

News Release
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

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Community Capacity Grant Awards Announced Several local communities and organizations awarded capacity-building grants JUNEAU, Alaska- The U.S. Forest Service, in partnership with the National Forest Foundation, is proud to announce the recipients of a new grant program designed to assist communities in creating forest-based jobs. The program, called the Community Capacity and Land Stewardship Grant, aims to create jobs that foster healthy communities and a healthy forest.

Close to \$100,000 was awarded to four community-based organizations supporting a range of projects and work across Southeast Alaska. "Seeing money go straight to local organizations to help facilitate work on the ground is really rewarding," said Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, Northwest regional director for the National Forest Foundation. "We're excited to see these projects move forward to benefit Southeast's forests and communities."

Specifically, grants were awarded for the following projects:

- * The Organized Village of Kake will hire a part-time stewardship coordinator to help build local community capacity to participate in forest stewardship projects near Kake.
- * The Sitka Conservation Society will work with the community of Sitka and the Sitka Collaborative Stewardship group to expand watershed restoration projects and to catalyze use of young growth timber.
- * The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council will work with small business owners and individuals throughout Southeast Alaska to improve understanding of Forest Service contracting and permitting processes, enabling them to perform restoration, young growth and stewardship work on the Tongass National Forest.
- * The Juneau Watershed Partnership will bring together local stakeholders and use a landscape scale approach to analyze, catalog, and prioritize potential restoration and mitigation projects in Juneau watersheds.

Local businesses are enthusiastic about the grants, and what opportunities might emerge. "There are a lot of opportunities for using young growth timber from the Tongass," said Sitka contractor Marcel LaPerriere, owner of Southeast Cedar Homes, which uses wood from local sources. "I believe this is an opportunity to raise awareness and increase the commercial use around the region."

The emphasis on collaboration between the government and local interests is also strongly supported by the Forest Service. "This grant recognizes the hard work of Kake and other stakeholders to identify the opportunities they share on public lands," said Jason Anderson, Petersburg District Ranger. "I am thrilled to be a new participant in the effort, in hopes that the work we do for the public good can be a source of local employment for rural communities."

The grant will be open for a second round in late spring, offering another opportunity for Southeast-based organizations and communities to compete for funds. The Forest Service and National Forest Foundation will make an announcement preceding this second round.

For further information, please contact Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, kdowdgailey@nationalforests.org, 206.832.8280; or Karen Hardigg, kehardigg@fs.fed.us, 907.382.7169.

About the National Forest Foundation (www.nationalforests.org) Founded by Congress in 1991, the National Forest Foundation works to conserve, restore and enhance America's 193-million-acre National Forest System. Through community-based strategies and public-private partnerships, the NFF enhances wildlife habitat, revitalizes wildfire-damaged landscapes, restores watersheds, and improves recreational resources for the benefit of all Americans.