



**Western North Carolina
Forest Products
Cooperative Marketing Project
2009-2011**



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View Project Video at <http://www.youtube.com/user/WNCForestProducts>

And at the Project Website: www.wncforestproducts.org

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Smashwords Edition

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Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks to all the grantees who participated in this eBook and video project.

Special thanks to the following persons who donated their time, materials, intellectual property or knowledge to this effort:

Susan Fox, Assistant Director, US Forest Service Southern Research Station

Tom Elmore, Thatchmore Consulting

Alison Dressler, Program Assistant, NC State University Dept. of Horticultural Science

Musical background for 'Recovering Traditional Cherokee Delicacies':

'Song of the Seasons', Paula Nelson (lyrics), Krista Hunsuck (shaker)

'Moon Dancer', Mark Hicks, flute player



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Western North Carolina Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project

Land-of-Sky Regional Council, North Carolina

Introduction and Accomplishments to Date:

Western North Carolina (WNC) produces some of the finest hardwoods and non-timber forest products in the country, yet our production and marketing have not fulfilled their potential. In December 2009, Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) received a **\$1.974 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant from the USDA Forest Service's Southern Research Station** to work toward a more competitive forest-based industry in WNC.

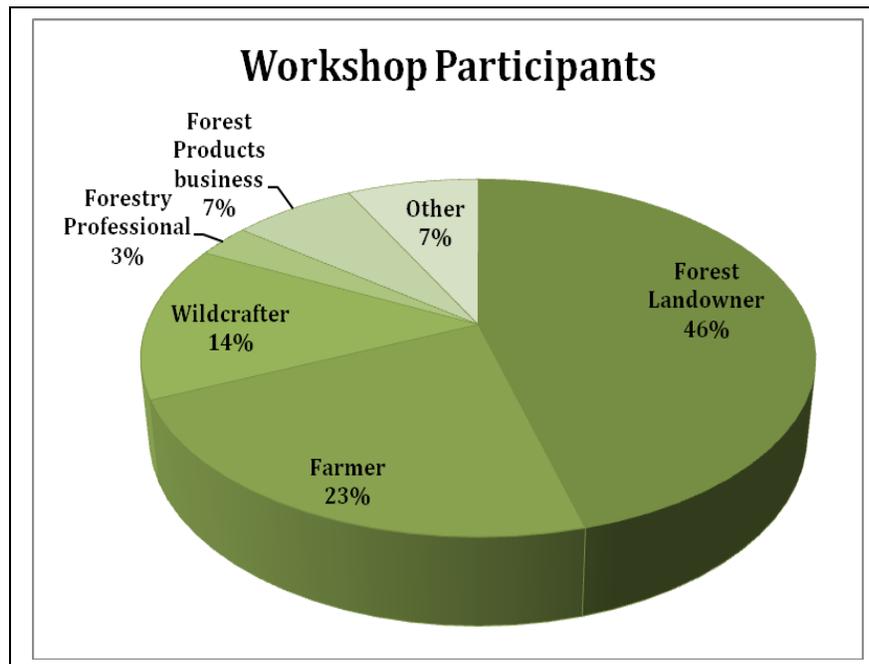
The WNC Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project (the project) was created to put forest workers to work building capacity in their businesses and make them more efficient and profitable while strengthening market access for their products. **We selected through a competitive process, 15 forest-based businesses for awards totaling over \$1.5 million.** Jobs retained or created through this grant include: loggers, foresters, horse loggers, small sawmill operators, handcrafters and artisans, furniture manufacturers, wild crafters, forest foods harvesters/growers, and firewood and wood shavings processors. **To date, the project has led to over 160 jobs;** full-time, part-time or seasonal, **at an investment of about \$11,900 per job.** The project also **contributed to over 68 additional jobs and has led to an estimated community financial impact of \$4.2 million¹.** Since the closure of the grant awards in July 2011, the job retention rate remains over 90%.

While the bulk of the funds went directly to job creation, project partners provided technical assistance to help accelerate the growth of our forest business clients. LOSRC, project partners, and other technical experts provided specialized assistance to the recipient businesses in the fields of best business practices, legal and accounting services, branding, retail packaging, green label certification, customer searches, web-based marketing, and many other topics. In keeping with the intent of ARRA, other small businesses were used for specific services to improve collaboration and networking in the future. These public-private partnerships resulted in a team that is uniquely suited to produce long-term benefits for the forest industries in WNC.

The market research, customer calls, and equipment improvement research was done by the producers themselves. Using this approach, we not only placed paychecks in the hands of forest workers quickly, but most of the learning and intellectual capital resulting from this project will remain with the forest producers after the project is complete.

¹ Walden, Michael, NCSU, *Measuring How Much Economic Change Will Mean to Your Community*. (forest/wood products multipliers)

Many groups are now collaborating in ways beyond those that we originally envisioned. For example, a portable sawmill operator decided to locate their facility adjacent to a woodworker to share equipment, land, and wood supply. They have also become mutually supportive businesses and are in the process of building a solar wood-drying kiln. Another partnership is a horse logger working with a mushroom cooperative to identify and cut oak logs to be used for growing gourmet mushrooms.



LOSRC and the partner organizations created a workshop series targeting forest producers and landowners titled ***“Does Your Forest Make Money?”*** The workshops were open to the public and held throughout WNC. **Over 300 people attended the series.** The goal of the workshop series was to provide direct information and tools to enable the target audience to generate income from their forestland. **Surveys collected at the workshops have expressed a strong need for continued outreach and increased networking opportunities** for small businesses and landowners. This unique feature of our stimulus project extended job growth potential beyond our twelve grantees.

Workshops were also held to directly benefit the grant recipient businesses. The workshops were structured on a ‘Curbside Consulting’ format. This allowed one-on-one consulting with professional experts in fields including legal, accounting, enterprise budgeting, marketing, finance, trademark and patents. The feedback from the participants was that the format is highly effective and essential for their continued success. The participating expert consultants donated their time and resources to the workshops and were very pleased with the opportunity to assist entrepreneurs in navigating challenges.

The project achieved success by networking businesses and organizations to work toward a more economically competitive WNC by closing economic leaks in our business clusters. For example, the initial steps have been put in place to identify and certify more locally sourced wood for harvesting, milling, and branding for furniture and construction right here in WNC. There are many more steps to take to achieve a robust forest industry in WNC, but we are on our way to achieve this goal. One area of future focus is in wild herbs. Most people purchase wild herbs from the northwest states and abroad, even though western North Carolina has one of the most diverse herb populations in the world. In order to better network businesses, landowners, and buyers in all the forest and agricultural clusters need additional regional marketing and branding approaches and the support to invest time and resources. A leading herb processing company located in our region is eager to buy WNC herbs.

Current grant funds from the USDA Forest Service have proven critical to small businesses and development of public-private networks throughout western North Carolina. Additional funding for this program will enable additional job growth in current and emerging sectors.



