



WOOD^{to} ENERGY

Biomass Ambassador Guide



Outreach Tools

The outreach tools suggested in this guide are grouped into categories based on the overarching outreach goals of raising public awareness, increasing comprehension, and engaging the public. Within each category, a brief list of useful outreach tools is provided and then one tool is highlighted and described in greater detail in three “Insight” sections. Each highlighted tool was implemented in a pilot Wood to Energy Outreach Program during the spring and fall of 2006 in Gainesville, Florida. We have included reflections from our experiences and key lessons learned within each section.

These outreach tools can be modified and implemented to fit more than one category. For example, if you present information at a city or county commission meeting, you may be increasing comprehension through an interactive question and answer session, or you may be raising awareness for community members who choose to watch the meeting on TV or access the recorded minutes from the meeting. If you plan a community field trip to investigate how other communities use wood for energy, the experience can be designed to help participants build an understanding of complex energy systems. The field trip can also be designed so that participants collect data and lessons learned from the facility and apply this information to their own community’s energy plan—a scenario that both increases comprehension and engages the participants in decision-making processes.

The following descriptions of the suggested outreach tools are based on two books that comprehensively cover many outreach tools for use in the natural resource field: *Conservation Education and Outreach Techniques* by Susan K. Jacobson, Mallory D. McDuff, and Martha C. Monroe and *Communication Skills for Conservation Professionals* by Susan K. Jacobson. See the “Resources” for the complete citations as well as additional resources that can provide more in-depth information about outreach tools.



Pilot testing outreach tools is essential to help you determine if the tool is effectively reaching your goals and specific objectives. Before printing a new publication, consider pilot testing it with a small group representative of your target audience. For example, if you prepare a newsletter, have a group of neighbors provide feedback before you widely distribute it. For some tools, such as community field trips, time and money constraints may make pilot testing unfeasible. In this case, conduct as much prior research as possible and try to discuss your plans for the trip with people who have past experience using similar outreach tools.

Raising Public Awareness

There are many types of tools that can help raise awareness about the local possibility of using wood for energy. Many of these tools are one-way communication strategies, where the information is going from the agency or expert to the public. These tools are excellent for reaching a large number of people; however, since they offer little

interaction with the public, they are not always effective at addressing misconceptions or answering questions.

- *Community Web site* – Develop a community Web site or add a page to an existing Web site that provides information and resources to learn about using wood for energy. To make the Web site more interactive, incorporate an on-line forum or bulletin board where community members can voice opinions and ask questions.
- *Dear neighbor letter* – Write a friendly letter to local residents to invite them to an upcoming event, introduce the idea of using wood for energy, or provide other relevant information. To save postage, this letter can also be sent by e-mail. But remember that while most people have access to the Internet in their homes or public libraries, a portion of the population cannot be reached this way.
- *Information booth* – Gather materials for an information booth that you can set up at festivals, fairs, farmers' markets, concerts, or exhibitions. Your booth can consist of a display board or posters, and informational materials to pass out (brochures, fact sheets, case studies, etc.). This approach provides an open atmosphere where people have the option to pick up information or have short discussions on relevant issues.
- *Letter to the editor* – Write a letter to the editor of the community's local newspaper about the possibility of using wood for energy. This is a free method of getting your message out and reaches many community members, including local policy-makers. Monitoring responses to your letter can reveal information about public perceptions.
- *Media opportunities* – Use the media to communicate with the public through an article, a series of articles, a radio/television interview, or a news story. Send a news release to the local newspapers, television stations, or radio stations and talk with editors and reporters about covering the issue of using wood for energy. You can also use the media to publicize your upcoming wood-to-energy event. See the piece "Insight: Media Opportunities" in this section for more details.
- *Newsletters* – Write articles for existing organizational newsletters or create a newsletter that contains information on the use of wood for energy, such as articles on the topic, interviews with key community leaders or experts, and lists of upcoming related events. Rather than incur the costs of mailing, you can distribute the newsletter by e-mail or place copies around the community and with interested organizations. Again, consider whether the Internet is a good way to reach your target audience.
- *Posters and signs* – Develop a poster or sign to depict some aspect of using wood for energy and display it at meetings and conferences, or get permission to hang it in appropriate buildings such as the city hall or community center. To build community awareness, create a simple, balanced message about using wood for energy and where to get more information.
- *Public access television* – If the community has public access television, you may be able to show previously recorded video footage of a community forum, meeting, discussion group, or presentations from a symposium. If you have enough time and resources, you can also develop a short program about using wood for energy and interview local residents about their perceptions of the issue. The time slots for public access television are usually 30 or 60 minutes.
- *Residential mailing* – If you have the resources, general fact sheets, postcards, or brochures that introduce using wood for energy can be mailed to all or a portion of community residents. While this method can be expensive and time-consuming, direct mailings can help increase community awareness.

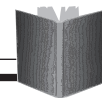
- *Special event* – Host a special event involving the topic of using wood for energy, e.g., a Wood to Energy Open House. Ask local energy and forestry professionals to set up information booths or displays. Have a few scheduled activities and then let folks meander freely to pick up information and network. Special events are a good way to share information and build community awareness.



Insight: Media Opportunities

The mass media can provide inexpensive opportunities to communicate with large audiences about using wood for energy. Your message can reach the public through a variety of media sources such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, or the Internet. When using the media to communicate with the public, consider your outreach objectives and the intended audience. For example, in one community the local newspaper may be the residents' preferred way to receive information, while in another community a local radio program might reach the most people. In addition, consider using multiple media sources so that your message will reach diverse groups within the community.

