

NEWS

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION RECOMMENDS NEW APPROACHES TO FOREST SECTOR RESEARCH IN U.S. **-Changes needed to focus direction, advance forest health, and rebuild nation's competitiveness-**

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

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A report by the [*Blue Ribbon Commission on Forest and Forest Products Research and Development in the U.S. in the 21st Century*](#) (BRC), released today by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment), calls for changes in the way forest and forest products research is addressed.

“After more than a year of study and deliberation the five members of the Blue Ribbon Commission empaneled by the Endowment have completed their work and released their findings,” said Endowment President & CEO Carlton Owen. “On behalf of the Endowment and all who are concerned about the health and productivity of our nation’s precious forests, as well as the myriad benefits they provide from drinking water to vital wood and paper products, we want to thank the members of the Commission for their hard work and insightful recommendations.”

Among the report’s findings are that forest sector R&D in America is unfocused and underfunded. To address shortcomings the BRC recommended changes and enhancements to spur innovation including:

- Development of a “national” R&D plan across USDA Forest Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, National Science Foundation, and the Department of Energy along with forest sector input that avoids wasteful duplication and sets a clear direction for the future; and,
- Institution of a new model where federal scientists serve more as team leaders engaging private sector, university, and federal researchers to increase speed, flexibility, and delivery of needed solutions.

“The timing of this report is perfect as the Administration is highlighting the importance of natural resources to achieve rural prosperity. Forest and forest products research and development are key to achieving that vision,” said Dr. Ann Bartuska, Vice President for Land, Water, and Nature Programs at Resources for the Future.

This week, the Endowment shared the report and its core findings with key Congressional staff as well as federal agency research leaders.

The members of the Commission were: Robin Jolley, former CEO of American Forest Management; Dr. Richard Ringeisen, Chancellor Emeritus, University of Illinois Springfield; Tim Punke, former Vice President Plum Creek Timber/Weyerhaeuser Company; Larry Selzer, President & CEO, The Conservation Fund; and, John D. Williams, President & CEO, Domtar Corporation.

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For more information contact:

Carlton N. Owen, President & CEO, 864-233-7646, carlton@usendowment.org

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