

Forest Products Innovation Corridor (FPIC)

Inaugural Kick-Off Convening

September 9–11, 2026 | Greenville, South Carolina

From Forest to Market: Building the Southeast's Bioeconomy Future

Wednesday, September 9

6:00–8:00 PM | Welcome Reception | Aloft – 5 North Laurens Street Greenville, South Carolina 29601

Thursday, September 10

7:30–8:30 AM | Registration, Breakfast & Networking | Greenville ONE – 1 Main Street Greenville, South Carolina 29601

8:30–8:50 AM | Launch of the Forest Products Innovation Corridor

From Individual State Efforts to a Regional Strategy for Forest Markets and Innovation

- M. Soledad Peresin, Director, Clemson University Wood Utilization + Design Institute
- Todd Petty, Dean, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia
- Jingxin Wang, Head, Department of Forest Biomaterials, North Carolina State University

Framing: *the case for regional action • changing forest markets • Southern forest-resource advantage • traditional & emerging market opportunities • connecting innovation to deployment • attracting manufacturing & investment • creating value for working forests • building FPIC together*

8:50–9:15 AM | Opening Market Outlook

The State of Southern Forest Markets

Moderator: Pete Madden, President & CEO, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Panelists:

- Brian Brashaw, Assistant Director, Natural Resources – Wood Innovations, U.S. Forest Service
- Nick DiLuzio, Forisk

Discussion: *forest market disruption • timber supply, demand & mill capacity • diversified markets for low-value wood • commercialization pathways • investment & infrastructure needs • landowner & rural-community value • building a resilient regional forest bioeconomy • opportunities for FPIC*

9:15–10:10 AM | Leadership Fireside Chat: A Regional Forest Economy

Perspectives from South Carolina, Georgia & North Carolina

Moderator: Todd Petty, Dean, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia

Panelists:

- Scott Phillips, Director and State Forester, South Carolina Forestry Commission
- Cam Crawford, President & CEO, Forestry Association of South Carolina
- John Sabo, Director and State Forester, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Tim Lowrimore, President & CEO, Georgia Forestry Association and Georgia Forestry Foundation
- Kevin Harvell, Deputy State Forester, North Carolina Forest Service
- John Hatcher, Executive Director, North Carolina Forestry Association

***Discussion:** lost & emerging markets • timber supply & demand • landowner needs • state successes • regional gaps • regional competitive advantage • opportunities for FPIC*

10:10–10:30 AM | Networking Break

10:30–10:45 AM | Welcome Remarks

Welcome: Mayor Knox White, City of Greenville, South Carolina

Moderator: Sam Konduros, President & CEO, Greenville Economic Development

***Welcome:** Greenville & the Upstate • economic transformation • manufacturing & innovation • regional competitiveness • industry–university–government partnerships • attracting new industries & investment • building on regional strengths*

10:45–11:40 AM | Global Keynote: From Forests to a National Bioeconomy — Lessons from Finland

Speaker: Antti Asikainen, Chair, Finnish Forest Bioeconomy Panel; Executive Vice President for Research, Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE)

Moderator: M. Soledad Peresin, Director, Clemson University Wood Utilization + Design Institute

***Discussion:** forest-sector transformation • market disruption & adaptation • diversification into a forest bioeconomy • research–industry–government collaboration • scaling innovation to markets • lessons from Finland for the Southeast*

11:40 AM–12:30 PM | Fireside Chat: Healthy Forests Need Healthy Markets

From the Finnish Experience to the Southern U.S.: Conservation, Working Forests & Market Demand

Moderator: Kristen Austin Gunter, Senior Vice President of Conservation, SustainSC

Panelists:

- Evan Smith, Senior Vice President, Conservation Ventures, The Conservation Fund
- Francis B. “Jeep” Ford III, CEO, Energy Ecosystem Partners, LLC; representing the Wallace F. Pate Foundation
- Robert Baldwin, Executive Director, Clemson Experimental Forest; Lloyd Endowed Chair
- Scott Jones, President & CEO, Forest Landowners Association
- Matt Hestad, Vice President, Georgia Forestry Foundation
- Laura Calandrella, Founder & Executive Director, Keeping Forests