Effectively communicating and working with reporters helps you reach the public with specific information about an issue. The information you provide the media should be newsworthy, meaning it is timely, location-specific, interesting, and relevant to the audience. News releases and articles, interviews, media alerts, and press kits are some ways that you can get your information to the media. A news release, also called a press release, is a short written piece (usually one page) that is used to share information with the media. You can send a news release about using wood for energy to local newspapers and magazines, as well as radio or television news stations. It is common to send the same news release to multiple media organizations. See Box 4 for some key points about working with the media.



Templates for news releases and other materials for communicating with the media are on the Wood to Energy CD and at <http://www.interfacesouth.org/woodybiomass>.

Box 4. Media Tips ADAPTED FROM JACOBSON 1999

- Get to know your local media, and the different departments within the organizations, and try to make personal contacts with reporters and columnists.
- Keep in mind your specific objective for using the media.
- Be careful what you write and say for public consumption, especially if you don't want it repeated or misconstrued in the media.
- Know your audience, appeal to their interests, and address their concerns.
- Make sure your information is newsworthy, relevant, and interesting.
- All materials should be brief, concise, and written at an eighth grade level.
- Feature the most important information in the beginning of a news release or interview.
- Make sure to include who, what, when, where, and how for your message.
- Use relevant photographs or graphics to enhance your message.
- Provide background information to help the reporter or editor better understand the issue.
- Try not to overload the reporter with unnecessary materials or information.

Let's take a closer look at two common ways to communicate with the public through the media. You can use the media to raise community awareness about using wood for energy or to publicize your upcoming outreach events.

Increasing Community Awareness through the Media

If you are trying to increase awareness, the particular issue or aspect of wood to energy that you choose to highlight will vary by community. For instance, if the community is not considering using wood, but has increasing population and electricity demand, you may write a news release that introduces the idea of using wood as one component of meeting growing energy needs and include quotes from community leaders or local residents. (A sample news release is offered in Box 5.) Or, if the community is already considering using wood, this may be a good time to be a guest on a local radio program and introduce some additional aspects of woody biomass such as economic impacts or sustainable forest management. The key point is to make sure the aspect of wood for energy that you cover is relevant and interesting to the community. Remember to provide your contact information so the reporter can get in touch with you for additional information.

Publicizing Events through the Media

The media is a great way to advertise your upcoming wood-to-energy outreach events. By getting the word out early, you can increase community participation. Members of the media usually need information at least one week before the announcement; however, the earlier you get the information to them, the better. Developing a rapport with the people in the media who edit and compile community events is helpful in making



Make sure you ask your media contact to publicize the event with enough time for people to make plans to attend. For example, a notice in the paper the day of or the day before the event may not give people time to find a babysitter, get off work early, find transportation, etc.

ing sure your event gets publicized. You may send an announcement to local radio and television stations to encourage attendance to a community forum (Box 6). Or you can write a news release to advertise upcoming outreach events, such as community forums or an open house (Box 7). Some communities also have a local government channel that will advertise local events and issues.

Sample Press Kit

Along with the news release you may want to send a cover letter, a short list of common questions and answers (Box 8), and relevant materials from the "Fact Sheets," "Case Studies," and "Community Economic Profiles" sections behind tabs five, six, and seven. This packet, referred to as a *press kit*, should contain materials that can help a reporter write the story.

Our Media Reflections, Fall 2006

From our experience in Gainesville's pilot outreach program, we learned that the timing of the news release is an important consideration. We used the local newspaper to both raise community awareness and to publicize our community forums. Even though the news release was sent to the media contact early enough, the announcement was printed in the Sunday paper, just a few nights before the forums. People may not have had time to plan to attend, which may have affected participation numbers. Our advanced communication with the reporter was not quite sufficient, and we suggest more specific communication about expectations for publicizing the event with enough time for people to

Box 5. Sample News Release to Increase Awareness**For Immediate Release**

October 15, 2006

For more information contact: Lauren McDonell at wood2energy@ifas.ufl.edu

**CITY COMMISSION DISCUSSING THE USE OF WOOD FOR ENERGY
AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO FOSSIL FUELS**

Gainesville, Florida

The most recent meeting of the Gainesville city commissioners proved just how serious elected officials and residents are about finding alternatives to another coal plant. A wood-fueled power plant is among the options being considered for meeting our future energy needs. Many issues, such as land-use change, costs, environmental impacts, jobs, health, and climate change surround the type of fuel we use to produce energy. How would using wood for energy affect our community and what do residents of Gainesville and Alachua County need to know about this fuel source?

Concerns about global climate change due to human-made greenhouse gas emissions and our over-reliance on foreign fuel have resulted in increased attention for alternatives to fossil fuels—such as solar and wind power, biofuels, and woody biomass. Wayne Smith, professor emeritus from the University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation, explains, “Wood, the long-standing traditional source of energy, was largely replaced in the late 19th century by fossil fuels, which were abundant, easily harvested, and versatile in use.”

But things have changed. Smith continues, “Now that fossil fuels are in shorter supply, more expensive to obtain, less secure, and whose environmental costs are better known, wood, a fuel source that lacks most of these problems, is an increasingly attractive energy source. While not infinite, it is renewable.”

Just like solar and wind power, wood represents an ongoing source of energy, as long as it is managed properly; that is, as long as we do not harvest more wood than local forests can provide without being negatively affected. Local forests can be managed sustainably to ensure environmental quality. In addition, wood is a carbon-neutral source of energy, meaning that it does not raise the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, providing trees are replanted.

According to UF post-doctoral researcher Matthew Langholtz, there is enough wood available within one hour of Gainesville Regional Utilities’ Deerhaven Facility to produce 30 megawatts of power with capacity to service approximately 12,000 homes, at less than \$2.50 per million Btu—a cost that is competitive with conventional energy. Cost is one of the issues that the city and GRU are considering. As local resident Sarah Fishback says, “The high cost of energy in Alachua County is a huge problem.” Using wood for power may also represent an economic benefit by helping to retain money in the local area and potentially becoming a driver for economic development.

