U.S. Endowment awards $5.5 million to accelerate wood fiber markets nationwide

Five organizations selected to strengthen forest product markets and support forest-reliant communities



The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities is a not-for-profit public charity collaborating with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation's workin

GREENVILLE, SC, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (the Endowment) today announced five awards totaling $5.5 million through its Accelerating Wood Fiber Markets initiative. The five-year effort will help connect underutilized wood fiber with new buyers and support the long-term economic viability of working forests and the communities that rely on them.

> These organizations bring knowledge and strategies for creating durable markets. Their work will help move more wood to productive uses while supporting landowners, businesses and rural communities."
>
> *Matt Krumenauer, VP of markets, U.S. Endowment*

The Endowment committed $5 million to the initiative, with an additional $500,000 provided by the Northern Border Regional Commission through its Forest Economy Initiative to support work in Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont.

The funding opportunity drew significant interest from across the country. The Endowment received 76 proposals requesting approximately $86 million, underscoring both the scale of the market challenges facing forest-reliant communities and the demand for practical, locally driven solutions.

"Strong forest product markets are essential to keeping working forests productive and economically viable," said Matt Krumenauer, vice president of markets at the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. "These organizations bring deep regional knowledge and practical strategies for creating durable markets. Their work will help move more wood to productive uses while supporting landowners, businesses and rural communities."

The selected awardees are:

Forest Landowners Foundation – $1.3 million
The Forest Landowners Foundation will lead a Southeast-focused initiative to identify and advance scalable market solutions for underutilized and low-value wood. The organization will convene landowners, forest industry representatives, universities, investors and public agencies to develop a coordinated pipeline of market-ready opportunities, particularly in areas with limited processing infrastructure.



U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities announces awards for the Accelerating Wood Fiber Markets initaitive.

Sustainable Northwest and Intertribal Timber Council – $1.7 million
Sustainable Northwest and the Intertribal Timber Council will establish a Tribal-led initiative designed to build durable, community-driven markets for small-diameter timber, slash and low-grade logs. The partners will incubate a Wood and Biomass Hub within the Intertribal Timber Council to provide project development assistance, connections to financing, and workforce and infrastructure support, beginning with three Tribal communities.

Northern Forest Center – $1.5 million
The Northern Forest Center will launch a regional venture serving Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Building on the Center's experience in wood products business development and regional collaboration, the effort will strengthen the forest business and investment network and cultivate a more consistent pipeline of market opportunities for private, philanthropic and public investment.

Siskiyou Economic Development Council – $500,000
The Siskiyou Economic Development Council will coordinate a regional network of forest industry partners to advance markets for small-diameter and underutilized wood. The work will include convening partners, assessing the commercial feasibility of processing sites, supporting capital readiness, and advancing opportunities in areas such as biochar, advanced composites and value-added manufacturing.

Montana Cooperative Development Center – $500,000

The Montana Cooperative Development Center will lead a statewide effort to strengthen Montana's forest products economy through market development, expanded use of wood fiber, business assistance and cross-sector collaboration. The initiative will align existing efforts, support emerging wood technologies and improve coordination across the state's forest products sector.

"Supporting a vibrant forest economy in Northern New England and New York is a central focus of the Commission," said Chris Saunders, federal co-chair of the Northern Border Regional Commission. "This collaboration with the Endowment brings together our shared knowledge and resources for the benefit of rural communities and their residents."

Together, the five projects represent distinct regional approaches to a shared national challenge: ensuring forest landowners, loggers, manufacturers and communities have access to strong, reliable markets for wood fiber.

About the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities
The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities is a not-for-profit public charity collaborating with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and enduring change for the health and vitality of the nation's working forests and forest-reliant communities. To learn more about the Endowment, please visit our website at www.usendowment.org.

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