

**JOINT NEWS RELEASE**  
from  
**Northern Forest Center**  
**The North East *State* Foresters Association**

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## **Grants award \$70,000 to Northern Forest projects**

CONCORD—The Northern Forest Partnership small grants program has awarded \$70,000 in funding to 15 innovative, community-generated projects that strengthen local forest-based economies, communities and the environment in the Northern Forest. The selected projects range from creating marketing materials for cultural sites and local wood product suppliers, to educational programs for landowners and teachers.

The competitive grant program is a collaboration of the Northern Forest Center, the North East *State* Foresters Association (NEFA) and the USDA Forest Service. Funding for the program was made possible by a grant from the Forest Service Economic Action Program and the support of U.S. Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire.

“These projects are very exciting,” said Sen. Gregg. “Each one is making a connection between the forest and the local economy of our communities. They will help build understanding about the importance of developing sustainable economic uses of our forest.”

The grants ranged from \$3,875 to \$5,000 each, and were awarded in each state to the following organizations:

### **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

- The **Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire**, to create a brochure highlighting historic and heritage sites in the North Country and to draw attention to the area’s historic significance;
- The **Northern Forest Canoe Trail**, which will build two kiosks in Coos County along the regional water trail to promote recreation and economic development;
- The **Center for Woodlands Education**, which will use the grant to continue its natural resource education program that reaches schools in most Northern Forest counties and to prepare the annual teacher’s guide for its "Northern Woodlands Goes to School" program;

- **Haverhill Heritage, Inc.**, which is redeveloping the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Grafton County Courthouse into an active cultural center for the community and visitors;

#### MAINE

- **Threshold To Maine RC&D Area, Inc.**, to create a touring map that stimulates economic development by promoting connections between Maine's culture and forestry and bringing attention to multiple forest uses;
- **Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission**, which will develop a three-town economic development plan for the communities that host the Mountain Division Multi-use Trail;
- **Millinocket Area Growth & Investment Council**, which will conduct a feasibility study for converting an industrial park in Medway or Millinocket into an ecological business park featuring a wood-fired biomass cogeneration energy system;
- **Maine TREE Foundation**, which will sponsor five teachers from northern Maine to attend tours of Maine's forests, mills, and natural areas as part of Project Learning Tree certification;
- **Quebec-Labrador Foundation**, which will develop an International cultural heritage route that celebrates traditions, cultural sites and landscapes of the St. John Valley of Maine and neighboring New Brunswick;

#### VERMONT

- **Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association**, which help 18 member companies assess their facilities and prepare to welcome tourists for a theme-based driving tour of factories, workshops, mills and forests;
- **The Intervale Foundation**, which will provide native plant material for watershed conservation as part of an effort to educate and involve the public to conserve and restore forested riparian buffers in Vermont;
- **The Nulhegan Gateway Association**, which will promote successful entrepreneurship by introducing workshop participants to tools, resources and a support network for their enterprises;

#### NEW YORK

- **The Adirondack North Country Association**, which will create a wood-products directory to provide local companies with a valuable marketing tool for targeting retailers throughout the Adirondacks;
- **Greater Adirondack RC&D Council**, to educate more than 100 forest landowners about the sustainable use of their forest resources with a forestry letter series and two field workshops;
- **New York Folklore Society**, which will create an "ethnographic marketing" program to develop marketing and promotional strategies for the Akwesasne Mohawk basket-makers.

Almost 70 non-profits, local government entities and businesses applied from across the Northern Forest, an area that includes 29 counties in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont

and New York and comprises the largest, contiguous forest remaining in the East. A review committee with representatives from all four states selected the grant winners.

“We were very pleased with the number and quality of applications in this first round of grant-making,” said Charlie Levesque, executive director of The North East *State* Foresters Association. “It’s clear that we’ve got people across the Northern Forest who are thinking about how to strengthen their local economy by making connections between the forest and people in the communities.”

“All the projects submitted speak to tremendous creativity and entrepreneurial initiative at the community level,” said one reviewer. “There is real "can-do" spirit and energy all across the Northern Forest region.”

“We appreciate Senator Gregg’s assistance in getting this small grants program off the ground,” said Steve Blackmer, president of the Northern Forest Center. “And we’re very excited that the Senate Appropriations Committee has doubled the amount of funds available for next year. These relatively small amounts of money can have a tremendous effect when they are put to work at the local level by communities, businesses, and agencies that see opportunities for developing sustainable forest-based economies.” Funding for next year’s grant program is included in the Interior Appropriations bill approved by the full Senate Interior Appropriations Committee and will go before the full Senate for approval in the coming months.

Reviewers were looking for projects that could strengthen the capacity of rural communities to develop or strengthen sustainable forest-based local economies; promote environmentally sensitive uses of the forest and other natural resources; promote local history, culture, and working connections to the landscape; or be part of sustaining or helping to create new jobs in these areas.

“The top projects stood out by demonstrating good community collaboration and leverage, and having high strategic value,” the reviewer said. “They all will produce benefits to the entire Northern Forest region.”

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Please call or email Kelly Short at the Northern Forest Center (603-229-0679, ext. 7; [kshort@northernforest.org](mailto:kshort@northernforest.org)) for detailed contact information pertaining to your local grant winners.