



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 30, 2023

Contact: Marina Bowie

mbowie@nbrc.gov

(603) 724-5802

Northern Border Regional Commission Announces 2023 Forest Economy Program Awards

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) approved over \$2.5 Million in new awards to three projects on June 21, 2023, as part of the Forest Economy Program (FEP). The organizations receiving these awards are:

- **St. John Valley Technology Center (ME) - \$946,140:** The award will support Forest Technology Programming at the SJVTC by ensuring students have access to the most up to date equipment utilized in the forest industry.
- **University of New Hampshire (NH) - \$ 998,348:** “From Stump to Structure: Accelerating Adoption of CLT Made from Local Species” will support the northern border region’s forest industry log and lumber [suppliers] by accelerating the adoption of CLT [demand] made from local New England tree species.
- **Jesup Memorial Library (ME) - \$600,000:** The Jesup Library’s Mass Timber Expansion Project will build an 11,400 square foot addition to the existing building in Bar Harbor, Maine, using locally sourced eastern hemlock CLT.

The Commission’s Forest Economy Program supports the regional forest-based economy and the industry’s evolution to include new technologies and viable business models across the 4-state NBRC region. The funds for this program, and all NBRC programs, are available thanks to the support of the Congressional Delegations of all four NBRC states: Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

The application process for the FEP program began in March, 2023, with a review of Letters of Interest by an external Advisory Board, leading to requests for full applications in April, 2023. Applications were scored on a range of variables, including their regional scope, potential for transformative change, and ability to implement.

“The Northern Forest is an incredible natural and economic asset for the communities in our region. The Commission’s investments in these projects demonstrate our commitment to helping the region realize economic opportunities that are rooted in the forest economy. We see a bright future for mass timber produced from locally sourced tree species and believe the public sector has a role in supporting these projects and the training that ensure these career pathways are open to all residents in the Commission’s territory,” said NBRC Federal Co-Chair Chris Saunders.

“For our educational purposes, this funding gives our students the opportunity to work with technology that is state of the art, and which we can use to collaborate most effectively with business stakeholders such as Irving Woodlands, TNT, or other businesses within our local area that work in the woods industry,” said Kevin Lavoie, Director of the St. John Valley Technology Center. “We’re appreciative of the opportunity to have been applicants and recipients of this grant from NBRC.”

“The University of New Hampshire and our project partners, including New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, University of Vermont, Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation, Olifant, and North East *State* Foresters Association, are grateful to the Northern Border Regional Commission for supporting this project that connects the architecture, engineering and construction community to local supply chain and promotes demand for cross-laminated timber made from local tree species. This project will support the forest economy of the Northern Border Region by building and strengthening a new forest products market in the northeast, US. While the project team is a diverse group of entities, the initiative includes many more -- such as WoodWorks, Sterling Structural, Vermont Integrated Architecture, AIA NH, ME and Boston, as well as the full suite of forest-based businesses tied to these forest products and the supply chain,” said Andy Fast, Forest Industry State Specialist and UNH Cooperative Extension Professor.

“The Jesup Memorial Library has been a community treasure in Bar Harbor for over 100 years. We have been working to build this expansion for over 10 years and we're excited to begin construction in 2023. As we thought about expanding our facility for the next 100 years, we wanted to select materials and building strategies that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and that reflect the character of our region. We are thrilled that our project will be constructed with cross laminated timber sourced from the Northeastern United States,” said Matt DeLaney, Director of the Jesup Memorial Library. “As a public building in downtown Bar Harbor, our library will demonstrate an innovative and exciting way to construct public buildings in New England and hopefully pave the way for similar projects in the future.”

“The NHTOA is pleased to see these 3 projects get funding,” Jasen Stock, Executive Director of the NH timberland Owners Association, said. “It is great to see the forest products marketing work proposed at the Jesup Library and University of New Hampshire using cross laminated timbers. It is also good to see the support for the other end of the forest products supply chain – the workforce training that is being done by the St. John Valley Technology Center training tomorrow’s timber harvesting professionals.”

"This is a very positive development for logging education in northern Maine," Dana Doran, Executive Director of the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine, said. "The logging industry of today is technologically advanced and requires a strong educational pipeline to prepare young people for careers in the woods. This Forest Economy Grant Program will allow the Frenchville St. John Valley CTE to invest in a new processor/forwarder that is desperately needed to give students the hands-on experience with modern logging equipment that they need to be competitive in the industry from day one."

The FEP program will run another application round in the fall of 2023. Please refer to the NBRC’s website, www.nbrc.gov, for additional announcements about the Forest Economy Program, and other funding opportunities.

About the Northern Border Regional Commission (www.nbrc.gov)

Created in 2008, the Northern Border Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership whose mission is to help alleviate economic distress and encourage private sector job creation in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. In 2019, NBRC was directed by the U.S. Congress to appropriate \$4 million per year for initiatives that seek to address the decline in forest-based economies throughout the region. To date, NBRC has awarded approximately \$11.8 million in support of projects ranging from forest economy workforce development to demonstration of new wood product innovations, and projects that address the availability of quality workforce housing.