There are still a number of concerns regarding the use of wood for fuel, including the effect on local forests, the likely increase of truck traffic to deliver the wood, and potential impacts on air quality. While Gainesville city commissioners have a big decision on their hands, residents of Gainesville and Alachua County can play an important role in this decision-making process by getting involved and participating in the local discussions about energy issues.

For more information about using wood for energy or to get involved in community discussions about our energy resources, please contact Lauren McDonell at wood2energy@ifas.ufl.edu.

Box 6. Sample Radio Announcement for Publicity

Equip yourself to be part of Gainesville's energy discussion! A Wood to Energy Forum will be held next Tuesday night, November 28th, at the Millhopper Branch of the Alachua County Library at 7pm. The library is at 3145 NW 43rd Street in Gainesville. Come learn about some perspectives on using wood for generating electricity in Gainesville and share your questions and concerns.

What: A Wood to Energy Community Forum

Who: A Team of Researchers

When: 7:00pm on Tuesday, November 28, 2006

Where: Millhopper Branch of Alachua County Public Library

For more information, please e-mail wood2energy@ifas.ufl.edu

Box 7. Sample News Release for Publicity

For Immediate Release

November 1, 2006

Contact: Lauren McDonell, wood2energy@ifas.ufl.edu

UPCOMING COMMUNITY FORUMS FOCUS ON USING WOOD FOR ENERGY

Gainesville, Florida

As the Gainesville City Commission considers a wood-fueled power plant among the options for meeting our future energy needs, a series of community forums about wood-to-energy possibilities will be offered to involve residents in the discussion. During the next two weeks, the forums will be held in the evening at different locations in Gainesville.

The purpose of the forums is to help residents educate themselves about the advantages and disadvantages of using wood to generate power. Martha Monroe, associate professor at the University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation, believes there is an important role for the public to play in environmental decisions. "The most valuable opinions are those based on informed judgment. This series of forums shares the information we have and provides an opportunity for residents to ask questions, discuss the issues, and voice concerns," she said.

Information will be provided on various aspects of using wood for energy, such as environmental and economic impacts, potential sources for wood locally, the technology used in wood-fueled power plants, and sustainable forestry practices. You are invited to come and learn more about the energy possibilities in your town!

Times and places for the community forums are as follows:

- Wednesday, November 15th, 7pm-8pm, Civic Media Center, 1021 University Avenue,
- Monday, November 27th, 7pm-8pm, Main Branch Library, 401 E. University Avenue,
- Tuesday, November 28th, 7pm-8pm, Millhopper Branch Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street.

Box 8. Media Questions and Answers*What is woody biomass?*

Woody biomass is plant material that comes from trees and shrubs. Branches, trunks, limbs, shrubs, and vines are all types of woody biomass.

Where does woody biomass come from?

Woody biomass can come from many sources. A major source of woody biomass is found right in our backyards, since urban waste wood and roadside trimmings can be collected and used as fuel. Land clearing for development can provide another source of woody biomass. In addition, by-products of local forestry industries, such as leftover tops and branches or poorly formed trees can be used. Trees can also be grown specifically for energy production, just as they are grown for paper or lumber production.

How can woody biomass be used to generate energy?

Wood can be used for fuel at utilities similar to the way that coal is used to generate electricity. Although there are lots of different ways to convert wood to energy, typically fuel (wood or coal) is burned to create steam in boilers, which is passed through steam turbines to generate power. Wood can be converted into gas or oil, and then those fuels, commonly called syn-fuels, can be burned to produce energy. Wood can be used in institutions such as hospitals and schools to generate heat, electricity, hot water, or any combination of the three. Wood can also be used to produce steam or electricity for industrial processes such as powering a sawmill. Furnaces and boilers can be designed to use wood, alone, or in combination with other fuel sources.

How much energy can be produced from woody biomass?

Wood-fired power plants typically generate from 1 to 50 MW of electricity. In addition, industrial and commercial facilities can use wood to generate steam and electricity using combined heat and power (CHP) systems on-site, or can just generate steam, hot water, or hot air on-site. Large coal power facilities can co-fire wood with coal to improve air emissions. Some facilities would not require modification if they accept a maximum of 5% of their fuel as wood.

How can we protect our local forests and use woody biomass for energy?

Using wood for energy provides another economic market that may encourage landowners to sustainably manage their forests rather than sell their land for development. If appropriate management practices are used for growing and harvesting forests, environmental impacts are minimized. Many programs and certifications exist that provide timber growers with information and tools to implement sustainable practices. In addition, energy companies can hire a forester to ensure these practices are being implemented on lands where they obtain wood.

Is woody biomass more expensive than coal?

In areas where woody biomass is readily and economically available on a sustainable basis, and where coal must be transported long distances, energy from wood can be economically competitive with energy from coal. This depends on how far both fuels are transported, how much is needed, and the quality of the fuel.

make plans to attend. And as reporters are not always in a position to determine what gets in the paper and when, it is a good idea to cultivate connections with editors and other managers at local media. In reviewing our approach, we also realize that we should have contacted additional media (radio stations and local TV stations) in order to reach a larger audience.

Increasing Comprehension

To increase comprehension about the various issues that surround using wood for energy, outreach tools may share detailed, technical information and involve interaction

between the participants and the agency or experts. The intended audiences for these tools may differ between community and industry leaders, scientific communities, and the general public. A key consideration here is to make sure the level of the information you provide is appropriate for the intended audience.

