

NOTES: SOFAR Biomass Committee

April 27, 2023

Meeting Recording: [\[LINK\]](#)

Action Items & Next Steps

- **Cindy** will send Greg and Norma data she has about biomass feedstock availability and any information about funding for the biochar market analysis
- **Cindy** will put Greg in touch with Hardeep Singh, the local food system advisor at UCCE and also with the UCCE natural resources and ranch land advisor
- **The planning team** will invite Mark Maguire at OPR to present at a future working group meeting about the marketability of biochar and funding opportunities through OPR

The **next Biomass meeting** will be August 24 at 11 AM online.

The **next Collaborative meeting** will be October 11 from 1:30-3:00 online.

Report-Back on Plumas County Field Trip

Greg Stanton and Perry McLain reported back on the Biomass Field Trip to Plumas County. The two of them, plus County Supervisors Parlin and Turnbo, Lester Lubetkin, and Alice Cantelow joined Zach Browning for the tour. The group visited:

- The biomass boiler at the Plumas County Health and Human Services building
- Greenville to see prefabricated homes made from laminate small dimension timber, for homeowners without fire insurance who lost their homes in the Dixie Fire
- Sierra Institute's [Indian Valley Wood Products Campus](#) that produces firewood, wood pellets for the biomass boiler, and some dimensional timber, and has potential for more.

Sierra Institute is interested in potentially making laminate lumber at the wood products campus a biomass generator to take the place of the nearby diesel generator providing power in place of energy infrastructure lost in the fire.

For the complete recap, watch the recording here [\[LINK\]](#).

Irons in the Fire Updates

Black Oak Mine Unified School District

The school district did not receive the workforce development grant from CalFire to develop a certificate program related to biomass, nor the \$3.5 million in federal appropriations congressman Kylie requested for an energy hub to power the Georgetown community. Norma and Greg will join the School District to discuss the grant outcomes with CalFire and continue to seek other funding opportunities.

SPI Camino Site

A letter from Supervisors Parlin and Turnboo to SPI detailing the County's progress on biomass utilization and forest health, was well-received by SPI. The Supervisors hope to meet in July to discuss utilization of a portion of the Camino site for a wood products campus. Of the three potential 10-15 acre sites SPI identified at Camino, one is more favorable than the others.

SMUD & Mote Hydrogen

Mote Hydrogen is evaluating eight different potential sites in the region for their clean hydrogen. Norma and Greg hope to know by August if the El Dorado County sites are still under consideration. SMUD is involved in the site selection process and they are looking for feedstock availability data. Cindy will send Greg and Norma data she has about biomass feedstock availability, to share with SMUD. Mote received a half million dollar planning grant from Department of Conservation for this project, and will apply for phase 2 of the same grant.

Caldor Fire Recovery-Biomass Utilization & Mobile Units

Gold Seal Industries received a preliminary permit from the County's Air Quality Management District to begin construction of a mobile biomass unit onsite in the Caldor fire footprint. A holding company is being established between GSI and their business development support for private investors to fund the unit. Great Basin Institute and Blue Forest are both involved in the funding for this. The hope is to have a unit up and running in the first quarter of 2024.

El Dorado Northern Millsite

No updates since last meeting.

Countywide Strategic Planning

No updates since last meeting.

Discussion

Participants discussed opportunities brought to mind by the field trip and the Irons in the Fire updates.

Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) Zone Initiative [\[LINK\]](#)

This is an international initiative that is used like credit ratings or institutional ratings that analyze a regional footprint and issue a rating as a promotional tool for investors. It's much like business districts used by community development centers, but looks at natural resource opportunities for green economies. Greg and Norma learned about it at the Placer County Biomass Symposium on June 21, where Aryn Garswood at EcoStrat presented [\[LINK\]](#).

Biochar Marketability

Greg is investigating whether the County should pursue a biochar production plant or just find local outlets for biochar as a byproduct of biomass conversion. He has found mixed levels of interest asking local agricultural groups whether they might have a use for biochar in their

operations. He is hoping to co-host a presentation on the benefits of biochar with University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and the County Ag Commissioner. Cindy will put Greg in touch with Hardeep Singh, the local UCCE food system advisor and also with the UCCE natural resources and ranch land advisor to help with this.

The return of compost in the County from food waste collection provides an opportunity to put biochar to use.

The planning team will invite Mark Maguire at the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to present at a future working group meeting about the marketability of biochar.

Available Funding

Participants made these comments about available funding:

- The County has been looking at funding from the federal Build Back Better campaign coming in through State programs.
- OPR and Sierra Nevada Conservancy both receive funds from the state for alternative energy sourcing.
- OPR had excess resources designated but not allocated for renewable energy this year. Mark Maguire can hopefully speak to these funding opportunities if he presents at a future meeting.
- As a small fish in a big pond, we need to find out how we connect to the bigger picture to be more relevant for funding.

National Forest Timber Sales Representative

Marc Young introduced himself, he oversees the timber sale preparation program at Eldorado National Forest. He has recently sat in on meetings of TCSI and HELP at the suggestion of Michelle Wolfgang. He collaborates with SOFAR partners such as Great Basin Institute, the County Resource Conservation District, Wild Turkey Federation, and others. Marc is the contact to direct companies wanting to know about feedstock supply. His email address is marc.young@usda.gov.