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The Northern Forest Center creates economic opportunity and community vitality from healthy working forests in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.
Dear Supporters and Friends:

Inspiration drives change. Every day, we are touched by the people, businesses, communities and lands that define the Northern Forest and are driven to find new ways to strengthen our rural communities. Thanks to your support, dedication, and investment, we are making a difference. Together, we are sowing the seeds of change. Through innovation and collaboration, we are catalyzing demand for a new, modern wood heat economy; transforming wood products companies; creating new community forests; enhancing the quality of tourism experiences and so much more. We are creating jobs, conserving forests, reducing carbon emissions and securing significant investment in the Northern Forest.

Our success is best revealed through the stories of the people, companies and communities that we serve. We are:

- Redefining for Luke Muzzy of Greenville, Maine, how making the Moosehead region a destination for travelers can positively impact the local economy and the lives of residents (page 5);
- Inspiring Tabitha Bowling and Alyssa May to heat their home in East Burke, Vermont, with local, renewable wood pellets and to invest in a new pellet mill for the Northeast Kingdom (page 7);
- Showing Brendan Prusik how local forest ownership in New Hampshire can deliver high-quality forest stewardship, local control and community benefits, all in one package (page 9);
- Helping Wayne White lead a major wood products producer in Lowville, New York, to increase efficiency and expand its product line so it can continue providing quality jobs (page 11);
- Providing Lucy Leriche, Vermont’s commerce secretary, with a regional context as she guides the state to build on its history of forestry and agriculture (page 13).

These are just a few of the stories of our collective good work, which ripples across communities, the region, and beyond.

Even as we reflect on the year’s successes, we know that Northern Forest communities face great challenges. We are constantly evolving our programs and strategies to do more, and have just launched a new Community Revitalization program that focuses on inspiring people who drive positive change to stay in, move to, or return to the region. It’s a daunting task, but one that—we believe—holds great potential.

Together, our track record of success and the magnitude of the region’s challenges propel us forward with even greater commitment and urgency.

We thank you for making so much possible and being part of the effort to create a strong, resilient Northern Forest for future generations.

Mary McBryde, Rob Riley
Chair, Board of Directors President

The Center delivers programs to:

- Catalyze Innovation in the Forest Economy: We create jobs and build local wealth through economic opportunities that advance a regional land ethic and sustainable forest use.
- Develop Vibrant Rural Communities: We strengthen communities and their ability to attract new residents and entrepreneurs seeking quality of life, community and connection to the natural world.
- Provide Dynamic Regional Leadership: We advocate a regional vision for thriving communities and healthy forests and empower local voices to capitalize on changing trends and opportunities.

www.northernforest.org
### Program Impact by the Numbers

#### Since 2005

- **4,000 Jobs**: The Center’s programs have benefited 4,000 jobs in wood products, tourism, and modern wood heat through direct business assistance and skills training initiatives.
- **254,434 Acres**: The Center’s programs have helped conserve 254,434 acres of forestland for community benefit through the Community Forest program and forestland purchases financed through New Markets Tax Credits.
- **$177 Million Investment**: The Center’s programs have helped to secure and leverage $177 million for projects that benefit the region’s communities, the economy and forest stewardship.

#### 2015–2016

- **2** new Community Forests: Milan, NH and Grand Lake Stream, Maine
- **7** counties engaged in tourism enhancement programs in Maine
- **10** new innovation projects begun with wood products manufacturers
- **29** new wood pellet boilers installed, generating heat and supporting the forest economy
- **80** organizations engaged in advancing tourism as an economic strategy
- **130** projects, initiatives and strategic forums the Center is engaged in across the Northern Forest
- **132** woodworkers and students issued Woodwork Passports
- **169** partners collaborating on creating forest-based economic opportunity and community vitality
- **1,600** tons of carbon dioxide avoided by using wood pellets instead of fossil fuels
- **2,700** people subscribing to the *Northern Forest News Digest*
- **$17,600** in microgrants to strengthen Maine tourism businesses and job opportunities
- **$687,000** total economic impact of wood pellet boilers installed this year
- **$1.5 Million** Center program investment in Northern Forest communities, forests and economic development
- **$23.3 Million** public funding, foundation grants, business investment and organizational resources leveraged by the Center’s program investment
With your support, the Center is...

Improving quality recreation tourism opportunities in the region to create better paying jobs in the fast-growing tourism economy.

