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Regional Forum recommends sustaining Northern Forest, reinvigorating rural economies

Concord, NH — Governors Pataki, Douglas, Lynch, and Baldacci from New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine respectively announced the release of the final report of the Northern Forest Lands Council 10th Anniversary Forum today. The Forum report, concluding work over the last year, recommends actions to conserve the Northern Forest and reinvigorate the surrounding rural communities' economies in the four-state region.

The report, *Recommendations for the Conservation of the Northern Forest*, is an update of a 6-year, \$5 million study in completed in 1994.

The Forum work makes four major recommendations:

- invest public and private resources to reinvigorate the rural forest economies of this region
- continue public and private land conservation efforts
- support private forest landowners in practicing sustainable forest management and good stewardship while encouraging recreational public access

- continue to collaborate with stakeholders and partners in the region to realize these recommendations.

The focus area for this effort, the 26 million-acre Northern Forest, stretches from eastern Maine to Lake Ontario in western New York state and is the largest unbroken region of forest in the US.

The NFLC 10th Anniversary Forum is a 23-member group appointed by the administrations in each of the four states and organized by the North East *State* Foresters Association (NEFA). The group includes representatives from a diverse group of interests, from conservation groups, community leaders to recreational enthusiasts and timber managers. The project was funded through the USDA Forest Service State & Private Forestry, the Baskahegan Company, Huber Resources Corp. and LandVest.

The report will be made available through the NEFA website at www.nefainfo.org.