

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

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Grants award \$135,000 to Northern Forest projects

CONCORD—The Northern Forest Partnership Program has awarded \$135,000 in grant funding to 21 innovative, community-generated projects that strengthen local forest-based economies, communities and the environment in the Northern Forest. The selected projects range from improving white-tailed deer habitat to support hunting-based economic activity, to expanding a business that produces high-value wood products from “character” wood, to integrating hands-on learning about sustainable forestry into a youth camp experience.

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.

“This year’s projects continue the tradition of exciting innovations set out by last year’s winners,” 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 \$3,500 to \$20,000 each, and were awarded in each state to the following organizations:

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- **Center for Woodlands Education, Inc.**, to publish a practical manual, *The Land You Call Home: A Guide for Caring for Your Land in the Upper Valley*, that will be distributed free to woodland owners in the Upper Valley of New Hampshire and Vermont;
- **Haverhill Heritage, Inc.**, to develop programming capacity and sustainability for its Alumni Hall Cultural and Visitors Interpretive Center;
- **North Country Council**, to support its role in developing a Northern Forest Economic Adjustment Strategy Project;

MAINE

- **Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments**, to create a press release program for signature products of “Mountain Made” to stimulate sales of locally made and grown products;
- **The Birches** (on behalf of the Moosehead Region Futures Committee), to support its citizen group’s work to create a strong regional voice and craft revisions to the largest development proposal planned for Maine’s north woods;
- **Downeast Lakes Land Trust**, to increase hunting-based employment by restoring white-tailed deer habitat;
- **Katahdin Area Chamber of Commerce**; to support its Wooden Canoe Festival centered on the cultural heritage of the wooden canoe;
- **Kennebec Chaudiere Heritage Corridor**, to develop a pilot cultural tourism initiative, *Where the River Meets the Woods*, that will train river guides on local culture;
- **Loon Echo Land Trust**, to expand its stewardship of Pleasant Mountain Stewardship Program, in partnership with Lakes Environmental Association and the Appalachian Mountain Club;
- **Maine Rural Partners**, to create the Rural Maine Community Builders Network, a cross-sector network that will stimulate innovation and strengthen the rural community;
- **Maine TREE Foundation**, to sponsor (and certify for Project Learning Tree) five teachers from Northern Maine to attend tours of Maine’s forests, mills and natural areas;
- **Maine Wood Products Association**, to develop a website that will include a searchable database of opportunities to promote Maine products;
- **Native Woods**, to expand markets and manufacturing for character hardwood furniture made from “cull” logs;
- **Natural Resource Education Center at Moosehead**, to expand its Forest Heritage Days festival celebrating the people of Maine Woods past, present and the abundant natural resources that originally brought them to the region;

VERMONT

- **Cobleigh Public Library**, to add Book Mobile programs that highlight local culture, history and working connections to the forest while promoting sensitive uses of natural resources;
- **Vermont Family Forests**, to collaborate with the Girl Scout Council of Vermont and the University of Vermont to integrate hands-on learning about sustainable forestry into the context of a youth camping experience in the Northern Forest;
- **Vermont WoodNet**, to provide members the opportunity to showcase and sell their exclusively made Vermont wood products at the Vermont MapleWood Gallery, as well as to provide space for educational displays about sustainable forestry;

NEW YORK

- **Black River–St. Lawrence Resource Conservation & Development**, to hold workshops that educate local building inspectors and small lumber producers about lumber grading of locally produced structural lumber in the three counties of St. Lawrence, Lewis & Jefferson;
- **Northeast Forests, LLC**, to create the Adirondack Forest Owner’s Manual and Landowner Information Kit CD of relevant public domain publications that will provide valuable

technical assistance to private landowners, helping the long term sustainability of working forests;

- **Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks**, to support its Adirondack Park Sustainable Forestry Chain of Custody project dedicated to building local and regional infrastructure that supports the growth of Forest Stewardship Council-certified forests and businesses;
- **Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust**, to print a 2006 version of its four-season *Tug Hill Recreation Guide: A Guide to Cross-Country Skiing, Hiking, Biking and Fishing Access on Tug Hill*, which includes Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego and Oneida counties.

Thirty 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.

“With the additional funding available this year, we were able to broaden the program and offer a new category of larger awards to support the creation of living-wage jobs in the Northern Forest,” says Charles Levesque, executive director of The North East *State* Foresters Association.

“The Partnership Program invests in projects that can have a very positive effect on communities, the forest landscape and the economy of the Northern Forest,” says Steve Blackmer, president of the Northern Forest Center. “We’re grateful to Senator Gregg for getting this program started.”

Congress has appropriated \$350,000 toward the program for next year. Information and application materials will be available at www.northernforest.org in the spring of 2006.

Reviewers looked 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 and helping to create new jobs in these areas.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Please call or email Shelly Angers at the Northern Forest Center (603-229-0679, ext. 109; sangers@northernforest.org) for detailed contact information pertaining to your local grant winners.