**Workforce Training**

We’re helping tourism businesses of all types and sizes improve their customers’ experiences. The Center coordinates the Maine Woods Consortium and works closely with leading economic development agencies in 7 Maine counties to offer affordable training in customer service and management, as well as marketing to attract visitors.

**Brand Recognition**

We’ve helped establish Maine Woods Discovery as a high-quality travel brand for the Maine Woods, working with a dozen top-notch lodges and adventure leaders, such as the New England Outdoor Center (above) and Mahoosuc Outdoors (right).

**Collaboration**

We’ve built a shared strategy for advancing destination tourism to support the local economy by engaging more than 80 organizations through the Maine Woods Consortium. Many attended the 2016 Destination Tourism Rally (above) in Hermon, Maine.

**Why tourism matters:**

Tourism businesses in interior Maine provide:

- **30,000 jobs**
- **$561 million in earnings**
- Across Maine in 2015 spending on recreation went up 13% to **$506 million**

**Program Delivery:**

Since beginning of fiscal year 2016:

- Partnered with **12 businesses** in Maine Woods Discovery—raising the bar for hospitality in the North Woods
- Served **15 counties** in Maine, Vermont and New York
- Engaged **80 organizations** through the Maine Woods Consortium to advance rural destination tourism as an economic strategy
- Supported **155 businesses** with training for **358** people in marketing, customer service and management
- Provided **$17,600** in micro-grants to serve **28 tourism businesses**

**Since program beginning:**

- **1,168 businesses supported** with training
- **2,287 people trained** in customer service, marketing and management
- Earned **$1.7 million** in media promotion for tourism businesses and region

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Inset photo: Facing Wave/ Kelsey Thompson
Putting the Northern Forest on the map

Programs build region as destination for travelers

“Moosehead Lake has always been a destination but so far we’ve only scratched the surface. I truly believe that we have the assets—natural and human—to become one of the must-see destinations in the country.”

—Luke Muzzy, Greenville, Maine
Senior Land Asset Manager, Weyerhaeuser

If you ask Luke Muzzy why he works so hard to make the Moosehead Lake Region a destination for tourists, you’ll hear a story of change.

Luke was born and raised in Greenville, Maine, and when he graduated from high school in 1978, the timber industry—particularly paper—drove the economy in the Maine Woods. Since then many paper companies have closed and communities like Greenville have shrunk. Greenville’s population has dropped almost 27 percent since 1970, yet there is a sense of positive change underway.

“The timber industry and tourism have co-existed in the Moosehead Region for over two centuries,” said Luke. “Both industries are very important to the area. This relationship has kept the Moosehead Region virtually unchanged and a place worthy for folks from near and far away to visit.”

Luke has made his career in real estate, first as a private broker and for the past 12 years as senior land manager for Plum Creek Timber and now for Weyerhaeuser. Luke managed Plum Creek’s Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan, which slated roughly 17,000 acres for development and put a conservation easement on 363,000 acres of forest.

He has always been involved in community issues and serves as president of the Moosehead Lake Region Economic Development Corporation. “A defining moment for me was the Maine Woods Consortium meeting in 2013,” said Luke. “I came away realizing how much work the Moosehead Region, and—frankly—all of rural Maine, needs to do to become a destination that would positively impact our economy and the lives of our residents.”

Since then, the Center has worked to help make the Moosehead region a true tourism destination, most recently by partnering with Luke and others to create the Center’s Tourism Innovation Program, which provides matching funds to help local businesses make crucial improvements.

“We all love our respective regions and sometimes we can get trapped in that geographic silo,” said Luke. “What I love about the Northern Forest Center is that it won’t allow silos to exist. The Center brings all parts of the state together and makes us realize that we’re all in it together—and they’re right!”
Why modern wood pellet heat matters:

Program Delivery:

Since beginning of fiscal year 2016:
- 16 boilers installed in Vermont
- 9 boilers installed in Maine
- 3 boilers installed in New Hampshire
- 1 boiler installed in New York
- 1,600 tons net carbon dioxide reduction
- $687,000 economic impact

Since program beginning:
- 130 boilers installed for wood pellet heat (since 2012)
- $4.1 million contributed to the region’s economy (from 130 boilers!)
- $22 million economic impact projected over 25-year lifespan of boilers in program

Local, Renewable Heat
The Center wrapped up its project in Farmington and Wilton, Maine, and assisted 16 home and building owners in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom to install efficient wood pellet boilers. Installations are underway in the Adirondacks and Windham County, Vermont, as well. Homeowners Larry and Kathi Stewart (above) of Lyndonville and Kim Butler (left) of Kirby, Vermont, helped publicize the Northeast Kingdom program with tours of their new systems.

