

THE STATUS OF AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS CLUSTERING WITHIN THE FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR IN THE U.S.

Appendix C Online Registry of Forest Business Clusters in the U.S.

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An online registry of existing forest sector clusters in the U.S. is available at www.fwrc.msstate.edu/cluster/cluster_search.asp. The registry provides information about each forest business cluster including location, contact information, geographic area served, legal status, size (number of firms and employees), duration, and specific strategies the cluster uses to meet its objectives. The registry is not intended to represent all forest sector clusters in the U.S. Instead, it is the “first step” in a process to begin to categorize clusters nationwide and create a structure for monitoring clustering activities in the U.S. forest sector. Visitors to the website can submit information about additional clusters for listing in the online registry or provide additional information about specific registered clusters at www.fwrc.msstate.edu/cluster/register.asp. The objective is to provide a resource that helps identify and monitor the status of forest sector clustering in the United States.

The registry was developed by two methods. First, forestry stakeholders known to the researchers to possess knowledge about forest clusters were contacted by telephone or e-mail. These contacts in many cases led to referrals of specific individuals currently engaged in working with a forest sector cluster. Second, input was gathered through an online survey (see Chapter 5 of the full report). At least two individuals in each of the 50 states were invited to participate in the survey. These individuals included at least one representative from

the State Forester’s office (or equivalent office) and heads of leading forestry and forest product associations around the U.S. Key individuals identified in the telephone contact phase of the study were also sent questionnaires.

To date, the registry includes information about 48 forest sector clusters in the U.S. Represented in this number are forest sector clusters in 21 individual states and an additional 15 states where multi-state clusters are included. The clusters vary from informal associations to formal for-profit entities and are distributed across the country. The summary of included business clusters is presented in Table 1.

The top business strategies that are being used by the clusters include:

- Promotion of local products (74%)
- Promotion of certified products (48%)
- Employing paid personnel in support of the cluster (41%)

Clusters were identified in Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia. Regional clusters were also identified that serve the entire Southeastern U.S., Intermountain-West, and the New England region.

Table 1. Summary of forest business clusters included in the online registry.

Total Number of Clusters Identified	Supported by an Industry Association	Non-profits	Less than 10 years old	More than 10 years old
48	48%	42%	51%	49%