

NEWS

ENDOWMENT LAUNCHES FIRz, A FORUM FOR INNOVATION ABOUT FORESTS, FOREST MANAGEMENT, FOREST PRODUCTS, AND FOREST-RICH COMMUNITIES

U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Greenville, SC

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (January 8, 2019) The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment) today announced the first annual Forest Innovation Reviews (FIRz) to be held on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 in Athens, Georgia. FIRz is a forum for innovative ideas for solving some of today's most significant natural resources challenges. The inaugural FIRz event will create a space for presenting well-formed ideas about forests, forest management, forest products and forest-rich communities, conveyed through short, powerful talks.

Innovative thinkers from around the world will gather for a day of breakthrough thinking and sharing about the biggest challenges — and potential solutions — that face forests and forest health. Selected speakers will share their ideas with an audience open to the new, innovative, and in some cases utterly unheard-of thinking. Then those ideas will be shared around the world via video. The presentation voted by FIRz attendees as “most likely to make a lasting difference” will be awarded \$10,000.

“As the nation’s largest public charity dedicated to working forests, the Endowment has a consistent and proven track record of successful ventures that link to at least one of seven strategic initiative areas: traditional markets, non-traditional markets, wood-to-energy, innovation, asset creation, forest health and forest retention,” said Endowment President and CEO Carlton Owen. “We expect that over time, FIRz will emerge as the signature annual event for unearthing sector innovation and revolutionary thinking in all of these areas and more.”

The inaugural FIRz will take place at the University of Georgia, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. Each year FIRz will rotate to a different region of the U.S. (*that's the z!*). In fact, FIRz 2020 is already slated for Oregon in collaboration with Oregon State University's College of Forestry. The deadline for nominating yourself or someone else for FIRz 2019 is February 28, 2019. Those asked to continue to the next step in the selection process will be notified not later than March 30, 2019. For more information visit www.usendowment.org or email info@usendowment.org.

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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