

## WERC Project Application – Part II

**A. Project Title:** Marketing Urban Wood through Certification and Branding

**B: Submitted by:** Tri-State Urban Wood Marketing and Certification Collaborative

- *Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation & Development Council*  
 Contact: Morse Brown, Chairman  
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[brownmo@msu.edu](mailto:brownmo@msu.edu); [www.semircd.org](http://www.semircd.org)
- *Michigan Department of Natural Resources*  
 Contacts: Anthony Weatherspoon, Forest Products Specialist  
 Kevin Sayers, Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator
- *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources*  
 Contacts: Terry Mace, Forest Products Marketing Specialist  
 Richard Rideout, State Urban Forestry Coordinator  
 Laura Wyatt, Urban Forestry Communications Specialist
- *Illinois EAB Wood Utilization Team*
  - *Morton Arboretum*  
 Contact: Edith Makra, Community Trees Advocate  
 Wood Utilization Team Chairman
  - *Illinois Department of Natural Resources,*  
 Contact: Tom Gargrave, District Forester
  - *Illinois Conservation Foundation*  
 Contact: Dick Little
  - *IL Department of Agriculture,*  
 Contact: Paul Deizman, EAB Program Coordinator
  - *US Green Building Council, Chicago Metro Chapter*  
 Contact: Lauren Blissard, Co-Chairman
  - *USDA APHIS*  
 Contact: Jeffrey Coath, IL EAB Program Coordinator
- *Arbor Day Foundation/Tree City USA*  
 Contact: Dan Lambe, Vice-President
- *Recycle Ann Arbor*  
 Contact: Jason Bing, Environmental House Coordinator

**C: Length of Project:** 12 months

**D: Costs:** Federal funds: \$98,604; Matching funds: \$106,909; Total funds: \$205,513

**E. Abstract:** A Midwestern multi-state partnership proposes to develop strategies for urban wood certification and branding through a series of working group summits involving key players in the wood products, urban forestry, government, and green building and products sectors. The primary outcome would be a plan for implementing urban wood branding and certification marketing systems on a national level, including incorporating "recovery of urban wood value" as a new points-generating management component in the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA Growth Awards, creating an incentive-based plan for private arborists within a leading professional association, and

developing a branding and certification plan that addresses the smaller processors' challenges. These recommendations will be focused on improving wood utilization rates within public and private arboricultural operations and driving demand for urban wood products within green markets. Communication tools such as white papers and discussion forums will both facilitate problem-solving and communicate results. A working group and advisory committee will maintain connections among key players in the green building and products industry and work to implement the suggested marketing program.

**F. Goal:** The goal is to develop strategies for developing branding and/or certification systems that would promote urban wood products and incentivize the use of urban wood in the green building and products market.

**Objectives:** The intent is to develop a pathway to certification and/or branding that would eventually extend beyond the Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois region to promote urban wood utilization on a national basis.

A multi-state partnership has come together to determine how branding and certification programs could help improve urban wood reclamation rates and create new, higher-value market opportunities for producers. This new, collaborative network will bring together experts and significant stakeholder groups to understand obstacles and opportunities to develop new marketing protocols for urban wood products. Specifically, the group plans to examine:

- How green builders and product manufacturers, specifiers, consumers and other end users and their certification programs regard urban wood products and what certification or branding mechanisms could increase demand for urban wood products within their markets;
- How other wood certification and branding systems and their auditing processes, chain-of-custody regulations, limitations, and attributes can inform the development of appropriate parameters for the certification and branding of urban wood;
- How urban wood certification and branding can support the processing of urban wood products and how chain-of-custody certification would work among these mostly small processors; and
- How certification and branding programs might help provide guidelines and incentives for arborists to incorporate wood utilization into urban forest management strategies.