Grant Recipients:

Forest Producer Groups in WNC received ARRA funds through a competitive process:

- Appalachian Designs used \$74,900 to develop a dry kiln, concentration yard, and certification program for small diameter wood products.
- Bark House Supply Company was awarded \$90,700 to expand the market and sell home furnishings made from sustainably managed, locally sourced and manufactured forest materials.
- Blue Ridge Wild Timbers used \$81,340 to construct dry kilns and develop marketing and education materials to increase capacity for locally sourced firewood while establishing cooperative relationships with unemployed loggers.
- The Boggs Collective received \$108,000 to create a cooperative workshop, woodshed, woodworking school and virtual gallery to support craftspeople and forest producers.
- Clear Creek Wood Products received \$91,500 to operate a shaving mill from small diameter timber procured from area harvesters.
- Community Forestry Project used \$104,998 to promote sustainable forestry through worker training, product development and cooperative marketing in horse logging, sawmill operation, and production of value-added forest products.
- Furniture Specialties Inc. was awarded \$119,880 to gain Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, conduct seminars, assist local vendors become FSC certified, and market the benefits of green furniture constructed with sustainably harvested wood.
- Green River Forest Products received \$96,700 to construct dry kilns to bundle, market, and transport environmentally safe and marketable firewood.
- Hickory Nut Gap and Big Sandy Mush accepted \$99,519 to form a partnership to improve sustainable community forestry through local lumber, small scale sawmills, woodland and medicinal plants, ecotourism, eco-education, land conservation, and the use of local building materials.
- Highland Craftsman, Inc. used \$87,550 to certify locally sourced hardwood trees for structural purposes, certify local professionals to provide grade stamping, and provide this service to other businesses.
- Mountain Valleys RC&D Council used \$102,947 to train loggers and forest workers to sustainably open old roads and trails in private forests while implementing forest stewardship plans for innovative approaches to forest uses.
- NC Mountain Mushroom Cooperative received \$83,200 to coordinate production of regional growers to collectively market and promote cultivation of gourmet and medicinal mushrooms and sustainably draw from underutilized timber resources to produce mushroom substrate, making this product available to the public.

- Recovering Traditional Cherokee Delicacies accepted \$62,327 to train and employ unemployed forest producers to harvest, grow, and market forest food products traditionally gathered by Cherokee tribe members, including wild edible greens and mushrooms.

- Smoky Mountain Native Plants received \$90,000 to create a network and cooperative of producers to grow, harvest, and market value-added ramp products

Four Cooperating Organizations:

- Department of Horticultural Science, NC State University, Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension Center

- Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

- NCDENR Division of Forest Resources

- Southern Forests Network

Additional information about the project can be found here:
www.wncforestproducts.org

Timber-Based Forest Products Grantees

Appalachian Designs, LLC



Background

When the real estate market crashed in 2008, it really crashed for furniture builder Lang Hornthal. His beautiful rustic, custom made chairs, tables and bedroom sets are geared to the high end vacation home market. With a high price tag, these usable works of art stopped selling. Lang's business, Appalachian Designs, LLC, was on the verge of going under, and then he heard about the Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project. He applied for \$64,900 in ARRA funds to develop a dry kiln and concentration yard for underutilized wood products, and obtain Forest Stewardship Council Certification. He believed this two-pronged approach would diversify his business and fill in the gaps while the market recovered.



With a vision geared toward sustainability, Appalachian Designs falls naturally in step with the region's strong tradition of woodland responsibility by placing its focus on "the woods that nobody wanted." Appalachian Designs utilized grant funds to develop a concentration & distribution yard for underutilized forest materials, and to expand product development and marketing of their value-added alternative forest products. The concentration yard enables Appalachian Designs to become a buyer and seller of materials such as locust, hickory, pine, rhododendron and mountain laurel that often go to waste on logging and construction sites. Harvesting small diameter wood from forests contributes to healthy forest management and the prevention of forest fires.

By providing the concentration yard, and therefore a market for underutilized and small diameter wood products, Appalachian Designs is able to:

- provide landowners with new income streams that help make forest ownership and good forest management financially feasible
- diversify income opportunities for loggers, graders, gatherers or laborers by creating markets for underutilized material
- create new value-added manufacturing opportunities for local craftspeople and businesses
- support the restoration and sustainable management of local forestlands

Appalachian Designs is working with the Southern Forests Network to build local markets for products with sustainability certification and branding. Appalachian Designs has achieved Forest Stewardship Council™ certification through SFN's Group Certification Program. FSC certification is considered the gold standard for sustainably produced forest products, and earns wood products points in the US Green Building Council's LEED program.

Community Impact

Grant funds enabled Appalachian Designs to:

- Expand to a larger workshop space with more room for production and room to develop a new concentration yard and kiln
- Launch a new product line for rustic building components, including raw materials, stair & rail components, and wood slabs
- Form new partnerships with William Hamilton, Hickory Nut Gap Lumber Mill and Robert White, Burnt Shirt Wood Products to co-locate their milling shed and portable sawmills
- Achieve FSC Certification.
- Launch new marketing initiatives, including a website redesign, new blog, and open house event for prospective clients and partners at their new facility



- Launched a new *Root Cause* brand to appeal to consumers seeking local products, as their website states: 'Appalachian Designs' Root Cause initiative is about raising awareness in the southern Appalachians for a good idea: the use of local forest products. We live and work in the birthplace of Forest Conservation in the United States. Our forests give us life, shelter, and beauty;

in turn, they should be protected and managed with thoughtful planning and the careful fostering of our valuable native tree species.'

The grant has enabled Lang to achieve all the activities above, to keep his business going, have several employees on the payroll, and look forward to a bright future.

Click here to view Lang's business and product line:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8R166pidVE>

Grant Funding: \$74,900

Jobs: 5

Appalachian Designs, LLC

appalachiandesigns.com

Toll-Free (800) 969-3928

Mailing Address:

Physical Address: 12 Smith Farm Rd. Fairview, NC 28730

Hours:

Lang Hornthal, Owner

info@appalachiandesigns.com

Local (828) 628-9994

PO Box 2228 Fairview, NC 28730

Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

By Appointment only on Fridays and weekends.



Highland Craftsmen Inc. Bark House Supply Company



Background

[Highland Craftsmen Inc.](#) began manufacturing Bark House shingles in 1990 and now offers a full line of architectural elements for the whole home. Highland Craftsmen's mission is to minimize the impact of construction by harmonizing with nature. They are a 'green' building company and members of the US Green Building Council. Highland Craftsmen has received Chain of Custody certification from the top three US affiliated companies including the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Program for Endorsement of Forestry Certification (PEFC). Highland Craftsmen sources the majority of their materials within the region to build capacity and economic opportunity of small businesses and individuals.

In 2009, the Bark House Supply Company (BHSC) was created to sell home accessories and lifestyle items made from sustainably managed, locally sourced and manufactured forest materials in the Bark House brand name. The intent of the new retail store is to sell products designed in-house where style and quality control will be tightly managed. The BHSC will also market forest products created by local artisans and manufacturers for home décor, including products from Highland Craftsmen Inc. and Mayland Court. The storefront will be located on part of the Highland Craftsmen campus and a web-based retail store will also be created.





Community Impact

Grant funds enabled Highland Craftsmen to:

- Hire a dedicated sales agent and wood intake coordinator for the new woodlot
- Create a network of vendors to provide locally sourced locust materials
- Develop locust grading certification for structural purposes, certify local professionals to provide grade stamping, and provide this service to other businesses

Grant funds enabled Bark House Supply Company to:

- Staff and launch the Bark House Supply Company with two full-time employees; a store manager and e-commerce coordinator
- Create new accessory lines – Natural Elegance and Bark2
- Assist local suppliers improve their processes so they can be competitive and eligible for FSC, SFI and PEFC certification.
- Contract with numerous local suppliers and artisans to market and sell locally crafted products in the campus store and web-based retail store

Grant Funding

Bark House Supply Company:	\$90,700	Jobs: 2
Highland Craftsmen Inc.	\$87,550	Jobs: 2.5

Highland Craftsmen, Inc.	Chris and Marty McCurry, Owners
barkhouse.com	sales@barkhouse.com
Phone: 828-765-9010	Fax: 828-765-9012
Address:	534 Oak Avenue Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Hours:	Call ahead or check website

Blue Ridge Wild Timbers, LLC



Background

Historically the only product available for purchasers of bundled firewood in western North Carolina consisted of wood harvested, processed, and packaged from out of state. Craig Hart of Blue Ridge Wild Timbers, LLC (BRWT) set out to change that. By utilizing business acumen developed over years of working in several different capacities ranging from Christmas tree grower to software designer, Craig has developed BRWT into a local source of high-quality hardwood firewood for both residential and retail customers.

