

**Southeast Michigan  
Resource Conservation  
& Development Council**



Serving Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, & Wayne Counties

Southeast Michigan RC&D Council  
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Chairman: Morse Brown

**February 2010**



**NEW MEDIA PROMOTES LOCAL  
URBANWOOD BUSINESSES**

In today's tough economic climate, small businesses must be innovative to attract customers. Through help from the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council, members of the area's Urbanwood Project have new tools for promoting their unique services and unusual business strategy. Their work, turning urban "waste" wood into valuable products, used to be tough for many people to visualize, but thanks to several new videos, these businesses can introduce customers to the concept of reclaiming urban trees, recruit more arborist partners, and help builders and other wood users learn more about these sustainable products. These short films, including in-depth interviews with sawyers, woodworkers, and architects, are available on the Urbanwood Project's channel on YouTube. All of this activity also landed the Urbanwood Project a cover story on the Greenovation.tv website. To see available products, learn more about the participating businesses, or join the mailing list, please visit <http://urbanwood.org>.

**EAB UNIVERSITY PROVIDES  
GUIDANCE ON ASH WOOD USE**

Staff from the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council presented strategies for the *Utilization of Ash in the Wake of EAB* on a recent *Emerald Ash Borer University* webinar. Since mid-2004, the Council's *Ash Utilization Options Project* has helped communities and businesses find more value in trees removed due to the emerald ash borer outbreak. The webinar gave an overview of this work, providing research results, planning strategies, success stories and resources that may help with the development of effective EAB response plans. The full webinar (including slides and audio track) can be viewed at: <http://breeze.msu.edu/p28503914/>.



Extension educators at Michigan State University, Ohio State University, and Purdue University launched *Emerald Ash Borer University* as a joint effort to broadcast free webinars that provide up-to-date education and the latest information on responding to the emerald ash borer outbreak. For more details, visit: [http://www.emeraldashborer.info/eab\\_university.cfm](http://www.emeraldashborer.info/eab_university.cfm).

See Urbanwood videos on YouTube:  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/urbanwoodproject>

Read more about Urbanwood on Greenovation.tv:  
<http://www.greenovationtv.com/2010/01/harvesting-trees-from-cities/>



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## COUNCIL SEEKS PROPOSALS FOR NEW GRANTS & PROJECTS

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council will be accepting proposals and seeking partners for the following new projects in the coming months:

- *Community Wood Use Demonstration Site* - The project will use an interested county, city, or public recreation area in southeastern Michigan as a large-scale urban wood utilization demonstration location. The selected community will receive a package of technical assistance and training services worth approximately \$90,000.
- *Firewood Debarking Technology Grant* - This project is aimed at creating simple, affordable, easy-to-build firewood debarking equipment suitable for small wood-processing businesses. A grant of \$30,000 is available for the development of the equipment designs.
- *Firewood Chemical Testing Contract* - In an effort to help with the development of safer firewood products, the Council is seeking professional testing to determine the impacts of borate insecticide treatments on firewood performance and emissions.
- *Wood Boiler Installation Grant* - A grant of \$60,000 is available to help fund the installation of a wood-fueled biomass boiler system in a public facility in southeastern Michigan. Preference will be given to facilities that can lower wood disposal costs, lower energy costs, and act as a demonstration site for others.
- *Pellet Industry Workshops* - Together with the Michigan DNR and the Potowatomi RC&D Council, workshops will be held to explore the challenges and opportunities facing the state's emerging wood pellet industry.

For more information about these programs, please visit the News section of the Council's *Ash Utilization Options Project* website at <http://semircd.org/ash/news> or contact [jessica.simons@semircd.org](mailto:jessica.simons@semircd.org).

## TRI-STATE COLLABORATIVE LOOKS AT URBAN WOOD MARKETS

Along with partners throughout Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, the Southeast Michigan RC&D is helping to lead the *Urban and Community Wood Marketing Collaborative*. This group has come together with a mission to encourage the highest possible use of downed trees from urban areas and is looking for ways to increase demand for urban and community wood products in green building markets.

