The New York State Wood Products Development Council was established under Article 18, Section 225 of Agriculture and Markets Law. It is charged with promoting and encouraging the economic activity of New York's diverse forest products industries.

## Table of Contents

1. Role of the Wood Products Development Council 2
2. Statutory Priorities and Objectives 2-3
3. 2018-2019 Strategic Direction 4-5
4. Forestry and Wood Products Summit 6-7
5. New York's Forest Products Industry 8-9
6. The Forests of New York State 10
7. Summary of 2018 Council Meetings 11-12
8. Other Wood Products Development Council Activities in 2018
   - Softwood Prospectus 13
   - Website Development 14
   - Modern Wood Heat Marketing Campaign 14
   - Timber Sports and Forestry Experience Day at the New York State Fair 15
   - Developing Export Markets for New York Hardwoods 16
The Role of the Wood Products Development Council

Established by statute within the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Wood Products Development Council is tasked with supporting and encouraging the practice of sustainable forestry and the manufacture of wood products. The Council works to improve public understanding of and appreciation for New York’s forests and forest products. It also directs attention and funding to programs and ventures that sustain existing forest product markets and promote the development of new markets.

Council members are appointed by the Governor and include recommendations from the Senate President, Speaker of the Assembly, Senate Minority Leader, and Assembly Minority Leader. The Council serves as a forum for open discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing New York’s forestry sector. This unique coalition provides the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets with the opportunity to collaborate with a variety of forest industry stakeholders, including loggers, forest landowners, wood product manufacturers, state environmental conservation and economic development agencies, associations representing forest landowners and industries, and members of the public.

Through its cooperative efforts, the Council helps to provide economic, social, and environmental benefits for New York State, while enhancing both the efficacy of government programs and the quality of life in upstate communities. Increasing the economic contribution of New York’s forest industry helps to generate employment, invigorate the economies of rural communities, and incentivize the sustainable management of the state’s forest resource.

Statutory Priorities and Objectives

The following statutory priorities and objectives are used as a framework to guide the Wood Products Development Council in supporting agency work and funding projects that achieve these priorities and objectives.

The Council shall give priority to:
- Increasing private investment in working forests;
- Maintaining access to working and family forests;
- Coordinating with state agencies, academia, and the private sector;
- Working to improve public understanding of and appreciation for forestry and forest products; and
- Increasing export and market opportunities for New York forest products.

The Council shall support agency work and fund projects that achieve the following objectives in support of the statutory priorities:
- Support expansion and growth of the forest products industry, with particular attention to the wood supply chain;
- Enhance marketing and promotion of the forest products industry;
- Define the value of the forest economy;
- Support equitable forest taxation; and
- Increase export and market opportunities.

Council Membership

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Council Member</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets</td>
<td>Commissioner Richard Ball designee Kevin King</td>
<td>New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets</td>
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<td>NYS Department of Environmental Conservation</td>
<td>Commissioner Basil Seggos designee Rob Messenger</td>
<td>New York State Department of Environmental Conservation</td>
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<td>Empire State Development</td>
<td>Commissioner Howard Zemsky designee Howard Zemsky</td>
<td>Empire State Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sawmill Owner</td>
<td>Steve Servies</td>
<td>Gutchess Lumber</td>
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<td>Secondary Wood Products Manufacturer</td>
<td>Wayne Majuri</td>
<td>International Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logger</td>
<td>Doug Handy</td>
<td>A&amp;H Forest Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maple Syrup Producer</td>
<td>Harry Komrowski</td>
<td>Komrowski Maple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial Forest Owner</td>
<td>Mike Hanlon</td>
<td>Cotton-Hanlon, Inc.</td>
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<td>Non-designated</td>
<td>Maureen Fellows</td>
<td>SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-designated</td>
<td>Ed Wright</td>
<td>Empire State Forest Products Association</td>
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Nonindustrial Forest Owner, Forest Industry Organization Representative, and Statewide Forest Landowners Association designations are vacant.
2018-2019 Strategic Direction

The Council’s strategic plan contains five outcome-oriented goals for 2018-2019:

1. Make recommendations and advise on public policies
2. Support existing markets and encourage the development of new markets
3. Develop focused information for a target audience
4. Conduct public outreach and education
5. Produce and distribute an annual report

Each goal has several objectives. The Council made progress toward reaching them in 2018 and evaluated and reported performance at each of the Council’s quarterly meetings.

Goal 1: Make recommendations and advise on public policies

Objectives

- Collaborate with New York State agencies, wood product industry representatives, landowners, maple producers, and academic partners on new and persisting issues affecting the wood products industry.
- Produce an annual economic analysis so that the scope and impact of the wood products industry are known and up-to-date.
- Support the Forestry and Wood Products Summit to identify challenges and develop solutions to issues affecting the wood products industry.

