

National Forest Foundation

USDA Forest Service Alaska Region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2011

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NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION AND USFS ANNOUNCE \$125K IN GRANTS TO SUPPORT SOUTHEAST ALASKA WATERSHEDS AND COMMUNITIES

KETCHIKAN, Alaska— The National Forest Foundation (NFF) and U.S. Forest Service Alaska Region announced a new competitive grant program to fund tools and support for nonprofit and public organizations to advance watershed and landscape-scale projects in Southeast Alaska. These Community Capacity and Land Stewardship (CCLS) grants will support sustainable and diversified job growth and healthy communities and watersheds in the region.

“Building capacity in rural communities will be essential to sustaining a healthy forest and healthy communities,” said Regional Forester Beth Pendleton. “We are confident that this new grant program will play an important role in increasing access to technical and financial assistance for local entrepreneurs.”

The U.S. Forest Service Alaska Region and Wilburforce Foundation are providing \$125,000 in funding for these NFF-administered grants. Each grant is limited to no more than \$24,000 and can be used for work including, but not limited to: organization and staff support, action plan development, community outreach, training related to facilitation, and travel related to collaborative group activities.

The NFF will hold a question and answer call November 14, 2011, at 1 p.m. AST to provide information to those interested in requesting a CCLS grant. Hard copy requests for proposals are due to the NFF by December 13, 2011. Prospective grant applicants are encouraged to visit the CCLS web site to obtain more information about the program as well as application instructions, copies of application forms, and information about the question and answer call at <http://nationalforests.org/conservation/grantprograms/capacitybuilding/ccls>

The intent of the program is to strengthen the capacity of Southeast communities to capitalize on new economic opportunities beneficial to the Tongass National Forest. Many of these opportunities and initiatives have been recently identified through economic cluster working groups in forest products, ocean products, visitor services, and renewable energy.

“Rural Development believes this program can help local businesses be successful in applying for grants and low-interest loans through our agency,” said USDA-Rural Development Alaska State Director Jim Nordlund. “We look forward to working with communities on those projects.

Partnerships such as this are integral in reinforcing USDA's investment strategy in support of economic growth in the rural communities of Southeast."

Land managers and community partners across the Tongass National Forest are increasingly using collaborative approaches to address natural resource and community economic development challenges.

"Our community is ready and willing to work with the Forest Service on their economic diversification strategy," said Wrangell Mayor Jeremy Maxand. "This grant program could make a critical difference for a local business or collaborative group working with the Forest Service on natural resource projects in and around Wrangell."

Nonprofit and public entities working on watershed and landscape-scale restoration around the Tongass National Forest are eligible apply for CCLS funds. This includes 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations; state, local, and Tribal governments; and educational institutions.

"We are honored to partner with the Forest Service, in the implementation of this innovative capacity-building program. Through this grant program we aim to support the groups working diligently on the ground for the benefit of communities and the Tongass National Forest," said Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, NFF Northwest regional director. "We hope this program will be scaled up and replicated in other regions across the country."