**Needs:**

1. Public land managers and private tree companies lack the economic incentives and functional networks needed to transform their wood disposal activities into wood recovery processes.
2. Urban wood processors are struggling to find markets for their products, often selling high-quality lumber as pallet stock for lack of viable opportunities.
3. The green building and products industry is burgeoning and secondary wood manufacturers and builders are struggling to meet the demand for certified wood that meets US Green Building Council LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) standards. Existing chain-of-custody forest certification systems do not apply to urban wood.
4. The emerald ash borer (EAB) is destroying millions of ash trees in the Midwest creating both a disposal problem for land managers and an unexpected surge in the volume of useable ash timber. Other invasive pests can and will cause similar challenges in other regions with other tree species.

## **G.H. Project Description, Methodology:**

To facilitate understanding and to foster innovation, two working summits will be held to bring together significant stakeholder groups to consider their roles in developing new marketing protocols. Experts from the urban wood products industry, urban and community forestry profession (both public and private), government, forest products certification groups, non-profit groups (in forestry, conservation, and recycling), and the green building and products sector will be invited to participate in the summit activities. Likely participants include:

- Materials specialists for green building certification programs: U.S. Green Building Council's LEED, National Association of Homebuilders' GreenBuilt, Green Building Initiative's Green Globes
- Existing forest product (and other) certification programs: Forest Stewardship Council, Rainforest Alliance SmartWood, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, American Tree Farm System, American National Standards Institute
- Wood products manufacturers that are using or are interested in using urban wood
- Arborists associations: International Society of Arboriculture, Tree Care Industries Association, Society of Municipal Arborists
- Wood product industry associations and certification programs: American Wood Council, Architectural Woodwork Institute, Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association, Forest Products Society, Hardwood Manufacturers Association, Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association, National Hardwood Lumber Association, National Wood Flooring Association, Wood Products Manufacturers Association, various state-based wood products organizations, and others as appropriate
- The building/construction industry, including architects, designers, remodelers, and builders, and their associations (National Association of Home Builders, National Association of the Remodeling Industry, and others)
- USDA Forest Service
- Other state forestry programs or neighboring urban wood use programs (such as those in Ohio and Indiana)
- Other forestry, community-focused, and/or sustainability organizations, such as Dovetail Partners, the National Recycling Coalition, and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

To meet these objectives, the partnership further proposes the following specific deliverables:

- A series of communications tools (such as white papers, conference calls, and online discussion forums) will also be created to facilitate ongoing discussion and analysis within the stakeholder group and the wider community as a whole.
- An implementation plan that will promote mainstream growth of urban wood utilization. This will include a detailed framework of strategies that will make possible:
  - Incorporation of "recovery of urban wood value" as a new points-generating management component for municipal arborists in the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA Growth Awards.
  - Creation of an incentive-based plan for private arborists within one of the leading professional associations.
  - Development of a branding and certification plan that will address the challenges of working with smaller processors, ensure that urban wood products are recognized as creditable materials in green building and other green product programs, and increase the market demand for urban wood products.
- An advisory board, with representation from key stakeholder groups (see below), that will provide leadership for executing the implementation plan described above. This group will be tasked with securing the additional funding and partnerships necessary to carry out a successful urban wood branding and certification program based upon the work accomplished in these summits.

Key resource personnel from Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin have come together to develop this plan, provide leadership for the proposed summits, and implement this project. These states hold significant experience in understanding urban wood utilization, promoting the use of urban wood residues, and most importantly, completing successful projects.

**Michigan:** Since 2004, Michigan's Ash Utilization Options Project, with funding support from USFS WERC, has have worked extensively to promote the reclamation of timber products from urban trees felled by the emerald ash borer. Numerous demonstrations, research, and training programs have identified partners and built support for urban wood use programs. This work has resulted in the extensive use of EAB-affected ash wood in Ann Arbor's new library building, the upcoming installation of a wood boiler system in the City of Taylor, 41 days of trainings assisting 175 individuals, the development of the *Urbanwood* marketing group for small sawmill operations, presentation of wood use information at over 100 events, and national media coverage.

