

'Dollars in the Woods: Financial Opportunities from the Forest



Western North Carolina Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project
Funded by grants from the
American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) to
USDA Forest Service's Southern Research Station and dispersed from
Land of Sky Regional Council.

MAXINE SAYS:

'The economy is so bad, if the bank returns your check marked "Insufficient Funds", you call and ask if they meant you or them.....!'



Rural Tourism Trends on the increase:

- Agri-tourism and Silvi-Tourism
- Heritage Tourism
- Adventure Tourism
- Nature/Eco-Tourism
- Edutainment

Terms used to describe Non Timber Activities

Compatible Forest Opportunities

- Resource Harvest and Management: Lumber, Firewood, Furniture Wood
- Wildflower Plant Collection, Wild Crafting Plants
- **Mushrooms**, Christmas Trees, Apples, **Ramps**, Wild Blueberries and Blackberries, Wild Game and Fish
- Recreation: Hiking, Backpacking, Camping, Scouting, Horseback Riding, Bicycling, Sledding, Cross Country Ski, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Observation, Hunting and Fishing, Geocaching, Eventing, Photography, Landscape Painting, Pleasure Driving

- **Hospitality Services:**
Cabin rental, B&B,
Private Campgrounds, Lodges
- **Activities:** Pick Your Own (Berries),
Trout Fishing for Kids, Car/Motorcycle
Rally and Touring
- **Recreational Services:** Outfitters, Tour Guiding,
Educational Outings: students, Scouts
- **Events:** Christmas Tree “Cut Your Own”, Cider
Making and Apple Picking, Bluegrass Pickin’

Shiitake Mushroom Logs: Growers WANTED!



The NC Mountain Mushroom Cooperative
uses the Madison Family Farms Value-Added Kitchen in Marshall.
They received a ARRA Stimulus grant to expand.



Shiitake Mushrooms



Dehydrators in Value Added Kitchen, Marshall, NC



In the Cooler; MMC wants more growers! Expand marketing to Charlotte-Atlanta metro area.



Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association

Stecoah Valley Center, A 'Nexus' in Graham County



Value Added Kitchen





Ramp Dip Mix

Made from local dehydrated ramps

SMNPA is marketing this product,
Assisted by grant funds

Stecoah Valley Center
Value Added Kitchen:
Ramps prepared here



Spring Creek: A Silvicultural Community

Example of Enterprises

They form a nexus that draws more traffic

- **Drygoods, Fuel, Groceries and Food Service:**
 - Grits Café and Store
 - Trust General Store and Restaurant
 - Meadowfork Store/Deli
- **Private Campground:**
 - Meadowfork Campground
- **Rental Cabins, Cottages and Houses**
 - Meadowfork Campground/Cabins
 - Briarose Farm
 - Max Patch Cabins
 - Many others...
- **B&Bs and Lodges**
 - Sterchi Lodge (TN)
 - Kanati Lodge B&B





HUNTING LEASES

Additional income from
your forest land.

- Hunting is a recreational opportunity
- Leases can be daily, weekly, annual
- Leases can be for one species or all species
- Leases work well with absentee landowners
- Leases do not interfere with most landowners desires for the property



Considerations...

- available acreage
- habitat quality
- soil fertility
- abundance of game
- proximity to wildlife corridors
- demand in your area

Annual Lease Rates in NC

vary: \$3 - \$15/ac

What adds value to your wildlife lease?

- Ease of access
- Beautiful setting
- Lodging onsite



DO YOU...

- like working with people?
- have the right wildlife habitat?
- have hazards on your property?
- have appropriate insurance?

What is the payoff?

- additional income from leased land
 - can be combined with forestry & agricultural land uses
- increased security: they will post it
- free land maintenance (maybe; do a contract)

Conservation Programs for Financial Longevity

- Present Use Property Tax Deferment Program:
www.dor.state.nc.us/publications/property.html
- Conservation Easements: both private and government entities hold easements: contact the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
www.appalachian.org/
- Contacts: Soil & Water Conservation districts; Local Land Trusts; Agricultural Districts; Conservation Developments such as droversroad.com; Farm Transition Network www.ncftn.org
- USDA-NRCS: Conservation Stewardship Program;
- EQIP Forest Program for cost sharing practices on forestland
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/> Use these: your neighbors are....

