



Ash Trees and More: Your Source for Urban Wood Use News

A report from the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council's Ash Utilization Options Project
Primary project funding is from the USDA Forest Service Wood Education & Resource Center

April 2009

Greetings from the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council!

Warmer weather is finally here, Arbor Day is upon us, and many people are taking a closer look at their trees. While we share in the excitement over the season's many tree planting and tree care events, we want to offer a reminder that there are still positive options left for the many dead and dying trees that will unfortunately be removed from our landscapes.

Whether you are fighting the emerald ash borer, cleaning up after storm damage, or just clearing the way for new development, we hope that this newsletter will offer you some innovative ideas for how to bring a bit more value back to your community in these tough economic times. With so many cities setting ambitious goals to be "greener," we think you'll be impressed with the creative strategies that many people here in southeastern Michigan are using to develop renewable energy and green building supplies from the dead trees in their own neighborhoods.

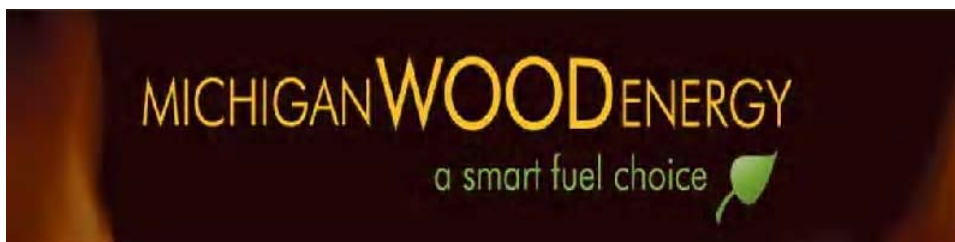
If you like what you see here, please be sure to check out our educational websites for the [Ash Utilization Options Project](#), [Michigan Wood Energy](#), and [Urbanwood](#) for even more information.

Best wishes for a Happy Spring!

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Biomass Grants Help Facilities Look at Wood Fuel



Wood may prove to be a promising energy option for one military facility in Warren, MI. Through

a \$3,000 grant from the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council, RDA Engineering will conduct a wood fuel procurement study as a part of their assessment of renewable energy options for the steam plant at the Detroit Arsenal. RDA has provided operation and management services for this facility for over ten years at the request of the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command.

In this study, RDA and its partners will examine the equipment needs, wood storage and handling requirements, wood acquisition, and installation costs for converting a portion of their natural gas operation to using wood fuel. The firm feels that this local fuel supply has the potential to significantly reduce the Army's ongoing costs, while also helping them to meet federally mandated requirements on the use of renewable fuels.

Additional \$3,000 grant awards were recently made to Macomb County's J.H. Hart Urban Forestry and Lenawee County's Vergote and Sons Greenhouses to explore how these businesses might be able to use locally-generated wood waste to fuel their business operations.

At this time, the Council is offering one more \$3,000 award to assist another institution or business in evaluating the use of wood as a biomass energy source. The [complete grant details and application](#) are available online or by contacting the RC&D office. Act fast -- applications will be accepted until May 1, 2009.

The [Michigan Wood Energy](#) website may also be helpful for those considering submitting an application. This site features a free online calculator to generate customized cost savings estimates for switching to wood as a boiler fuel.

[Learn more about the available biomass grant](#)

Local Communities Develop New Partnerships with Sawmills

Through past educational events, the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has found that many communities have an interest in cooperating with local wood industries, but seem unable to secure even a small amount of funds to try out a new idea like milling their dead city trees. In late 2008, the Council issued three \$1,000 "mini-grants" to communities and local organizations to fund a full day of milling services and encourage them to develop partnerships with local sawmill operations. Grants were awarded to the City of Grosse Pointe Park, the Saginaw Conservation District, and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge:



- The City of Grosse Pointe Park worked with a local contractor, J&W Tree Artisans, to mill sixteen high-quality dead elm and ash trees from city property. The lumber was used as the edging for their new bocce ball field at a city park, creating another recreational activity for residents and reducing their own wood disposal costs, while using a more affordable resource than they could have purchased locally at a lumber yard.
- The Saginaw Conservation District's forestry program worked with Schultz Farm and Log to mill pine and hardwood logs that were obtained from road improvement, line-clearing, and Michigan Department of Transportation activities. Over 2,200 board feet of lumber was produced from this effort, resulting in plans to conduct lumber sales in the local community and create baseball bat blanks. A portion of the funds from the lumber sales is going into the District's Forestry Endowment Fund for future tree plantings and youth projects.
- The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge constructed a rustic stream crossing on its Humbug Marsh. The railing structure was made from a dead ash tree from Detroit. Richard Mills, of Logs to Lumber and Beyond, was hired to mill the wood and assist in the railing design. Tracings from the tree's emerald ash borer infestation were left exposed on the handrails to serve as an additional educational experience for visitors to the site. At the opening ceremony alone, over 200 visitors used the new stream crossing.

Urbanwood Business Network to Expand Membership

The Urbanwood Project is planning a major recruitment drive in the coming months in hopes of bringing more sawmills, tree care companies, green builders, and woodworkers together to see that southeastern Michigan's dead trees are reclaimed and put to good use. Created by the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council and Recycle Ann Arbor, this network connects a wide range of partners to find value in city trees removed due to insect infestations, storm damage, development, or death.

