

## Group Shares Working Knowledge with Maine Forest Landowners

### Non-Traditional Forest Products Addressed

#### The Challenge

Maine, largest of the six New England states, is 89 percent forested, the highest in the United States on a percentage basis. Roughly 100,000 individual private landowners own a third of Maine's 5.5 million forest acres. Private forests provide public benefits: 40 percent of the wood used in Maine's forest product industries comes from privately-owned forestlands. Privately-owned forests protect wildlife habitats, provide recreational opportunities, and keep open spaces natural.

According to recent studies, private forest landowners in Maine and elsewhere are facing increasing pressure to sell or develop their land. Assisting private landowners in finding ways to supplement their income from their land can aid in keeping forestland intact. Doing so can help offset property taxes, which in turn would help landowners retain their forests. However, the large number of individual forest landowners and their geographic spread makes communicating forest stewardship a challenge. Many private forest landowners do not have adequate access to information that would help them better manage and improve their forests while making a profit.

#### The Solution

The U.S. Forest Service State and Private Forestry Northeastern Area works with other Federal and state natural resource agencies and associations to develop and deliver important training to Maine's forest landowners. In 2002, the State established the Maine Forest Working Group, made up of the Maine Forest Service, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Small Woodland Owners of Maine, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and the Resource Conservation & Development Program.

The Group provides information and training to the state's forest landowners about making money through the sustainable production of agroforestry and non-timber forest

*Maine's privately-owned forests protect wildlife habitats, provide places of recreation and keep open spaces natural.*



*Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program Representative Roger Monthey leads a lively presentation at one of the Maine Forest Working Group's workshops.*

products. Agroforestry combines forestry and agricultural practices, such as growing trees and shrubs on the same land. Among the many topics are: "Non-Timber Products and How to Identify Marketing Opportunities," "Achieving Your Vision for Your Forested Lands," and "Keeping your Woodlot & Making it Profitable Too!"

The group also addresses forestry issues with forest landowners throughout Maine. Eight Agroforestry conferences and sixteen regional workshops have been held in Maine since 2002.

#### Resulting Benefits

The Maine Forest Working Group has worked directly with more than 400 landowners representing over 10,000 acres of forestland. The Group has created an effective, inexpensive educational model for others to follow.

#### Sharing Success

Maine State Forester Alec Giffen recently nominated the Maine Forest Working Group for the 2008 Two Chiefs' Partnership Award for their outstanding efforts in reaching out to forest landowners. The annual award recognizes outstanding projects and employees of the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, conservation districts, and state agencies who collaborate to promote conservation and forest stewardship.



USDA Forest Service  
**Northeastern Area**  
 State and Private Forestry

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