HOW to decide

what kind of business

you want to pursue?

Use this Decision Assistance Tool Chart, in booklet:

New Crops and Agricultural Enterprises Decision Assistance Tool

Agritourism	✓	Specialty Nursery	✓	Value-Added Products	✓	Specialty Meats & Cheeses	✓	Organics	✓	Specialty Fruits & Vegetables	✓
Are you okay with having people on your farm?		Do you have greenhouses?		Do you know what your customers want?		Do you have the facilities needed?		Are you certified organic or willing to become so?		Do you have a market for your products?	
Are you in a good location for a public activity?		Do you have access to good water?		Do you have good organization and business skills?		Will there be customers for your products?		Are you willing to do paperwork and abide by the rules?		Is it legal to grow the crop of interest?	
Do you enjoy working with the public?		Do you have capital to start a nursery?		Do you have capital to start a new enterprise?		Do you know the state regulations?		Could you make a profit without a price premium?		Do you have a source of seeds or planting stock?	
Are you creative?		Do you have a good knowledge of the plants?		Are you creative and entrepreneurial?		Are you willing to do paperwork and abide by the rules?		Do you have the labor resources for weed control?		Do you have good fields to grow in?	
Do you have good social skills?		Are you willing to attend trade shows?		Are you willing to do paperwork and abide by the rules?		Do you have adequate pasture?		Do you have a market for your products?		Do you have the ability to irrigate?	
Can your roads accommodate additional traffic?		Can you handle the stress?		Do you like to cook or follow a detailed process?		Are you willing to take on a 365 day a year operation?		Do you have good fields to grow in?		Do you have post harvest facilities?	
Do you have parking, restrooms, and shelter?		Do you have entrepreneurial skills?		Are you willing to attend trade shows to sell product?		Do you have an entrepreneurial spirit?		Do you have the ability to irrigate?		Do you have labor to harvest your crops?	
Are you willing to take on the liability risks?		Do you have organizational skills?		Do you have the means to store and distribute?		Do you know where to get assistance?		Do you have post harvest facilities?		Do you have greenhouses or high tunnels?	
Are you able to promote your farm?		Do you have the basic technical skills?		Do you have a marketing plan?		Will you have adequate labor?		Do you have greenhouses or high tunnels?		Do you have an entrepreneurial spirit?	
Does local zoning permit the activity you want to do?		Are you willing to run a year round business?		Do you have family members or employees to help?		Can you find affordable sources of supplies?		Do you have access to organic supplies?		Do you know where to get assistance?	
Agritourism		Specialty Nursery		Value-Added Products		Specialty Meats & Cheeses		Organics		Specialty Fruits & Vegetables	

Instructions: Working in columns, put a check mark next to each question that you can answer "yes" to. If you answer "yes" to every item in the column, put a star in the box at the bottom. Those categories that receive a star are enterprises that you are probably well suited for right now. If you have most of the boxes checked, you might want to consider that enterprise. If you have few boxes checked, that enterprise is probably not a good fit for you.

- At <http://www.thrivenc.com/smallbusiness/start-a-new-business>:

• **Navigating Business Services in North Carolina:**

- Your “Where to Go for What” Guide

in it are 3 CHECKLISTS:

- USE THEM to help you DECIDE!

Two self-assessment checklists for entrepreneurs

The third checklist is a startup checklist

ASSESS your Forest or Farm Property

- A LAND PLAN, with forest, soils, water assessment;
- **CALL** the NC Forest Service for forest management plan
- **CALL** the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service/ Soil & Water Conservation District office for your county

For Technical & Business Start up Information:

- KEEP YOUR BOOKLET from tonight!
- Grants; small business loans: there are many potential sources of assistance, in the booklet
- <http://www.thrivenc.com/smallbusiness/start-a-new-business>

MAXINE SAYS:



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