**Illinois:** The Illinois Emerald Ash Borer Wood Utilization Team, with funding support from USFS WERC, has created a network of over 100 stakeholders, generated at least 30 prominent Chicago media placements, two national television network news stories, and leveraged more than \$78,000 in matching support from influential partners like the Illinois Institute of Technology and the Chicago Furniture Designers Association. The Team has trained arborists to assess urban timber potential and safely fell trees as marketable saw logs, identified sawyers available to saw and dry urban timber, marketed urban timber at wood industry trade shows, and supported the traveling juried furniture exhibit, "Rising From Ashes: Furniture From Lost Trees."

**Wisconsin:** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources meshes a successful state wood utilization program that is strongly supported by the traditional forest products sector with a robust and popular urban forestry program. In 2008, Wisconsin detected EAB in the state's most populous region, Milwaukee.

The following specific organizations have agreed to play a leadership role as part of the Core Working Group to implement the plan. This group will work together on a monthly basis and will assist the advisory board that is tasked with developing long-term plans for promoting broader national urban wood use.

- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Illinois EAB Wood Utilization Team comprised of the IL DNR, IL Conservation Foundation, Morton Arboretum, IL Department of Agriculture, USDA APHIS, USDA Forest Service, and municipal/industry partners
- Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation & Development Council
- Arbor Day Foundation/Tree City USA
- Recycle Ann Arbor

**Timeline:** The activities outlined above are planned to occur throughout a 12-month period. A planning period of six months will occur before the initial summit, with the subsequent summit held four months later. The two-month period following the final summit will be used to conduct follow-up communications, compile reports, and develop summary recommendations.

## **I. Measures of Success:**

1. Extent and depth of engagement of green building and products sectors and certification program leaders
2. Extent and depth of engagement of wood product industry groups.
3. Extent and depth of engagement of arboricultural and urban forestry groups
4. Number of summit participants
5. An implementation plan that will promote mainstream growth of urban wood utilization
6. Increase in urban wood reclamation and utilization in the three states.

## **Final Outcomes:**

- A multi-state, multi-disciplinary advisory group collaborating to market urban wood;
- A mapped pathway to certification and/or branding that would promote urban wood utilization on a national basis;
- Two productive, well-attended summits to explore and develop strategies for a certification system;
- Expansion of the Tree City USA program to provide incentives for urban wood reclamation in communities;
- Development of a certification or branding program for private arborists
- White papers identifying opportunities and laying out a plan for certification and branding systems for urban wood;
- Stronger regional networks for technology transfer and information sharing; and
- New opportunities for growth in urban wood market development within the green building and green products sectors.

The final report will address Section 508 compliance. SEMIRCD, with the support of the advisory group, will be responsible for the completion of the final report.

## WERC Project Application – Part II (continued)

### J. Budget Table:

<b>Categories</b>	<b>I <i>FS Share</i></b>	<b>II <i>Cooperator's Share</i></b>	<b>III <i>Total</i></b>
<b>1. Personnel</b>	\$5,200	\$28,886	\$34,086
<b>2. Fringe benefits</b>	\$2,000	\$9,108	\$11,108
<b>3. Travel</b>	\$10,000	\$6,750	\$16,750
<b>4. Equipment</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>5. Supplies/Materials</b>	\$2,000	\$9,500	\$11,500
<b>6. Contractual</b>	\$70,208	\$49,356	\$119,564
<b>7. Construction</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>8. Other (identify)</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>9. Direct charges</b>	\$89,408	\$103,600	\$193,008
<b>10. Indirect</b>	\$9,196	\$3,309	\$12,505
<b>11. Total</b>	\$98,604	\$106,909	\$205,513
<b>12. % of Total</b>	48%	52%	100%

