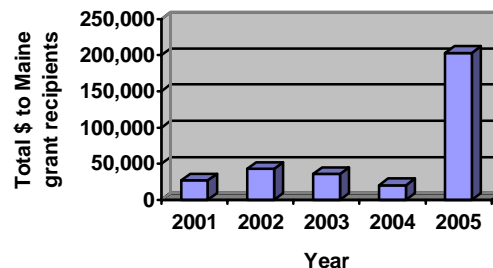
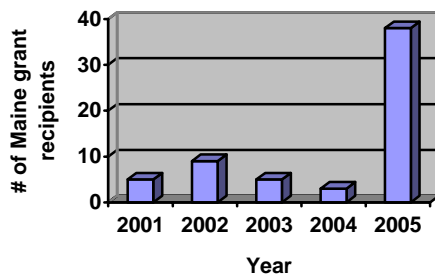


39 Exchange Street, Suite 301 ph (207) 253-1965
Portland, ME 04101 fx (207) 253-1966
www.EnvironmentMaine.org Info@EnvironmentMaine.org

Plum Creek: Buying Silence

For the donations of a corporation to be philanthropic charity rather than self-interested influence peddling, the corporation should be able to demonstrate that the benefit of its contributions to organizations and communities outweighs and is removed from, its bottom line. Otherwise, its generosity can be construed as the purchase of an organization's or community's complicit acceptance of its business agenda, messaging in regards to the corporation or positive public image. Furthermore, giving money to non-profit groups allows a corporation to be affiliated with trusted and established names and messengers.

The Plum Creek Foundation touts its charitable giving as a means "to support and improve the general welfare and quality of life in the communities where Plum Creek operates."¹ Plum Creek Timber Company began operating in the Moosehead Lake region in October 1998. Before 2005, the Plum Creek Foundation made a handful of contributions to Maine organizations.² But in 2005, the foundation contributed to 38 Maine organizations, a 700% increase over the company's average number of recipients in Maine in the previous four years. The foundation contributed \$203,300 in total to Maine grant recipients in 2005, a 645% increase over the company's average total gift amount to Maine organizations in the previous four years.³



It is no coincidence that Plum Creek's sudden spike in financial support to Maine organizations comes in the same year in which it submitted its proposal to LURC to develop the Moosehead Lake region. With a proposed development of unprecedented scope and size needing approval from LURC, which seeks public input as part of its review process, Plum Creek must appear to have the public's approval to move forward. Giving contributions to these non-profit organizations makes it more difficult for these organizations to voice their opposition and raises the image of Plum Creek in the eyes of these organizations' members and staff.

Plum Creek took little charitable interest in Maine communities and organizations before its massive development proposal was on the table and before public sentiment came to bear on the corporation's agenda in Maine. Plum Creek's dramatic increase in financial support to Maine organizations makes a much broader slate of organizations, and their memberships, beholden to the company, likely silencing opposition from grant recipients.

¹ <http://www.plumcreek.com/community/default.php>, accessed on March 15, 2006.

² Plum Creek Foundation, Form 990PF for 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004, www.fdncenter.org, accessed on March 16, 2006.

³ Plum Creek News Release, Feb. 14, 2006.