Collaboration
As a complement to demonstration projects and advocacy for supportive policies, the Center worked with pellet and boiler manufacturers, non-profits and agencies to develop a shared marketing strategy that promotes wood pellets as a low-carbon, local, and renewable heating choice.

With your support, the Center is...
Reducing greenhouse gases by more than half and supporting forest-based jobs by switching buildings to renewable wood pellets for heat.
Using local fuel to cut carbon, create jobs
Wood pellet boilers replace fossil fuel and boost economy

“As switching to wood pellet heat is the single most important thing I can do to reduce my carbon footprint. In a rural area, there is no way to eliminate your car, but you can move away from fossil fuel for heating. I’m really pleased about that.”

– Alyssa May, UCC Minister
East Burke, Vermont

After almost 20 years of living in big cities, Tabitha Bowling and Alyssa May came home to the Northeast Kingdom. Their son Marshall is the eighth generation of the May family to live there.

“I wanted to recalibrate the life-work balance and connect with the outdoors,” said Tabitha. “We both grew up in pastoral environments and wanted to raise Marshall in an environment that had been so good for us. Living in downtown DC wouldn’t afford us that.”

They discovered local renewable heat when a tour of the Burke Town School included the boiler room and its four wood pellet boilers, which the Center subsidized. “The value equation is so profound—it’s hard to find anything that can compete,” said Tabitha. “I equate modern wood heat to the clean-up hitter on a baseball team, given the impact it can have reducing carbon, and what it can do to achieve economic goals locally. It supports the working landscape. It thins out low-grade wood. It can heat schools, homes, commercial buildings. It is scalable in a meaningful way.”

Soon after the tour, Tabitha and Alyssa joined the Center’s Model Neighborhood Project in the Northeast Kingdom. They now heat their home in East Burke with a modern wood pellet heating system and wood pellets sourced from and produced in the Northern Forest.

“When we were preparing to move here, we committed to work with the landscape and try to generate some economic well-being for the rest of the community,” explained Alyssa, a minister in the United Church of Christ. “Pellet mills mean jobs and that ripples out to guys in the woods and people making coffee at the local gas station.”

The potential of modern wood heat to help the region spoke to Tabitha’s entrepreneurial and business instincts, and she began to research and plan a new pellet mill for the Kingdom. The project, now known as Kingdom Pellets, is in development.

“The Center has supported and advocated every step of the way for what we’re trying to do here,” said Tabitha. “Without my connection to the Model Neighborhood Initiative, I would never have known about the Gilman site for the mill. From the beginning, the Center has played a central role, including program support—soup to nuts.”

“From my perspective as a kid from the Kingdom, I’ve always had a sense that everybody was in some way connected to the land, even if they had an office job,” said Alyssa. “I hope Marshall feels that connection too. I want him to look at family land and see we’re using it for the greater good.”
Why community forests matter:

Local ownership, benefits and decision making
Support for forestry and the local economy
Permanently conserved forests for recreation, education and capturing carbon

Program Delivery:

Since beginning of fiscal year 2016:

- **2 Community Forests** established (Milan, New Hampshire, and Grand Lake Stream, Maine)
- **3 Community Forest projects** underway
- Presentations and workshops in **10 communities** to more than **350 people**
- **265 acres** acquired to establish Milan (NH) Community Forest

Since program beginning:

- **9 Community Forests** created with Center assistance
- Nearly **20 towns** assisted
- **35,535 acres** conserved for community benefit
- More than **$4 million** in timber sales
- **Net revenue** to towns more than **$2 million**

Recreation & Rural Character
Community Forests provide recreational opportunities and permanently protect the forested views that define the Northern Forest landscape. The Cooley-Jericho Community Forest (below) conserves the forested ridgeline seen from four New Hampshire towns: Easton, Franconia, Landaff, and Sugar Hill.