What began as a promising idea in June, 2006 was initially difficult to bring to fruition. As Craig describes, "...because of the economy, timing, not enough personal assets or luck, we kept running into financial walls." As firewood quarantines were being established in adjacent states for the purpose of controlling the spread of harmful insects, it became clear that producing a kiln-dried product would be necessary to enter the firewood market. Over time equipment was purchased or salvaged to work towards that goal. Initially Craig fabricated a kiln from a large dumpster to avoid the cost of a commercially produced kiln. This didn't prove to be effective so he invested in a pre-fabricated kiln with a biomass boiler. This investment allows Craig to dry firewood to USDA certified specifications for numerous insects, in a fraction of the time of the dumpster kiln. The improved processing enables employees to bundle firewood year-round with greater frequency for a higher yield.



The Boggs Collective, Inc.



Background

[The Boggs Collective](#) represents a new business vision that fosters the highest levels of design, craftsmanship and sustainability in studio furniture making. Their model integrates four key components: materials, workspace, training and visibility creating opportunities for landowners, loggers, sawyers and craftspeople to work collaboratively.

The Boggs Collective's goal is to create a unique business model that allows craftsmen to be independent designers and/or makers while being supported by the efficiencies usually afforded only to employees of larger companies. The Collective supports the craftsman in a way that allows more focused attention on his or her craft. In addition, it brings the forest community, craftspeople, and retail sales power together to maximize the value of forest resources creating the greatest jobs benefit for local communities.

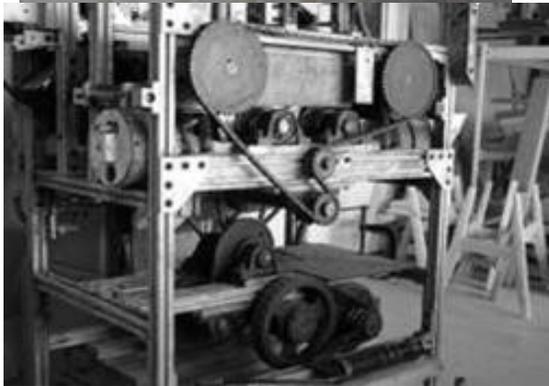


By processing forest products from stump to high-end furniture, we extract the greatest value possible per board foot of lumber harvested. For landowners, loggers and sawyers who practice sustainable forestry there is an assurance that their efforts are helping create value-added wood products that stimulate the regional economy.

For craftspeople involved, it offers an infrastructure that allows woodworkers to focus on their passion. For clients, it represents the chance to own timeless, handcrafted furniture produced in a reliable and sustainable manner. For all of us, it presents a new way of looking at the items we live with, an awareness of the labor and materials that go into each piece and a conscious choice to hold these values at the heart of our philosophy and practice.

Grant funding enabled the Boggs Collective to:

- Create the workshop, and woodworking school: The workshop provides opportunities to craftsmen with passion and talent in the field of woodworking. A culture of continued learning is an important part of what makes this Collective successful. The shop creates efficient ways for members to work together on orders or work individually. This cooperative spirit quickly leads to efficiencies that can help keep production costs down and prices more marketable. Through the benefits of sharing resources, the workshop is an incubator for emerging craftsmen. The school promotes woodworking skills, efficiency in production, new designs, and regional cooperation among forest product businesses. The Collective hosted four workshops during the project.
- Develop a Woodshed: The Woodshed is designed primarily as procurement headquarters' of sustainably managed forest products for the Collective. The demand for this specialty wood provides an opportunity to expand beyond the Collectives needs and become a resource for woodworkers both regionally and nationally. The Collective created a new part-time position for a Woodshed Manager.
- Create Market Opportunities for Hickory Bark: In addition to specialty timbers the Collective harvests and processes hickory bark for chair seats. Brian has designed and built the only known machine that streamlines the processing of hickory bark making it an efficient and profitable product for the national market. The market for bark as well as the specialty woods is still very under served with great growth potential. Hickory bark is a resource currently discarded but has a value often greater than that of the log it came from. This opportunity gives these under-employed individuals a broader market for their skills on a sustained basis. This, like other bark harvesting is a seasonal, but a very profitable job opportunity that allows the Collective to hire up to seven harvesters per season.



- Become FSC Certified: Working with the [Southern Forests Network](#), the Boggs Collective achieved Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. FSC certification is considered the gold standard for sustainably produced forest products, and earns wood products points in the US Green Building Council's LEED program.
- Improve Marketing Strategies: The Boggs Collective developed several marketing publications and mailers that have been extensively distributed through their events and direct mail campaigns. The Collective hosted marketing events including open houses and house parties. They attended several trade shows and craft fairs. In addition, the Collective hired a temporary sales coordinator for marketing and buyer outreach. The Collective developed a new website and gallery to market their products. The web site highlights work accomplished by the Collective craftsmen and provides resources for woodworkers via blogs, articles and links.

Click on this link to view the craftsmen in the Cooperative workshop:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxaKTA-2Cs8>



Grant Funding: \$108,000 Jobs: 6

The Boggs Collective

Boggscollective.com

Address:

Gallery hours:

Brian Boggs, Melanie Moeller, Owners

828-398-9701

8 London Road Asheville, NC 28803

Monday – Friday 10:00 – 5:00PM

Call for weekend appointment

Clear Creek Wood Products



Background

Clear Creek Wood Products is a small wood products business near Hendersonville. Owner Scott Gross produces a number of lumber products and building materials, including specialty items such as unique burls and large slabs ideal for tables and countertops. Clear Creek Wood Products also offers portable and custom milling and drying services for green and kiln dried lumber, cabin construction dovetailing, and custom kits for playhouses, sheds, barns, gazebos and siding.



Clear Creek Wood Products received a grant to diversify their wood products line by adding a wood shavings operation. The grant enabled Scott to hire three shavings mill operators, provide the training to operate the mill, and support marketing efforts.

Community Impact

With grant funds, Clear Creek Wood Products:

- Hired three full-time employees to set up and operate the shaving mill. Their efforts included a lot of creative engineering to produce shavings in a range of sizes and types for different end-users.
- Conducted market analysis. Their new shavings line is used predominantly for livestock bedding and mulch. Their work exploring the market enabled them to refine their product to suit area horse owners, identify potential buyers for mulch, and find ways to get the word out about their broad array of products and services.
- Created and disseminated marketing materials. The company created a new logo, brochure, business cards, and launched its first website. In addition, they purchased yard signs to mark their location and advertise to neighbors. Their slogan is "*Turn the Trees on Your Land into Custom Cut Lumber*".

As a result of the grant funds, the company is marketing a new line of products, while creating greater awareness of all their products and services.