- *Brochures or fact sheets* – Brochures or fact sheets can be strategically placed at state forestry and county extension offices, community centers, stores, and libraries. These tools may contain basic information or may be more technical. Make sure the information is at an appropriate level for the audience you are targeting. Check back often to assess whether people are picking up materials and refill when necessary. This is a good method to reach many people but is limited in terms of personal interaction with the community.
- *Community field trip* – Invite interested community members to an organized tour of a nearby wood-powered facility, a wood-handling operation, or a local forest that is sustainably managed. While the field trip may involve a substantial time commitment from participants, experiential learning opportunities like these can be helpful and memorable.
- *Conference presentation* – Conferences are great places to network with people of similar interests, share ideas, and build new skills. If your target audience includes conference attendees, this could be a good tool to use. Think about the types of conferences that would attract the people you want to reach, such as forest landowners, county administrators, or energy companies. Conference audiences are often interested in more detailed information. You could submit an abstract to present a paper or poster about some aspect of using wood for energy.
- *Presentations at city or county commission meetings* – Request time to speak at local governmental meetings and plan a presentation that is relevant to the community leaders. You can provide an overview of using wood for energy, costs and benefits of using wood, the sustainable supply of wood, the economic impacts, etc. This provides an opportunity to share specific information with local leaders, and because these meetings are public forums, they also serve to inform the residents about using wood for energy. Bring enough copies of simple, accurate handouts or fact sheets to share with the commission and attendees.
- *School programs* – Volunteer to be a guest speaker at a local school to introduce energy concepts and to explain where woody biomass fits into energy systems as a renewable fuel. Engage students in an age-appropriate activity and ask the teacher to invite parents and other guests if possible. This would allow you to raise awareness and build understanding with students, teachers, and parents.
- *Symposium* – A symposium is a brief technical or academic conference. Hold a symposium with multiple presentations, round-table discussions, and posters that cover the different aspects (technology, sustainable forestry, environmental benefits, renewable energy, etc.) of using wood for energy. Your available time and resources may determine the length and complexity of the symposium. Depending on your format and program, local community leaders may be audience members or panelists. See the following for more information.



Insight: Symposium

A symposium brings together many different people and covers a variety of issues or topics that surround a central theme. You can participate in a symposium or organize your own. In order to suit your needs, objectives, and available time and resources, you can organize a symposium in a variety of ways. A combination of presentation styles,

such as keynote speakers, traditional presentations, panel discussions, round-table discussions, or poster sessions can be used to discuss the various aspects of using wood for energy. Topics may include such issues as uses of woody biomass, sustainable forest management, woody biomass and forest health, sources of woody biomass, woody biomass and energy technologies, economic impacts, financing facilities, regulations and incentives, case studies of biomass use, and public perceptions of woody biomass.

The following guidelines can help you organize a successful symposium:

1. Assess your available resources in terms of time, money, volunteers, and potential donors. Develop objectives for a woody biomass symposium and consider the size, interests, and needs of the audience you hope to reach. All of these factors will help you decide how large or small, simple or complex, long or short, technical or non-technical the symposium should be. At this point, you should have a good idea of the central theme, topic areas, number of presenters, presentation styles and lengths, and length of symposium (usually one or two days).
2. Next, determine the location and date(s) of the symposium. Hotels with conference rooms can offer both meeting space and lodging for presenters and participants. Rates may be less expensive if a block of hotel rooms is reserved along with the conference room. Alternatively, you can reserve a meeting space at a local college, library, or community center. When choosing a symposium location, keep in mind that out-of-town presenters and participants will need lodging, transportation, and nearby restaurants. Make sure that the conference room(s) or meeting space is large enough to accommodate the size and style of the symposium you are planning.
3. Most symposia and conferences charge a registration fee for attendance. You will need to estimate the symposium costs, taking into consideration the cost of meeting space, materials (e.g., notepads, pens, name tags, flip charts, audio-visual equipment rental, brochures, mailings, and banners), refreshments, meals, etc. You may wish to ask for contributions from local companies and organizations that would like to be involved with the symposium. You could even include an area for companies and organizations to display exhibits for a fee or in return for donations of materials or funds. The more affordable you make the registration fee, the more people will be able to attend.
4. Some symposia offer continuing education credits to participants. These may be offered through professional forestry, economic development, or utility organizations. If you choose to do this, you will need to contact the continuing education coordinators for the appropriate professions in your state or region for more information. Offering continuing education credits or even a certificate of completion provides people with an incentive to attend.
5. Presenters should be invited at least three to four months in advance. You will need to provide potential presenters with a brief synopsis of the symposium explaining the theme, related topics, presentation styles and lengths, dates, and location. They will also need to know in advance whether or not they will be compensated and whether travel, accommodations, and food will be provided. Following are some of the types of presenters you may want to invite: representatives from utility companies, university or college professors, energy consultants, representatives from the forestry



A template for a letter of acceptance for a symposium is also available on the Wood to Energy CD and at <http://www.interfacesouth.org/woodybiomass>.

industry or public land management agencies, and community leaders. Presenters should be competent public speakers with experience in some aspect of using wood for energy. Presenters employed by public agencies usually do not charge to speak as long as their travel and accommodations are provided, though some may be able to cover these expenses too. Make sure to keep in contact with presenters by sending them a confirmation letter (Box 9), other symposium information, and updates.

6. You should also begin contacting potential participants at least three to four months in advance. Make a brochure or flyer about the event, including all the important details, and distribute it through your networks, organizations, and media outlets (Figure 2). You should have already determined (in step 1) the audience you are trying to reach, and can begin to contact them through e-mail lists, Web sites, direct mailings, and posters or flyers. If you're offering professional development or continuing education credits, you may be able to advertise in the appropriate professional newsletters or journals.