The Collaborative will be hosting two roundtable meetings to bring together key stakeholders in the urban wood industry - arborists, governments, sawmills, wood products certifiers, and green builders. Together, they hope to create new ideas for how to expand the market opportunities for urban wood. The first of these meetings is scheduled to take place on March 8, 2010 at the Ann Arbor District Library's Traverwood Branch. The Traverwood facility's architects have received national recognition for their innovative use of reclaimed ash wood in the library's interior.

## SEE MORE FROM THE SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN RC&D COUNCIL

Visit our websites for more about how reclaimed dead trees can create jobs and produce sustainable energy:



<http://semircd.org/ash>



<http://urbanwood.org>



<http://michiganwoodenergy.org>

*Funding for the Council's wood utilization projects comes from the USDA Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center and from the USDA Federal State Marketing Improvement Program. Additional technical support is provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.*

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**May 2010**



**NEW \$50K  
COMMUNITY  
WOOD USE  
GRANT  
AVAILABLE**

Under increasingly tight budgets, both public and private tree care operations struggle with the costs of removing, handling, and disposing of wood from urban forest management activities. The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council is currently accepting proposals from communities or organizations interested in serving as a pilot facility for a large-scale urban wood use demonstration and training program.

The project aims to create a model for innovative wood recycling that conserves resources, reduces costs for public tree care, creates new sustainable products, and develops partnerships between the public and private sector. The program also should generate important data collection and educational opportunities that may inform future urban forest management decisions across the region. A single \$50,000 grant will be awarded to the selected community or land management organization. Proposals should be submitted by June 21, 2010 to be considered.

The complete request for proposals is available online:  
<http://semircd.org/ash/news/CommunityWoodDemoRFP0510.pdf>.

**OVER \$60K IN USDA FOREST  
SERVICE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR  
SOUTHEAST MI BIOMASS PROJECT**

Fuel costs continue to be a major challenge in Michigan. Most of the fuels used in the state are imported — 100% of the coal, 96% of the oil, and 75% of the natural gas — at a cost of \$18 billion each year to our local economy. At the same time, manufacturing and urban forestry activities create excess wood residues in need of costly disposal. One 2005 study of wood waste generation in southeastern Michigan found that the 2,600 companies interviewed paid nearly \$9 million each year to dispose of wood, with over a fourth of the material ending up in landfills.

In response, the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council is now offering a \$62,600 grant for the installation of a wood boiler system. This grant is intended to create a successful biomass



energy demonstration project focused on the use of wood residues from urban tree removals and/or other clean urban “waste” wood sources. The grant is targeted toward public facilities or other high-profile sites.

The complete request for proposals is available online:  
<http://semircd.org/ash/news/woodenergyRFP0610.pdf>

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## COUNCIL LEADS EFFORT TO DEVELOP NEW TREE CARE STANDARDS

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council is heading up a USDA Forest Service-funded program to encourage the highest possible use of downed trees from urban areas. Working together with partners in Illinois and Wisconsin, the Council has brought together a group of arborists, wood industry members, furniture makers, architects, academics, and government officials to create better ways to recover valuable tree residues and to move those into markets like green building.

This group, the Urban Forest Products Collaborative, held roundtable meetings in Ann Arbor and Chicago to brainstorm and develop new ways to promote sustainable urban wood products. As a result of this program, partners are now looking at how two prominent tree care programs might encourage more arborists to look for better wood recycling options.

Team members have petitioned the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program to include "high-value wood recovery and use" as a new category in its Growth Awards system. The Growth Awards offer recognition for exceptional community forestry efforts and reward innovative management.

A working group has also formed to examine how better wood recycling could be incorporated within the Tree Care Industries Association's ANSI A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations. The Tree Care Industries Association's standards are recognized by the American National Standards Institute as the official accepted tree care industry practices nationwide. Having official standards for how arborists can find the "highest and best use" for their removed trees would be a powerful way to encourage more wood recovery among TCIA's over 2,000 member businesses.

The Urban Forest Products Collaborative is tentatively planning a third roundtable meeting in September 2010 to continue networking and building partnerships.

