



# Bottomland/Wetland Working Forest Conservation Project FAQ

## 1. What is the Bottomland/Wetland Working Forest Conservation Project?

This is a co-creation process, sponsored by Enviva Biomass (Enviva) and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment), designed to develop a range of recommended options that private landowners and/or companies procuring wood from working bottomland/wetland forests in North Carolina and Virginia might use to enhance the ecological attributes and benefits of such forests.

Recommendations will be designed to build upon benefits currently provided through Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality and will be science-based and practical for forest landowners and practitioners to implement. Through this process, we also hope to develop ideas and potential collaborative solutions that would incentivize private forest landowners to manage for and protect these forest elements for the long-term.

## 2. Who are Enviva and the Endowment?

Enviva Biomass, founded in 2004, is the world's largest producer of wood pellets and owns and operates six plants in the southeastern United States, including three wood-pellet production facilities within the North Carolina-Virginia coastal plain. Enviva does not own forestland; rather, it purchases wood for its production largely from working forests owned by private forest landowners within its operating area. Enviva employs about 600 people and supports many other businesses in the rural South. To learn more about Enviva visit <http://www.envivabiomass.com/about/>

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, founded in 2006, is a not-for-profit, public charity. It was established at the request of the governments of the United States and Canada in accordance with the terms of the 2006 Softwood Lumber Agreement between the two countries. 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. Endowment leaders often state this in shorthand as: 1) keeping working forests as forests; and 2) advancing family-wage jobs in rural forest communities.

The Endowment operates under a "theory of change" that focuses on work in three areas: retaining and restoring healthy working forests; promoting and capturing multiple value streams; and enhancing community capacity, collaboration, and leadership. To learn more about the Endowment visit [www.usendowment.org](http://www.usendowment.org)



### **3. Why are Enviva and the Endowment sponsoring this project?**

Enviva recently committed to several initiatives to promote sustainable working forests in the North Carolina and Virginia area, a region that comprises 6 million acres of forests of all types that have been harvested for a variety of wood products for centuries. About 20% of these are bottomland/wetland forests – low-lying, marshy areas near rivers and streams that are home to tree species such as cypress, gum and oak that offer a wide variety of environmental benefits and contain some of the most unique plant and wildlife communities in the Atlantic coastal plain.

#### **Enviva has adopted a three-pronged plan:**

- First, the company has established the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund that will be administered by the Endowment – a \$5 million/10-year effort to protect bottomland/wetland forests in North Carolina and Virginia;
- Second, Enviva has immediately begun working with private landowners from whom it procures wood to protect discrete ecological elements including: bald cypress/tupelo swamps, Atlantic white cedar stands, pocosins and Carolina bays; and,
- Finally, Enviva and the Endowment are co-funding a process to identify additional science-based recommendations that the company and landowners could employ beyond Best Management Practices to protect water quality that would yield added ecological benefits in working bottomland/wetland forests.

To learn more about Enviva’s holistic approach and especially the second prong of its three-part plan -- a \$5 million/10-year effort to protect bottomland/wetland forests in North Carolina and Virginia – visit [www.envivaforestfund.org](http://www.envivaforestfund.org).

### **4. So, tell me more about this co-creation process.**

One prong of Enviva’s three-part plan was a commitment to work with landowners from whom Enviva procures wood to protect sensitive ecotypes within these bottomland/wetland forests. To support this effort, Enviva and the Endowment are co-funding a process that will enlist a variety of experts to help create recommendations that would be:

- Based on the best science available;
- Incentivize landowners to voluntarily manage and enhance these habitat elements over time, irrespective of who the landowner is or the customer for their wood;
- Practical, easy for a landowner or procuring organization to understand and implement; and,
- Economically viable for landowners and/or procuring organizations.



## 5. What is the ecological concern around southern bottomland forests?

Southern bottomland forests contain sensitive ecotypes such as cypress-tupelo swamps, Atlantic white cedar stands, pocosins, and Carolina bays. These forest types have been part of managed forest operations for decades. In recent years cypress and Atlantic white cedar may not have been regenerating as expected and these forest types are facing increasing threats for conversion to other uses. As one part of its commitment, Enviva has made an immediate commitment to protect the four ecotypes listed herein as part of its procurement operations.

