



Ruffed Grouse Society honors Ryan Woody at Milwaukee banquet

By [Paul A. Smith](#) of the Journal Sentinel
April 23, 2013

The [Ruffed Grouse Society](#) honored a local attorney on Monday for his work on behalf of the organization in national conservation issues, including an amicus brief in a recent U.S. Supreme Court [decision](#).

[Ryan Woody](#) of Whitefish Bay, a partner at the Hartford-based law firm of [Matthiesen, Wickert & Lehrer](#), S.C., received a Ruffed Grouse Society life sponsor membership for his "contribution of time and talents."

The award was presented Monday night at the 32nd annual David V. Uihlein Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet at the Milwaukee Athletic Club.

The event drew a crowd of more than 200, including John Eichinger, president and chief executive officer of the Ruffed Grouse Society.

Eichinger said he made the trip from the organization's Coraopolis, Penn. headquarters to Wisconsin primarily to honor Woody.

"Ryan was instrumental in pro-conservation decisions in many cases in recent years," Eichinger said. "His work on behalf of the organization has been a huge benefit to the causes of young forests, wildlife and conservationists across the country."

Woody, a native of southeastern Wisconsin and a 2004 graduate of [Marquette University Law School](#), took up an interest in forest- and conservation-related legal issues when working as an intern at the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)

regional headquarters in Milwaukee.

The [U.S. Forest Service](#) is part of the USDA. Woody's work at the Milwaukee USDA office led to a special interest in environmental and natural resources law. He is a member of the Natural Resources Division of the American Bar Association.

After graduation from law school, Woody was encouraged by USDA personnel to contact Gary Zimmer of Laona, a regional biologist for the Ruffed Grouse Society.

Woody did and said it didn't "take long for Gary to list some areas I could get involved."

Woody performed the work at no charge.

"Some of my partners are here tonight and I think they're just finding out it was pro bono," Woody said to laughter as he accepted the award.

Among his work, Woody filed an amicus curiae brief before the U.S. Supreme Court in Decker et al versus Northwest Environmental Defense Center. Eichinger said Woody's work in that case was instrumental in the [high court's reversal of the case](#). The Supreme Court handed down its [decision](#) on March 20.

"This will allow timber management to occur in areas where it would have been shut down due to high costs and red tape of unnecessary permits," Eichinger said.

In addition, Woody successfully defended the forest management plan for the Superior National Forest in Minnesota in two federal court cases. The cases were Sierra Club et al versus Kimbell et al in 2009 and Sierra Club versus Kimbell in 2010.

"I really appreciate the opportunity to serve and work with the Ruffed Grouse Society on these cases," Woody said. "Unfortunately, when it comes to habitat management these days too many decisions are made by judges and too few are made by biologists. Hopefully the result of these cases will help create more wildlife habitat for species that require young forests."

The photo below shows Woody, left, and Eichinger at Monday's banquet.
Photo by Paul A. Smith, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.



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