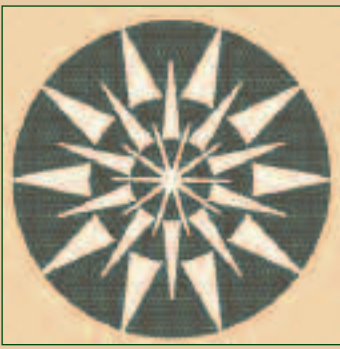
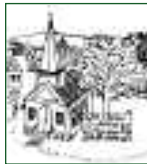


NORTHERN FOREST Connections

MAY 2001



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Conference
Wrap-up



SPECIAL INSERT
Annual Report
2000



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Ways of the Woods Conference

Exploring the Northern Forest from all angles

On April 18-20, the Northern Forest Center hosted what may have been the most wide ranging exploration of Northern Forest issues ever convened.

Opening with a four-hour workshop designed to identify people's greatest hopes and concerns about the future of the region (see related story, below right), the Center's third regional Ways of the Woods conference went on to provide opportunities for nearly 150 participants to talk in detail about issues ranging from biodiversity to healthy communities, from livable wages to artistic traditions, and creating a culture of learning in the Northern Forest.

In short, the gathering brought people together to consider the Northern Forest as a place in the fullest sense of the word—its history and culture, communities, economy, and environment—to reaffirm their connections to the Northern Forest as a place, and to start thinking together about its future as a place in a rapidly changing world.

"I thought it was a wonderful mix of different types of sessions that not only allowed me to learn, but to exchange ideas and network for future



Participants in the opening plenary session worked intensively to define common hopes and concerns for the future. Read about their findings, below.

opportunities," reflected one conference participant. "It is clear that melding ideas, concerns, issues, etc., across the state boundaries is exciting people and is answering a

need," said another.

The conference's eight workshops, two plenary sessions, and field trips took participants deep into topics such as "Creating a Sustainable For-

est Future," which offered perspectives "hopeful and grim simultaneously."

"Evolving Artistic Expression in the Northern Forest" and an "absolutely outstanding presentation" by Dartmouth College Art Historian Bob McGrath offered a vastly different slice of the Northern Forest experience. "Who is this Culture For?"

posed crucial questions about the conflicts, benefits, and consequences, both intended and not, of heritage based development.

After two days of intensive inquiry, dialogue, and issue-based analysis, many confer-

*Continued on page 3
of newsletter*

PAGE
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"First you pressed us
like grapes.
Now you distill us
like whiskey.
First you tap our sap.
Then you boil us
down
so we sugar-off."

—Whiskey & Wine,
by Dave Anderson

Fear & Hoping in the Northern Forest

These were the words one participant used to describe the opening plenary session at the Center's third regional Ways of the Woods conference April 18-20.

Designed as an abbreviated "Future Search" process, the session built on the framework provided in the Center's *Northern Forest Wealth Index* to uncover some of the core elements of a shared vision for the future of the Northern Forest.

"The *Northern Forest Wealth Index* helps us understand the assets and values most important to quality of life in the region. It

Continued on page 2 of newsletter

Conference catalogues hopes and fears

*Continued from page 1
of the newsletter*

helps us understand where we are,” says Mike Wilson, the Center’s program director. “The work people did during the conference marks the first step in understanding where we want to go.”

The opening conference workshop asked participants to interview one another about the things that most excite and most concern them about the future of Northern Forest communities, culture, education, economy, and environment—the five asset categories identified in the *Wealth Index*. After an intensive round of interviews, participants worked in small groups to identify greatest hopes and greatest concerns in each of the five categories.

The result of this process was a list of hopes and concerns people have for the future of the Northern Forest. The list,

however, also pointed to tensions between people’s hopes and concerns across the various asset categories.

For example, people said they hope to see educational programs in the region that

emphasize experiential, place-based learning, lead to increased collaboration between schools and local communities, and tap new technology. At the same time, people are concerned about the consolidation of local schools into regional districts, a perceived lack of collaboration between schools and other community institutions, and about the ability of small, rural school districts to pay for top quality education.

