The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities Releases 2014 Annual Report

U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Greenville, SC
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“Our 8th Annual Report (for calendar year 2014) reflects the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities’ (the Endowment) focus on “Investing for Impact” in a wide-array of initiatives all with the ultimate purpose of supporting the North American forest industry,” said President & CEO Carlton Owen.

“We are willing to use many different financial instruments to bring about systemic, transformative, and sustainable change to improve the health of America’s forests and the millions of people that depend upon them,” continued Owen. “We use traditional approaches such as grants, but more frequently we are moving to Program-related (low-interest loans) and Mission-related Investments (traditional loans) and even equity investments. Regardless of our investment strategy, in each case we seek a measurable impact that addresses our twin purposes of ‘keeping forests as forests’ and ‘growing family-wage jobs’ in forest-rich communities.”

Highlights from the Endowment’s 2014 successes featured in the Annual Report include:

- Significant investments in commercialization of cellulosic nanofiber technology that could create markets for low-value wood thus providing important forest health benefits, such as reducing wildfires, while yielding 21st Century green products and high-wage jobs in rural America;
- Creation of a new consortium focused on renewable energy from torrefied wood as another tool to advance forest health while also growing use of a domestically-produced renewable energy;
- Revitalizing forest industry investments in research and development essential for expanding existing markets and creating new ones;
- Continuing collaborations between the U.S. and Canada on forestry issues common to both;
- Financial strategies to protect and improve management of forested watersheds which produce two-thirds of our Nation’s drinking water; and
- Advances to help African American landowners retain and better manage their forests to improve their financial futures.
“Another thing that sets the Endowment apart is that we are just as transparent about our not-so-successful ventures as we are about those that do succeed,” Owen said. “No investor is right 100% of the time and neither are we. One of our most exciting programs to create a wood-to-energy facility did not go as planned. We are deeply disappointed, but we learned a lot that we plan to share publicly to position us and others better for greater successes in the future.”

America’s forests and the thousands of products they produce have driven our country’s growth and prosperity throughout its history. The Endowment seeks to continue sustainable use of those forests by “doing what others can’t or won’t.” “We are not afraid to tackle the toughest issues faced by our forests and the forest industry. In collaboration with a wide-range of public and private teammates, we are working for a brighter future for one of our most important natural resources,” said Endowment Senior Vice President Peter Stangel.

The 2014 Annual Report is available as a PDF here.

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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