Community Income
In Milan, N.H., residents are using the income from timber harvests on town-owned land to generate funds for purchasing more forestland for their Community Forest. The Center continues to work with the Milan Community Forest Committee to help members reach their goal of a 5,000-acre Community Forest that provides timber income, outdoor education, and recreational opportunities for residents.

Collaboration for More Community Forests
In addition to helping establish the Milan Community Forest in New Hampshire and the Grand Lake Stream Community Forest in Maine, the Center launched a joint project with UNH Cooperative Extension and the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (above) to inventory town forests in NH and introduce the Community Forest model to communities across the state.
Owning forests for community benefit

Today’s projects benefit future generations

“Community Forests are a win for ecology and a win for the economy...
Control is local, revenue is local. The community gets the benefits of the forest.”

- Brendan Prusik, Columbia, NH
UNH Cooperative Extension, Field Specialist in Natural Resources and Economic Development

Brendan Prusik chose a career in forestry because he knew he wanted to be outdoors. He worked for 15 years as a forester for Champion International and 10 years for his brother’s wood flooring business.

When the “county forester” position opened up for northern New Hampshire, Brendan knew he wanted the job. Officially, he’s a University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension field specialist in natural resources and economic development.

“There are so many characteristics about the Community Forest concept that I really like,” said Brendan. “It addresses many of my concerns about forestry today,” such as loss of forests to development, and the reality that forest ownership is often shorter than a healthy stewardship cycle. “Bringing a management plan through an entire rotation doesn’t often happen, especially with northern hardwoods,” he said. “We are realizing only a fraction of the true potential of our forests.”

Community Forests are locally controlled, unlike state and federal forests, which can be unreliable in making payments to offset property taxes. “Community Forest projects get a community excited about managing the forest,” he said. “They rally around it and learn how a forest ecosystem works. Forest stewardship standards are written into the stewardship plan. We can maximize timber productivity and other priorities such as wildlife habitat and recreation.”

The Center is working with Brendan and other residents of Columbia, N.H., to explore the possibility of creating a Community Forest in this town of about 760 people near the Canadian border. Also, Brendan and his Extension service colleagues, the NH Association of Conservation Commissions, and the Center are working together to inventory town forests and introduce the concept of Community Forests statewide.

“A Community Forest in Columbia would protect water quality and trout streams while maximizing the return from the forest,” said Brendan. “Bringing those things together is great—and that’s true for other places too.”

“Community Forests will allow continuous quality management so our kids and grandkids will realize significant sustained cash-flow from high quality trees,” said Brendan. “This is compatible with water quality protection, habitat enhancement, and recreation. In fact, good sustainable silviculture will enhance all forest uses.”
Why wood product manufacturing matters:

- Employs more than 20,000 people in the region
- Income from wood product markets provides financial incentive to owners to maintain forests as forests
- Wood products, furniture and related manufacturing sales in the 4 states totaled $6.6 billion in 2011

Program Delivery:
Since beginning of fiscal year 2016:
- Engaged 9 high schools, colleges and tech centers in skills training
- Helped 14 businesses increase innovation and training
- Supported 132 wood workers and students in earning industry skills certification
- Leveraged more than $267,000 in innovation investments

Since program beginning:
- Spurred more than $1.9 million in innovation investments
- Assisted 65 companies to strengthen their businesses through innovation and training
- Helped 270 wood workers and students achieve industry skills certification

With your support, the Center is...

Sustaining and creating jobs in the wood products industry through innovation and workforce training.

Quality Products, Quality Jobs
Over the last year, the Center has helped 14 wood products businesses with innovation and training, including: bowling pin maker QubicaAMF in Lowville, NY (above); Lyndon Furniture in Lyndon, Vermont (left); and flooring manufacturer Appalachian Engineered Flooring (bottom) in North Troy, Vermont.

The heart of every QubicaAMF bowling pin is solid maple, sourced from mills in New York and New England.

Workforce Training
After helping Jennifer Fraser, general manager at Appalachian Engineered Flooring in northern Vermont (right), to transform company culture and apply lean manufacturing principles to the workflow, the Center provided assistance for cross-training and credentialing the company’s employees.
“What I love about our product—bowling pins—is that it’s unique,” said Wayne White, general manager and senior vice president of the pins division at QubicaAMF in Lowville, NY. “This is a very fun business to be in.”