The process also indicated that people see interest in regional culture and heritage as an emerging means of addressing a wide range of issues—from community to economy, education, and environment. Many also listed the type of interdisciplinary discussion that characterized the conference as among their

greatest hopes for the region’s future.

With the *Wealth Index* as a foundation, and the work by conference participants marking an important step forward, the Center is now committed to working with people and organizations across the Northern Forest to craft a shared vision for the region’s future—a vision based upon stewardship of community, cultural, economic, educational, and environmental assets.

As the Center works with people to craft a regional vision, we also will begin to develop a formal network of organizations and institutions committed to that vision and to working together to develop and implement strategies to make it a reality.

For a complete report on the conference plenary work-

shop, or to learn more about the Center’s plans for the next stages of this process, contact, Mike Wilson in the Center’s Bethel, Maine, office, 207-824-8263, or check our website: www.northern-forest.org.

Please Join Us

We need your support to do our work and send you this newsletter. Please become a member to stay on our mailing list.

Thank You!

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2

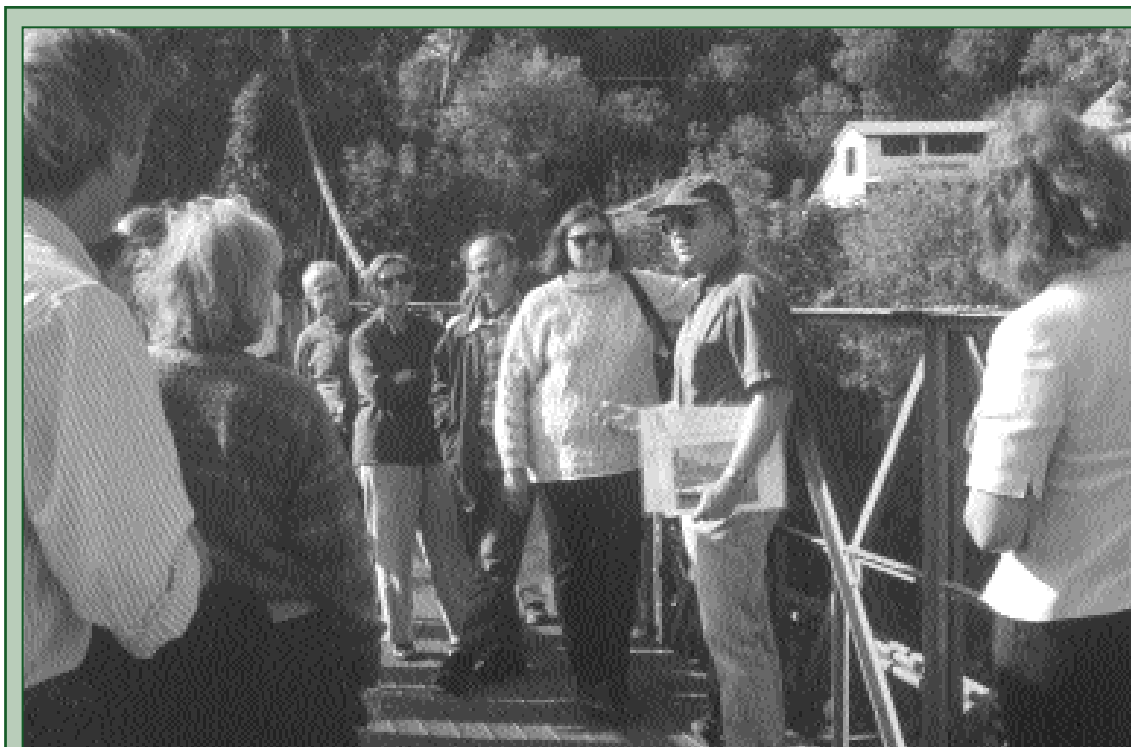


Photo by Laura Tam

Participants in the second Heritage Exchange, sponsored by the Northern Forest Center and the Quebec-Labrador Foundation, toured heritage development projects in several towns on New York's side of the Champlain Valley, including Keeseville, Willsboro, and Essex. The Exchange brought together heritage development practitioners from the Northern Forest to learn from each other about interpreting cultural resources for community development, and about opportunities for regional collaboration.