***Discussion:** working forests & conservation • landowner economics • consequences of lost markets • emerging markets as conservation tools • lessons from Finland • keeping forests as forests • opportunities for FPIC*

12:30–1:30 PM | Lunch & Global Keynote: Creating Forest Value and Markets Through Function

Speaker: Orlando Rojas, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Bioproducts & Scientific Director, Bioproducts Institute, University of British Columbia; incoming Governor’s Chair, University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Moderator: M. Soledad Peresin, Director, Clemson University Wood Utilization + Design Institute

***Discussion:** creating value through function • forest-derived advanced materials & bioproducts • connecting material properties to market needs • reaching non-traditional industries • science-to-market translation • commercialization & scale-up • opportunities for the Southeast*

1:30–2:15 PM | Policy. *Public-Sector Tools, Incentives, Challenges & Pathways from Innovation to Deployment*

Moderator: Trip Chavis, President & CEO, Milliken Advisors

Panelists:

- John Lummus, President & CEO, Upstate SC Alliance
- William Bowers, Government Affairs, Forest Landowners Association Guild
- Jackson Morrill, CEO, American Wood Council
- Bill Tobin, Senior Vice President of Construction and Innovation, SmartLam

Discussion: *barriers from innovation to deployment • incentives & public-sector tools • codes, standards & procurement • attracting manufacturing investment • creating durable market demand • landowner & industry needs • regional policy alignment • opportunities for FPIC*

2:15–3:15 PM | Company Innovation Pitches I

Biomass • Bioenergy • Biomaterials • Bioproducts

Moderators: M. Soledad Peresin, Director, Clemson University Wood Utilization + Design Institute

Companies:

- Bioderivatives Inc. — Tyler Burkholder, CEO
- Carolina Renewables — Robert Bryan, CEO
- Wakefield Biochar — Tom Marrero, CEO
- AirBurners — Michael Schmitt, Director of Sales

Discussion: *low-value & residual biomass utilization • technology-to-market pathways • feedstock requirements & scale • distributed vs. centralized deployment • products & offtake markets • commercialization barriers • investment & demonstration needs • opportunities for regional deployment*

3:15–3:35 PM | Networking Break

3:35–4:30 PM | Company Innovation Pitches II

Biomass • Bioenergy • Biomaterials • Bioproducts

Moderator: Todd Petty, Dean, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia

Companies:

- ReWOOD Center, Georgia Tech — Stefan France
- Mosaic Colors & Additives — Joey Espinosa
- Green Eagle / Natura™ — Guerry Green, Vice President
- Liquid Lignin LLC — David Bruce and Michael Lake, Co-Founders

Discussion: *forest resources to higher-value products • market-driven innovation • emerging biomaterials & bioproducts • customer demand & market adoption • value vs. volume • commercialization & scale-up • manufacturing & demonstration needs • opportunities for regional deployment*

4:30–5:30 PM | Financing the Forest Bioeconomy: Investment & Commercialization

Moderator: Troy Harris, Founder & President, Boundary Stone, LLC

Panelists:

- Trevor Cutsinger, Vice President, Natural Capital Solutions, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities
- Brian Brashaw, Assistant Director, Natural Resources – Wood Innovations, U.S. Forest Service

- Mark Woloszyn, Director, Investment Strategy and Analytics, Resource Management Service (RMS)
- Cliff Holekamp, Co-Founder & General Partner, Cultivation Capital

Discussion: *lessons from the company pitches • promising vs. investment-ready • investor & funder perspectives • commercialization gaps • de-risking & demonstration • public, catalytic & private capital • innovation-to-scale continuum • building an investment-ready FPIC pipeline*

5:30–7:00 PM | Networking Reception | Fireforge Crafted Beer – 311 E Washington St, Greenville, SC 29601

connect • continue the conversation • explore partnerships • meet innovators, investors & regional collaborators

Friday, September 11

7:30–8:15 AM | Breakfast Networking | Greenville ONE – 1 Main Street Greenville, South Carolina 29601

8:15–8:30 AM | Welcome & Day 2 Framing — From Strategy to Implementation

Speaker: M. Soledad Peresin, Director, Clemson University Wood Utilization + Design Institute

