



The Center for Land use, Education, and Research at the University of Connecticut (CLEAR) in cooperation with CT-DEP Forestry Division and other partners proposes to research, develop, test, demonstrate, establish and coordinate a self-supporting regional network of local forest product growers, producers, and users linked by common goals.

This project will create a network of engaged forest landowners, foresters, forest practitioners, woodworkers, craftsmen, educators, community leaders and others will be committed to the common purpose of retaining forested properties in the rural-suburban interface that will provide the array of forest benefits, services and products on which their communities depend. Network members will also be committed to small-scale, low impact harvesting techniques, local (on-site) processing, direct local marketing, and management for quality and value-added activities as a means to return a traditional rural enterprise to the local landscape in a scale-appropriate, visible, profitable way. Members of the general public and the network will understand that careful stewardship, management and use enhances environmental, social and economic benefits of the forest, and that building appreciation for forest values at the community level is key to protecting and perpetuating the resource. Forest properties will be less at-risk for conversion to other uses because more landowners will have a wider variety of management options and means of deriving benefit and value. Communities will be less inclined to see their forests and associated forest benefits as well their rural heritage disappear through the incremental conversion of forests to other uses and will adopt alternative sustainable techniques to accommodate inevitable growth needs.