Make sure to provide time for symposium participants to interact. Refreshment and meal breaks are good opportunities for participants to get to know each other. Panel discussions and small group interactive sessions help engage participants in active learning.

7. At this point, you are ready to develop the symposium agenda. Depending on the symposium duration, the number of presenters, and presentation styles and lengths, you may choose to have general sessions (also called *plenary sessions*) which are attended by all participants, offer concurrent sessions (more than one session occurs at the same time), or a combination (general session in the morning and concurrent sessions in the afternoon). The sample brochure in Figure 2 includes a symposium agenda.

Box 9. Sample Letter of Acceptance for Symposium

February 2, 2006

Dear Martha,

Thank you for agreeing to be a speaker for the annual SAF/SFRC Spring Symposium, March 28-29. Your presentation will be a significant contribution to an excellent program and list of speakers. We are excited about the theme: "Fueling the Future: The Role of Woody Biomass." This is an important topic for natural resources professions and a critical issue for the whole nation. The State-of-the-Union message and other recent news have certainly pushed it to the forefront. Registration brochures (copy enclosed) for the Symposium have gone out and we anticipate a full house.

You are invited to participate in all activities, and we hope you will be able to stay for the entire Symposium. You are welcome at the Tuesday evening dinner at the Austin Cary Memorial Forest. We will also cover your registration and meal costs for the symposium. We are planning 30 minutes for most presentations, with a 20 to 25 minute talk and 5 to 10 minutes for discussion and questions after each speaker. The site of the meeting, the Paramount Conference Center, is well equipped for slide, overhead, computer and video projection. Please send an abstract of your talk and a short biography by March 21. We will include this information in the symposium program. Also please let us know which audiovisual equipment you will need. Again, we truly appreciate your participation in the Symposium. We are looking forward to a great event and to working with you.

With best regards,

Alan J. Long
Co-chair, Spring Symposium

Shibu Jose
Co-chair, Spring Symposium

FUELING THE FUTURE: THE ROLE OF WOODY BIOMASS

March 28–29, 2006 Gainesville, Florida

About the Symposium

Woody biomass, the largest source of bioenergy that has been used for thousands of years for cooking and heating, has received considerable attention in the recent past as a “fuel of the future”. Our public and private forests could provide a reliable supply of woody biomass for bioenergy production while reducing wildfire threats and the staggering cost of fighting those fires. Development and commercialization of such biobased and bioenergy products provide new and expanded markets and help reduce our dependence on non-renewable energy sources. The expected increase of biomass energy, particularly from woody biomass, could play a significant role in diversifying the forestry sector and revitalizing forestry dependent communities in the South and elsewhere in the country. At the 37th Annual SAF/SFRC Spring Symposium a wide spectrum of leading experts from around the country will describe the role of woody biomass in fueling the future.

The John Gray Lecture will keynote the Symposium and will be presented by Dr. Ann Bartuska, Deputy Chief of the USDA Forest Service.

Continuing Education Credit

The Symposium offers 7 Category 1 Continuing Forestry Education (CFE) credits as authorized by the Society of American Foresters.

Tuesday Night Dinner

Dinner Tuesday night will be hosted by the University of Florida SAF Student Chapter at the UF/IFAS Austin Cary Memorial Forest at 6:00 PM. Dinner is included with your registration.

Agenda

Monday, March 27

7 PM–9 PM Exhibit & poster set-up

Tuesday, March 28

8 AM–5 PM Registration, exhibits & posters

10:00 AM Morning refreshments

10:30 AM John Gray Lecture **Why biomass is important? – the role of the Forest Service in managing and using biomass for energy and other uses** Dr. Ann Bartuska, Deputy Chief, USDA Forest Service, Washington DC

11:30 AM Luncheon

1:00 PM General Session I

Woody biomass opportunities in the South – an overview Dr. Liam Leightley, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS

Overview of thermochemical and biochemical conversion technologies Dr. Michael Pacheco, National Bioenergy Center, Golden, CO

3:00 PM Refreshment break

3:30 PM General Session II

Woody biomass production in plantations Dr. Darwin Foster, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

Woody biomass: What's out there?

An U.S. and southern assessment
Dr. Bryce Stokes, USDA FS – R & D, Washington, D.C.

5:00 PM Adjourn

6:00 PM Dinner, ACMF

Wednesday, March 29

7:00 AM Breakfast

8:30 AM General Session III

Harvest, transport, storage and pre-processing of woody biomass Dr. Ben Jackson, University of Georgia, & Richard Schroeder, University of Florida

Economics of using biomass Alan Hodges, University of Florida
How to get projects off the ground? Bruce Crain, Crain Consulting

10:00 AM Refreshment break

10:30 AM General Session IV

A biomass case study in the Pacific Northwest Dr. Michael Andreu, University of Florida

Public perceptions and acceptance of biomass production Dr. Martha Monroe, University of Florida
Ag-based biomass fuels: 25 x 25 project Ernest Shea, Natural Resource Solutions

11:30 AM **Panel Discussion: What will be necessary for woody biomass energy in Alachua County**

12:30 PM Adjourn

Registration

The reduced early registration fee is \$120 if payment is postmarked by March 10, 2006. After March 10 the regular registration fee is \$140. The student fee is \$50 for early or regular registration. The registration fee includes lunch and dinner on Tuesday, breakfast on Wednesday, refreshment breaks and Symposium materials.

You may register on the symposium website:
<http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/ContEd/>

Non SAF members who attend the Symposium and join SAF within 30 days after the Symposium will have their names entered in a raffle for which the Florida Division of SAF will reimburse you for your first year membership dues. SAF applications can be obtained at the registration desk at the Symposium.

