

# Wood Education and Resource Center

USDA Forest Service  
Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry



*Promoting sustainable utilization of hardwoods*

**Description:** The Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) was established in 1999 when legislation directed the Forest Service to assume leadership of the Robert C. Byrd Hardwood Technology Center in Princeton, WV. WERC promotes sustainable wood processing and woody biomass utilization across the 35-State eastern hardwood region. It offers technical expertise and information to businesses, States, and other partners on topics such as efficient wood processing, utilizing pest-damaged timber, green building, and wood energy. An annual competitive grants program is central to WERC's program. A 43,000-square-foot rough mill and 12,000-square-foot shop, the majority under lease to Accurate Millworks, Inc., provides local jobs and opportunities to improve worker skills.

## Key Issues:

- American hardwood manufacturers are struggling to remain competitive in the face of global competition and high operating and energy costs.
- Wood industries find it hard to recruit, train, and hold on to skilled managers and employees.
- Processing efficiencies and new uses for wood improve industry viability and profit margins.
- Collaboration within the forest products industry helps individual businesses keep pace with a rapidly changing environment.

## Accomplishments:

- Invested in 24 projects totaling \$1.4 million in Fiscal Year 2010. WERC funded 168 projects totaling \$10.2 million in 26 states during the past 6 years. Activities included technical assistance, training sessions, industry publications, and applied research.
- Maintained a WERC Web site with information about funded projects, training workshops, conferences, DVDs and CDs, and other resources. The Web site address is [www.na.fs.fed.us/werc](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/werc).
- Strengthened existing partnerships and developed new alliances with State forestry agencies, wood products extension programs, universities, businesses, industry organizations, and others.
- Provided oversight assistance to Accurate Millworks, Inc., current operator of WERC's manufacturing facility.

## Budget History:

Wood Education and Resource Center (Dollars, thousands)				
FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
\$2, 673	\$2,673	\$2,673	\$1,960	Est. \$960

## Future Direction:

- Offer additional training opportunities to wood industry personnel in the eastern hardwood region.
- Continue the grants program, selecting projects that align with WERC's mission, vision, and goals.
- Maintain and expand the WERC Web site as an information hub for the hardwood processing industry.
- Continue technical assistance and support to improve the global competitiveness of wood-based manufacturing.
- Continue to promote hardwood utilization opportunities that support related program missions such as invasive species mitigation, urban forest management, the green building movement, and carbon sequestration.
- Provide information and technical support for sustainable development and use of woody biomass.

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