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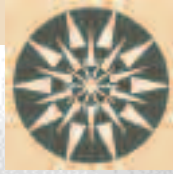
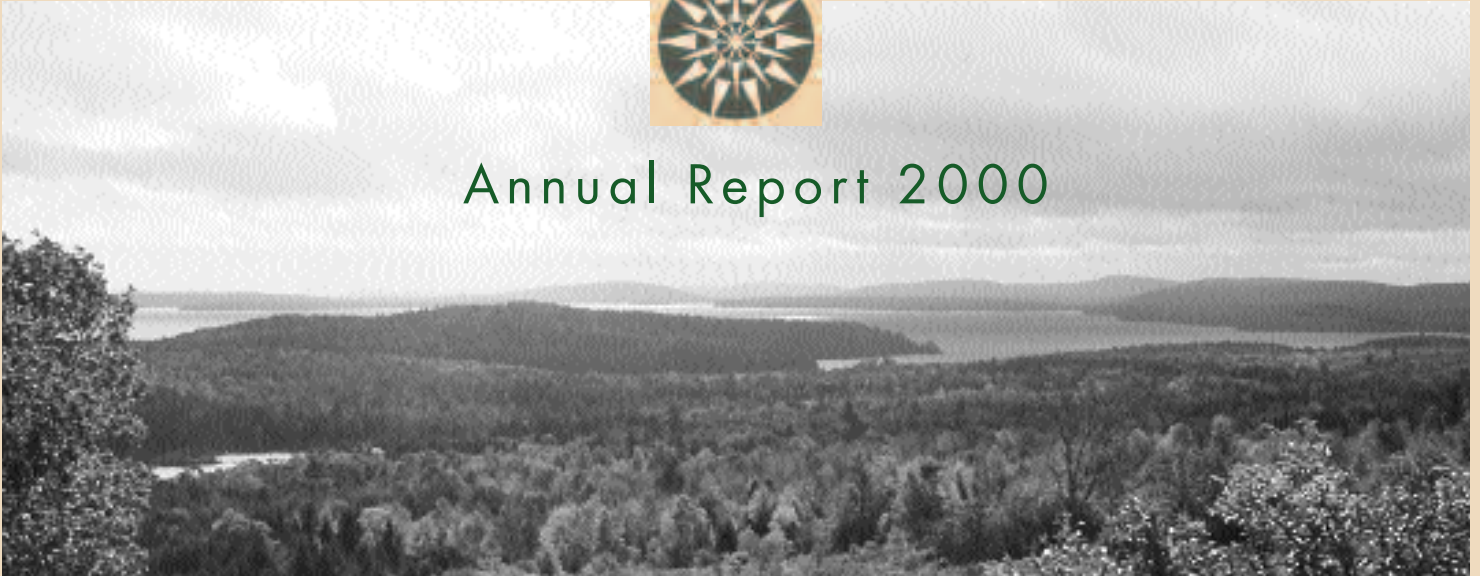


Photo by Ryder Scott



Annual Report 2000

Building on Regional Assets

The Northern Forest continued to experience dramatic and rapid change during the past year. Large land transactions are re-arranging landownership in the region, the forest products industry is enduring tough times, and the rich cultural and natural heritage of the Northern Forest is drawing more attention than ever. While the overall economy is less certain than a year ago, globalization and its accompanying rapid movement of information and financial capital continue to exert a tremendous influence.

Increasingly, people across the Northern Forest are aware that the well-being of the region will rise—or fall—in accordance with how well we safeguard and build upon its assets and strengths. The core of the Center's work is to understand these assets and bring people together to conserve and enhance them as the foundation for long-term well-being.

In the past year, the Center accomplished a great deal, both in solidifying the Center as an organization, and in our programs. In addition to completing our initial core projects, we also refocused with a new strategic plan; laid the groundwork for a second generation of programs; expanded our circle of constituents; and built the capacity of the organization to meet the needs ahead. Please read on for an overview of our programmatic accomplishments.

