



Research & Development



# Wood Utilization Center, Sitka

## Background

The Wood Utilization Center identifies and evaluates opportunities to create and maintain a viable forest products industry in Alaska. In 2009, we expanded the center to include the evaluation of several forest-based economic development projects to help sustain healthy communities. The center also is evaluating biomass energy opportunities. This year new strategies are helping communities in southeast Alaska to transition from harvesting old-growth forests to using new techniques for managing young-growth stands in the Tongass National Forest. The center is also developing strategies to expand the tourism industry in Alaska.

## Funding

| FY10          | FY09          | FY08          | FY07          | FY06          |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| \$1.1 million | \$1.1 million | \$1.1 million | \$1.0 million | \$1.0 million |

## Key Outcomes

- Assess economic development opportunities in Southeast Alaska that support sustainable communities.
- Facilitate the use of biomass in Alaska for wood energy in homes, sawmills, schools, and community buildings.
- Develop new and emerging methods to manage forests to minimize and mitigate climatic change. Work with the Sitka Ranger District and others to produce firewood, wood chips, and other energy products from young-growth forest stands.
- Establish methods to evaluate and lessen the impact of economic development on the environment (e.g., rivers, forests, air quality).

## Current Activities

- Completing projects to define available biomass (renewable wood energy), burning equipment, consumer preferences, and demand for these products in Alaska.
- Completing a project to determine suitability and quality of wood pellets produced from Alaska spruce and hemlock.
- Completing a case study analysis of the problems and benefits resulting from installation of a biomass heating system in the Craig school system.
- Determining consumer preferences for products produced from red alder lumber.
- Determining product demand for products made from log exports from China, Japan, and South Korea.
- Examining land management decisions that impact the environment.
- Evaluating the processes and outcomes of two different community economic development strategies.

### Who Benefits Directly?

- Local government, rural communities
- Land managers (e.g., Forest Service, Native corporations, and economic development organizations)
- Mill owners, entrepreneurs, and consumers

### Partners

- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry
- Alaska Energy Authority
- Alaska Forestry Association
- City of Sitka
- Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation
- Forest Service, Alaska Region, State and Private Forestry
- Juneau Economic Development Council
- Tongass National Forest
- University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative State Extension Service (Alaska)
- University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (USDA)
- Oregon State University, Department of Forest Products
- University of Idaho, Forest Products Department
- University of Washington, Center for International Trade in Forest Products

### More Information

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