Goal 2: Support existing markets and encourage the development of new markets

Objectives

- Grow New York’s participation in the American Hardwood Export Council and Hardwood States Export Group by distributing information about New York hardwoods and participating in international trade shows.
- Become a “partner” of the WoodWorks Wood Products Council, an organization that works with architects, contractors, and related businesses on technical assistance for wood-related projects.
- Address an overabundance of softwoods on New York State lands by hosting meetings and/or giving presentations at pre-scheduled forums.
- Support marketing efforts to grow demand for New York State wood products.

Goal 3: Develop focused information for a target audience

Objectives

- Work with academia, Cornell Cooperative Extension, industry organizations, state agencies, and others to develop targeted information for landowners and businesses as concerns and opportunities arise.

Goal 4: Conduct broader public outreach and education

Objectives

- Work with educators, students, and communities to foster an awareness, understanding, and appreciation for forest stewardship and wood products.
- Identify and engage in opportunities to attract young people to educational opportunities and careers in forestry.
- Expand Timber Sports and Forestry Experience Day at the New York State Fair.

Goal 5: Produce and distribute an annual report

Objectives

- Develop and produce an annual report to be distributed to legislators, agency leadership and others so decisions affecting the wood products industry are well-informed.
The Council actively supported the first-ever Forestry and Wood Products Summit on October 25, 2018 to advance New York’s forestry industry. Held at the Broome County Regional Farmers Market in Binghamton, the event attracted 115 attendees. Members of the Wood Products Development Council, academia, local government, and the industry met with state officials to identify growth challenges and explore new opportunities for New York’s forest and wood products businesses. During the summit, several initiatives were announced to help strengthen the sector, including funding to support the growth of the maple industry, increased promotion and marketing efforts, and expanded research on key issues.

The Forestry and Wood Products Summit was first announced in the Governor’s 2018-19 State of the State address to explore new developments and strategies to boost this economically important sector. The forest products industry is a major component of New York agriculture. It is also a contributor to New York State’s growing tourism industry and its expanding environmental conservation efforts.

Discussions during the Summit focused on opportunities to expand clean technology and invest in research and development, the importance of growing markets, workforce development and training needs, and continued education and promotion to bolster the industry. Based on the input of these key stakeholders, several innovative actions were announced to increase opportunities for businesses in this agricultural sector.

- **Grow Domestic and International Markets**
  - Convene a forum to identify impediments and outline actions to support the growth of domestic markets for New York forest products.
  - Expand New York State’s Grown & Certified to include New York’s firewood, paper, and lumber industries.
  - Support the development of a local market for overstocked plantation-grown softwood timber on New York State Forest Management Lands by broadening available avenues for offering and selling standing timber on New York State forests.

- **Increase Public Awareness and Engagement**
  - Highlight New York’s forest products industry at the New York State Fairgrounds through various events and displays.
  - Work with the New York Future Farmers of America and Agriculture in the Classroom programs to attract young people into pursuing educational opportunities and careers in forestry and wood products.

- **Grow Maple Industry**
  - Fund capital improvements to Cornell University’s Arnot Teaching and Research Forest to support innovation and growth of New York’s maple industry.
  - Double the number of active contracts with maple producers on New York State lands statewide within the next year.

- **Expand the New Forest Economy**
  - Continue to pursue a biorefinery project in the state, working closely with SUNY, the Research Foundation, and other partners.
  - Continue to address the development of a skilled workforce.
  - Propose changes to the Renewable Heat NY program that support replacement of wood boilers for low-income New Yorkers with affordable solutions that are cleaner and more efficient by May 2019.
  - Convene a meeting between stakeholders to consider ways to improve the Renewable Heat NY Program’s application, including the potential inclusion of wood chip fueled boilers, to support markets for byproducts from forest management and the manufacture of wood.

- **Improve Forest Health**
  - Revise the Forest Tax Law 480-A regulation aimed at improving the efficiency and administration of the program for consulting foresters and program participants.
  - Propose the “Regenerate NY” program to assist forest landowners in addressing the extreme difficulty in growing New York’s next forest partly caused by heavy deer forage pressure and competing vegetation.
  - Propose a Working Lands Easement Program for land trust organizations to administer.
  - Establish a Climate Change & Wildland Fires Task Force with a heavy focus on land management practices.