### II. Cooperator Contributions — (not including U.S. Forest Service contributions)

<b>Cooperator</b>	<b><i>Cash</i></b>	<b><i>Materials</i></b>	<b><i>In-Kind Services</i></b>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
Michigan DNR			\$13,333	\$13,333
Wisconsin DNR			\$17,950	\$17,950
Illinois DNR			\$4,000	\$4,000
IL Cons. Found.			\$3,000	\$3,000
Morton Arboretum			\$1,000	\$1,000
U&M assistance			\$20,000	\$20,000
Work in Motion			\$11,856	\$11,856
Arbor Day Found.			\$12,770	\$12,770
Summit attendees			\$18,000	\$18,000
Various - website			\$5,000	\$5,000
<b><i>Totals</i></b>			\$106,909	\$106,909



4100 Illinois Route 53  
Lisle, IL 60532-1293

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January 30, 2009

Steve Milauskas, Director  
USDA Forest Service  
Wood Education & Resource Center  
301 Hardwood Lane  
Princeton, WV 24740

Dear Mr. Milauskas:

I am writing to express my full support for the proposal titled *Certification & Branding: Exploring Marketing Options for Urban Wood*. The project is a collaboration among Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan involving the most influential organizations to support urban wood utilization.

The loss of ash trees to emerald ash borer (EAB) is devastating to the Midwestern states. Disposal of ash trees in urban areas will be difficult and expensive. However, the enormity of the losses and the high degree of public awareness present an opportunity to further the reclamation of urban timber. Growing green ethics and practices make the re-use of urban wood an appealing option.

However, green building standards such as LEED that are powerful forces in the industry, do not currently recognize the economic and environmental benefits of reclaiming urban timber. Traditional forest products industry's objections to the exclusive standards have opened the issue to discussion and reconsideration. This is the opportunity for urban timber advocates to collaborate and promote this nascent industry.

Michigan and Illinois have accomplished much to promote and build networks necessary for the effective use of dead ash trees. The Ash Utilizations Option Project brings talent and experience to this collaboration. The Illinois EAB Wood Utilization Team has built an impressive network in less than two years. Both have grown with US Forest Service investment. Wisconsin, the newest state to grapple with EAB, brings strength in state-level wood utilization expertise. I think this is a dynamic collaboration and am pleased to lend my support.

The Morton Arboretum will be an active participant in this project and will lend staff and resources to accomplish its objectives. Thank you for your consideration of this exciting proposal.

Sincerely,

Edith Makra  
Community Trees Advocate and Chairperson, Illinois EAB Wood Utilization Team

630-968-0074  
Fax 630-719-2433  
trees@mortonarb.org



ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH, GOVERNOR  
THOMAS E. JENNINGS, DIRECTOR

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**Bureau of Environmental Programs**

State Fairgrounds P.O. Box 19281 Springfield, IL 62794-9281 (217)785-2427

DeKalb, Illinois Field Office 2280-B Bethany Road, DeKalb, IL 60115 (815) 787-5476

January 30, 2009

U.S. Forest Service  
Wood Education and Resource Center  
301 Hardwood Lane  
Princeton, WV 24740

Dear USFS and Cooperating State Forestry Agencies:

I am writing this letter to formally support the efforts of the proposal for green certification and green recognition of urban wood as proposed by the various groups working through the SE Michigan RC&D Council and titled *Marketing Urban Wood Through Certification and Branding*.

One reason our Department of Agriculture supports wood utilization as outreach with our Emerald Ash Borer program is that utilization drives constraints and opportunities for compliance and control of the EAB and it drives constraints and opportunities for management of the EAB situation.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture supports and applauds the FY2009 Competitive Grant Initiative project titled *Marketing Urban Wood Through Certification and Branding*.

Sincerely,

Paul Deizman, CF  
IL Dept. of Agriculture  
PDQ/Emerald Ash Borer Program Manager



January 30, 2009

U.S. Forest Service  
Wood Education and Resource Center  
301 Hardwood Lane  
Princeton, WV 24740

Dear Review Team,

I am writing to you to ask that you support certification or branding of Urban Timber.