Wayne—who has worked for QubicaAMF for 22 years and oversees 85 employees in the pins division—knows how important the business is as one of the four largest employers in the area. The company is the largest producer of bowling pins in the world, but industry changes have posed challenges, and the number of bowling centers has declined steadily.

“We have made the product the same way for 40 years, and it’s the best in the world,” said Wayne. “We’re not changing that. Our new focus is on being as lean as we can so we can remain competitive and develop new products.”

The Center has twice provided financial support for QubicaAMF to consult with CITEC Business Solutions on innovations. The current project has focused on two priorities, the first of which is staff training to permanently integrate lean manufacturing principles into QubicaAMF; to continuously improve efficiency, reduce expense and increase customer satisfaction.

The second component focuses on engineering innovation that will help the company identify and test new products and services it can offer due to increased production capacity gained through lean manufacturing. QubicaAMF has tested cutting boards and shooting pins, and is considering providing other wood product manufacturers with services such as kiln drying, planing, turning, laminating, and more.

“The Center’s wood products program is helping us expand our manufacturing capabilities by networking with other companies and building new markets,” said Wayne. Even with these changes, the heart of every QubicaAMF bowling pin remains hard maple, all sourced from local or New England sawmills.

“Any changes we make are done to secure the future of our employees and the plant,” said Wayne. “I think running lean is the only way to run a business. You should always be looking for ways to do things more efficiently. Lean manufacturing can make the employees’ jobs easier, eliminate steps, and make duties less physically demanding.”

“Our employees take great pride in what they put in the box. We have a very solid workforce that stays at QubicaAMF,” said Wayne. “They’re great workers. Without them we wouldn’t be here today.”
Why regional leadership matters:

- 4 states, 1050 communities, 2 million residents, 1 shared region

Program Delivery:

Since beginning of fiscal year 2016:

- Inspired 120 leaders at the Northern Forest Symposium
- Engaged 200-plus stakeholders to shape Northern Border Regional Commission economic strategy ($7.5 million annual investment)
- Advocated for supportive wood heat policies in 4 states
- Represented the region’s priorities to legislative and agency staff in Washington, DC

Since program beginning:

- Connected thousands of Northern Forest leaders to address shared challenge and seize common opportunity
- Secured $3 million in public funds for Center projects to benefit region
- Secured and leveraged $177 million to benefit the region’s communities, economy and forest stewardship

Symposium Synthesis

Participants shared ideas for revitalizing communities and local economies.

Collaboration: Community and economic leaders from across the 4 states shared challenges, insights and energy at the Northern Forest Symposium, co-hosted by the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the Center. Their input helped shape significant regional initiatives such as the Northern Border Regional Commission’s new strategic plan.

With your support, the Center is...

Providing regional leadership on state and federal policies and economic strategies and advancing collaborative projects that deliver benefits to Northern Forest communities.
Looking beyond borders
Center’s regional leadership builds cooperation and trust

Lucy Leriche grew up on a farm in Wolcott, Vermont, where her parents and grandparents had emigrated in 1950 after refrigerators put an end to the family business of ice harvesting on Lake Memphre magog. At age 20, Lucy set out for big cities, adventure and two years of world travel. She came home to finish her bachelor’s degree at Johnson State College, then went to Arizona for her master’s degree. “I liked it there, but I decided I really needed to come back home,” said Lucy. “My family is here, and I missed seeing green. I missed the water. I really missed this place.”

Today, Lucy lives on the edge of the Northeast Kingdom, where she cycles, cross-country skis and will do just about anything as long as it’s outdoors. She’s also Secretary of Commerce and Community Development for Vermont.

“When I came back, there had been a lot of economic growth, but one thing that hadn’t changed is the connectedness of community, even when the downtowns struggle,” said Lucy. “Vermont has always had a sense of resiliency in the people, and community is a really strong part of it. People look out for their neighbors; we understand that all our destinies are linked.”

Over the past year, the Center has been working closely with Lucy, the governor’s designee to the Northern Border Regional Commission, to develop a new strategic plan for the regional federal agency.

As commerce secretary, Lucy sees the challenges that hinder economic and community development, but also the opportunities. “Our geography creates physical barriers and restricts our ability to communicate,” she said. “We have cell tower interference. Travel is difficult. We need the water and waste infrastructure to sustain jobs at an adequate pay level to enable people to stay here.”