Grant Funding: \$91,500

3 jobs

Clear Creek Wood Products
clearcreekwoodproducts.com

Scott Gross, Owner

scott@clearcreekwoodproducts.com

Phone:

(828) 329-1082

Address:

2130 Fruitland Rd Hendersonville, NC 28792

Hours:

Call for hours of operation

Doubletree Farm: Community Forestry Project



Background

Doubletree Farm was established by Andy and Cathy Bennett in 1999 as a horse powered produce farm and homestead in Madison County. In 2003, the Bennett's purchased a Wood-Mizer portable sawmill and Andy began serving western North Carolina and east Tennessee with custom harvest and on site milling services under the name Doubletree Logging and Milling. Using draft horses for timber extraction, Andy was able to offer landowners a low impact alternative to mechanized harvest systems.



Demand for this service was high, but depended on a steady flow of customers who desired to build structures with their own timber. This business model also required a lot of travel. In order to serve local landowners who wanted to sell timber and have it logged with horses, a log truck and loader were added to the business and Andy began to harvest timber on shares for landowners in his home county and sell the logs to local buyers. During this time Andy Bennett was the only horse logger working

full time in western North Carolina. Doubletree Logging and Milling was running full tilt, often booked six to eight months ahead until the summer of 2009.

With fuel prices steadily rising and local log buyers going out of business as the economy turned sour, Andy sold his log truck and loader and turned more to farming and selling firewood to make ends meet. Many landowners still wanted to sell their timber and have it logged with horses, but log prices remained low and shipping to the buyers still in business was prohibitively expensive. The sawmill stayed mostly on the farm and served more as a community mill. Others in the Grapevine community, mostly farmers, would bring a few logs to the mill and have them sawn into lumber for their own use. It was during this time that Andy developed the idea of a 'Community Forestry' model; processing logs into lumber as a value-added service before the resource leaves the community and thereby benefit all stakeholders involved.

Demand for low impact logging, paired with landowners' desire to produce income, meant a large timber resource was available but the lack of skilled horse loggers, infrastructure for lumber storage, and markets for the lumber made it impossible to utilize that resource. Doubletree Farm's 'Community Forestry Project' or CFP, was the perfect vehicle to receive the ARRA grant in an attempt to address these issues through horse logger training, building lumber storage and processing facilities, and market development. Andy collaborated with Clifford Cox, a horse logger in Polk County, on the project.

Community Impact

Due to grant funds the Community Forestry Project:

- Achieved the direct employment of five unemployed or underemployed forest workers in the thirteen months of the project. Two workers completed their training and are now skilled in the art of horse logging. CFP involved over two dozen local collaborators including foresters, loggers, teamsters, and landowners.
- One lumber storage barn was built in the course of the project. Another building for housing the sawmill and lumber storage is near completion. Both structures utilize small diameter timber from timber stand improvement.
- The project purchased a team of horses, harness, saws, safety equipment, printed materials, and supplies, stimulating local economies.
- Two public Field Days were held, to educate the public about horse logging and involve teamsters from around the region.
- More than 30,000 board feet of sustainably harvested lumber was produced during training.
- More than 40 cords of fuel wood were produced during training.
- Several new products and marketing strategies were developed.

Furniture Specialties Inc.



Background

Furniture Specialties was founded in 1988 by a husband and wife team who began doing furniture and upholstery repair for various furniture stores. In 2003, a local Leicester resident named Bryan Fore, purchased the struggling business that consisted of a 1200 square foot building and two full time employees. By the next year, Mr. Fore expanded the business and became one of the fastest growing furniture manufacturers in North Carolina.

At the beginning of 2010, Furniture Specialties expanded to a larger location in west Asheville after consolidating the framing plant formerly located in Hickory to the Asheville location. After the consolidation Furniture Specialties employed 16 people.



The newest focus on the business has become the company's green furniture line. This furniture is constructed of all natural materials, including FSC certified wood, bio-based soy foam manufactured in North Carolina, and eco-friendly fabrics. The vision for Furniture Specialties is to become the leading WNC company in green furniture manufacturing.

Community Impact

Grant funding enabled Furniture Specialties to:

- Hire additional permanent, full-time employees. Since the grant funds were applied to payroll, operating capital was used to purchase equipment and provide training. The combination of new employees with additional equipment ultimately increased production by 44%.
- Expand the Green Furnishings Line: They expanded their production capacity adding a line of custom built cabinetry and casework. Increased demand for these products has resulted in hiring additional full time employees.
- Launch Marketing Initiatives: Furniture Specialties has launched a new website, developed new marketing publications, deployed a direct mail campaign, and hosted an open house event.
- Achieve FSC Certification: Furniture Specialties has achieved Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. FSC certification is considered the gold standard for sustainably produced forest products, and earns wood products points in the US Green Building Council's LEED program.
- While Furniture Specialties had already been offering products manufactured with FSC certified wood, they were unable to sell their products as "certified" without their own certification. Now they are able to help clients earn LEED points and market themselves as a certified company. In addition, they will be the only FSC-certified company in the region manufacturing cabinetry.
- Apply for Energy Efficiency Assistance: Furniture Specialties is in the process of completing an energy audit, which will help secure financing and incentives for energy efficiency.

Clink here to view a video of Bryan Fore's company in action:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCDt72KcAxw>

Grant Funding: \$119,880

Jobs: 14

Furniture Specialties, Inc.
furniturepecialtiesinc.com
 (828)683-1177

Address:

Hours:

Bryan Fore, President
 bryanceo@furniturepecialtiesinc.com
 Fax: (828)683-1020

7 Ramsey Road Asheville, North Carolina 28806
 Check website for hours of operation

Green River Forest Products, LLC



Background

Green River Forest Products is a wood products business operated by Terry Jordan, procuring wood and turning it into a bundled firewood product for retail sales. It is located on Green River on the Polk/Rutherford County line.



The company received a grant to expand their operation to include a wood sterilization kiln with greater production capacity. Owner Terry Jordan believes this new equipment and expansion will allow the business to prosper. The large kiln is essential to kill insects and efficiently increase the volume of firewood and kindling processed. Future USDA regulations will likely restrict the interstate commerce of non-seasoned firewood. Green River is now positioned to actively seek large contracts with major retail chains.

Community Impact

With grant funds, Green River Forest Products:

- hired employees to manage the firewood operation
- constructed a sterilization kiln
- conducted marketing for their 'Best Burn' label

The company worked hard to secure new contracts with major retailers such as Ingles and Whole Foods. They have begun marketing specialty woods to restaurants for wood-fired ovens. Terry looks forward to continued success and strives to keep staff on the payroll.

Click here for a video of Terry Jordan's business in action:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPe1BVvWaeK>

Grant funding: \$96,700

10 jobs

Green River Forest Products & Services

Terry Jordan, Owner

greenriverforestproducts.com

sales@seasonedfirewood.us

(828) 287-3745

Fax: (828) 286-9688

Address:

289 Calton Hill Lane Rutherfordton, NC 28139

Hours:

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.



Hickory Nut Gap & Big Sandy Mush, LLC (HNGBSM) working with Burnt Shirt Wood Products

Background

The recession hit the new home construction industry hard in Western North Carolina. William Hamilton of Hickory Nut Gap, and Christopher Jayne of Big Sandy Mush, knew that sustainable forestry was crucial to their communities. They were determined to develop a model of low impact forestry and value added wood products for landowners and farmers.

Grant funds enabled them to work with Robert White, creator of Burnt Shirt Wood Products, to revitalize William's sawmilling business in the Fairview community near Asheville. Along with the establishment of a viable custom sawmilling operation, it had the added benefit of collaborating with Lang Hornthal of Appalachian Designs to co-locate their facilities. This joint effort energizes both businesses and opens the door to a larger customer base.