Cancellation and Refunds: Requests for registration refunds will be honored if a written notice of cancellation is received by the Office of Conferences & Institutes on or before March 15, 2006. A \$25 processing fee will be deducted from all registration refunds. Sorry, no refunds will be honored for cancellation after March 15.

Special Needs: Participants with special needs can be reasonably accommodated by contacting Dr. Shibu Jose at least 10 working days prior to the conference. He can be reached by phone: (352) 846-0872, or by calling (800) 955-8771 (TDD). The TDD number can only be accessed from within the State of Florida.



Meeting Site & Lodging

The Symposium will be held at the Paramount Hotel located at 2900 SW 13th Street, Gainesville, Florida 32608. The Paramount is offering a special group rate of \$77 plus tax / night for single or double occupancy. To qualify for the special rate, reservations must be made prior to Monday February 27, 2006. Please call the hotel directly at: (352) 377-4000, fax: (352) 371-1159 to make your reservations and state that you are a Forestry Spring Symposium participant. After the deadline, the discounted group rate and guest room availability are no longer guaranteed. The hotel provides shuttle service to / from the Gainesville Regional Airport.

Additional Information

Program Information:

Alan Long or Shibu Jose
University of Florida / IFAS
School of Forest Resources & Conservation
Phone: (352) 846-0891 or 846-0872
Fax: (352) 846-1277
Email: ajl2@ufl.edu or sjose@ufl.edu

Registration Information:

Office of Conferences & Institutes
University of Florida / IFAS
Phone: (352) 392-5930
Fax: (352) 392-9734
Email: spb@ufl.edu
Project #2006 – 18

Symposium website:

<http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/ContEd/>

School of Forest Resources & Conservation
Society of American Foresters

37th Annual
Spring Symposium

FUELING THE
FUTURE: THE ROLE
OF WOODY BIOMASS

March 28–29, 2006

Gainesville, Florida



Figure 2. A brochure for the symposium can help to advertise your event.

8. All symposium participants should be given a name tag and symposium agenda upon arrival. The meeting space should be equipped with a laptop computer, projector, screen, flip chart, markers, notepads, pens, tables, and chairs. If speakers are using presentation software, arrange to have them give their presentations to your audio-visual staff person before the beginning of the symposium. You may wish to have a moderator introduce the presenters and help them end on time.
9. Finally, create an evaluation form to give to all participants so you can collect feedback about what worked and what did not work at the symposium. Evaluation forms can be designed to reveal what participants liked, what they learned, and what they intend to do with the information.

Our Symposium Reflections, Spring 2006

About 125 participants and 11 presenters attended the symposium, which lasted for a day and half. Many of the sessions were lecture-based presentations. Presenters who added some humor or did anything outside of the normal presentation style were well

received by the audience. Sitting and listening all day can be difficult, and breaks are essential to keep participants motivated. A well-planned mix of some technical and some less technical sessions is also a nice way to break up the agenda.



Exhibits and posters around the room used for breaks can give sponsors and students a ready audience.

Engaging the Public

Several types of interactive outreach tools help engage the public and enable community involvement in questions and concerns about using wood for energy. These tools could also create opportunities for community residents to voice their opinions and influence decisions. While these tools may require considerable time and effort from both you and the participants, they are effective for sharing information, increasing comprehension, determining and addressing community concerns, gaining public input into energy plans, and increasing public participation in decision-making. The main ideas generated by these outreach tools can be collected and shared with community leaders through a report, a presentation to community leaders, a Web site, or a letter to the editor.

- *Community forum* – Hold a series of community forums with the goal of raising public awareness and stimulating community discussions about using wood for energy. See “Insight: Community Forums” for more details.
- *Discussion group* – Small groups of interested community members can get together to discuss the local issues surrounding using wood for energy or other types of renewable energy resources. Retirement facilities, civic groups, and faith-based organizations often sponsor such meetings. You can supply informational materials from the sections, “Fact Sheets,” “Case Studies,” and “Community Economic Forums” prior to the meeting and facilitate the discussion.
- *Learning network* – Become part of or develop a learning network. Learning networks generally consist of experts, leaders, managers, and other interested parties who help to identify and overcome barriers to complex projects like using wood for energy. Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations usually sponsor and organize learning networks. See “Resources” for more sources of information.

- *Study circle* – Study circles are similar to discussion groups but tend to be more structured. They help community members learn about an issue together. The group identifies relevant reading materials and meets regularly to discuss the material. While this approach requires devoted time and interest from participants, a great deal of learning, engagement, and organized action can occur through study circles. Like discussion groups, study circles may be sponsored by a variety of community organizations.



Insight: Community Forums

Community forums create opportunities for the public to increase their knowledge about woody biomass by first providing information and then stimulating discussion. This interaction allows community members to become meaningfully engaged in the discussion of local energy options, which makes the forum different and ultimately more useful than traditional public meetings. Forums last from one to two hours and consist mainly of two parts—a short introductory presentation of using wood for energy (see “Presentation”) and an engaging discussion that allows participants to ask questions and voice their perspectives. Participants’ perceptions, ideas, and concerns can be collected through surveys or by taking notes during the discussion. These ideas can be reported to community leaders to help guide their decision-making about using wood for energy (see the *Gainesville Report* in “Appendix”). Following are some general guidelines to follow when organizing community forums:

1. First, you should decide how many forums you will be able to hold and if other community leaders or professionals can provide assistance. The number of forums you hold may depend on your outreach objectives, your allotted time, or the availability of meeting locations. Since a variety of issues relate to the woody biomass option, you may seek out other knowledgeable people who can assist you with the presentation and the discussion. Some people who may be helpful include the following:

- University/college professors
- Forestry professionals
- Energy consultants
- Economic development professionals
- Woody biomass users or procurers

You may also want to have an independent facilitator help coordinate the forum. Facilitators are extremely helpful and recommended for this type of outreach strategy. They can help keep participants on topic, manage the time, and help keep the forum from becoming a divisive debate. If you cannot afford to hire an outside facilitator, there are many strategies that will help improve your own facilitation skills. See Box 10 for some quick facilitation tips and “Resources” for more sources of information.