Developing a Regional Vision and Strategies

- ◆ We completed and published the *Northern Forest Wealth Index: Exploring a Deeper Meaning of Wealth* in September. The *Wealth Index* identifies and assesses core assets important to the overall wealth, or well being, of the Northern Forest. A steering committee of community development professionals, educators, mill workers, human service providers, and environmental and business leaders helped develop the index framework, which looks at the region through five categories: Community, Culture, Economy, Education and Environment.
- ◆ With numerous partners, the Center organized about 20 community discussions and presentations to “field test” the *Wealth Index* as a catalyst for action. Based on the favorable responses across the region, we are beginning to identify elements of a regional vision and regional strategies to build the overall wealth or well-being of the Northern Forest.

Fostering Public Understanding

- ◆ We published *At Home in the Northern Forest: Reflections on a Region's Identity*. Through interviews with 79 Northern Forest residents and beautiful black and white photographs, *At Home* explores people's perceptions about living in the Northern Forest and illuminates the threads of relationships, land, and culture from which regional identity is woven.
- ◆ In July, we released *What's In a Name: Exploring the Stories of the Baskahegan Landscape*. This publication weaves historical research and stories from long-time eastern Maine residents into a history of the relationships between people and the local landscape. The project also engaged local students in exploring local place names and will serve as a model for future education programs.
- ◆ In partnership with the NH State Council on the Arts, we produced a video entitled *Wood Ways* highlighting traditional artists working in wood and their relationship with the forest.



Mission

The Northern Forest Center's mission is to build a public consensus to conserve and enhance the cultural, civic, economic, and ecological wealth of the Northern Forest.

Toward this mission we strive to:

- Build Regional Identity
- Increase Citizen Capacity
- Promote Stewardship

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 207-824-8263

www.northernforest.org

From the Chair & President

Building connections for the future

Dear Friends,

When we began the Northern Forest Center four years ago, we did so in the belief that there was a need for an organization dedicated to building connections across the Northern Forest. East-west connections across the northern parts of these four great states. Networks among people who care about culture, history, arts, communities, and people. Common ground among people working for a healthier economy and people working for healthier ecosystems. We bet there was a role for an organization committed to convening people, encouraging dialogue, and promoting new approaches. Based on the your response, we think we were right.

Over the past year, as you will read elsewhere in this report, we have completed several of our initial projects. We released the *Northern Forest Wealth Index*, which reports on the community, cultural, economic, educational and environmental wealth of the region and establishes a framework for building a better future. We published *At Home in the Northern Forest*, a reflection on regional identity and connections to the land, based on interviews with 79 people across the four states. We made great strides



In an image from At Home in the Northern Forest, Eve Dana from Solon, Maine, carries on the traditional craft of basket making/Andrea Bruce Woodall photo

toward bringing to reality our dream of a traveling exhibition of the shared heritage of the Northern Forest. We have built an enthusiastic network of people working together on heritage-based community development initiatives. And, we have undertaken to create "Sustainable Forest Futures" as a catalyst to transform the forest economy toward a model of sustainability.

These signs of successful, evolving programs are mirrored by internal growth in the Center. In February, the Center's board completed a year-long strategic planning exercise and took a more active leadership role in the organization. We have added members to the board (see page 3) and will continue to expand the board in the next few years to better reflect the interests and assets of the Northern Forest.

With these changes, the

Northern Forest Center is entering a new phase in our evolution. We have completed our initial formative period and are poised to grow and contribute to the well-being of the Northern Forest. We are now looking ahead to projects that build on the important work we have accomplished, and we are eager to share our future accomplishments with you.

We couldn't have made it to this point without the support of numerous people, organizations, and foundations. We thank every one of you for sharing this journey, and we ask for your continued support as we move ahead.

With gratitude,

Jacquelyn Tuxill,
 Chair

Stephen D. Blackmer,
 President

FINANCIALS

Statement of Activities

	2000	1999
SUPPORT		
Contributions & Grants	240,638	\$378,433
Program Income	2,953	16,391
<u>Interest Income</u>	<u>10,393</u>	<u>5,565</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT	253,984	400,389*
EXPENSES		
Program Expenses	287,299	186,476
Operating Expenses	26,217	13,347
<u>Grants to Partners</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>45,000</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	313,516	\$244,823
Net Increase (Decrease) in Assets	(59,532)	155,566
CHANGE IN ASSETS		
Net Assets—Beginning of Year	297,691	142,125
Net Assets—End of Year	238,159	297,691

*Total for 1999 includes multi-year grant commitments.