“We need to invest in what has served us really well, and make it sustainable: agriculture, logging, more use of our forest resources, like wood pellet heating, biomass production, and sustainable forestry,” said Lucy. “We have huge untapped capacity for producing maple products. Our low-quality wood market is in crisis, but we have lots of opportunity to harness Vermont innovation and turn crisis into opportunity.”

Through the Border Commission project, Lucy saw how the Center works across multiple borders and interests. “The Center’s work I value most is serving as a connector across the region,” she said. “Our economies don’t function independently; they’re closely tied. There is no sense in limiting our thinking to just our state boundaries.”

“One of most important functions the Center serves is finding common ground among the states in the region. We can be parochial, and it’s important to have a vision out there pushing us to think more regionally.”

– Lucy Leriche, Hardwick, Vermont
Vermont Secretary of Commerce and Community Development
The Northern Forest Center creates economic opportunity and community vitality from healthy working forests in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.

**Public Policy & Engagement**
- Advocating for Northern Forest communities at the state and federal level.
- The Center brings a unique multi-state perspective to the region’s congressional delegation and agency staff in Washington, D.C. to help shape public policy and secure federal funding for the Northern Forest.

**Modern Wood Heat**
- Catalyzing demand for high-efficiency, modern wood heating systems to reduce heating costs, retain wealth locally, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate positive economic impact in the region.

**Wood Products Innovation**
- Assisting wood products manufacturers to implement innovation and advance worker training. These programs help businesses become more competitive, enabling them to sustain and create living-wage jobs.

**Tourism**
- Strengthening the outdoor recreation tourism economy to enhance visitor experiences and improve job opportunities in rural communities. Programs are creating quality-based branding and providing training to tourism-based businesses.

**Community Forests**
- Helping communities create locally-owned and managed forests that conserve forestland and generate economic and community benefits such as timber income, outdoor classrooms and recreational opportunities.

**Tax Credit Financing**
- Developing New Markets Tax Credit projects to finance multi-million dollar investments that can conserve working forestland, increase use of renewable energy and strengthen the wood products manufacturing and tourism sectors.

**Ways of the Woods**
- Providing the traveling exhibition *Ways of the Woods: People and the Land in the Northern Forest* to colleges, museums and other public institutions to help people explore the history of the region.

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**2015-2016 Programs At a Glance**

- **Modern Wood Heat**
- **Wood Products Innovation**
- **Tourism**
- **Community Forests**
- **Tax Credit Financing**
- **Ways of the Woods**
See page 22 for a full list of partner organizations.
Other Highlights

Investment in northern Maine

The Center facilitated tax credit financing for a major investment in Piscataquis County that is funding lodge construction, trail work, fisheries improvement and a new Tourism Investment Program to spur investment in tourism businesses near Moosehead Lake. Above: crews from general contractor E.W. Littlefield & Sons, Inc. of Hartland, Maine, work on the building, with Big Spencer Mountain in the background.

The Center facilitates use of the federal New Markets Tax Program, bringing major sources of capital together with projects that stimulate the region's economy and generate a variety of benefits for the communities of economically stressed counties.

In early 2016, the Center facilitated financing for a major investment in Piscataquis County that enables the Appalachian Mountain Club to reconstruct its Medawisla Lodge & Cabins, build new trails, improve local fisheries and more. In addition, the Center will launch a new tourism investment program in partnership with AMC and others.

The new Tourism Innovation Program will help tourism providers implement innovations that will strengthen their businesses, expand job opportunities and attract visitors to the Maine Woods. Financial support up to $25,000 each will help qualified businesses hire consultants to develop and implement business innovations ranging from software and facility improvements to new product development. The Plum Creek Foundation has also provided support for the new program.

The Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation (MHIC) and JP Morgan Chase provided capital and tax credit authority for the federal New Markets Tax Credit financing.

“Pairing support for local businesses with AMC’s expansion made this investment compelling for MHIC,” said MHIC President and CEO Joseph Flatley. “Our goal is to help create better economic opportunities for area residents while respecting local priorities. We are grateful for the chance to work with such outstanding local partners.”
Other Highlights

Strengthening rural communities

Project culminates in 55,000-acre Community Forest

Back in 2009, the Center facilitated a tax credit financing that ensured 22,000 acres of forestland would remain intact to continue supporting the economy and communities in the Downeast Lakes region of Maine. The extensive forest there is the heart of the region’s outdoor recreation industry.