It is important to select presenters who are friendly and comfortable with talking to the public. It is also helpful if they are humble and not too opinionated. If presenters portray an attitude that there is only one right answer, they may appear to be biased and untrustworthy. By speaking in plain terms, adopting a neutral attitude, providing the cons as well as the pros, and encouraging discussion, presenters can offer information in a warm and inviting manner. Saying “That is a very important concern...” rather than “Of course we have considered that...” makes a big difference in how a presenter is perceived by the audience.

Box 10. Facilitation Tips ADAPTED FROM GENTRY 2007

- Begin the forum with introductions and housekeeping announcements (bathroom, water, and exit locations).
- The forum atmosphere should remain open, comfortable, and collaborative.
- Keep the forum's objective(s) and agenda in mind and be familiar with the content so you can stimulate discussion and encourage participant engagement.
- Maintain a neutral position throughout the meeting, and do not advocate for any specific outcome.
- Try not to let one view or one person dominate the discussion by encouraging other participants to share their points of view.
- If the discussion gets too escalated or begins to be argumentative, ask participants to write down their questions and comments on index cards and then use the cards to facilitate the discussion.
- Help participants stay focused on the topic and keep track of time.
- For longer forums, consider varying the energy level by asking people to talk with their neighbor, work in small groups, or be part of a larger group discussion.
- Summarize the discussion and close the forum by emphasizing areas of agreement, areas for more investigation, and the importance of public involvement.

2. Community forums can be held in conjunction with an organization's meeting or they can be open to the public. For example, community service organizations such as the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, neighborhood associations, environmental groups, political groups, or faith-based groups have ready-made audiences who are often looking for speakers. While holding a forum at an organization's meeting provides a captive audience, you are limited to the organization's time frame, location, and meeting format. For example, groups that meet during lunch may provide only 30 minutes for the forum. In addition, some organizations encourage member discussion while others usually have traditional presentations with little or no discussion.



Templates for forum flyers and related materials can be found on the Wood to Energy CD and at <http://www.interfacesouth.org/woodybiomass>. Review materials from the sections "Fact Sheets," "Case Studies," and "Community Economic Profiles" to select the appropriate handouts for your forum. Order copies through the Web site.

Being aware of the format that the organization is accustomed to can help you plan accordingly.

Choosing a diversity of locations and clubs for forums is very important to reach different segments of the community. For example, holding a community forum in conjunction with a local minority organization, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), can reach community members who may not attend other forums.

You can also hold forums that are open to the public, where the primary purpose for meeting is the forum itself. This type of forum can be held at public libraries or community centers, which often have meeting rooms that can be reserved (often free of charge). It is important to think about the best time and location for community attendance. You may want to vary the locations, days of the week, and times that the forums are held in order to give community members different options.

3. When you call the organizations and meeting locations to reserve the date and space, they may want specific information about the forum. The sample forum overview in Box 11 may help you better explain the topic and purpose of the forum. Some organizations will need this type of information to obtain approval for the

Box 11. Sample of Community Forum Overview

Wood to Energy: A Community Outreach Program in the Southern U.S.

How a community chooses to generate electrical power has implications for land-use development, public health, the local economy, environmental quality, and global climate change. Several possibilities and issues must be explored when a community is designing or modifying an energy program to meet its needs. The Wood to Energy Outreach Program is a partnership between my agency; the University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation; the USDA Forest Service, Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry; and the Southern States Energy Board. This program helps communities like ours consider and discuss the possibility of using woody biomass for energy production.

As part of this outreach program, we would like to come to your organization's meeting to present information, answer questions, and find out how people feel about the idea of using wood to generate power. Our objective is to increase knowledge about woody biomass so that the public can become meaningfully engaged in the discussion on local energy options. We hope to provide a forum where community members can learn about woody biomass. We recognize there are many variations and concerns within the option of using woody biomass, and we wish to provide information and stimulate discussion.

We expect the Wood to Energy forum to last about one hour. General topics that will be presented include the following: common concerns about woody biomass, sources and the supply of woody biomass, affordability of energy and economic impacts, air quality, climate change, comparison of wood and fossil fuels, general environmental impacts, and case studies of other communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk with your group about using wood for generating electricity!

event. Also, remember to find out what type of audiovisual equipment is available at the meeting location, and if the organization or meeting location will provide any advertisement of the forum.

4. In order to assure a good turnout, begin advertising your forums well in advance. If the forum is open to the public and not a regularly scheduled meeting, it is essential that you make a concentrated effort to get the word out. You can make flyers to place at popular stores, restaurants, and community bulletin boards in the area (Figure 3). You can also ask local television and radio stations to make announcements about the forum. This is also a good time to ask the local newspaper to publish a short article that announces the forum times and locations. For more information on utilizing the media for publicity, see the previous "Insight: Media Opportunities." Organizations will usually have their own forms of advertising via a newsletter or Web site. In addition, you could ask to send an announcement to the organization's e-mail list, notifying all members about the forum and where to get additional information.
5. Before the forum, practice the presentation, especially if other people are involved. Also, think about the types of questions people are likely to ask. *Gainesville Community Forum Questions and Answers*, a list of the questions asked during our community



The forum's focus on engaging the public in discussion might be unlike the types of presentations that some organizations are used to and they might believe a controversial discussion or debate will occur. If they voice such concerns, reassure your contact for the organization that your group does not wish to create conflict but to facilitate productive discussions about using wood for energy. See Box 12 for a sample letter that addresses these concerns.



