

Making Wood WERC for US

The Challenge

According to the National Forestry Association, approximately half of the U.S. wood supply is grown by independent private forest landowners nationwide. That percentage is even higher in the East, where prized hardwoods grow. It's no coincidence that the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (NA) works with private landowners in this part of the country.

NA is focused on sustaining not only privately owned forests but also the markets for products from these forests, including woody biomass. One way NA helps the hardwood industry compete within the global marketplace is through the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) in Princeton, WV.

The Solution

WERC reaches out to the 35 States in the eastern hardwood region by providing competitive grants—the hallmark of all NA programs. In 2006, the center awarded more than \$1.7 million for 34 projects, which was matched by grant recipients. Thirteen of the projects investigated using woody biomass for energy or value-related products. One project explored the design and potential development of a rapid deployment wood recovery system that could potentially be used to process larger types of woody debris generated during disasters such as hurricanes and invasive species outbreaks.

Resulting Benefits

WERC is continuing a long tradition of NA support for biomass projects. Since 1999, NA has invested more than \$6 million in 69 biomass or biomass-related projects.

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WOOD EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTER

The Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry oversees the Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center in Princeton, WV.

Three significant examples of projects funded by WERC include:

- The New Hampshire Biomass Partnership received \$10,000 for a feasibility study and design work for a wood-fired central heating system for a rehabilitation center for disabled people.
- The Vermont North Country Hospital received funding for a feasibility study and technical assistance for a combined heat and power plant, which is now up and running and saving the hospital as much as \$250,000 each year.
- A partnership was developed in Anne Arundel County, MD, to explore the technical and economic feasibility of a pilot waste-to-energy plant that could potentially use wood waste, animal waste, and landfill gas.

Sharing Success

WERC continues to support biomass initiatives throughout the eastern hardwood region. In fiscal year 2006, 10 of the grants awarded by WERC, worth a total of nearly \$600,000, involved efforts to use woody biomass. For more information about WERC, visit www.na.fs.fed.us/werc.



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