## 6. But don't private landowners already follow Best Management Practices? Why isn't this enough?

Forest landowners are encouraged to apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) developed in each state by broad stakeholder groups to protect water quality. BMPs have been used successfully for several decades to ensure water quality protection while conducting forestry operations in all forest types, including bottomland/wetland forests. While BMPs often advance and/or provide ecological benefits, such is not their primary purpose.

## 7. Who is invited to participate in this process?

We are seeking a variety of experts and perspectives. The partners we seek should have at least **one** or more of the following attributes:

- Expertise in applied conservation science of southern bottomland forests, sensitive ecotypes, wildlife habitat, and riparian zones;
- Expertise in hydrology;
- Expertise in developing and/or implementing private forest conservation incentive programs;
- Expertise and experience in engaging private forest owners on sustainable forest management practices;
- Expertise and practical experience in forest management, silviculture and logging techniques in southern bottomland forests;
- Experience in leveraging funding or in/kind support from other sources;
- Use of knowledge and tools applied in sustainable forest management and conservation;
- Ability to increase the adoption of proven innovations in such a way that gains are sustained with minimal external inputs.
- Strong likelihood of achieving a substantial impact; or
- Enhancement of ongoing work to sustainably manage southern bottomland/wetland forests.



## 8. Why are Enviva and the Endowment using a co-creation process to develop recommendations?

Challenges and potential solutions to conserving sensitive ecotypes in southern bottomland/wetland working forest are complex and not well-understood. We believe enlisting a wide variety of scientific and practitioner expertise, and a diversity of perspectives, will help us come up with the best range of solutions that will work effectively on the ground. Additionally, by including a broad range of stakeholders to create solutions, we hope to identify potential partners to help advance common objectives.

## 9. What do I need to do to be part of this process?

Send us an expression of interest including the following items:

- **Title of the Idea or Solution**
- **Submitter's Name and Contact Information**
- **Problem Statement.** Explain the direct linkage to sustainably managing and enhancing ecological attributes of southern bottomland/wetland working forests and why the submitter is interested in working in partnership to address the problem.
- **Description of your Solution/Idea/Approach.** Include your thoughts on the practicality of your idea to be implemented and the potential for substantial, lasting impact.
- **Partnership Expectations and Value, and other relevant information.** Describe the organization or group of organizations which currently support or you believe would support the solution, the strengths they bring to a potential partnership, and any ability to provide matching resources. Describe any other relevant information, such as intellectual property rights associated with the proposed solution, etc.

Submitted expressions of interest are **required** to:

- Be a maximum of 3 pages in length, with no smaller than 12 point font;
- Submitted via email to [jess.mcglyn@gmail.com](mailto:jess.mcglyn@gmail.com) by Feb 25, 2016; and
- Be in .pdf, or .docx, or format

We anticipate receiving interest from a large number of stakeholders. Therefore, we may not be able to include everyone who expresses interest. We will notify you if space is available for your participation in the workshop by March 15th.



## **10. When will the actual co-creation process occur?**

We will hold a 3-day workshop May 12-14th, location and times to be determined. At that time, we will co-create the outlines of recommendations and solutions as described above. If needed, we will work with a sub-set of participants to continue to build out recommendations after the workshop. Our plan is to finalize recommendations and solutions by August 2016.

## **11. How does this effort relate to the Forest Guild's project on southern bottomland forests?**

The Forest Stewards Guild is developing a model of and publication on ecological forestry for bottomland hardwood forests of the southeastern United States, synthesizing scientific research with the expertise of boots-on-the-ground foresters and land managers that work in these systems to produce a practical, science-based guide to ecological management. Their geographic focus is on bottomland hardwood forests of North Carolina and Georgia, with broader regional applicability.

The Enviva effort is also seeking to develop practical science-based recommendations for ecological enhancement of bottomland forests in fulfillment of its commitment referenced in question #3, but will be focusing on where the company procures wood in Virginia and North Carolina. As such, many of the stakeholders Enviva has invited to participate in the co-creation process are from this specific region. We hope to learn from Forest Guild's and other experts' work. Beyond simply identifying actions that would be beneficial to ecological outcomes, we also hope to develop ideas and potential collaborative solutions that would incentivize private forest landowners to manage for and protect these forest elements for the long-term.