I am Chair of the traveling juried exhibit, "Rising from Ashes: Furniture from Lost Trees." This exhibit shows ash wood from EAB killed trees in furniture made by professional designers. Our goal has been to demonstrate, by the quality of the furniture, that urban harvested ash can be used at the most artistically demanding level of the craft to create beautiful, and functional furniture.

As furniture makers we need certification for urban wood to help our clients discern when they are really helping sustain the environment. Our clients are demanding sustainability, finally. It has been a long time coming, but now they want it, and they deserve to know what is real, and what is hype. A certification system for this timber would be a very valuable service to manufacturer and client.

I am a board member of The Chicago Furniture Designers Association and a professional furniture maker. Please refer to the websites below for more information.

Dolly Spragins, Chair  
Rising from Ashes: Furniture from Lost Trees  
[www.risingfromashes.org](http://www.risingfromashes.org)  
[www.cfdainfo.org](http://www.cfdainfo.org)

1500 S. Western Ave 5CN2  
Chicago, IL 60608  
[www.dollyspragins.com](http://www.dollyspragins.com)  
773-573-9339



# The National Arbor Day Foundation®

211 N. 12th St. • Lincoln, NE 68508 • 402-474-5655 [arborday.org](http://arborday.org)

*We inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees.*

January 30, 2009

U.S. Forest Service  
Wood Education and Resource Center  
301 Hardwood Lane  
Princeton, WV 24740

To: The Competitive Review Team

The Arbor Day Foundation is pleased to provide this letter of support for the "Marketing Urban Wood through Certification and Branding Project," submitted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in collaboration with the Illinois and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources.

The Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the US Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters manage and facilitate the Tree City USA Growth Award program which recognizes and encourages advanced levels of community forest care and management. The Growth Award is designed to promote best practices and support innovative new ideas among community leaders striving to improve their community tree care.

We believe that incorporating "recovery of urban wood value" as a management component provides communities with a creative idea that will enhance and benefit their urban forest. We are hopeful that communities will seek to make use of wood from their urban forest as we help to establish a meaningful management standard.

The Arbor Day Foundation will support this new project by:

- Participating in the Project Core Working Group;
- Working to incorporate the "recovery of urban wood value" into the Tree City USA Growth Award program;
- Educating Tree City USA communities and the Foundation's general membership about the Project and its outcomes; and
- Making our members and the general public aware of the value associated with urban wood recovery and usage.

Thank you for your attention. Please do not hesitate to call or contact us with additional questions.

Sincerely,

Dan Lambe, Vice President  
Arbor Day Foundation Programs



*A private, nonprofit  
organization improving  
environmental quality  
through reuse, recycling  
and effective energy use.*

January 30, 2009

Recycle Ann Arbor  
2420 S Industrial Hwy  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

**RE: Marketing Urban Wood through Certification and Branding Project**

To: The Competitive Review Team

Recycle Ann Arbor would like to express our support for the "Marketing Urban Wood through Certification and Branding Project," submitted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in collaboration with the Illinois and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources.

The primary objective of Recycle Ann Arbor's Environmental House program is to increase consumer and industry awareness of, and improve standards and practices relating to indoor air quality, effective energy use, and resource conservation in new and existing buildings. We continually seek partners and projects that promote awareness and implementation of green buildings in our community.

Since 2006, the Environmental House and Recycle Ann Arbor's ReUse Center, a 20,000 sf warehouse of "gently-used" merchandise and green products, have been working to promote the development and growth of an urban wood marketplace in southeast Michigan through retail sales. Working through a partnership with local sawmills, the ReUse Center has sold over \$30,000 in urban wood products since 2007. Furthermore, through its collaboration with the Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development Council, Recycle Ann Arbor has been involved in outreach efforts to promote and market The Urbanwood Project to a wide range of potential customers.

Architects, builders, remodelers, and retailers are expressing more interest in urban wood products and momentum is building. However, a consistent "complaint" from these customers is that urban wood is not recognized within current green building standards, and is frequently overlooked for this reason. With strong branding and integration into green building certification standards, Recycle Ann Arbor is convinced an urban wood market could flourish and help strengthen local economies.

