



Western North Carolina Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project

Project Report from the Southern Forests Network

In 2009, the [USDA Forest Service – Southern Research Station](#) was awarded nearly \$2 million of federal stimulus funds to support forest product businesses in western NC. [Land-of-Sky Regional Council](#) was awarded this funding through a competitive process to implement the [Western North Carolina Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project](#). As a result of the project, 14 Western North Carolina businesses received grants through a competitive process to expand into new product lines, improve marketing, and provide workforce training. These companies used the funds to expand and diversify their businesses while providing more than 140 jobs to under- or unemployed forest products producers.

The [Southern Forests Network](#), [Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project](#), the [NC Forest Service](#), and [NC Agricultural Extension Service](#) partnered with the Land of Sky Regional Council on the project, and provided support to grantees, hosted training and networking events, and coordinated cooperative marketing initiatives.

About The 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. SFN works to:

- Create active partnerships among landowners, forestry professionals, local forest products businesses, conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, educational and research institutions, and economic development organizations.
- Provide landowners with tools and resources that help them practice sustainable forestry and realize greater benefits from their forestland.
- Enhance rural economies through local value-added processing of sustainable forest products.
- Develop markets for local & sustainable forest products.

With ARRA support, the Southern Forests Network:

Provided Direct Support to Grantees

SFN provided direct support to 6 of the 14 grantees, assisting them with implementation of their projects, locating assistance providers, certification, and marketing initiatives.



[Appalachian Designs](#)

Appalachian Designs received \$74,900 in ARRA funds to develop a dry kiln, concentration yard for small diameter wood products, and begin certifying and branding their products as 'green'. SFN assisted



Appalachian Designs with researching kiln construction, Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC) certification, applying for additional grant funds, and developing new marketing materials.

Boggs Collective

The Boggs Collective received \$108,000 to create a cooperative workshop, woodshed, woodworking school and virtual gallery to support craftspeople and forest producers. SFN assisted the Boggs Collective with exploring financing options, Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC) certification, networking, supplier identification, exploring relocation opportunities, grant research & applications, and marketing.



Clear Creek Wood Products

Clear Creek Wood Products received \$91,500 to operate a shaving mill from small diameter timber procured from area harvesters, and initiate a marketing campaign. SFN worked with Clear Creek Wood Products on market identification & research, and designed their first website.

Furniture Specialties

Furniture Specialties, Inc. received \$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. SFN assisted Furniture Specialties with marketing, connecting with government contracts, initiating an energy audit & energy savings plan, FSC certification, and additional grant research & applications.



Green River Forest Products

Green River Forest Products received \$86,700 to construct dry kilns to bundle, market, and transport environmentally safe and marketable firewood. SFN assisted Green River Forest Products with market research, exploring government sourcing, and buyer linkages.

Highland Craftsmen

Highland Craftsmen received \$91,450 to certify locally sourced hardwood trees for structural purposes, certify local professionals to provide grade stamping, and provide this service to other businesses. Their new [Bark House Supply Company](#) received a grant of \$90,700 to expand to market and sell home accessories made from sustainably managed, locally sourced and manufactured forest materials in Spruce Pine. SFN assisted Highland Craftsmen with market research and grant applications.

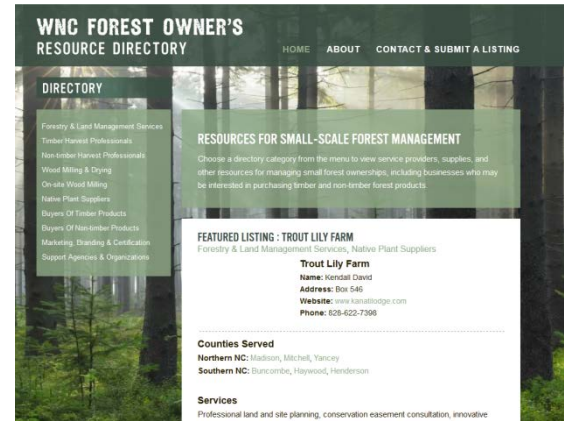




Published the [WNC Forest Owner's Resource Directory](#)

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. Listing categories include:

- Forestry & Land Management Services
- Timber Harvest Professionals
- Non-timber Harvest Professionals
- Wood Milling
- Native Plant Suppliers
- Buyers of Timber Products
- Buyers of Non-timber Products
- Marketing, Branding & Certification
- Support Agencies & Organizations



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](#)™ certification for three grantee businesses and more than 2,500 acres of forestland in the region. 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 is the only nonprofit program of its kind in the South, and provides affordable, accessible certification to small businesses and forests.

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.

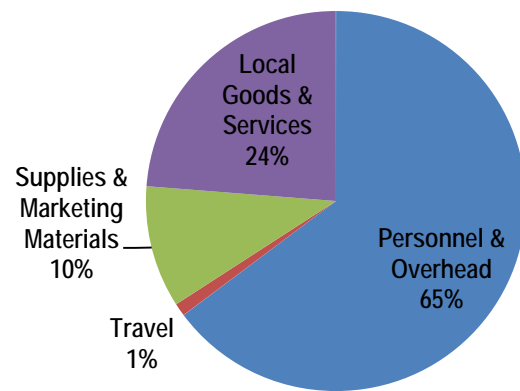
Enhanced Support Services

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.

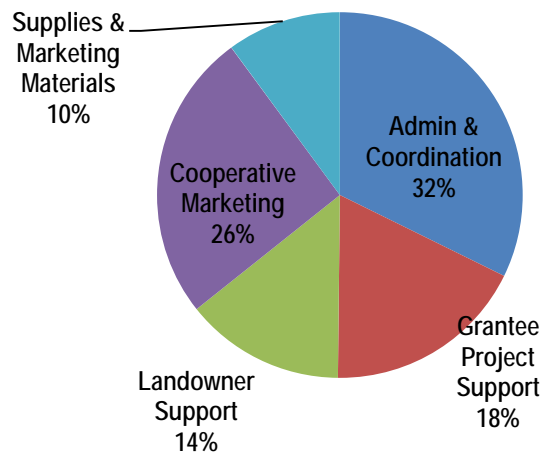
ARRA Funding

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.

SFN Expenditures by Type



Expenditures by Purpose



Contact

Alyx Perry, Director

[Southern Forests Network](http://SouthernForestsNetwork.org)

SouthernForestsNetwork.org

PO Box 941

Asheville, NC 28802

828-277-9008

