



2007 Annual Report and Year in Review

Primary project funding is from the USDA Forest Service Wood Education & Resource Center

2007

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has had another busy and successful year. The Council has continued to take a leadership role in helping communities impacted by the emerald ash borer to find more value in their removed trees. Through educational events, research programs, demonstration grants, and strategic outreach, the Southeast Michigan RC&D has supported local efforts to create markets for an undervalued natural resource.

Wood Energy Projects Gain Steam



Major Projects...

- **Wood Energy Projects Gain Steam**
- **New Urban Wood Research Shows Potential for Area Businesses**
- **Educational Events Held to Promote Wood Use**
- **EAB & Wood Use Outreach Expands Throughout Region**
- **Council Receives New Marketing Grant**
- **Continuing to Work for Official Designation**

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has three major woody biomass energy initiatives underway this year. First, the Council has sponsored a statewide study of boiler systems through grants from the USDA Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth's Energy Office. This study, performed by CTA Architects and Engineers, produced a list of the top 35 potential wood boiler conversion projects in each county of Michigan. Additionally, the project created the Michigan Wood Energy website. The website includes a calculator that will allow users to enter specific information about their site's existing fossil fuel costs and energy needs. This data is then analyzed to produce an estimate of the cost of installing a wood-fueled boiler and the potential for annual fuel savings. The full boiler study report may be found at www.semircd.org/ash/research. The Michigan Wood Energy site and calculator are located at www.michiganwoodenergy.org.

The Council also funded wood boiler conversion engineering assessments in two local public institutions. Oakland University and the City of Monroe's Department of Public Service received \$25,000 and \$20,000 grants, respectively, to conduct feasibility studies on their existing boiler systems. Building managers at both facilities have brought together expert teams to evaluate the costs and benefits of using wood as an alternative fuel source. The use of locally-generated wood wastes for heating public buildings could provide a cheaper fuel for struggling communities, while also boosting markets for wood residue utilization.

Finally, through a grant from the US Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center, the Council will be offering a \$65,000 for a wood boiler conversion project. The RFP for this demonstration grant is expected to be released in November 2007.

New Urban Wood Research Shows Potential for Area Businesses

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has sponsored several research programs to evaluate the resource availability and utilization options for ash and other removed urban trees. Studies on urban wood residue generation and on ash log sanitization were recently completed and are available at www.semircd.org/ash/research.

Dr. Sam Sherrill and Dr. David MacFarlane completed *Measures of Wood Resources in Lower Michigan: Wood Residues and the Saw Timber Content of Urban Forests*. This study characterized the volume, quality, and estimated value of southeastern Michigan's urban trees and other types of urban wood waste. According to this report, about 7.5 million cubic yards of wood residues were generated in the area in 2005. This amount would fill 354 football fields to a depth of 10 feet. MacFarlane's portion of the work, which focused only on standing urban trees, found that dead urban trees from this region could produce 4.7 million board feet of lumber annually, or enough to build 362 average-sized homes. His study was featured in the July 2007 issue of *Arboriculture and Urban Forestry*, the scientific journal of the International Society of Arboriculture.

Another Council-sponsored research project is pending publication in the Forest Products Journal, *Sanitization of Logs Infested by Exotic Pests: Case Study of the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire) Treatments using Conventional Heat and Microwave* (by Nzokou, Tourtellot, and Kamdem). This study evaluated the effectiveness of two physical treatments (conventional heating and microwave heating, to temperatures ranging from 50°C to 65°C) at removing EAB infestations from ash logs. An additional study on local wood disposal yard processing and efficiency is in progress by Dr. Pascal Nzokou and his research team.

Educational Events Held to Promote Wood Use



Several events were held in 2007 to encourage the creative use of urban and other salvaged wood. The Council-sponsored *It Grows on Trees* woodworking competition and exhibition showcased the artistic works of 18 Michigan artists and featured the works of David Gendler, the show's organizer. The event, held throughout March and April at Ypsilanti's Riverside Arts Center Gallery and Highland's Huron Valley Council for the Arts, was a remarkable success. It resulted in national media coverage and record-breaking audiences at each gallery. Gendler, who hopes to make this show an annual event, has already secured the Riverside Arts Center Gallery and the Manistee Arts Institute for two of next year's shows. Exhibits from the show can be seen at www.semircd.org/ash/woodshow.

The Council also hosted *EAB & Beyond: Finding Value in Urban Trees* in May 2007 in order to share information on all facets of urban wood utilization. This conference brought participants from throughout the entire Midwest region and provided a valuable opportunity for wood generators, wood users, and service providers to network and trade information. Presentations from the event, which included research updates, market discussions, and community planning guides, are available at www.semircd.org/ash/education/resources.php.

As in years past, several training programs were also held for local wood industry members. Due to statewide demand, the Michigan DNR partnered with the Southeast Michigan RC&D this year to host the Game of Logging chainsaw safety program in a broader range of locations. This year's programs were offered in Ann Arbor, Berkeley, and Muskegon.

EAB & Wood Use Outreach Expands Throughout Region

Given that southeastern Michigan was the first area in the country to be hit by the emerald ash borer, the Council has felt a great responsibility to share the lessons learned here with other state and regional partners. The Southeast Michigan RC&D was fortunate to have the opportunity to share its experiences in the following venues in the last year:

- Indiana Arborists Association Annual Meeting
- Wisconsin Arborists Association Annual Meeting
- Wisconsin Association of RC&D Councils Summer Meeting
- Remodel Green Midwest Conference
- Michigan Recycling Coalition Conference
- City Trees Roundtable Discussion (in the Journal of the Society of Municipal Arborists)

Additionally the Council provided input to the production of two valuable guides for communities facing the emerald ash borer:

- Michigan's Emerald Ash Borer Community Preparedness Plan
- Cost Effective Tree Removal and Utilization Strategies to Address Invasive Species Attacks (*a USDA Forest Service Publication*)

Both of these documents are available at www.semircd.org/ash/education/resources.php.

Council Receives New Marketing Grant

In partnership with the Michigan DNR and Recycle Ann Arbor, the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has been awarded a \$47,410 grant from the USDA Federal and State Marketing Improvement Program to create marketing and retail opportunities for southeastern Michigan's growing urban wood products industry. The grant will be used to create a marketing website, print materials, training workshops, and branding strategies for local sawmills who process urban trees. This effort will largely target the expanding "green building" movement in the region.

Continuing to Work for Official Designation

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has continued to work toward receiving its official USDA designation. This year, the Council is working to update its application to include the completed projects from the last few years. Additionally, the Southeast Michigan board recently completed a prioritization session to lay a framework for new project development.

In order to maintain political support for the application and to update local leaders on the Council's activities, the annual Legislative Breakfast was held on February 15, 2007 at Lyon Oaks County Park. Always a successful event, the meeting attracted 32 participants and provided a valuable opportunity to promote the good work of the Council.

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