

# Endowment Initiative Overview

## Retaining Healthy, Working Forests

November 2011

### 80,000 Points of Light

#### Creating the First Ever Conservation Easement Database

They play a critical role protecting forests, open space, and a myriad of natural resources on more than 21 million acres over 50 states. They have become the conservation tool of choice for thousands of private landowners because of their flexibility and tax-savings. Until now, however, it has been impossible to see where they are and how they impact conservation planning, or even how many there are.

Easements are an essential element in 21st Century conservation tool box, but their true value has been diminished by the fact that there is no standardized database showing the shape, size, and location of easements on private land. A \$1 million Endowment grant has finally made this database possible.

The lack of a database is no small issue. For conservation planners, not knowing the location of private easements on the landscape is a little like planning a driving route without knowing the placement of intersections and stop signs—you might as well be driving blind.

Through an impressive partnership that includes The Trust for Public Land, Defenders of Wildlife, Conservation Biology Institute, Ducks Unlim-

ited, and NatureServe, this database is now a reality. Through September of 2011, this group has collected information on more than 81,000 privately

#### **Healthy, Working Forests**

*“Retaining and expanding our nation’s working forests, and the many economic, cultural, and ecological benefits that they provide our society, is the core of the Endowment’s mission. We tackle this issue in many ways, from supporting policy work at the national level through the Working Forests Coalition, to providing seed grants to green entrepreneurs who are finding new ways to value forest products, to promoting the virtues of community-owned forests, to regional alliances such as the Partnership for Southern Forestland Conservation. We are always looking for innovative ways to keep working forests working.”*

**Carlton Owen, President,  
US Endowment**

held easements, representing about 605 of all know easements, with more added each month. The database can be accessed at <http://nced.conservationregistry.org/>.

The National Conservation Easement Database improves accountability, reduces redundancy in planning, and maximizes conservation impact.

# The Working Forest Coalition

## Private Forests, Public Benefits

*“...when we are recovering from the worst recession in generations, and waging two wars abroad, some may ask whether now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to our national heritage. But I want everybody to recall, it was in the midst of civil war that Abraham Lincoln set aside lands that are now Yosemite. It was in midst of a great depression that FDR formed the Civilian Conservation Corps...”*

President Obama, America’s Great Outdoors Initiative, April 2010.

To promote the public benefits of private working forests in America’s Great Outdoors, the Endowment participates in and funds the **Working Forests Coalition**. This diverse group helps ensure that working forests are always on the agenda.

The Working Forest Coalition is the Endowment’s only current national-level activity designed to advance fed-

eral policy and national-level actions that sustain and enhance the value of

*“We are convinced that the Obama Administration gained a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the importance of private forests to the nation’s future through the efforts of the Working Forests Coalition.”*

**Chuck Leavell, Director  
U.S. Endowment**

private working forests to society and to forest owners. The Coalition includes: American Forest Foundation; Environmental Defense Fund; Forest Landowners Association; National Alliance of Forest Owners; National Association of State Foresters; National Wildlife Federation; Pacific Forest Trust; Society of American Foresters; The Conservation Fund; The Nature Conservancy; Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; and the Endowment.

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## Not Just Whistling Dixie

In just 20 years the nation could lose 57 million acres of private forests—an

*“This type of conservation work is critical and urgent.”*

**Ken Arney, Deputy Regional Forester, State and Private Forestry, Southern Region, U.S. Forest Service**

area 25 times larger than Yellowstone National Park—according to the U.S. Forest Service. Southern forests will

bear the brunt of the loss. The Endowment, U.S. Forest Service, and Department of Defense have joined forces to support the **Partnership for Southern Forestland Conservation**, which works to maintain and expand large blocks of working forests ([www.pfsfc.org](http://www.pfsfc.org)). The Partnership now includes 33 government agencies and private organizations and entities, including large landowners.

## National Community Forestry Service Center

The rapid divestment patterns we see in forestland ownership by timber investors and family forest owners indicate perhaps a ten-year window of opportunity to effect meaningful change. After that, fragmentation rates and land prices will be so high as to effectively:

- 1) bar communities from acquiring large-scale community forests, and,
- 2) weaken the necessary economic infrastructure of processing facilities and logging contractors.