- **Further Research and Development**
  - Create a New York State Climate and Applied Forestry Research Institute (CAFRI) that will be a partnership involving NYS Departments of Agriculture and Markets, Environmental Conservation, and Energy Research and Development Authority, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and Cornell University. The Institute will initially focus on forest carbon sequestration research in support of New York’s role in the U.S. Climate Alliance Natural and Working Lands Initiative.
  - Double funding for the New York State Wood Products Development Council.
New York State receives significant benefits from its forest industry. The sector is composed of four broad categories of output: forestry and logging, solid wood products, pulp and paper products, and wood furniture. In 2016, New York’s forest economy generated **$13.1 billion in direct output** with around 70% of that output attributed to the production activities of the pulp and paper industry.

In addition, the sector provides direct employment of **more than 40,000 jobs** and $2.5 billion in direct labor income. This provides for an average labor income per worker of $61,526.
Today, New York State has more acres of forestland than it has had at any point in the past 150 years. New Yorkers enjoy many benefits from this forested land, improving the lives of all residents, even those living in cities far away from large tracts of forests.

These benefits encompass:

- **Clean Water**
- **Clean Air**
- **Fish & Wildlife Habitats**
- **Economic Impacts**
- **Reduction of Greenhouse Gases**

Other forest benefits include:

- **Flood Protection**
- **Recreational Opportunities**
- **Scenic Beauty**
- **Open Space**

63% of the state’s land area is classified as forested and of the 19 million forested acres, 15.7 million are suitable to produce a timber crop.

New York’s forests are a rich mix of stands of varying sizes, ages, and stocking levels. Northern hardwood forests make up more than 53% of the New York forest cover. New York’s forests are largely privately owned by individuals, families, and businesses, who together own over 76% of the forest.

Summary of 2018 Council Meetings

The New York Wood Products Development Council held four meetings in 2018:

- **February 7, 2018** at SUNY ESF, Syracuse
- **May 18, 2018** at SUNY ESF, Syracuse
- **August 9, 2018** at SUNY ESF, Syracuse
- **December 4, 2018** at SUNY ESF, Syracuse

All meetings were conducted in accordance with New York’s Open Meetings Law.

**February 7, 2018**

The Department of Agriculture and Markets reported on the Forestry and Wood Products Summit. The Department of Environmental Conservation discussed Empire Forests for the Future Initiative and the Emerald Ash Borer quarantine repeal. Empire State Development discussed its collaboration with the Department of Environmental Conservation on the Softwood Prospectus. The Softwood Prospectus was discussed in further detail and the Northern Forest Center updated the group on the status of the Feel Good Heat wood heat marketing campaign. A proposal to develop and maintain a Wood Products Development Council website was brought to the attention of the Council, voted on, and unanimously approved for a budget of up to $30,000.

**May 18, 2018**

The Department of Agriculture and Markets discussed the Council’s participation in the New York State Fair and the New York State Grown & Certified marketing program. The Department of Environmental Conservation updated the group on the status of the Spotted Lanternfly and Emerald Ash Borer. The Council’s maple syrup producer shared his concern about the Food and Drug Administration’s proposed changes to food nutrition labels that would have a significant impact on the maple industry. Other topics discussed included the impact of quarantines on the forest products industry, and trucking and employment concerns. Updates were shared on the Softwood Prospectus, annual report, Council website, and Modern Wood Heat Marketing Strategy.

A facilitated strategic direction session was held in the afternoon to discuss the role of the Council, how the Council operates, and which focus areas the Council should pursue. The group agreed that the Council should direct its focus to supporting New York’s forests and forest products industries in three ways:

- Focusing attention on issues of importance;
- Supporting the industry’s retention and growth; and
- Encouraging the industry’s adaptation and evolution.
In 2018, the Council sought to further its mission by exploring the issues and opportunities facing New York’s forest industry, and by initiating a series of projects and activities designed to support the forest industry, the forest landowners, and the sustainable management of the forestland itself.

- **Softwoods Prospectus**

The New York State Wood Products Development Council has identified interested parties over the past year to develop a softwood manufacturing facility or other utilization project in eastern/central New York State. The goal is to develop a sizeable market so that large volumes of maturing growing stocks of softwood timber will be utilized, and so that necessary timber management options for forest owners are expanded.

The eastern/central region of New York is over 60% forested, including 8.1 million acres of timberland owned primarily by private forest owners. The other major owner in the region is the State of New York, which owns 706,000 acres of State Forest Management lands containing significant volume of plantation softwoods, most notably Norway spruce and red pine. The softwood growing stock volume in the region has been building over decades and is now estimated to be 19.6 billion board feet. It continues to build due to an annual growth to a harvest ratio of around 3 to 1. Many pure stands of softwood and groups of trees growing in mixed hardwood forests have surpassed economic maturity and are approaching or beyond biological maturity. Local markets for softwood logs have been sparse and have been regressing since the 1950s, particularly over the last 20 years. While some markets have emerged, particularly in Quebec, Canada, and New England, they are relatively small, rely on backhauls, and do not facilitate harvest levels needed to utilize most of the state’s standing timber and regenerate stands for the future.

