

New Era, New Opportunities *for the Northern Forest*

A new era has dawned in the Northern Forest of northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.

The people who live and work here understand that the economy and the environment are a package: interdependent and essential to building strong communities.

They are looking ahead to new opportunities that can bring vitality back to their communities.

This spectacular and vital region can be a proving ground for a new ideal: a strong economy that is compatible with conservation of the working landscape, built upon the region's abundant natural resources.

The building blocks for this new economy include:

- Renewable energy created from the sustainable use of forest biomass, including tree tops, thinnings and byproducts such as sawdust.
- Tourism that promotes this forested landscape and supports the region's natural and cultural riches.
- Sustainable forestry and a competitive wood manufacturing industry that capitalizes on the region's wood supply to produce high-quality products.
- New market opportunities that reward landowners for the environmental services that their well-managed land provides, such as carbon storage, water and air filtering.

The people of the Northern Forest are ready to write the next chapter in their economic history and need your help.



Making Strategic Choices

As bright as the future looks, current realities are alarming. The average annual income in the Northern Forest—often earned by working two or more jobs—is only \$30,000, and those jobs are hard to find. That makes it challenging to stay and raise a family, and to be concerned about the health of the forest. In contrast, when people are able to find good jobs that are linked to the health of the forest, they will guard against over-harvesting, subdivision and permanent changes to the forest.

At this critical juncture between today's realities and the vision for tomorrow, the Northern Forest needs champions. It needs The Northern Forest Center and investors like you to partner with communities on projects that conserve forests, generate wealth and address community values. It needs people who care enough to make strategic choices that will put the Northern Forest on the right path for the future by asking challenging questions:

- Can the region shed its dependence on fossil fuels for heat, and turn to locally produced biomass fuel from sustainably managed forests?
- Can we develop market incentives to reward stewardship of our forests that naturally filter air and water and absorb harmful carbon?
- Can the region become a world-class tourism destination that provides high-quality, year-round employment?
- Can we advance innovations that increase the competitiveness of the region's wood products industries?

The Center believes we can and should do these things and is demonstrating what conservation-based development looks like in Northern Forest communities.

For the first time in 20 years, national interests, a strong, engaged regional leadership, and a can-do spirit at the local level are aligned to transform the Northern Forest.

Only The Center

Guiding change of this magnitude calls for a holistic approach. The Northern Forest Center is *the* organization addressing community well-being, economic development and forest conservation across all four states. The Center's unique regional perspective enables it to accelerate and amplify the work of others by bringing multiple approaches together into one, integrated whole.

Since 1997, The Center has delivered on its commitment to build a shared vision and strategy to support the Northern Forest's economy, communities and environment. The Center's collaborative, network-based approach has excited and empowered community leaders to create change and has built hope for the future of the region.

Today, people and communities throughout the Northern Forest understand the power of a region with a shared voice and vision. Northern Forest advocates are formidable when they deliver a strong, unified message to state and federal political leaders.

Vision for the Northern Forest's Future

The forest supports a strong, locally based economy; the economy supports thriving communities and the people who live and work in the Northern Forest. The people safeguard the forest.



A New Kind of Conservation

The Northern Forest Center believes that traditional land conservation alone cannot transform the region. It is time to move beyond dependence on philanthropy and public funding to advance forest conservation. To expand options for the region, The Center is creating a new generation of conservation tools that can provide economic incentives for long-term forest stewardship.

Picture an area like the Androscoggin Valley–Mahoosuc Range in northern New Hampshire and Maine, and imagine how local communities would benefit if schools there heated with the byproducts of local wood harvesting rather than oil, and invested their savings in teachers and facilities. Imagine a downtown heating district that generates inexpensive heat and electricity, which attract new businesses. Add to this scene a new Community Forest that earns income for the town by selling timber, carbon credits and biomass, while also providing easy access for hiking, biking, fishing and snowmobiling for residents and visitors. Tourists would spend longer vacations here, enjoying the culture, the outdoors, and top-notch hospitality.

Even more is possible. New programs could reward good stewardship through payments to landowners whose forests maintain clean water and eliminate the expense of new water treatment plants. Manufacturers—attracted by an ample wood supply and the reduced costs of renewable energy—could invest their savings in innovations and marketing to grow their businesses. The region's success would draw more private investment into the region, employment would increase, and the community would be better able to invest in itself. The backbone of this vision is a healthy, productive forest, and the new economic opportunities are the catalyst to make this vision a reality.