Community Impact

Grant funds enabled HNGBSM and Burnt Shirt Wood Products to:

- Develop strategic relationships in a revitalized business
- Establish a viable facility for local forest products operations, including forestry, logging, milling, and building
- Provide employment in an owner-operator business
- Increase the type and amount of wood products available to the community, including lumber for mantels, Carolina siding, shingles, and fencing
- Offer services for sustainable forest planning, native plant identification and conservation easements
- Promote the development and use of Forest Management Plans to landowners to keep forest lands affordable and taxes at present use valuation. Design and

construct a solar kiln to dry high quality wood species for local craftsman and suppliers

- Establish a web presence and develop a marketing plan

Click here to view the workers using the custom portable sawmill and discussing their vision of sustainable forestry:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p79tWpDeHLU>

Grant Funding: \$99,519

Jobs Impact: 8

Burnt Shirt Wood Products

Robert White, Owner, Sawyer

Burntshirtwoodproducts.com Robert@burntshirtwoodproducts.com

Phone: (828)808-4617

Address: 12 Smith Farm Rd Fairview, NC 28730

Co-located with Appalachian Designs; call for hours of operation.

Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation & Development Area Council, Inc.

Background

The Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Council, Inc. was established in 1974 to develop, improve, and conserve natural resources and to provide employment and other economic opportunities to the people of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties. In 1997 the Council expanded to include Cleveland, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford Counties.



The project goal was to train unemployed forest workers in environmentally sound forest management skills while improving access to forestlands for fire protection, wildlife habitat management activities and erosion control. These practices are described in individual plans and allow for better access on private forestland by opening old skid trails, logging roads and removing old culverts, thus allowing private landowners more opportunities for income generation potential.

Additionally the project conducted workshops to showcase the potential of forest tourism activities, encourage responsible forest management and teach landowners about non-timber product opportunities on their forestlands, such as medicinal herbs.

Community Impact

Mountain Valleys RC&D trained 11 unemployed or underemployed forest workers during this project. Forest management plans were implemented on several properties where landowners saw the benefits. A consulting forester developed management plans for two municipal watersheds. At the end of this training program most workers were chosen for jobs related to forest management activities or in the construction industry.

- Access roads and trails were cleared on 1200 acres of forestland for the town of Marshall and Mars Hill in Madison County.
- Forest management plans were developed for both of these watersheds.

- Work was performed on over 20 landowner's properties in Polk, Rutherford and Madison Counties, carrying out several different activities listed below.
- Approximately 30 miles of trails were opened for fire control access on their property.
- Approximately 40 wildlife plots were established or rehabbed.
- Approximately 110 acres of timber stand improvement were accomplished.
- Educational outreach was provided to landowners during public workshops.
- Invasive weed control was performed on approximately 100 acres of forestland.

This project allowed Mountain Valleys RC&D to make contact with landowners interested in managing their timber resources for various activities other than timber harvest. Recreational activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, and hunting were all emphasized with the landowners in contact with them on their property. Fire protection became an important part of the project as numerous trails were opened for fire access. Invasive species and pest control activities were implemented on numerous acres. Pre-harvest thinning, pruning and crop tree release were implemented on several tracts.

The forest workers gained knowledge of how to perform these activities in conjunction with the landowner's objectives. They received new skills training on how to perform these practices, and will carry that knowledge forward to their new jobs. And the twenty landowners affected now have conservation practices in place that can be shown to their community.

Grant Funding: \$107,800 Jobs: 16

Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

Mountainvalleysrcd.org (828) 649-3313 x5
Russell Blevins, Director Russell.blevins@mountainvalleysrcd.org
Mailing/Physical Address: 4388 US Highway 25-70, Marshall, NC 28753
Hours: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Non-Timber Forest Products Grantees

NC Mountain Mushroom Cooperative: The Mushroom Substrate Project



Background

The North Carolina Mountain Mushroom Cooperative received funds to coordinate production of regional growers to collectively market and promote cultivation of gourmet and medicinal mushrooms; and access underutilized timber resources to produce mushroom substrate.

Rodney Webb, Project Coordinator, seized the opportunity for expansion and marketing mushrooms with Madison Family Farms, a retail distribution and marketing center for the area. Located just north of Asheville, Madison County has an optimum climate for growing shiitake mushrooms: warm temperatures and good rainfall, with sudden changes triggering rapid growth of the mycelium. Invasive plants including kudzu and miscanthus were tested as substrate options for mushroom production.

Quarterly group meetings of the Cooperative were open to the public and held in the Marshall Extension office. They included tours of the value-added kitchen, Madison Family Farms sales office, storeroom, equipment, cooler and freezer. The growers shared their experiences about mushroom cultivation, including successful growing conditions, storage and space requirements, pricing, and packaging.

Community Impact

With this grant the Cooperative:

- Employed 13 individuals
- Trained 150 persons in shiitake mushroom log inoculation at 10 workshops
- Experimented with different types of shiitake and oyster mushroom spawn and substrates

- Worked with Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation Development Council forest workers and Doubletree Farm to procure hardwood logs for shiitake inoculation
- Manufactured a sterilizer and installed seasonal fruiting chambers
- Held quarterly group meetings on training and marketing
- Marketed several types of mushrooms through Madison Family Farms
- Changed the name to Madison Farms Mushrooms for expanded marketing impact

The ripple effect of the grant's economic impact is significant: jobs were created for unemployed forest workers; entrepreneurs were educated on growing mushrooms for the wholesale and retail markets. More growers are needed as current demand outstrips local supply. Thanks to the efforts of the Cooperative during the grant period, the future looks bright for new mushroom growers.

Click this video link to see Project Coordinator Rodney Webb discussing the project:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV6Wru5DRZs>

Grant Funding: \$83,200

Jobs: 13

Rodney Webb

Project Coordinator

Madison Family Farms

madisonfarms.org

Cooperative Extension Facility

(828)649-2411

258 Carolina Lane

Marshall, NC 28753

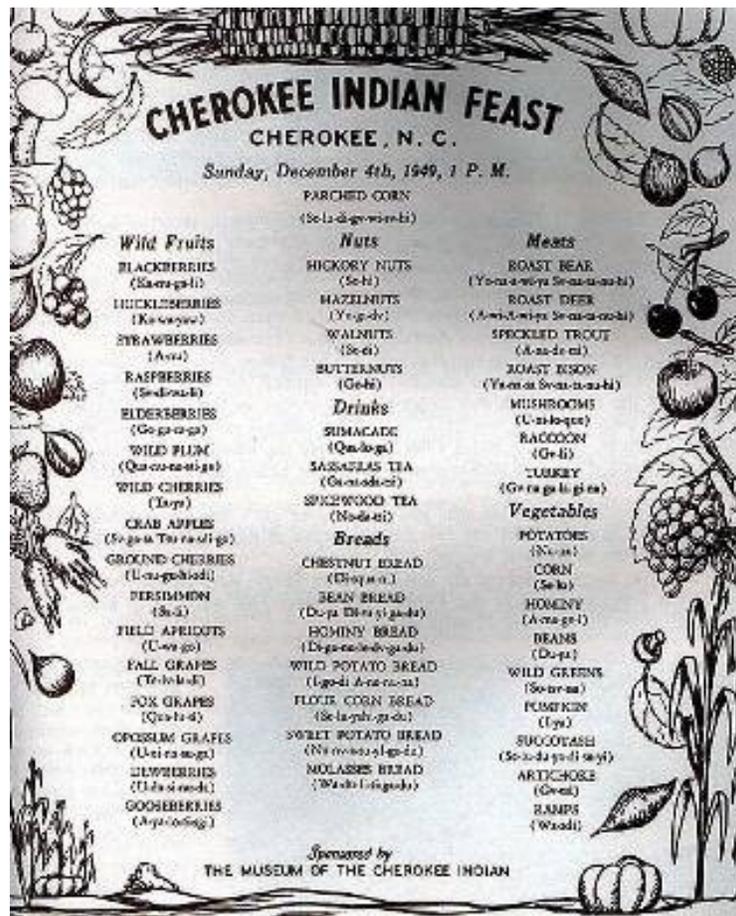
Hours:

Call for hours of operation

Recovering Traditional Cherokee Delicacies

Background

The Cherokee People have ancestral knowledge of using forest products for foods and artisan supplies spanning 11 millennia. The deep coves and moist soils of the Southern Appalachian Mountains produce an abundance of wild edible foods: walnuts and butternuts, ramps and sochan, elderberries and strawberries, sassafras and mushrooms, fish and wild game. This poster from an event in 1949 reveals the depth of the forest bounty.



However like most of young people today, the Cherokee youth are growing up in a high-tech world, and are not learning to identify or gather the traditional foods of their elders.

Mary Thompson wanted to ensure that her daughters and grandchildren would appreciate and use the land's bounty. A member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, she used her grant to hire community members to cultivate traditional foods on her mountain farm land: ramps, sochan, watercress, bloodroot, corn beads and crayfish.

As Mary stated in the grant application, 'the Appalachian forest is the source of these foods but land development and gathering restrictions are depleting these resources. I can address these concerns; to raise these wild edible forest products; to provide needed jobs; to train others and sustain these resources.'

Click this video link to see Mary talking about sustainable ramp harvesting, traditions and opportunities for her products at the new Cherokee market:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbq7sc3zl7o>

Community Impact

The grant enabled Mary to employ nineteen individuals, three contractors and create additional work for other businesses. Employees sustainably prepared the land for forest foods by clearing undergrowth and planting seed and root stock. Forest foods were harvested and preserved and a root cellar was built to store the food products.

As a result of this work, Mary is available to do plant identification, garden tours, harvesting, and programs for community groups. Her daughter Victoria is seen sorting sochan in the picture, beside rows of canned ramps.



Mary's family started a business called 'Recovering Traditional Cherokee Delicacies and Artisan Supplies'. Her daughter Tamara is the accountant and graphic artist; Sarah gathers and preserves the food and uses the artisan supplies to make river cane baskets and pottery; and Victoria harvests and markets the food products and sells at the newly established 'Handmade, Homemade and Homegrown Market' at the Cherokee Indian Fair Grounds. Mary's baskets are made with river cane and the dyes are from forest products: bloodroot (orange) and either walnut or butternut (black).



Three generations of her family were featured on local billboards promoting Cherokee artists. Tamara created their new business logo, incorporating the Cherokee language and bloodroot plant.

The economic impact of responsibly harvested food products in these secluded mountains is significant: jobs for unemployed workers create a ripple effect throughout the community. A more lasting effect could benefit Mary's daughters, grandchildren, friends, and community. Learning self-reliance and independence by growing and marketing their own forest foods: that's an enduring Cherokee legacy.

The forest products grant leveraged other grants including an AgOptions grant for crayfish production; and Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project grant for marketing materials.

Grant Funding: \$62,327

Jobs: 10

Recovering Traditional Cherokee Delicacies Mary Thompson, Owner

Mailing Address:

PO Box 2065 Cherokee, NC 28719

(828) 497-5533

Big Cove Road Cherokee, NC

Available for tours by appointment

Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association: The Ramp Project

Background

In the Smoky Mountains of western North Carolina, wintertime comes early and stays late. Both natives and newcomers struggle to find work when the tourist season in the Park is over. With a love of native plants and faced with declining tobacco revenue, growers came together in 2000 to form Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association (SMNPA). Their idea was to link native plant conservation with economic development while honoring mountain traditions. One of the founders, Beverly Whitehead shares their mission statement: “Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association is dedicated to helping people earn income through growing, collecting, processing and marketing Appalachian native plants and to preserving Appalachian native plants for future generations. We implement our mission through research, education, community service and economic development.”

This mostly volunteer group qualified as a non-profit corporation and is based in Graham County, a Tier 1 county (economically stressed). They have a small office in the Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center, a historic renovated school.



The original idea for selling products made from local plants came from Perry Jenkins, a logger, wild crafter, and original SMNPA Board member. His family recipe ‘Bear Hunter’s Cornpone’ dates to 1835, and is on the back of the *Cornmeal with Ramps* package, produced by SMNPA since 2003.

The group began by hand producing a product of stone ground cornmeal with ramps (*allium tricoccum*), a popular native plant of the region that has been described as a cross between onion and garlic. The success of the product was highlighted on a national scale. *Cornmeal with Ramps* was featured at the 2003 Smithsonian Institute’s FolkLIFE Festival on Southern Appalachian Traditions. The products continue to be hand produced and locally sold, appealing to both tourists and long-time residents. The product offers ‘A Taste of Traditional Mountain Food’ to thousands of tourists who flock to the area each summer, and provides a feeling of pride to residents who may have overlooked the uniqueness of this traditional plant.

Fast forward to the economic crisis of 2008: construction comes to a screeching halt; a local furniture manufacturing plant closes; tourist traffic reduces by 70%, and of the 35 local stores selling the ramps cornmeal, only 4 remain open. It was in the

shadow of this crisis that the group applied for a federal grant to support their economic incubator value-added 'Ramp Project'. They had successfully received grants before, focusing on education, research and community service. Drawing from their achievements of the ramps cornmeal and the fact that both local residents and gourmet chefs desire ramps for culinary uses, SMNPA focused their efforts on both the protection and promotion of this distinctive plant. Using this wild perennial leek of the high mountains, SMNPA proposed to:

- Educate growers and harvesters on sustainably harvesting ramps
- Buy only sustainably harvested ramps from local harvesters
- Produce and market a value-added food product for the upscale market
- Hire 34 underemployed or unemployed persons in either seasonal or fulltime jobs

Gathering ramps, the earliest of spring greens, continues to be an important local ritual. High in vitamins A, C, iron and fiber, it is chopped and stirred into scrambled eggs or fried potatoes, and often served with trout, the other mountain delicacy of spring. The brave eat it raw, and the pungent aroma lingers. With a short growing season of 4-6 weeks, ramps can be pickled, frozen or dried for later use.

Ramps grow in rich, moist deciduous forests from the Carolinas to Canada. Numerous ramp festivals are celebrated throughout the Appalachians. Its importance to natives cannot be overstated: the word 'chicago' is a French derivative referring to this plant, found growing thickly along Lake Michigan in the 17th century. <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/2463.html>.

'The Ramp Project' refers to the spring harvest, purchase, drying, and packing of this wild forest food by the SMNPA. View videos of the project activities here:

- Video 1: Tony Rattler describes several styles of sustainable harvest learned from his Cherokee mother and grandmother <http://youtu.be/dhluwKWsuH4>
- Video 2: Margaret Whachacha and Beverly Whitehead, speaking on what the project means to them <http://youtu.be/7NlvAbTMBMU>
- Video 3: Carol Lawson, kitchen manager, in the Stecoah Valley Center certified kitchen describes the Ramp Project <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=No8b5jRJ1KY>

A primary goal of this project is to enable SNMPA to sell more ramp products through improved packaging and marketing. Only sustainably harvested plants will be purchased for the end products, since over-harvesting is a viable concern. Currently one-third of the ramps purchased are farm raised, while the rest are wild crafted from the forest. Other ramp products being tested are three ramp seasonings plus a ramp dip mix.