Key members of the Urbanwood Project, representing five local businesses, were recently designated as the group's new leadership team. These partners are from Lumberjacks Tree Service (of Ann Arbor), Sawmill John Custom Sawing (of Whitmore Lake), Scotty's Custom Sawing (of Belleville), Tervol Wood Products (of North Adams), and Ullmann Urban Sawmill (of Warren and Dexter). This team will direct the upcoming membership drive, lead planning for the group's educational and marketing activities, and continue improvements to the [Urbanwood](#) website. This site, billed as "Southeast Michigan's Reclaimed Wood Marketplace," includes an online inventory of lumber, flooring, and other products available from the partnering mills.

Customers can also browse a large selection of these products in person at Recycle Ann Arbor's ReUse Center at 2420 South Industrial. RAA's urban wood sales have been a great demonstration of how conservation can also make good economic sense - The over \$30,000 in Urbanwood products sold so far at RAA have not only helped to meet the growing demand for green building supplies, but have supported the local economy as well.

[Learn more about Urbanwood](#)

New Firewood Safety Grant Available



As you've probably heard, the emerald ash borer has killed millions of ash trees in Michigan and neighboring states. Movement of firewood has long been seen as the likely cause for much of the spread of this nasty pest and many other invasive insects. Extensive quarantines regulating the movement of firewood and other wood products have been created to suppress the spread, but at significant cost to both the enforcing regulatory agencies and the industries forced to adapt their processing to new and often expensive standards.

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has been working since 2004 to help communities and businesses to safely find economic value in EAB-affected ash and other dead urban trees. At this time, the Council is allocating a single \$30,000 grant to assist with the development of an affordable system to treat firewood at risk of carrying invasive species. The grant will go to a research team, university, engineering firm, or wood processing equipment manufacturer to design plans for a simple,

effective, affordable, "build-it-yourself" debarking system that can be used by the many small, independent firewood processors and dealers in the region. This program will create new opportunities for wood products businesses to remain competitive in a complicated regulatory environment, while also ensuring that their products are safe and free from risks of transporting EAB and other invasives. Proposals will be accepted until May 22, 2009.

[See the complete Request for Proposals](#)

New Planning Guide Available for Community Wood Use

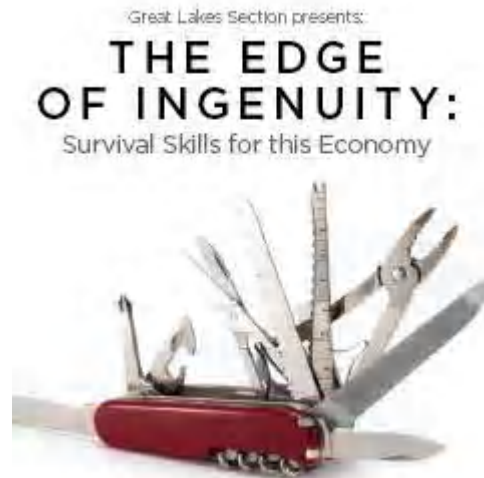
The Southeast Michigan RC&D has created a new resource to help communities find more value in their dead and dying trees. The new Urban Wood Use Planning Worksheet for Communities includes a step-by-step questionnaire intended to walk a municipal forestry planner through developing a more comprehensive wood use plan. It includes strategies for helping a city

evaluate its own resources and needs, develop partnerships with local industries, effectively process wood, and communicate its goals with local citizens. The worksheet also has a guide for further reading and contact information for obtaining technical assistance. This complete planning guide is available on the Council's [Ash Utilization Options Project](#) website.

[See the complete Urban Wood Use Planning Worksheet](#)

Don't Miss These Important Upcoming Conferences

- [The Edge of Ingenuity: Survival Skills for this Economy](#), hosted by the Great Lakes Section of the Forest Products Society, will be held May 12-13, 2009 in Grand Rapids. Participants should expect creative, thought-provoking dialogue and coaching for wood products industries on how to become lean, green, and niche-friendly in today's highly competitive marketplace. The event will include factory tours of Jeup Furniture and Haworth. Please visit the [Great Lakes Forest Products Society](#) website for more details.



- The emerald ash borer and its impacts will be one of the highlights of the [2009 Soil and Water Conservation Society International Annual Conference](#) in Dearborn on July 11-15, 2009. This year the overarching theme of the conference is *Delivering Conservation, Today and Tomorrow*. The event will explore the challenges facing the delivery of conservation planning, policy, and practices today and the issues that must be resolved in order to deliver sustainable soil and water conservation into the future.

- The Glacierland RC&D Council in Wisconsin is hosting a series of [wood packaging workshops](#) throughout the midwest. The workshops are designed to clearly explain the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM 15), how the system operates, and how it can affect companies that use or supply wood shipping materials for exports. Michigan events will be held May 7, 2009 at the Grand Rapids Township Hall and May 8, 2009 at the RESA Annex Building in Wayne.

For More Information

- [Ash Utilization Options Project](#)
- [The Urbanwood Project](#)
- [Ash Utilization Resource Library](#)
- [Southeast Michigan RC&D Council](#)
- [Michigan Wood Energy](#)
- [Emerald Ash Borer Information](#)
- [Ash Wood Use Photo Gallery](#)
- [USDA Forest Service WERC](#)

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