The prospectus detailed the species, volume, and quality of the available resource and described available business incentives in New York State. Physical and digital copies of the prospectus were distributed across the United States and internationally.
Website Development

In 2018, the Council approved funding to develop a website (woodproducts.ny.gov) to promote forestry and wood products, improve public understanding of the timber industry, and enhance the impact of the Council. Another goal of this project was to streamline and improve the accessibility of information related to New York wood products and to create a one-stop-shop for all information relating to the Council. The new website includes information on New York forests and forest products, as well as resources for the industry, forest owners, students, teachers, and the media.

Modern Wood Heat Marketing Campaign

The Council partnered with the Northern Forest Center to fund the organization’s Regional Wood Heat Marketing project. The Center used the first portion of the grant to support development of professional marketing materials for the “Automated Wood Heat” concept and the second portion for campaign implementation in New York communities. The Northern Forest Center has deployed a targeted marketing campaign in the Northern Adirondacks and the greater Ithaca area, leveraging the www.feelgoodheat.org website and associated Feel Good Heat campaign to:

- Develop partnerships and engage participants in the campaign;
- Conduct targeted marketing to focal areas through Facebook ads and Google Adwords;
- Build social media channels to expand the Feel Good Heat conversation; and
- Deploy on-the-ground outreach through personal conversations, presentations, events, and open houses.

These activities directly support the Council’s strategic goals to “support existing markets and encourage the development of new markets,” “develop focused information for a target audience,” and “conduct broader public outreach and education to address identified concerns and opportunities.” The need to grow markets for low-grade wood remains pressing.

Timber Sports and Forestry Experience Day at the New York State Fair

The Great New York State Fair celebrated its second annual Timber Sports and Forestry Experience Day on Sunday, September 2, with exhibitions, draft horses, and professional lumberjack demonstrations.

The event included activities like speed climbing, pulp toss, log rolls, and saw and axe demonstrations. A draft horse demonstration kicked off the celebration, followed by teams from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, SUNY Morrisville, SUNY Cobleskill, and Paul Smith’s College performing crosscut, bowsaw, axe throw, underhand chop, logrolling, speed climbing, and more. Fairgoers also had the opportunity to enjoy a Lumberjack Hall of Fame Museum and meet professional lumberjacks, courtesy of the New York State Woodsmen’s Field Days of Boonville. Professional lumberjack competition champions Dave and Peg Engasser showed off their skills, while Cornell Cooperative Extension hosted an educational forestry exhibit. A logging truck and mobile sawmill were also on display.
Developing Export Markets for New York Hardwoods

The United States grows more temperate hardwood species than any other country in the world. Hardwoods—including oak, maple, and cherry—are well suited for a variety of commercial applications, ranging from flooring and cabinetry to molding, furniture, and fuel. Accordingly, high-quality desirable hardwoods can be of considerable economic value. The United State’s commercially important hardwood resource is concentrated in the northeast.

Hardwoods dominate New York State’s forests; the Northern Hardwood forest type—composed primarily of American beech, yellow birch, and sugar and red maples—makes up over half of the state’s forest cover. New York hardwoods are prized worldwide for their exceptional quality and consistency. However, despite the superior qualities and tight growth rings of its hardwoods, New York must compete with other states to meet the growing global demand for American hardwood products.

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) is the leading international trade association for the United States hardwood industry, representing hardwood exporting companies and the major hardwood product trade associations. The worldwide program promotes American hardwoods in over 50 markets and more than 35 countries. All initiatives are carried out by the United States hardwood industry and the Foreign Agricultural Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. AHEC membership allows for participation in the Hardwood State Export Group—an informal coalition of trade specialists from eastern hardwood states that receive AHEC funding. The group collaborates on multi-state efforts to increase sales for United States wood product companies through the development of international markets and opportunities. The Wood Products Development Council supports New York’s membership in the AHEC. Inclusion in the association provides the state’s hardwood suppliers with a distinct advantage in an increasingly competitive global market.

The Council will continue to develop strategies to improve the business climate for New York State’s forest industry and facilitate the development of expanded and new markets for the state’s high-quality wood products. In addition to sustaining export markets in 2019, the Council will direct attention to growing domestic markets. Through improved communications between the wood products industry and architects, engineers, and builders, and with the inclusion of wood products into the New York State Grown & Certified program, the Council is well-equipped to meet this goal.