Community Impact

The community impact is significant, because the Graham County economy is based on forest products, agriculture and tourism, all warm season activities. Wintertime unemployment rates range from 17 to 28 percent; the Ramp Project provides jobs at a crucial time when there is no other work available. This is the impetus for establishing an ongoing local business of distinctive retail food products. While the goal for SMNPA is to provide jobs from sales of ramp products, one thing is certain: the stimulus funding provided critical income for a community in need at a desperate time.

Grant Funding: \$90,000.00 Jobs: 34

Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association

Smnpa.org smnpa.info@gmail.com (828)479-8788
Beverly Whitehead, Chair BWRC@Earthlink.net
Mailing Address: PO Box 761 Robbinsville, NC 28771

Physical Address: Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center
Stecoahvalleycenter.com 121 Schoolhouse Road Stecoah, NC 28771
Hours: Call for hours of operation

Project Reports from the Partner Agencies

The [NC State University Cooperative Extension Service](#) , [Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project](#), [Southern Forests Network](#), and the [NC Forest Service](#) partnered with Land-of-Sky Regional Council on the project to provide support to grantees, host training and networking events, and coordinate cooperative marketing initiatives.



Dept. of Horticultural Science, NC State University

*Dr. Jeanine Davis, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist
Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Mills River, NC*

Jeanine Davis is one of few NC State professors who works and farms in western North Carolina. Her NC Alternative Crops and Organics Program is dedicated to helping regional farmers and forest landowners sustainably manage their land and make a profit from their enterprise. For over 20 years she has accomplished this by developing new crops, optimizing organic production systems, bringing native forest plants into cultivation, and making conventional vegetable production more sustainable.

Non-timber forest products are a specialty of hers, and in addition to helping people grow and sustainably wild-harvest these items, she has worked with the U.S. Forest Service to survey that industry in western North Carolina. Non-timber forest products include medicinal herbs (e.g., ginseng, goldenseal, and black cohosh), foods (e.g., ramps, mushrooms, honey, and berries), decorative florals (e.g., galax and vines), and handcrafted specialty woods (e.g., mountain laurel railings and poplar bark siding).

Dr. Davis was responsible for overseeing the non-timber forest products part of this project. She helped select the businesses that were awarded grants; hired a non-timber forest products adviser to organize landowner workshops, conduct outreach, and provide media support; and provide technical support to producers, trainers, and entrepreneurs. Collaboration with other researchers, extension agents, and businesses was also a priority during the NCSU grant project which received \$100,000.

Major Accomplishments for this grant project:

- Directly assisted three non-timber grantees with onsite technical and business resources: Recovering Traditional Cherokee Delicacies; NC Mountain Mushroom Cooperative; and Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association.

- Developed a series of Forest Landowner workshops entitled “Does Your Forest Talk Money?” Over 300 people attended these meetings and went home with a resource handbook and information on how to make money from their forests.
- Video documentation was made of the “Does Your Forest Talk Money” workshops and of the business grantees on location. These videos were used to create a series of educational videos and for inclusion in an eBook.
- A video documentary was created and managed by Caroline Edwards, the non-timber forest products adviser. It is available on the project website and through links from project partner and business grantees’ websites.
- An eBook was created and made available on the project website and through links from project partner and grantees’ websites.
- In collaboration with the WNC Natural Products Project, led by AdvantageWest and funded by the GoldenLeaf Foundation, organized and offered three “WNC Naturally” workshops for growers, harvesters, and manufacturers.
- Updated the “Collection to Commerce: Western North Carolina Non-Timber Forest Products and Their Markets” 2003 report for the U.S. Forest Service.
- Did a major revision of the bulletin “Producing Shiitake Mushrooms-A Guide for Small-Scale Outdoor Cultivation on Logs” which can be found at http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/fletcher/programs/herbs/crops/mushrooms/pdf/2011%20AG-478_Shiitake_Final.pdf



Email: Jeanine_Davis@ncsu.edu
Websites: <http://ncherb.org> <http://ncspecialtycrops.org> <http://ncorganic.org>
Blog: <http://ncalternativecropsandorganics.blogspot.com>
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/JeanineNCSU>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/people/Jeanine-Davis/1442912228>
Address: Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension Center
 455 Research Drive, Mills River, NC
 28759
Phone: (828)684-3562 **Fax:** (828)684-8715

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project



Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project is a nonprofit organization that supports farmers and rural communities in the mountains of Western North Carolina and the southern Appalachians. ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. Since 2002, ASAP has conducted a Local Food Campaign centered on the marketing and promotion of local food and farms.

To support the goals of the WNC Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project, ASAP provided producers of forest products with marketing assistance through forest products research, a matching funds program, expansion of ASAP's online database to include forest food products, and the development of a marketing plan to support the growth of the local forest products industry. ASAP staff also met individually with forest producers to provide advice on marketing, local branding, and other issues.

Through a matching funds program, producers of forest products received direct one-to-one match cost shares for promotional materials. The program helped 12 producers promote products such as honey, ramps, trout, mushrooms, furniture, and firewood. Cost share funds paid for web development, logo design, advertising, banners and signs, UPC codes, social media and more.

ASAP expanded its online database to connect producers to buyers interested in sourcing forest food products. The online database is used to create ASAP's signature publications, the Local Food Guide and Mixing Bowl. ASAP prints and distributes 100,000 copies of the Local Food Guide annually. The Mixing Bowl, also produced annually, is both a buyer's guide to local products and a producer's guide to products buyers are seeking. The directory helps buyers and producers form well-chosen, lasting business partnerships. ASAP is also developing a forest products "landing page" at buyappalachian.org, which will highlight the availability of these products locally, and is creating a version of ASAP's Appalachian Grown logo specifically for local forest products.

To guide the development of a marketing plan for forest products, ASAP conducted research on four key forest food products: trout, honey, ramps, and mushrooms. Research gathered and analyzed statistical data on current production and consumption, surveyed producers of forest products, conducted in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the forest products industry including producers, buyers, Cooperative Extension, and other agricultural professionals, and conducted a survey with consumers in nine Western North Carolina counties.

Informed both by the research and by ASAP's experience and success with the Local Food Campaign, the project culminated with the completion of a forest products marketing plan. To support the strategic growth of the industry, it provides a detailed communications plan outlining key marketing and messaging strategies and recommendations for implementation.

Find ASAP on the web at www.asapconnections.org

Southern Forests Network



The Southern Forests Network is a community of people, organizations, and businesses working to conserve private forestlands and cultivate sustainable forest-based economies in the South.

Southern Forests Network provided direct support to six of the fourteen grantees, assisting them with implementation of their projects, locating assistance providers, certification, and marketing initiatives.

- Appalachian Designs
- The Boggs Collective
- Clear Creek Wood Products
- Furniture Specialties, Inc.
- Green River Forest Products
- Highland Craftsmen, Inc.
- Bark House Supply Company

SFN published the [WNC Forest Owner's Resource Directory](http://wncforestowners.org) at wncforestowners.org.

The web-based directory provides listings of services and other resources that are useful for managing forestlands in the region. It also provides a valuable outreach tool for forestry professionals and other businesses serving landowners in our region, including many of the businesses funded by the grant.

