

BANGOR DAILY NEWS

Court strikes down Plum Creek plan

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AUGUSTA, Maine — A judge on Thursday overturned the Land Use Regulation Commission's historic decision on Plum Creek's Moosehead Lake development plan, sending the case back to the agency for further review.

In a decision that appeared to catch even the appellants by surprise, Maine Superior Court Justice Thomas Humphrey invalidated on procedural grounds LURC's approval of Plum Creek's rezoning application for the Moosehead region. Humphrey sent the case back to LURC "for further proceedings consistent with the decision."

The commission approved the largest development plan in Maine history in September 2009 after a more than four-year-long regulatory battle. LURC's decision opened the door for Seattle-based Plum Creek to develop nearly 1,000 house lots and two large resorts in the Moosehead region.

The three appellants — the Forest Ecology Network, RESTORE: The North Woods and the Natural Resources Council of Maine — appealed soon after the decision.

"We are absolutely thrilled," said Lynne Williams, an attorney for the Forest Ecology Network and RESTORE. "It is being remanded to the commission and gives them an opportunity to look very closely at whether this massive rezoning is the right thing for northern Maine."