Seven years later, at the end of the New Markets Tax Credit financing term, two very exciting things happened. In July, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust completed its fee purchase of the property, which it has added to an existing property to create the 55,000-acre Downeast Lakes Community Forest. The land trust owns the forestland on behalf of the local communities and is managing it for the economic and community benefit of the region. The state of Maine holds a working forest conservation easement on the property.

Also, in March, the town of Grand Lake Stream received $650,000 generated by the tax credit financing to support future housing, economic development, and community facilities projects.

“This entire project has been a big win for the town,” said Grand Lake Stream Selectman Louis Cataldo. “We look forward to creating jobs for residents and promoting residential development to attract young families to move into the town, among other things.”

“We are grateful to CEI Capital Management, the Northern Forest Center, Lyme Timber, and the other partners for everything they have done to make this all happen,” Cataldo said.

Economic Solutions

The Center has been a key advisor to the proceedings of the federal Economic Development Assessment Team, which is strategizing economic development options for Maine communities hit hard by mill closures. Between fall 2013 and spring 2016, five mills shut down in Maine, costing hundreds of jobs and stressing the entire forest products economy.

The Center engaged more than 200 stakeholders across the Northern Forest to develop a new regional investment strategy for the Northern Border Regional Commission. The commission—a partnership between the federal government and the states of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont—is now investing $6 million a year to promote economic growth and projects in the northern areas of its member states.

The strategy will guide the commission’s investments, seeking to capitalize on regional assets to increase and retain wealth in the region. High priorities include modernizing the region’s infrastructure, investing in business and workforce development, and building the region’s capacity for community economic development.

If Congress provides sufficient funding through 2021, the commission’s goals are to:

- create or retain 5,000 jobs
- improve the infrastructure of 10,000 households and businesses
- deliver benefits to 1,000 businesses representing 5,000 employees
- provide 7,500 workers with skills training
- engage 250 communities and 1,000 leaders in regional leadership, learning and/or innovation networks
- leverage NBRC investment by 3-to-1

To develop the plan, Center staff conducted more than 200 interviews and a comprehensive review of existing economic development plans and strategies across the region and weighed local priorities identified by public, private, and not-for-profit stakeholders.

The Center supported the creation of the commission and annually advocates for funding to enable the commission to make strategic investments that will help revitalize the region’s economy.

Center authors new regional investment strategy for Northern Border Regional Commission

Matt Erskine, US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development (left), and Center President Rob Riley.
This recognition list is more than a list of names—it’s a celebration of donors who gave this past fiscal year (May 1, 2015 – April 30, 2016). As the Center approaches its 20th year, we are recognizing your giving, organized by longevity, because you—our donors and funders—are amazing!

Those who invest in the Center realize that helping people and businesses in rural communities regain their footing takes time, dedication, perseverance, a measure of risk, and it takes resources. Our donors take a long view and stay committed for the long haul.

Thank you! Our growing community of supporters makes possible the impact and results achieved every year. Your dedication and commitment inspire and instill confidence in people who choose to become new members.

Please take pride and celebrate with us! Your philanthropic investment has made enormous strides toward keeping forests as forests and developing vibrant rural communities that will become “home” for future generations.

This list of donors reflects donations received within our last fiscal year (May 1, 2015 – April 30, 2016). Many others have provided gifts over the years and played an important role in the Center’s growth and program impact. Thank you—we appreciate every contribution along the way.

We extend special appreciation to Roy and Emily Van Vleck and Cheryl Anne Williams, loyal and generous supporters whose gifts fell outside the fiscal year. Their longstanding leadership has helped launch and sustain Center programs.

We wish to recognize all of our generous supporters. Please let us know if we have made any errors in compiling this list. Please contact Doreen Oliveira at 603-220-0679, ext. 102, or email her at doliveira@northernforest.org, to notify us of any errors.

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President’s Council members indicated by bold type. These donors have contributed $1,000 or more.

△ Evergreen Society: these donors give recurring donations

◊ Board member

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Fiscal Year 2016

Honoring & Thanking Our Donors

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Jacqueline L. Tuxill

The Heritage Society

Remembering the Center in your estate plan is one way you can support the Center and ensure its continued success. There are simple ways you can take care of your family and meet your charitable goals. Your legacy is our legacy, and we can plan together for the future. Please contact Doreen Oliveira, director of Philanthropy, to discuss your questions—603-229-0679, ext. 102 or doliveira@northernforest.org.

