

Northeastern States Research Cooperative Receives \$5.5 Million to Advance Northern Forest Research and Management

Applied Forest Science to Sustain Health of the Northern Forest



Burlington, VT; Durham, NH; Orono, ME; Syracuse, NY — [Northeastern States Research Cooperative](#) (NSRC) Directors are pleased to announce that \$5.5 million in funding from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will support research efforts across the Northern Forest Region. The NSRC is a collaboration among universities in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont that supports research to sustain the health of northern forest ecosystems and communities, develop new forest products, and improve forest management.

“The Northeastern States Research Cooperative is an outstanding example of collaborative science,” said John Rothlisberger, acting director of the USFS Northern Research Station and Forest Products Laboratory. “This new funding agreement—more than \$5 million in support—reflects our commitment to science that is both rigorous and relevant. Our collaborative research not only deepens our understanding of forest ecosystems but also directly informs active forest management on the ground.”

Rothlisberger added, “These investments in research in places like Forest Service experimental forests in the Northeast will allow us to advance the knowledge needed to sustain the health, productivity, and value of Northeastern forests for generations to come.”

A \$3.6-million award to the University of Vermont supports three aspects of NSRC’s regional research program. First, to accelerate the delivery of research, NSRC will select projects from prior competitions that received strong technical reviews and are aligned with current NSRC and USFS research priorities. Second, a new regional call for research proposals will be announced in the coming months. Third, NSRC will issue a special call for work to support strategic research planning and science synthesis products for experimental forests in New Hampshire.

In a companion agreement, a \$1.9-million award to the University of Maine is focused on three areas identified in congressional direction and by NSRC’s External Advisory Committee of landowners, industry, agency, and community leaders. First, nearly \$1M will provide support for Digital Forestry research using remote sensing along with machine learning and decision tools to improve forest monitoring and management. This work continues the efforts of the Digital Forestry Systems Research Consortium, a regional partnership involving the University of Maine. Second, Maine’s USFS Experimental Forests will benefit from \$350,000 to support an

open Request for Qualifications to select a strategic research planning team to work with USFS scientists and regional partners at the Penobscot and Massabesic Experimental Forests. Third, the NSRC University of Maine team will release an open, competitive call for proposals that will award regional seed funding (ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000) for long-term research at sites across Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont, particularly the region's USFS experimental forests.

NSRC research priorities are developed with input from communities, businesses, industries, and agencies that contribute to and benefit from knowledge generated by research in the Northern Forest. The NSRC Executive Committee, comprised of representatives of four university partners, administers the program's competitive research program and facilitates widespread utilization of research findings. The USFS also provides input and guidance through *ex officio* membership on the NSRC Executive Committee.

The 2026 research priority focus areas identified by NSRC's External Advisory Committee include forest health, adaptation, and resilience; active forest management and silviculture; community and economic resilience; and communications. Priority topics within these four focus areas include wood products innovation and market development; workforce development; sustainable forestry; invasive species and forest pests; land use and forest recreation; biodiversity and connectivity; mitigation of environmental repercussions; drought and fire; and fire as a tool for management. Furthermore, recognizing the pivotal role of the region's experimental forests, the USFS has asked NSRC to prioritize work that encompasses experimental forest strategic planning and collaborative research.

Through this investment, the NSRC will continue to support regional partners, maintain its robust applied research program, and extend its outreach. NSRC's regional partners include scientists and experts from academic institutions; officials from local, state, and federal agencies; conservation organizations and industry professionals; and private landowners and residents of the Northern Forest. NSRC will support and disseminate cross-disciplinary, collaborative ecosystem, socioeconomic, forest products, and conservation research that benefits the unique landscapes and communities of the Northern Forest.

About the Northeastern States Research Cooperative

NSRC (<https://nsrcforest.org>) is a competitive grant program for Northern Forest research, authorized by Federal legislation (Public Law 105-185), with allocations to the program directed by the USDA Forest Service. Since its inception, the NSRC has funded more than 345 projects, engaging 50 different institutions, agencies, and organizations across the northeast. Federal funding comes from Congressional appropriations through a partnership with the research and development arm of the USDA Forest Service. The private sector, states, and other organizations offered matching funding to support the research on the Northern Forest and its 26 million acres in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

NSRC is jointly directed through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Northern Research Station and a designated institution in each of the four Northern Forest States (Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Vermont, the University of New Hampshire, the Center for Research on Sustainable Forests at the University of Maine, and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry). These institutions are all equal opportunity providers.

The Hubbard Brook Research Foundation (HBRF) worked with the NSRC from 2018–2026, working to revive the program in 2019 and establish a process that prioritized the real-world needs of forest practitioners. HBRF was also pivotal to NSRC's work with Tribal consultants and launching of the Indigenous Forest Knowledge Fund.

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