Community Forums

Come, learn, and share ideas about whether to use wood to generate our electricity!

The City of Gainesville is currently considering using wood as a fuel to produce energy. A team of UF researchers would like to share key information and answer your questions on this important issue.

Dates and Locations

- November 15, 7pm to 8pm Civic Media Center
1021 University Avenue
- November 27, 7pm to 8pm Alachua County Public Library
Main Branch, 401 E University Avenue
- November 28, 7pm to 8pm Alachua County Public Library
Millhopper Branch, 3145 NW 43rd Street

Forums are open to the public.



If you are unable to attend a community forum but would like to receive fact sheets concerning this issue, please contact the Wood to Energy Outreach Team at wood2energy@ifas.ufl.edu.

Figure 3. Flyers posted at community centers or on bulletin boards can provide additional publicity for your forum.

Box 12. Sample Letter to Address Concerns

November 1, 2006

Dear Sue,

We appreciate your concern that our Wood to Energy presentation does not become a political statement. We, too, have no intention of being advocates for developing woody biomass or telling anyone what to do. We will not be discussing the specific political climate in Gainesville regarding woody biomass or answering questions related to the commissioners' stances on biomass (other than to say that wood is an option being discussed). We do, however, feel strongly that the public has the right and responsibility to understand the issues around using wood and participate in the decision-making process.

The Wood to Energy community forum is designed to provide basic information, to solicit questions, to offer answers, and to promise that we will seek additional information for questions we can't answer. We plan to provide a facilitator, who should be able to restrain any tendency toward debate. If a divisive comment comes from the audience, our speakers are likely to agree that it's an important point and should be conveyed to the decision-makers. If the comment does not have any scientific grounding as we know it, we would probably say "some people agree, but others interpret the evidence differently . . ." and try to explain. I hope this appropriately conveys our tone and intent. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Annie Oxarart

forums, and the answers we gave, can be found in the “Appendix.” Depending on what equipment is available at the location, you may need to bring a laptop computer, projector, extension cords, and a projector screen. Gather appropriate handouts and organize them in the folders (see “Logistics” section in this guide for information on how to order folders). Remember to bring a sign-in sheet so you’ll be able to send additional information to participants in the future. In addition, you may want to bring cookies or other refreshments to encourage participant interaction and satisfaction. Homemade cookies were a big hit at our pilot forums (Box 13)!

Box 13. Cookie Recipe

Mom’s Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup shortening	3 cups flour
3/4 cup white sugar	1 tsp salt
3/4 cup brown sugar	1 tsp baking soda
2 eggs	1 cup nuts
1 tsp vanilla	1 cup chocolate chips

You can also add another cup of chocolate chips, granola, coconut, oatmeal, etc.

Blend shortening with sugars. Add the wet ingredients and mix. Next, add the dry ingredients and mix. Place spoonfuls of the dough onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 min. at 350° F.

- The agenda for the forum can be rather straightforward or it can be modified to meet time constraints. At the beginning of the forum, pass around the sign-in list and let the participants know that you will only contact them to send additional information about wood-to-energy projects. The introductory presentation should be just long enough to provide a brief overview about using wood for energy (about 20 to 30 minutes) and the rest of the time the floor should be open to participant questions and comments. If you are asked questions that no one on your team is equipped to answer, let participants know that these questions will be collected, researched, and answered by e-mail. The forum atmosphere should be comfortable, open, and inviting. Encourage participants to voice their questions and concerns and also to be respectful and understanding of others’ views. You want to create an atmosphere where the group is learning together: those leading the forum are learning about the public’s understanding, misconceptions, and opinions, and the participants are learning about the complexity of energy decisions, trade-offs, and different viewpoints.

Our Forum Reflections, Fall 2006

Six community forums were held in Gainesville, Florida, as part of the pilot Wood to Energy outreach program. A total of 172 community members attended these forums at public libraries and organization meetings. As part of the pilot program, the forums were evaluated through pre-forum and post-forum surveys, which allowed participants to express their opinions about using wood for energy and comment on the forum components and atmosphere. The post-forum surveys revealed that, in general, forum participants gained new knowledge about using woody biomass and would support a proposal to build a facility if their concerns were addressed.



Participants may have differing views about the issue of using wood for energy, which can lead to conflict. Being aware of community members’ values and perceptions about using wood for energy can help you reduce divisive situations and facilitate productive discussions. If a controversial situation arises, try to redirect the discussion by first recognizing that the issue at hand is complex and everyone’s opinion is valuable. See “Resources” for more sources of information about dealing with conflict.

Our experiences with community forums taught us that it is essential to simplify presentations and to use graphics, photographs, and other visuals to illustrate the presented information, when possible. The information should be relevant to the community and paint a clear picture of what using wood for energy might look like in their community. Use analogies to explain difficult concepts and explain all terms (sustainable forestry, cogeneration, etc.). Our presentation can be found after tab eight, on the CD, and on the Web site.

We also learned that presenter style and language has an influence on how information is heard and accepted. Phrases such as, “You’ve got to understand that...” or “My professional opinion is...” create a distance between the expert and the audience that reduces the likelihood of joint exploration and understanding. Responses that suggest that a variety of views are reasonable and helpful, that every question is interesting, and that audience members have good ideas are preferred.

References

- Gentry, J. 2007. Unpublished handout for facilitators at the Florida Institute for Sustainable Energy, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
- Jacobson, Susan. 1999. *Communication Skills for Conservation Professionals*. Washington DC: Island Press.