Heritage Society Members

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Woolsey & Beatrice Conover
Jennifer Huntington
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Northern Border Regional Commission
U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development
U.S. Economic Development Administration
Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund
Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

In Memoriam
The Center acknowledges with sadness the deaths of the friends of the organization listed below. We will miss their advice, friendship and support.

Lois Alger
Dennis Delay
Diane Giffen
Leon Gorman
Jocelyn Jerry
Robert Latshaw
Dr. Johnes Moore
Art Mudge
Preston "Sandy" Saunders
Gail Scott
Cy Sweet
Jennifer Wierwille Norton
Ann Wonham

Join the Evergreen Society!
The Evergreen Society is a committed group of people who provide charitable gifts through recurring monthly payments. Membership is growing, and you can be a member too!

"We enjoy the convenience of dividing our gift into monthly payments—it works quite well for us. The Center can count on our support each month, and we count on our gift helping the Center’s work not miss a beat. We don’t need to remember to write and mail a check. Payments go directly to the Center, our bank provides a monthly statement, and we receive one gift receipt at the end of the year. It’s a great way to support work that we believe in."

—Fred and Patrice Ficken, donors

It’s easy to join. Sign up online to make a monthly recurring gift by credit card. Please visit www.northernforest.org, click the Donate button on the home page and choose Evergreen Society Donation. Thank you!
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<td>Yestermorrow Design/Build School</td>
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In Fiscal Year 2016, the Center continued to deliver programs across the Northern Forest to foster innovation in the forest economy—through modern wood heating, wood products manufacturing, experiential tourism and Community Forests—while also securing investment in the region and building a regional vision. We’re pleased to have added new part time field staff to help accelerate program delivery in the Adirondacks and the Northeast Kingdom, while maintaining efficiencies in operations and fundraising.

Our substantial increase in program income and in net assets over last year is due to income earned by facilitating a New Markets Tax Credit project in Greenville, Maine. A portion of this income—$225,000—has been set aside to be distributed through our Tourism Innovation Program that will spur investment in Greenville area tourism services and infrastructure. In addition, through the support of generous donors, we established a special Program Development and Implementation Fund that has allowed us to test new ideas and strategies including our new Community Revitalization program.

We are pleased to report that the Center is delivering impact beyond our own $1.5 million investment in programs. Center projects have leveraged and secured an additional $23.3 million in public funding, foundation grants, business and organizational investment in the region. This includes $1.3 million in grants the Center helped secure for other organizations participating in collaborative projects.

These successes are only possible due to the generous individuals, foundations, corporations and agencies that help us raise our entire budget every year. We rely on your support, and gratefully acknowledge what we have accomplished together.
About the Center

Founded in 1997, the Center is a leading voice in rural community economic development and forest stewardship.

Center programs include advancing modern wood heat, catalyzing innovation in wood products, enhancing quality in experiential tourism, supporting community forestry and using the Center’s core capacities to secure jobs, conserve managed forests and leverage investment in the region.

The Center is led by a diverse board of directors representing the four Northern Forest and other New England states, and a professional staff with a main office in Concord, New Hampshire, and field staff in Milan, New Hampshire; South Portland, Maine; Saranac Lake, New York; and Morgan, Vermont.
A commitment to treat the land well, honor its many values, and steward it for future generations is essential to successful long-term community and economic development.

Use and conservation of the region’s natural resources should directly benefit local communities.

Empowered local voices and ideas will be the foundation of the region’s long-term vitality.

Integrated approaches to economic, community and environmental issues are fundamental to bringing people together, reducing conflicts and accelerating change.

Regional cooperation and learning is vital to addressing systemic rural challenges.

Bold vision, leadership and risk-taking are needed to capitalize on emerging opportunities.
The Northern Forest Center creates economic opportunity and community vitality from healthy working forests in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.

Cover photos by Northern Forest Center staff except as follows:

**Front cover**: Rafting and moose by New England Outdoor Center; children with sap bucket and canoeists fishing by Jerry Monkman/EcoPhotography.

**Back cover**: snowshoeing by Jerry Monkman/EcoPhotography; Milan Community Forest (bottom center) by Cheryl Senter, courtesy of NH Charitable Foundation.