

## *Healthy Watersheds through Healthy Forests*

### **Source Water Protection and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (the Endowment)**

#### **Forests are Essential for Clean, Abundant Water**

About two-thirds of our Nation's freshwater resources originate in forests. Maintaining forested watersheds in a healthy condition ultimately reduces drinking water treatment and storage costs. A 2004 study found that for every 10% increase in forest cover within the source area, treatment and chemical costs decrease about 20% and about one-half of the variation in treatment costs can be explained by the percentage of forest cover.

#### **The Endowment's Goal**

Promote "beneficiary pays," fee-based, funding mechanisms as the most cost-effective approach to conserving and improving management of forested watersheds.

#### **The Endowment's Approach: Beneficiaries Pay**

Protecting and managing forested watersheds is cost-effective, but very significant funding is required to accomplish this necessity on a nationwide basis. The most scalable and practical approach is to empower communities to protect their own watersheds by connecting water consumers with the forest landowners who produce their water, thus putting a "face" on this important issue. The Endowment supports approaches that allow communities to generate the funding needed to protect their watersheds, including payments for watershed services, watershed protection fees on water bills, and local ballot measures that secure funding for watershed protection.

#### **The Endowment's 2013 Watershed Projects**

Watershed Protection Fees --Through a \$4 million partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Endowment is piloting projects in NC, VA and the mid-Atlantic. Raleigh, NC, instituted a watershed protection fee in 2012 that averages 40 cents/month/household, generating \$1.8 million annually for watershed protection.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund—This federally-capitalized fund provides billions in loans for water treatment. Only a few states have successfully tapped this program for source water protection. The Endowment is partnering with The Trust for Public Land to encourage more states to participate. The primary focus in 2013 is in Colorado, California, Oregon, and Washington.

Conservation Ballot Measures— In 2012, voters passed 81% of local measures for conservation through bonds or tax increases, raising an estimated \$767 million. Concern for drinking water sources motivates voters to support these measures. The Endowment is working with The Trust for Public Land and others to expand this approach to more communities across the country

The Drinking Water Community and Individual Utilities—Water utilities are critical players in source water protection issues. Their support for projects can accelerate source water protection. In partnership with the American Water Works Association, the Endowment is funding a source water protection coordinator—Tracy Mehan, of The Cadmus Group-- to more systematically engage the water

community, individual utilities, and to help implement the *Source Water Protection Vision and Roadmap*.

Economic Benefits of Green Infrastructure—Increasing evidence suggests that healthy “green” infrastructure such as forests and wetlands can significantly reduce water treatment and storage costs through traditional “gray” or bricks-and-mortar infrastructure. The ideal combination of green and gray will save water consumers money and provide many other benefits. The Endowment is working with The World Resources Institute to support their research on this important economic issue.

### Partnerships

The Endowment works closely with a wide variety of public and private partners to promote the protection and improved management of forested watersheds. Our cost-share partners include:

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
USDA Forest Service  
Department of Defense  
American Water Works Association  
The Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation  
The Gates Family Foundation  
Knobloch Family Foundation  
The Kelley Family Foundation Trust  
Sand County Foundation Bradley Fund for the Environment  
American Forest Foundation  
The Conservation Fund

**In any extreme situation, you cannot survive for more than:**

- **3 minutes without air**
- **3 hours without shelter**
- **3 days without water**
- **3 weeks without food**

**The U.S. Army Survival Manual**

*“The Endowment’s approach that links local water consumers with protection of their own watersheds holds great promise as a sustainable way for communities to address perhaps the most important natural resource issue of this century – water conservation.”*

Jason Well, Acting Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service

*“Investing in watershed conservation is the best way for our citizens to save money on their water bills in the long run. The Endowment’s financial support helped Raleigh pioneer a system that is working well for all involved.”*

Charles Meeker, former Mayor, Raleigh, NC

**The Endowment’s Mission** -- The Endowment works collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation’s working forests and forest-reliant communities.

**Contact** -- Peter Stangel; [peter@usendowment.org](mailto:peter@usendowment.org); [www.usendowment.org](http://www.usendowment.org); 404-915-2763.