The **National Community Forestry Service Center**, an Endowment partnership with The Conservation Fund, aims to energize and dramatically accelerate the national movement toward

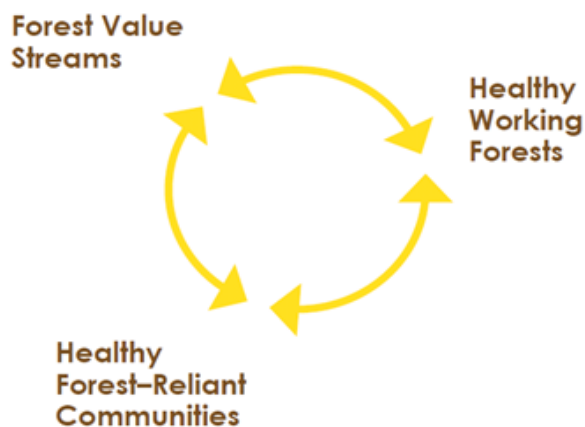
community ownership and management of forestland in the U.S., building on this opportunity to restructure timber ownership in our country. Success means that communities can increase and ensure economic, conservation, and community-building value through sustainable community-owned forests.

*The Conservation Fund is working with partners to establish North Carolina's first community forest on a 532-acre parcel in Hoke County, near Fort Bragg, and adjacent to forestlands with the second largest population of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.*

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## Working Forests: Benefitting Multiple Objectives

Retaining healthy, working forests advances all aspects of the Endowment's Theory of Change, which plots specific direction to the Endowment's



mission *“to work 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.”*

**Healthy Working Forests** - Retaining and expanding working forests is the bedrock of the Endowment's mission. Policy work at the national and regional level, innovative partnerships, and seed money for entrepreneurs are just some of the tactics the Endowment is using.

**Forest Value Streams**- Without new sources of revenue, some landowners cannot generate enough income to pay the costs of forestland ownership. Microloans to green entrepreneurs are seeding new businesses that seek to generate income from traditional and non-traditional forest products.

# Working Forests: Benefitting Multiple Objectives

**Healthy Forest-Reliant Communities:** The greatest number of family supporting jobs will come through retention and growth of traditional wood products markets (e.g. lumber and paper). Non-traditional markets, such as ecosystem services, woody biomass, and other revenue streams provide forest landowners with a supplemental income that enables them to retain ownership during challenging economic times. Both strategies, of course, rely on the presence of healthy, working forests. Developing traditional and non-traditional revenue streams and retaining and expanding the extent of America's working for-

## Old Trees Mean New Jobs

*“Re-imagination of urban resources, storytelling, and the creation of soulful objects.”* That’s how Ted and Zeb Es-selstyn describe City Bench ([www.citybench.com](http://www.citybench.com)). Operating from barns in Higganum, Connecticut, the team diverts downed urban trees from landfills by turning them into functional works of art. Business loans from the **ShadeFund** helped expand the business. ShadeFund is a joint venture of the Endowment and the Conservation Fund.

ests are being pursued in tandem by the Endowment. Both are essential for revitalizing forest-reliant communities.

## U.S. Endowment Programmatic Investments (through 8/31/2011)

	Award Date/ Project Type	Objective/Grantee	Funding		
			Endowment	Matching Funds	Total
In Progress	2008 <i>Operational</i>	Partnership for Southern Forest-land Conservation/ <i>The Conservation Fund</i>	\$150,000 (\$50,000/year for three years)	\$300,000	\$415,000
	2008 <i>Pilot, Operational, Policy</i>	National Community Forestry Service Center/ <i>The Conservation Fund</i>	\$110,000	\$100,000	\$210,000
	2008 <i>Demonstration</i>	ShadeFund/ <i>The Conservation Fund</i>	\$1,000,000	\$265,000	\$1,265,000
	2009 <i>Operational</i>	National Conservation Easement Database/ <i>The Trust for Public Land</i>	\$1,007,500	\$500,000	\$1,507,500
	2009 <i>Knowledge</i>	Private Forest Planning Collaborative/ <i>Open Space Institute</i>	\$25,000	\$275,000	\$300,000
		<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$2,292,500</b>	<b>\$1,440,000</b>	<b>\$3,732,500</b>

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry & Communities, Inc. (Endowment) is a not-for-profit corporation established in late 2006, at the request of the governments of the United States and Canada in accordance with the terms of the Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) between the two countries. The Endowment’s mission is to work 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.

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