Thanks for your support!

The Northern Forest Center wants to thank all of our supporters for making 2000 a great year. We appreciate your support, and look forward to working with you this year.

Financial Note

To finance the Center's growth, we have followed a conservative strategy of building up a pool of funds, both in cash reserves and through multi-year grants, in advance of spending. Multi-year grants are fully recognized as income at the time the grant is awarded. This strategy, which has enabled our growth, creates fluctuations in net assets from year to year, as reflected in the statement of activities.

Projects encompass economy, heritage and environment

Continued from page 1 of the Annual Report

◆ The Heritage Exhibition received a boost in the form of funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. These awards not only bring vital funding to the project but also signal national recognition of the arts and history of the Northern Forest. In the coming year, we will complete exhibit planning, launch a pilot traditional arts performance series, and begin development of Exhibition educational programs.

Promoting Heritage-based Development

◆ We brought together more than 20 heritage-based development practitioners, in collaboration with the Quebec Labrador Foundation and local organizations, as part of developing a coordinated regional heritage development strategy. We have received initial support to develop a network and Northern Forest heritage website as both an economic development and education resource and will be starting this work in the coming year.

Building a Sustainable Forest Economy

◆ With the Sustainability Institute, we developed a computer-based system dynamics model of the

interrelationships between the region's forest economy and ecosystems. In spring 2000 the Institute's modeling team produced a working version of the model, and the Center convened a "pre-pilot" workshop that brought together land managers, mill operators, ecologists, and others to test the model and suggest refinements. We will continue to use the model to illustrate the principles of systems thinking and sustainability and suggest ways this learning can be applied to the challenge of forest sustainability.

◆ We are launching Sustainable Forest Futures, Inc. (SFF), as a catalyst to bring private investment capital and philanthropic funds together with intellectual capital to invest in making the Northern For-

est's economy sustainable. The Center and SFF will work through market disciplined economic activity that promotes value-added forest product manufacturing, green certification, and land conservation. In addition, we will convene people and organizations to promote discussion and learning about how the region can steer itself through this transition to create a world model of sustainability.

These are but the highlights of an exciting year. We invite you to visit our website: www.northernforest.org to find more information on any of these projects, or to learn how you can become part of our work.



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR YEAR 2000 CONTRIBUTORS

The Board and Staff of the Northern Forest Center extend our appreciation to all who so generously supported our work in 2000.

Gifts up to \$99

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Government Support

National Endowment
for the Arts
National Endowment
for the Humanities
New Hampshire State
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Center adds two directors, bids Laura farewell

The Northern Forest Center is pleased to welcome Ann Fowler Wallace and George Miller to the Board of Directors.

"I'm just thrilled to have Ann and George join our board," said Center President Steve Blackmer. "They bring a great deal of knowledge about Northern Forest issues, as well as tremendous skills in

nonprofit management."

Ann is an independent consultant working in the environmental field, where she has spent more than 15 years advising charitable foundations and individual donors. She also serves as a trustee of the Beldon Fund, a national environmental foundation, the World Media Foundation, the Environmental League of Massachusetts, and is a new member of the Trust for Public Land's New England Advisory Council. Ann has a B.A. from Duke University and an M.A. with concentration in environmental policy from

Tufts University.

George Miller was appointed President of Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks in 1997, where he has led the college through its transition from a two-year school to a baccalaureate granting college. George also serves on the boards of the Adirondack North Country Association, the Adirondack Medical Center, and many others. He has published numerous educational articles, and earned his doctorate of education in higher education administration from the University of Virginia.

Meanwhile, Program Associate Laura Tam is leaving the Center to attend the Yale School of Forestry, where she will study watershed and estuary issues with an eye toward social justice and the cultural and heritage aspects of the environment.