Recycle Ann Arbor will support this project through participation in the Project Core Working Group, continued local market development, and tracking successes, obstacles and barriers in current market integration efforts.

Thank you for your attention. Please do not hesitate to call with any questions.

All Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB", is written over a faint circular stamp.

Jason Bing, LEED AP  
Program Manager, Recycle Ann Arbor  
t. 734.662.6288

January 30, 2009

U.S. Forest Service  
Wood Education and Resource Center  
301 Hardwood Lane  
Princeton, WV 24740

To: Review Team:

Without qualification, I wish to fully endorse the proposal “Marketing Urban Wood Through Certification and Branding Project” jointly submitted by the Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources.

Having worked over the past decade to encourage the best utilization of urban trees as a source of high quality lumber, I urge you to approve this grant so that via certification wood from urban sources finally can be formally recognized for the unique and valuable material that it is. I believe that certification that validly established the provenance of urban lumber will push the utilization of urban trees to the next level by encouraging more individuals and businesses to consider it as an especially valuable material that can be used in both public and private projects. To my mind there is no better fate for trees from public property than to be formally certified and used for public projects. Similarly, certified urban lumber will, I believe, appeal to homeowners, builders, and architects as they increasingly seek to construct environmentally sustainable homes and buildings.

Certification also notifies potential users that fallen urban trees from their properties are being used in their own communities. This connects directly with the growing movement to utilize produce and other natural materials from the periphery of the cities thereby reducing the carbon footprint of material that must be shipped from great distances.

In addition to certification, identifying selected urban trees as historically important bestows a very special brand that indicates that the lumber from such trees is unique and irreplaceable and must be used for special projects. I have completed many furniture commissions for individual families using heritage trees from their respective properties. For them, certification is not necessary: they already know where the trees came from. What counts is that the lumber is used for pieces that hold special meaning for them and that can be passed on to future generations as heirlooms. Such branding can be applied to public trees as well when their history is already well known.

Together certification and branding bestow a very special status on trees from the nation’s urban forests in a way that further encourages their highest and best use.

I have committed myself to helping in whatever manner I can to push this idea forward if the project is funded. I urge to find in favor of this submission.

Please feel free to contact me if the Team has any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Sherrill, Ph.D.  
Author, *Harvesting Urban Timber: A Complete Guide*  
[samuel.sherrill@uc.edu](mailto:samuel.sherrill@uc.edu)  
(513) 248-0509



City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of  
Streets and Sanitation

Michael J. Picardi  
Commissioner

Malcolm Whiteside  
Deputy Commissioner

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<http://www.cityofchicago.org>

January 30, 2009

Steve Milauskas, Director  
USDA Forest Service  
Wood Education & Resource Center  
301 Hardwood Lane  
Princeton, WV 24740

Dear USFS and Cooperating State Forestry Agencies:

I am writing this letter to formally support the efforts of the proposal for green certification and green recognition of urban wood as proposed by the various groups working through the SE Michigan RC&D Council and titled *Marketing Urban Wood Through Certification and Branding*.

One reason our Bureau supports wood utilization outreach with our Emerald Ash Borer program is that as an increasing number of Ash trees are lost, the impact on our utilization program will be immense. On an annual basis we trim 100,000 trees and remove 7-10,000 trees. With this exotic insect our removals are anticipated to increase exponentially based on the experiences of other affected communities such as Detroit, Michigan.

Growing green ethics and practices make the re-use of urban wood an appealing option. However, green building standards such as LEED, powerful forces in the industry, do not currently recognize the economic and environmental benefits of reclaiming urban timber. Traditional forest products industry's objections to the exclusive standards have opened the issue to discussion and reconsideration. This is an opportunity for urban timber advocates to collaborate and promote this nascent industry.

The Bureau of Forestry is a committed and active participant in this project and will lend staff and resources to accomplish its objectives.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Whiteside  
Deputy Commissioner



MW:jm