Workshop Series for Landowners & Harvesters

Project partners hosted a series of 6 events for forestland owners and harvesters that were attended by more than 300 people. The events featured workshops and networking opportunities. SFN assisted with program development, event coordination and surveys, and gave presentations on branding & marketing forest products at each event. Several of the grant recipients also gave presentations on the production of various forest foods.

Facilitated FSC® Certifications

SFN facilitated [Forest Stewardship Council](http://www.fsc.org)™ certification for three grantee businesses and more than 2,500 acres of forestland in the region. According to SFN, FSC certification is considered the most meaningful certification system for forest management. Markets for FSC® certified products are growing quickly, but certification

is still inaccessible to many small producers. SFN's Group Certification Program strives to make certification attainable and affordable to small landowners and businesses.



Developed a Branding & Marketing Campaign

SFN worked with several grantees to develop a unified marketing campaign for forest products that are both locally and sustainably produced. The new brand- [Southern Forest Works](#)- will be marketed to green builders & designers, homeowners, and other target markets beginning in early 2012. Through the initiative, SFN will continue to provide sales leads to businesses using the brand, and offer a referral service and procurement assistance for buyers seeking local & sustainable wood products.

Enhanced Support Services

SFN made strategic investments in training and technology in order to offer new support services to forest-based businesses and landowners, such as videography, photography and graphic design, and web design.

ARRA Funding

The Southern Forests Network received \$100,000 of the total \$1.9 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant given to the Land of Sky Regional Council by the U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station. The funding, expended from December 2009 to August 2011, enabled SFN to maintain a full-time Director during the nearly 2-year project term, and to contract for nearly \$24,000 in goods and services from local businesses.

[Southern Forests Network](#)

Alyx Perry, Director
(828)277-9008
SouthernForestsNetwork.org
Address: PO Box 941 Asheville, NC 28802

**North Carolina Division of Forest Resources
The North Carolina Forest Service**



The mission of the North Carolina Forest Service is to develop, protect, and manage the multiple resources of North Carolina's forests through professional stewardship, enhancing the quality of life for our citizens while ensuring the continuity of these vital resources.

The North Carolina Forest Service provided personnel to serve as technical advisors throughout the duration of the ARRA funded Western North Carolina Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project. In addition to their role as advisors, NCFS personnel contributed presentations for regional outreach programs covering a variety of topics relevant to non-industrial forestland owners in Western North Carolina.

Technical Advice for ARRA Grantees

The NCFS provided technical advice for grantees regarding the following the topics:

- Raw material procurement contacts and marketing strategies for a producer of wood chips
- Forest management plan standards and Best Management Practices (BMPs) related to the protection of water quality during timber harvesting for grantees directly engaged in logging and forestry
- Marketing strategies for traditional and non-traditional forest products

Community Outreach for Forest Landowners in Western North Carolina

As part of the grant project the NCFS delivered the following outreach presentations:

- Financial Considerations in Forestry: How to Manage Your Forests to Grow Money

This presentation was delivered at six landowner meetings across the region as a means to provide landowners with a greater understanding of how timber is valued, measured, and sold. The presentation also described alternative management

techniques landowners could implement to increase and maintain the value of their woodlot.

- Developing Multiple Revenue Streams from Farm Woodlands

This presentation was offered during The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's (ASAP) annual Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference, the target audience being farmers with woodland attached to their farm.

Several topics were addressed including ways to generate farm income from the woodlot, advantages and disadvantages of managing woodland in a farm setting, alternative ways to market traditional timber products, the accommodation of non-timber products while managing for timber production, the requirements for Present-Use Valuation in North Carolina, and examples of low-impact timber management coupled with creative marketing.

Find the Division of Forest Resources on the web at www.ncforestservice.gov.

Project Conclusion and Proposal:

We propose to extend our recent success by working with specific clusters in emerging markets in biofuels, biomass, forest and agriculture based business to double the number of jobs created in Phase One described above. The **NC Energy Office called WNC the “Saudi Arabia of biomass”**. We intend to capitalize on that opportunity by identifying current and future workforce training needs in these emerging markets, by assisting with networking forest and agricultural industry with locally sourced materials, and by continuing outreach to landowners and farmers and small businesses about income generation potential from their land. For example, many landowners in WNC have both forested and agricultural lands due to the steep topography along the streams. Biomass and biofuels production is a natural fit for these landowners and is an emerging business cluster in WNC.

Our WNC landowners are also natural partners for the green building industry since they produce many of the necessary raw materials. There is a strong WNC Green Building Council eager to promote locally sourced, sustainably harvested wood. WNC has a growing population of affluent retirees, a progressive building climate with interest in LEED certification, and strong interest in purchasing local products. We believe that connecting landowners, woodworkers, home buyers, builders, and architects through trade associations, trade shows, and carefully targeted marketing will allow a stronger local wood business cluster to continue to develop in WNC.

Another growing market in the forest and agricultural sector is the harvest and production of forest foods. These are often traditional foods harvested and consumed in the local communities of WNC. There is growing interest to develop a regional brand to identify sustainably harvested and locally produced foods and market these to a broader network, including restaurants. An area of focus for the second phase of the project is to support the Infrastructure for agricultural and forest foods exchange and access in the region, particularly in disadvantaged rural and urban areas. This support will include creation of food access and security plans for the region. These plans would assist in identifying workforce training needs and opportunities for growth of forest and agricultural businesses in areas of high need.

We intend to produce our projected doubling of job growth with a revolving loan fund for our past partners and other carefully selected forest and agricultural based businesses in our Region. LOSRC has a long record of administering revolving loan funds, including the Regional Brownfields Program.

In addition to the revolving loan fund for entrepreneurs, funds will also be used in task areas servicing both the public infrastructure and private sector and will include such activities as:

- Training and technical support for developing businesses in the target economic clusters
- Market analysis, regional branding, and certification
- Local government program support

- Business development for start-up businesses – i.e. legal advice, business planning, fiscal training, tax and employee responsibilities, marketing and branding

The proposed second phase of the project will continue serving the western portion of the state and our region using Council staff and partnerships. Our goal is to continue growth in the region's forest and agricultural industries, renewable energy, biofuels, green building, and botanical natural products clusters.

The region has access to innovative technologies, community colleges and universities, a strong and competitive entrepreneurial environment, and an abundance of biomass resources, which fit economic development priorities in our communities, outlined in our local livability principles and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)².

Current grant funds from the USDA Forest Service have proven critical to small businesses and development of public-private networks throughout western North Carolina. Additional funding for this program will enable additional job growth in current and emerging sectors.



² Land-of-Sky Regional Council, *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, 2007 and *Local Livability Principles*, adopted by the LOSRC Board 2010.

View Project Video at <http://www.youtube.com/user/WNCForestProducts>

About the Editors:

Jeanine Davis, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University, Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension Center, Mills River, NC. Dr. Davis's program increases the environmental and economic sustainability of agriculture by optimizing organic production systems and introducing and developing new crops. She supports both research and extension with emphasis on organic agriculture in western North Carolina, culinary and medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products, mushrooms, and specialty crops.

Caroline Edwards served as Non-Timber Forest Products Adviser and Extension Assistant to Dr. Davis during the ARRA grant period. A licensed soil scientist and entrepreneur, she created and collaborated with Turner HD Media to document grantees' activities, and produce the videos and this eBook.

Erica Anderson, AICP, is the Working Lands Planner for Land-of-Sky Regional Council. She has over 15 years of experience on projects related to forests, agriculture, land use, natural resources, economic development, and transportation.

