

Maine Forestry Direct Link Loan Program Enters Second Year

Source: Maine Forest Service (www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/)

The press release below announced the inauguration of the Maine Forestry Direct Link Loan Program earlier this year. Within the first six months, 12 companies' loans were financed and the allocated funds were used – indicating the success of this effort! The program anticipates that additional funds will soon be available for 2008 requests. Contact Chris Martin to find out more about 2008 available funds and equipment eligibility.

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New Financing Program Open to Landowners and Loggers

Augusta, ME — (May 4, 2007) — A new program announced today will enable Maine's forest landowners and loggers to receive low-interest financing for the purchase of environmentally-friendly equipment to help protect and improve water quality in and around logging operations.

The Maine Forestry Direct Link Loan Program is administered by the Maine Forest Service in partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, and local lenders. The program provides an incentive for landowners and loggers to purchase certain equipment that will help reduce pollution risk on logging operations. "Increasing the use of Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) through incentive financing is one of many innovative approaches the Maine Forest Service is implementing to achieve desired outcomes in Maine's actively-managed woodlands," said Maine Forest Service Director Alec Giffen.

"Green-certified" landowners and loggers, and those who have received training in harvest BMPs from the Maine Forest Service or other qualified programs, are eligible to apply. The Maine Forest Service will determine what equipment is eligible for financing and ensure that applicants are certified. Participants also agree to utilize pre-harvest planning worksheets available from the Maine Master Logger Harvest Integrity System. Periodic monitoring by the Maine Forest Service will document the improvements and practices of participating loggers. An advisory committee will review approved loans and provide guidance on eligible equipment.

"This program provides recognition for those loggers who have stepped up and committed to responsible logging operations," says Water Resources Forester Chris Martin. In its first two months of operation, the program has already helped loggers upgrade equipment in both central and northern Maine. The Maine Forest Service estimates the demand for linked deposit funds at approximately \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 annually.

The Maine Forestry Direct Link Loan Program utilizes Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds to provide low-interest rate financing for Forestry BMPs. "BMPs go beyond

regulatory minimums and thus typically afford greater natural resource protection,” Martin said.

The Maine forest products industry’s direct and indirect contributions to Maine’s economy total more than \$10 billion dollars annually. For more information on the Maine Forestry Direct Link Loan Program, contact the Maine Forest Service at 1-800-367-0223 in state, or 207-287-2791 or go to www.maineforestservice.gov.

Note to Editors: Established in 1891, the Maine Forest Service's mission is to protect and enhance our state's forest resources through forest fire prevention, technical assistance, education and outreach to the public, forest landowners, forest products processors and marketers, and municipalities.