The Northern Forest Center: A Proven Track Record of Success

By working to build regional identity and a shared vision for the Northern Forest since 1997, The Northern Forest Center has helped the region shift from rancorous debate to solution-oriented collaboration. The result is a strategy to support the Northern Forest's economy, communities and environment shared by a wide array of organizations, agencies and civic leaders across northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. A few of our major accomplishments:

- Won the Champions in Action: Environmental Impact award from Citizens Bank and WMUR-TV
- Secured Northern Forest Investment Zone designation and \$2 million in investment in the region
- Created a Regional Wood Products Consortium in conjunction with industry to boost competitiveness
- Led the Sustainable Economy Initiative (SEI) to create the first economic strategy for the region, earning gubernatorial endorsement and congressional backing
- Pioneered use of U.S. Dept. of Commerce New Markets Tax Credits to advance conservation, community, and economic goals on more than 450,000 acres of working forestland
- Developed a nationally recognized model for Community Forest ownership as a member of the Community Forest Collaborative, which has helped create new Community Forests in New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine
- Showcased the region's history and culture in the traveling *Ways of the Woods* museum for 130,000 visitors
- Invested more than \$600,000 in Northern Forest Partnership Program grants to community-based conservation and economic development projects
- Promoted the region's traditional craft industries through publication of *HandMade in the Northern Forest*

A Strategy for Change

The Northern Forest Center is collaborating with partners in the public and private sectors, non-profits and businesses alike, to create new economic opportunities that will support Northern Forest communities and encourage conservation. Across the Northern Forest, The Center is testing and combining a new generation of conservation tools through four, forest-based opportunities:

Community-scale renewable energy from forest biomass

Managed carefully, the forest can provide resources for renewable energy, helping communities reduce the cost of heating buildings while also providing a steady market for the low-value trees so that the best trees reach their potential. The Center is supporting communities and policy-makers in advancing this renewable energy opportunity.

Carbon, watershed and other environmental services from forests

Recognition is growing that the natural services provided by forests—such as filtering air and water, and keeping carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere—provide tangible value to people and communities. The Center is leading a regional effort to open these new markets to Northern Forest landowners as a source of additional income.

World-class tourism for quality jobs

As one of the few steadily growing economic sectors, tourism can diversify the local economic base and generate overall growth. The Center's strategy is to improve employee training, regional branding and visitor experience so that this industry can thrive and provide better paying, year-round jobs.

Innovation in sustainable forestry & wood products manufacturing

Innovation in every aspect of the industry, from land ownership to management to logging to manufacturing, can sustain and create jobs in these time-honored fields. The Center is partnering with the wood products industry to foster a culture of innovation, advance community-owned working forests, and promote new harvesting techniques that safeguard jobs and the environment.

Your Investment in Success

Some regions would never recover from the immensity of change that has been heaped upon the Northern Forest. But the people and communities here are resilient. They have a deep connection to the land and are ready to build a new future for this great region using its greatest natural asset—the forest.

Your investment in The Center will allow us to continue our work to create a new generation of forest-based conservation tools and incentives that will add lasting wealth and jobs to the communities of northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.

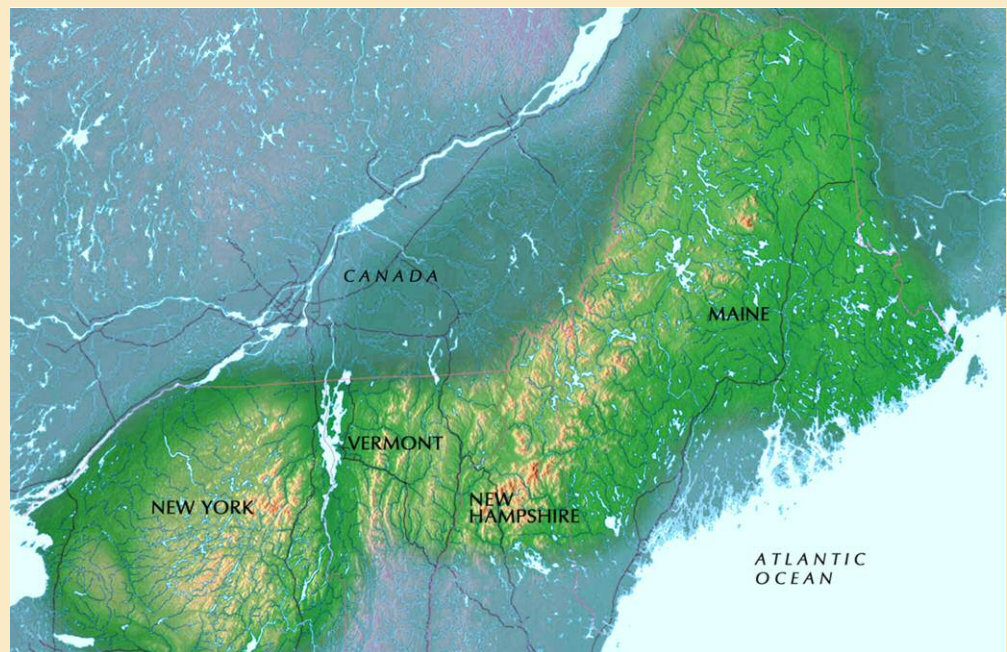
In the end, it's not just about the forest, the rivers, or the landscape—it's about the people who live and work here and the communities they call home. It is the successful integration of people and place, economy and environment that creates a healthy Northern Forest. That is what the Center is dedicated to achieving.

For more information, please contact The Center or visit our website:
www.northernforest.org



Northern Forest Center
Thriving Communities & Healthy Forests

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The Northern Forest region of northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York is home to more than 2 million people who live in communities surrounded by the largest intact forest in the eastern United States. The region's 30 million acres of woodlands, lakes, rivers, wetland, farms, rolling hills and mountains are the source of regional culture, quality of life, and economic opportunity now and into the future.