Framing: *Day 1 takeaways • from strategy to implementation • connecting resources, innovation, markets & capital • building a regional innovation ecosystem • defining FPIC priorities • opportunities for collaboration • moving from ideas to action*

8:30–9:15 AM | Building a Competitive U.S. Forest Bioeconomy: From Innovation to Markets

Moderator: Guy Sabin, Resource Development Section Chief, South Carolina Forestry Commission

Panelists:

- Masood Akhtar, President, BioRenewable DC
- Dipti Kamath, Guidance Team Center for Research and Advancement of Forest Products Technologies (CRAFT), Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Discussion: *innovation-to-market pathways • technology demonstration & scale-up • barriers to commercialization • national laboratory & industry capabilities • manufacturing deployment • building the innovation ecosystem • connecting national & regional resources • CRAFT–FPIC opportunities • U.S. competitiveness*

9:15–10:00 AM | Building the Bioeconomy Ecosystem: From Energy to Chemicals, Materials and Beyond

Moderators: Jingxin Wang, Head, Department of Forest Biomaterials/Daniel Saloni, Director of Graduate Programs, Department of Forest Biomaterials, North Carolina State University

Panelists:

- Jerrold Miller, R&D Technical Director – New Product Development and Scale Up, Kraton
- Kent Fonvielle, Co-Head & COO Power & Infrastructure, Pacolet Milliken Enterprises, LLC
- Derek Ratchford, CEO, SmartLam

Discussion: *building a forest bioeconomy ecosystem • forest resources & infrastructure • energy, chemicals, materials & advanced wood products • volume + value markets • industrial scale-up & manufacturing • customer & market demand • connecting the value chain • regional competitive advantage • priorities for FPIC*

10:00–10:20 AM | Networking Break

10:20–10:45 AM | Keynote: Mass Timber & the Built Environment

More Than a Material: How Human Experience May Become Mass Timber's Greatest Competitive Advantage

Speaker: Melinda Lehman, Vice President, Innovations, Britt, Peters & Associates

Moderator: Brunela Rodrigues, Clemson University Department of Forestry and Environmental Conservation. Wood Utilization + Design Institute

Discussion: *mass timber & the built environment • human experience & biophilic design • creating demand for wood buildings • value beyond structural performance • owners, developers & occupants • market differentiation • expanding mass timber adoption in the Southeast*

10:45–11:45 AM | Mass Timber is happening TODAY. From Design to Delivery: The Southern Mass Timber Value Chain

Mass Timber • Manufacturing • Construction • Advanced Wood Products

Moderator: Dustin Albright, Assistant Director, School of Architecture; Associate Professor of Architecture, Clemson University

Companies:

- SmartLam — Derek Ratchford, CEO/Bill Tobin, Senior Vice President of Construction and Innovation, SmartLam
- Timberlab — Graham Montgomery, Vice President & Director of Preconstruction
- Hanbury — Jared Coffin, AIA, LEED AP, Design Principal
- Simpson Strong-Tie — Daniel Hesington
- Britt, Peters & Associates — David Impson

Discussion: *mass timber & advanced wood products • design-to-construction value chain • market demand & adoption • cost, constructability & performance • manufacturing & project delivery • barriers to scale • Southern competitive advantage • cross-sector collaboration • opportunities for FPIC*

11:45 AM–12:15 PM | From Ideas to Action: Corridor Priorities & What Happens Next

Defining Near-Term Opportunities, Partnerships & Commitments

- M. Soledad Peresin, Director, Clemson University Wood Utilization + Design Institute
- Todd Petty, Dean, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia
- Jingxin Wang, Head, Department of Forest Biomaterials, North Carolina State University

Discussion: *convening takeaways • emerging corridor priorities • near-term action plan • working groups & partnerships • opportunities to participate • project & demonstration pipeline • upcoming FPIC milestones & dates • commitments & next steps*

12:15–12:30 PM | Closing Reflections & Adjourn

Healthy Markets, Working Forests & the Road Ahead

- M. Soledad Peresin, Director, Clemson University Wood Utilization + Design Institute

Closing Reflections: Scott Jones, President & CEO, Forest Landowners Association

Take-home message: *healthy markets & working forests • landowner economics • durable & diversified forest markets • active forest management • keeping forests as forests • regional collaboration • the challenge ahead for FPIC*