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[Faculty & Staff](#) | [Alumni](#) | [Arts](#) | [News](#) | [Parents](#) | [Research](#)

March 20, 2009

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UMaine Wildlife Ecology Major Receives P.F. English Award

March 19, 2009

Contact: Aimee Dolloff, (207) 581-3777

ORONO, Maine – University of Maine senior wildlife ecology major Ben Wasserman has been selected by the Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society as the outstanding undergraduate senior within the Northeast United States and Eastern Canada

"It's really an honor for the faculty of the department to nominate me for this, let alone to actually receive it," Wasserman says. "The names of previous UMaine recipients of the award includes some people that I've always looked up to, so I'm ecstatic that folks in the department would rank me with them."

The purpose of the award is to perpetuate the name of the late P.F. English, an outstanding educator, sportsman, and inspiration to youth, while acknowledging and encouraging students.

"Ben is a model student and wildlife conservationist," says UMaine wildlife ecology Professor Lindsay Seward who nominated Wasserman for the recognition.

The award is presented annually by the Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society. The international society was founded in 1937, and is a professional non-profit scientific and educational association dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. The organization's mission is to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources for the benefit of society.

"[Wasserman] demonstrates exemplary personal commitment to wildlife conservation, public service, and wholly cares about the world around him. He not only takes advantage of each and every opportunity presented to him, but he actively seeks out opportunities to contribute to environmental conservation," says Seward. "I am confident that Ben will make invaluable contributions to wildlife conservation."

There have been several prior P.F. English Awardees with UMaine ties, but Wasserman particularly noted that he was pleased to be among the ranks of UMaine wildlife resources Professor Malcom Hunter, who also is the former president of the Society for Conservation Biology, and UMaine alumna Sarah Spencer.

Wasserman, who also is majoring in math, currently is conducting research on contemporary evolution which occurs over observable time scales.

"I'm interested in the intersection between the processes of evolution and community ecology," says Wasserman. "I'm also interested in conservation

policy and the socioeconomic and political environments in which environmental conservation is practiced."

He recently applied to the Peace Corps and is awaiting an interview, but says he hopes to be able to take a community based approach to conservation if accepted into the program.

Wasserman plans to attend the 65th Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference in April in Lancaster, Penn. where he will accept the P.F. English Award.



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