

Rural Development Through Forestry Grants

Preserving Forests to Protect New York City's Water Supply

The Challenge

Forest owners often weigh development demands on their land against the long-term value of their timber resources. Such is the case in New York State's Catskill Mountains, a region whose reservoirs supply much of New York City's water. Permanent land-use changes in the Catskills have the potential to degrade water quality throughout the region.

The Solution

The Northeastern Area sought innovative ways to maintain timber values in Catskills working forests so that owners could maximize their economic goals without changing existing land use. The Northeastern Area awarded \$1.2 million through its Economic Action Program (EAP) to support the Watershed Forestry Program's Rural Development Through Forestry Grants Initiative. In 2001, 22 grants were made to Catskills-based wood-products businesses that use local sources and services, which help do the following:

- Maintain the timber value in working forests of the watershed
- Create local jobs
- Maximize the turnover of grant money within the community.

Resulting Benefits

The Catskills-based contemporary furniture maker GreenTree shines as an example of a local business that has made the most of Forest Service EAP grants. For years, GreenTree owners Don and Jenifer Green wanted to design a new furniture line, "but Don needed someone to handle production so he could concentrate on prototype development," Jenifer explained.

The Northeastern Area's Economic Action Program helps protect New York City's water supply by maintaining timber values in working forests in the Catskills.



GreenTree owner Don Green (right) instructs apprentice Steve MacClintock.

An EAP funded grant helped the Greens do the following:

- Build a viable business committed to using local forest products
- Start an apprentice program
- Boost GreenTree furniture sales by 20 percent
- Create positive national exposure for the Catskill Mountain region.

Sharing Success

The Greens received their first grant for the apprentice program; they later received a second grant for marketing efforts. The two grants totaling \$60,000 have strengthened the local economy and timber value by...

- Increasing the demand for regional kiln-dried lumber
- Creating jobs through the apprenticeship program
- Enabling the Greens to purchase metalsmithing products and to contract design, photography, and printing services from local providers.

This summer, the new GreenTree line will be on display at the prestigious Smithsonian Craft Show in Washington, DC. This honor was brought about in part by Northeastern Area expertise and funds that help ensure the protection of the Catskills watershed.



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