## RC&Ds COLLABORATE ON WOOD PELLET INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Wood pellets are a densified fuel made from sawdust and waste wood from other industries. Using only a pressure-treatment process, ground wood fibers can be transformed into an extremely efficient fuel source. Michigan currently has nine wood pellet manufacturers, with the industry expanding in recent years due to the growing interest in renewable energy around the state. The Potawatomi and Southeast Michigan RC&D Councils are now working together with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment to take a closer look this emerging industry. Through telephone surveys and site visits, the Council and its partners have been learning more about the opportunities and challenges facing these small businesses. The team plans to develop a training program that addresses issues of product quality, marketing, and networking for these companies and their industry suppliers later this fall.

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**August 2010**

### **COUNCIL TO AWARD \$115K IN FUNDING FOR WOOD USE PROJECTS**

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council is currently evaluating proposals from local communities and organizations for \$115K in grant funding. The Council requested proposals earlier this summer for two grants, a \$65K wood boiler installation project and a \$50K community wood utilization demonstration and training project.

The wood energy grant is intended to create a successful biomass energy demonstration project focused on the use of wood residues from urban tree removals and/or other clean urban “waste” wood sources. The grant is targeted toward public facilities or other high-profile sites. The community wood utilization grant will support the successful completion of a municipal wood use plan, an economic analysis of their wood utilization program, and an environmental “life-cycle” study of the final wood products created on-site.

Grant awards are expected to be made in September with projects beginning shortly thereafter. The Council is looking forward to providing support for innovative urban wood projects that can inspire other local communities. By finding valuable uses for the wood from urban tree removals, these projects can help reduce disposal costs for municipalities, create sustainable and renewable energy options, conserve resources, and promote the growth of local wood industries. Funding for these programs is provided through grants from the USDA Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center.



### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR WOOD USE PLANNING**

With over six years of experience in successful programming, the SE Michigan RC&D Council has built a reputation as a clearinghouse for quality information on finding value in removed urban trees. The RC&D regularly provides customized help to individuals, organizations, industry members, and governments at no cost. This technical advice includes services such as:

- Helping industry members to locate data on wood waste generation,
- Fostering public-private partnerships to help create more affordable wood disposal,
- Networking and coordinating wood industry members for group marketing activities,
- Educating landowners about tree removal and wood utilization options,
- Providing recommendations and templates for the development of community wood use plans, and
- Cooperating with wood-use groups in neighboring states to share our experiences.

For more information, please contact Jessica Simons at 517-851-2372 or [jessica.simons@semircd.org](mailto:jessica.simons@semircd.org).

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## COUNCIL ACTIVE IN START OF NEW WOOD ORGANIZATIONS

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council continues to work towards strengthening the markets and improving the safety of wood products from our area. While we focus on projects and activities in our own target counties, we also realize that by working cooperatively with similar efforts across the Great Lakes region, we can help create a better business climate for our local partners.

For the past year, we have been working to create better wood marketing strategies with the Urban and Community Wood Marketing Collaborative, a tri-state effort that includes partners in Wisconsin and Illinois. This collaborative has already hosted roundtable discussions in Ann Arbor and Chicago to evaluate the options for creating a widespread branding or certification program for promoting urban wood products. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup> in Milwaukee. Thirty-five participants, including members of the wood industry, government, and arborist organizations, plan to attend to lay out the strategy for creating a formal association to promote urban wood products.

The Council, along with its partners in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, has also agreed to act as an advisor for a firewood safety and networking effort led by the Glacierland RC&D Council in Green Bay, WI. This program is facilitating the creation of a new firewood industry association. The new association is intended to help businesses to remain competitive while working under the strict regulatory environment that is now in place to limit the spread of invasive species.

## USDA SEEKS EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL ASH UTILIZATION

The southeastern Michigan area has emerged as a national leader in finding innovative uses for trees removed due to the emerald ash borer. Representatives from the USDA Forest Service arranged for Southeast Michigan RC&D Council staff to meet with Ohio resource managers in July as they began developing a statewide ash wood utilization strategy. The Council was also asked to design a tour of successful ash wood utilization sites for a group of Pennsylvania foresters who will be visiting the area on August 31<sup>st</sup>. This tour will visit Mid-Michigan Recycling's wood disposal yard in Livonia, the Urbanwood Project's retail area at Recycle Ann Arbor's ReUse Center, and Ann Arbor's Traverwood Library. The tour will also feature presentations on Council-sponsored wood disposal and log treatment research by Michigan State University's Dr. Pascal Nzokou.