"Laura has contributed enormously to the Center's growth and evolution," says Blackmer. "It's impossible to list all the things she's done for us. We'll miss her more than we can say."

Reflections on place complete conference

Continued from page 1 of the newsletter

ence participants found the closing session, "Reflecting on Place: Exploring our Connections with the Northern Forest Landscape," a poignant way to wrap up the conference. The session gave people a chance to step back from the specific issues that consume their energy, so they could reflect on the connections they feel to the landscape and the places that fuel their interest in building a vibrant future for the Northern Forest.

This "was an absolutely terrific way to end this conference," wrote one participant. "This was truly a moving and emotional experience." Another added, "Reflecting on Place validated why we are here and working to advance with the world and keep what makes the Northern Forest special."

For a full conference summary, please contact the Center at 603-229-0679 or check our website: www.northernforest.org.



Photos by Kelly Short

Center kicks off performance series

The Center kicked off its Ways of the Woods Performance & Demonstration Series at the conference in April with three wide-ranging performances.

Renowned Adirondack storyteller and musician Bill Smith entertained the early arrivals with humorous and touching stories and songs of life in New York's Adirondack Mountains, surrounded by the woods and woodsmen in the days before electricity and television.

The second evening of performances began with Vermont actor Rusty DeWees performing his one-man act "The Logger," a humorous, satirical look at rural life in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

The finale featured a traditional Franco-American Soiree with New Hampshire Governor's Arts Award winners Larry and Henry Riendeau, and Richard Riendeau (above, right) and bones player Shorty Boulet (above, left).

The Ways of the Woods series is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts with additional support from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts. In the coming year the series will feature performances and demonstrations designed to highlight the shared culture and traditions of the Northern Forest. Starting in 2003, Ways of the Woods will tour the region as a part of the Northern Forest Heritage Exhibition.

Center publishes book exploring regional identity

In April, the Center capped several years of research by publishing *At Home in the Northern Forest—Reflections on a region's identity*. The 104-page book explores sense of place in the Northern Forest through interviews with residents from varied backgrounds, ideologies and professions.

In 1997, the Center wanted to look beyond the conservation and land policy questions addressed by the Northern Forest Lands Council to learn how people in the Northern Forest have created and developed a sense of place; what the name itself means to people; how people identify with the region's landscape and history, and how that is balanced with local senses of place and community.

"To answer these questions," says author Laura Tam, "we set out to explore the Northern Forest as a place, including its cultures, ecologies, land-

scapes, histories, communities, and values. Understanding the cultural, community, and personal relationships that shape people's sense of place and the region's identity is critical to build a better future for the region."

Tam talked to foresters, economic development professionals, inn managers,

wildlife biologists, loggers, shopkeepers, teachers and many others to discover how they are connected to the people, landscape and heritage of the 30-million-acre Northern Forest.

Striking photographs by *Washington Post* photographer Andrea Bruce Woodall accompany the stories and quotes in *At Home* that describe life in the rural communities of the Northern Forest, from Maine through New Hampshire and Vermont to New York.

Brendan J. Whittaker, who wrote the book's foreword, brings with him many perspectives: he is a professional forester who served as Vermont's Secretary of Natural Resources, and also an Episcopal pastor for the northern New Hampshire town of Groveton. He wrote, "The interviews range over the geographical area of the forest, but they also cover a range of personal feeling and emotional territory. Expressed here are joy, anger, hope, uncertainty, resentment, sadness, and trust. If there is one constant, it is the sense of change in what had been relatively stable for years and years."

At Home is available from the Center to individuals, and also to booksellers and other businesses that would like to add this book to their Northern Forest collection and

products. For more information, call the Center at 603-

229-0679, or use the form below to place your order.

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My membership contribution is enclosed.

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<i>Exploring a Deeper Meaning of Wealth</i>	\$15 x ____ = \$ _____
What's in a Name: Exploring the	
<i>Stories of the Baskahegan Landscape</i>	\$10 x ____ = \$ _____
Wood Ways: Conserving Culture	
<i>& Nature in the Northern Forest</i>	\$15 x ____ = \$ _____
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