

**Request for Proposals:**  
***Mapping the South's Protected Forests of the Future Project***

**U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Greenville, SC**  
For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (November 16, 2016)

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc. (Endowment) today announced availability of a new Request for Proposals (RFP) entitled *Mapping the South's Protected Forests of the Future*. The Endowment and the USDA Forest Service Southern Region (R8) are co-funding the project. Proposals are due to the Endowment on Friday, December 30, 2016. Up to \$100,000 is available for this project.

“Currently protected forest lands are fairly well known as a result of programs such as the National Conservation Easement Database and the Protected Areas Database U.S.,” said Carlton Owen, the Endowment’s President and CEO. “What is less well known, however, are projections for the extent and location of working forest and other types of retention in the future, should current conservation initiatives succeed as planned.”

With this information it will be possible to understand where permanently protected forests will be located and to better analyze their economic, cultural, and ecological values. It will also be possible to better understand gaps in forest connectivity and to increase collaboration among partners.

The [U.S. Southern Forest Futures forecast](#) models predict that about 12 million acres of southern forests will be urbanized between 1992 and 2020 and 19 million acres of forest will be developed between 2020 and 2040. This projected loss of 31 million acres is an area about the size of North Carolina. To help prevent this forest loss, the USDA Forest Service Southern Region has launched the Keeping Forests as Forests Initiative. The goal of this collaboration is to develop a regional vision that illustrates forest retention opportunities and also provides a common goal to promote forest benefits for all of their economic, societal and environmental values and vehicles to advance that objective. Outcomes from *Mapping the South's Protected Forests of the Future* will help inform the development of the Keeping Forests as Forests Initiative.

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The **U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities** (the Endowment) is a not-for-profit public charity working 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 – [www.usendowment.org](http://www.usendowment.org).