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**November 2010**

## COUNCIL TO AWARDS \$50K TO TREES FOR HABITAT

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Genesee Conservation District for their *Trees for Habitat* project. This project will recover usable logs from the removal of 100 of the City of Flint's most hazardous trees. These trees will be milled into lumber and products that will be used in local low-income housing development by Habitat for Humanity. Several evaluations of the process will take place to provide new information about the economic and environmental impacts of implementing this type of wood use plan.

Funding will specifically be used to support the following:

- Staffing of a forester/project manager with the Genesee Conservation District,
- Lumber processing and coordination with Habitat for Humanity's building efforts,
- Development and implementation of an environmental study to compare the impacts of the current wood waste disposal method to the new value-added method,
- Review of the economic impact of wood utilization,
- Partnership development with local work groups and city officials,
- Public outreach and education activities, and
- Creation of a report that can help other communities in the building of their own wood use plans.

In addition to the \$50,000 grant, the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council will provide another \$8,000 in training opportunities to the GCD, their partners, and the

southeastern Michigan community. These training workshops will proceed throughout 2011 and will address skill-building activities to support the new wood utilization plan. The schedule is still being developed, but may include workshops on timber harvesting, log evaluation and handling, or lumber storage.

The Genesee Conservation District expects many benefits from this project. In a city that has recently underfunded and understaffed its tree care activities, the GCD hopes that this project will help city officials and residents to develop a better connection with the City of Flint's Urban Forestry Program. It also has the potential to stimulate the local wood industry and to help Habitat for Humanity to sustain and lengthen their efforts in the City of Flint.

Through the *Trees for Habitat* project, the Genesee Conservation District hopes to be a "catalyst for change... to encourage creative problem solving and change the way people look at and value the urban forest." They also plan to evaluate the potential for future wood use activities to include partnerships with contractors and lumber yards in Genesee County.

Funding for this program is provided through a grant from the USDA Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center. Partners for the *Trees for Habitat* project include the Genesee Conservation District, the City of Flint, the Ruth Mott Foundation/Applewood Estate, ROWE Professional Services Company, Pollums Natural Resources, J and M Tree Service, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and Keep Genesee County Beautiful.

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## COUNCIL WORK LEADS TO NEW URBAN FOREST PRODUCTS ALLIANCE

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council continues to work towards strengthening the markets for wood products from our area. While we focus on projects and activities in our own target counties, we also realize that by working cooperatively with similar efforts across the Great Lakes region, we can help create a better business climate for our local partners.

Through a grant from the USDA Forest Service, the RC&D and its partners hosted a series of roundtable meetings in 2010 to bring together industry, government, and non-profit leaders around a common vision: *putting all wood from urban trees to good use*. These leaders and experts from a variety of disciplines, including forestry, tree care, wood processing, and green building, are working to form the Urban Forest Products Alliance (UFPA) with the mission of advancing the sustainable recovery and the highest and best use of the products of urban forests.

While the roundtable meetings began with partners mostly in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, the geographic reach expanded over time with interested businesses and organizations from other states joining the initiative. By the end of 2010, the expanded group of partners had come together to identify leaders, develop stronger networks, and create a strategic plan to move the cause forward.

While the UFPA is not yet a formalized organization, the group has already done significant work in identifying national partners and mapping a pathway for urban wood products to develop as a viable new industry. This coalition now plans to provide the first-ever coordinated national effort to collect and share success stories, build educational resources, collaborate with existing urban forestry programs, and create new partnerships to support urban wood utilization.

## STATE AGENCIES OFFER WOOD-RELATED GRANTS

Two current grant opportunities may provide needed funding for local urban forestry and wood utilization activities:

- The DELEG Bureau of Energy Systems is offering Biomass Energy Demonstration Grants. Proposals are due by December 15, 2011. See the RFP at: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dleg/Biomass\\_Energy\\_Demo\\_Grant\\_RFP\\_FY\\_2011\\_338774\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dleg/Biomass_Energy_Demo_Grant_RFP_FY_2011_338774_7.pdf).
- The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment is offering DTE Energy Foundation Tree Planting Grants. Grant applications must be received by December 31, 2010. For more information and a grant application, visit the DNRE Urban and Community Forestry website at [www.michigan.gov/ucf](http://www.michigan.gov/ucf).

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