

NEWS

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY & LAND RETENTION PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION *-HUD Secretary Ben Carson Presents Award-*

U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Greenville, SC
For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (July 16, 2018)

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment) is pleased to announce that the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention (SFLR) Program is a 2018 recipient of the Secretary's Awards for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships.

The award, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in partnership with the Council of Foundations, recognizes innovative partnerships that focus on housing and community development for low- and moderate-income families. The SFLR program is a partnership of the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and USDA Forest Service (USFS). The program promotes intergenerational land retention and family asset creation for African American landowners across the southeast.

"The success of the Sustainable Forestry and Land Retention Project demonstrates the power of government, philanthropy, and community collaboration to advance opportunity. We at the Endowment are proud to support a program that leverages public and private investment designed to empower African American families and communities to retain rural family land ownership, enhance forest health, and build intergenerational wealth," said Endowment President and CEO Carlton Owen.

The SFLR program was launched in 2013 as an effort to aid African American landowners in turning their forested properties into economic assets. The program capitalizes on innovative partnerships between local, state, and federal organizations to assist landowners in this process. SFLR provides a variety of support to these landowners, including access to legal assistance and opportunities for sustainable forestry. To date, the program supports 8 project sites across 7 states and more than 800 landowners. The participants own a combined 68,423 acres, ensuring land assets remain held by historical landowners.

SFLR has continued to strengthen networks that support, connect, and empower landowners. These networks are catalysts through which African American landowner leaders are emerging and organizing—both locally and regionally. Ultimately, it is the empowered leadership of these landowners and those they influence that will define the program's legacy.

In accepting the award, Owen noted, "We at the Endowment extend our deepest thanks to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Council of Foundations for this recognition. But, let's be clear, the SFLR program would not be possible without support from our federal and state partners, as well as our eight anchor organizations."

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The **U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities** (the Endowment) is a not-for-profit public charity working collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation's working forests and forest-reliant communities – www.usendowment.org