



NEWS RELEASE

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Northern Forest Days coming to Colebrook

On April 12-14, a new celebration of the Northern Forest will take place in Colebrook.

Northern Forest Days are a multi-day, multi-event program being held in communities across the Northern Forest region of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. Each local event is coordinated jointly by the Northern Forest Center and community partners to ensure that the celebration reflects local needs, interests and opportunities.

In Colebrook, partners include the Great North Woods Center for the Arts, Colebrook Downtown Development Association, Colebrook Elementary School and the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire. First Colebrook Bank is the local sponsor.

“We’re so pleased that Colebrook was chosen to be part of the first year of Northern Forest Days celebrations,” said Sharon Pearson, executive director of the Colebrook Downtown Development Association. “Working on this project has shown, once again, that exciting things happen when Colebrook’s residents, businesses, schools and other organizations come together.”

Each day during the celebration has opportunities to explore the Northern Forest’s past and discover its future. There are activities for people of all ages who care about the region.

On Thursday and Friday, local students will visit *Ways of the Woods*, the Center’s mobile museum about the changing relationships between people and the land. This “museum on wheels”—which also exhibited at Moose Festival last year—elicits powerful, emotional responses from attendees as they explore both the history of the region and their personal connections to it. Funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, *Ways of the Woods* combines interactive displays, artifacts that illustrate the region’s history in action, and interviews with people who live, work and play in the Northern Forest.

Colebrook’s Nancee Harrigan, Berlin’s Barry Kelly and Guildhall, VT’s Brendan Whittaker appear in the multi-media portion of the exhibit.

“Last year’s *Ways of the Woods* tour confirmed that people have deep connections to the Northern Forest,” said Mike Wilson, senior program director at the Northern Forest. “Northern Forest Days creates new opportunities to bring people together to share their hopes for the region’s future.”

The Northern Forest’s past is a vibrant one, and despite the economic challenges of the recent decades, the future can be, too.

From 7-8:30 Thursday evening, a forum about the economic future of the region takes place at Colebrook Elementary School's cafeteria. Information collected at this meeting will be integrated into the Northern Forest Center's Sustainable Economy Initiative (SEI), a program operated in partnership with the North Country Council (NH) and funded by the federal Economic Development Administration and private contributions.

SEI is developing a strategic blueprint for sustainable economic development in the four-state Northern Forest region that is based on balanced investment in business, community and environment.

"We're very excited to work with communities across the Northern Forest to hear their perspectives on the challenges they face and the opportunities they see for the future," said Joe Short, SEI program director. "This input—which will come from people across the Northern Forest representing a variety of perspectives on community and economic issues—will impact SEI's work to create a long-term strategy for the region's economic future."

Friday evening, Northern Forest Center's Mike Wilson will give the 30-minute multi-media presentation "A Hopeful Future for the Northern Forest" which highlights dynamic and innovative business and community initiatives from across the four Northern Forest states, illustrating that the region does indeed have a bright future—economically, culturally and environmentally. This presentation also details the work of the Northern Forest Center and local partner organizations, and outlines opportunities for people to help ensure that the region's future is indeed a bright one. Fiddler Patrick Ross and guitarist Haze Smith will then perform traditional Northern Forest music later in the evening.

Friday's festivities run from 7-8:30 p.m. and take place at Colebrook Elementary School's cafeteria.

On Saturday, April 14, *Ways of the Woods* will be open to the general public at Colebrook Elementary School from 11am-3pm. Demonstrations of traditional arts will take place at this time.

A Northern Forest Days celebration has already taken place in Gorham/Berlin, NH. Others are currently scheduled for:

April 18-21: Morrisville, VT

May 17-20: Old Forge, NY

May 24-26: Watertown, NY

May 31-June 2: Farmington, ME

June 7-9: Greenville, ME

June 13-16: Ft. Kent, ME

Specific details about Northern Forest Days events will be available from partner organizations, in the calendar sections of local newspapers and at www.aannh.org. Northern Forest Days schedule updates are available at www.northernforest.org.

The Northern Forest Center, a nonprofit organization, mobilizes people to build healthy communities, economies and ecosystems by working together across the Northern Forest region. Learn more about the Northern Forest and the Northern Forest Center at www.northernforest.org.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Photos of the Northern Forest Center's *Ways of the Woods* exhibit are available for publication. Please contact Shelly Angers, Marketing/PR Coordinator, at 603-229-0679, ext. 109, sangers@northernforest.org.