

**Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative**  
**Key Messages**  
*For Your Information: Not for Circulation*

1. This is good news from the Northern Forest Region. This initiative provides a strategy for building a resilient economy and creating good jobs in the 4-state Northern Forest Region.
2. The Northern Forest is truly a world-class natural resource. Our greatest opportunity to regain economic success in a global marketplace is to band together across our four states as a region.
3. The way we plan to move this strategy ahead is to work through the institutions and networks already in place. We are enlisting the help of business, community organizations and government at all levels.

**Talking points**

**What is the Northern Forest Region?**

The northern forest reaches across Maine, NH, VT and New York state and stretches 400 miles, encompasses 30 million acres and provides a home for 2 million people.

**What is the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative?**

SEI is a 4-state collaboration that began in 2006 to advance the findings of the [Northern Forest Lands Council 10th Anniversary Forum](#) and its recommendation to create “community and economic development strategies across the region to reinvigorate the rural economies of the Northern Forest.”

**What has the Initiative produced?**

A strategy for building a resilient economy and creating good jobs in the 4-state Northern Forest Region.

**Why this Initiative?**

To accelerate the shift in how people across the Northern Forest approach economic development, conservation and community building. We have to think of them as one in the same – as opposed to competing goals.

**How was it developed?**

Over 2 years we, key leaders from the 4 states – Maine, NH, VT and NY – worked to advance the idea of integrating economic development and conservation. They did the learning and thinking about what that idea would look like in practice. The result is a strategy that identifies long-term goals for the region and 10 immediate action steps to help us get there.

The Northern Forest Center and the North Country Council jointly managed the Sustainable Economy Initiative. Funders included the Economic Development Administration, Public Service of New Hampshire, First Colebrook Bank, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the Surdna Foundation and others.

### **What's SEI's longterm vision for the region?**

**That the Northern Forest is globally recognized for its vital regional economies and communities and the unique culture and ecosystem that support them.**

### **What are you recommending?**

#### **Long-term goals:**

1. Protect our region's assets
2. Expand enterprise
3. Advocate as a region

#### *Protect and Enhance the Region's Assets*

- By investing in the people, communities, infrastructure, and natural resource base that underlie the Northern Forest region's distinct character and comparative economic advantage.

#### *Expand Enterprise*

- Create a fertile environment for workforce, entrepreneurial and business development, and increase the region's ability to develop and commercialize new products and services that capitalize on its assets.

#### *Coordinate and Advocate as a Region*

- Increase the capacity of the region's individuals and institutions to anticipate and adapt to change and implement new initiatives by working and coordinating as a region to understand and advocate for regional interests and priorities.

### **10 Immediate Action steps**

#### *Maintaining the Legacy of a Forested Landscape*

##### **Keep Forests as Forests**

- Maintain forests to protect and enhance the essential economic and ecological services derived from the landscape and to capture value from emerging markets.

#### *Spark our Economy*

##### **Encourage Creativity and Business Growth**

- Develop programs to support creative and entrepreneurial people in building businesses that are based on and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Northern Forest.

##### **Coordinate Regional Marketing**

- Develop coordinated marketing of Northern Forest products, businesses, tourism services, amenities and attractions, while maintaining individual state branding efforts.

### **Buy Local to Keep Wealth in the Region**

- Support activities that encourage Northern Forest residents, visitors, institutions and government to “buy local.”

### *Provide a Strong Economic Backbone*

#### **Invest in World-Class Telecommunications**

- Deliver reliable, affordable and cutting-edge high-speed telecommunications to all Northern Forest communities through increased public-private investment.

#### **Improve Transportation Systems**

- Develop globally competitive, energy efficient, multi-modal public/private transportation systems to interconnect the region and its communities and support regional, national, and international trade.

#### **Harness Renewable Energy**

- Launch a four-state Renewable Energy Initiative that encourages energy efficiency, increases public and private investment in a diversity of energy systems, maximizes community wealth, and complements stewardship of the region’s natural resources.

### *Follow Through*

#### **Prepare for Future Changes**

- Invest in research, tracking, and forecasting of natural, social, and economic assets in order to make informed decisions to understand, anticipate and adapt to changes in the region.

#### **Coordinate & Advocate for Region**

- Establish a coordinating body of the Northern Forest states to support implementation of the SEI recommendations, continue regional coordination, and address future challenges and opportunities.

#### **Secure Federal Investment**

- Maintain and grow funding for new and existing federal programs that serve the long term strategies outlined in this report; Analyze and identify opportunities to more explicitly align existing federal programs with our recommended goals and actions.

### **What’s next?**

The conveners and participants are now working to advance the recommendations through their organizations and initiatives already underway across the four states.

The completion of the Sustainable Economy Initiative coincides with the recent authorization of the Northern Border Regional Commission to invest \$30 million per year in federal resources for economic development and job creation in the Northern Forest region.

**Where can someone get the report or more information?**

The full report may be downloaded for free from the Sustainable Economy Initiative's web pages at [www.nfsei.net](http://www.nfsei.net).