

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund



The forest products systems analysis, funded by WLEB (Yellow Wood Associates) identified numerous value chain opportunities, including: Enhancing the Economic Value of VT Woodlands; Improving the Marketing of Construction and Construction Materials; Addressing Demand in Wood Energy Markets; and Expanding Markets for Furniture, Furniture Parts, and Solid Wood Products. VSJF staff actively participated in this effort and have developed this project in partnership with the Northern Forest Center to assist in implementing the recommendations from the analysis.

Specifically, the project will deliver business coaching services to primary & secondary forest products-related businesses focusing on growth, profitability, access to capital, and value chain product development; Enhance forest products sector development and cohesion by forming a statewide Forest Products Network; Host regional convenings of forest products stakeholders for relationship building and innovative idea exchange; Develop working groups around identified leverage points which will lead to greater collaboration between firms and new products reaching the marketplace; Conduct or coordinate market research to understand consumer preferences, including market opportunities for under-utilized VT tree species, innovative engineered wood products relevant to raw materials in VT; Initiate the development of a sector-based communications strategy, including a media strategy for the forest economy that includes messaging for different audiences (e.g. landowners, Vermonters, visitors), story opportunities, etc.; and Messaging that re-frames and broadens awareness about the importance of the forest economy (e.g., climate change, energy security, small family businesses, local economies, and cultural heritage).

Total Working Lands Grant— \$20,000 for forest products value chain investment strategy