



Forest Service Wood Energy Technical Assistance Team: Taking Wood Energy Projects From Concept to Reality

“We developed this team to ensure that we have great examples of operating wood energy systems that demonstrate the potential for the use of wood energy in commercial, institutional, and industrial projects.” *Lew McCreery, Wood Energy Technical Assistance Team Leader*

WOOD-TO-ENERGY PROJECTS SUSTAIN FORESTS, COMMUNITIES, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Delivering environmental and economic benefits drives the day-to-day work of the USDA Forest Service Wood Energy Technical Assistance Team. The team’s renewable energy projects use local, sustainably sourced wood residues (such as wood chips) to offset the use of fossil fuels. This saves money, sustains local economies, and keeps our forests healthy.

Healthy forests are essential, not just for the communities that rely directly on the forests for jobs, but for all Americans. Forests purify our air and water, and also support critical ecosystems.

Opening markets for forest management residues and by-products is critical for reducing the risk of wildfires by reducing the fuel load in forests.

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The Wood Energy Technical Assistance Team works to move clean and efficient thermal and combined-heat-and-power (CHP) projects from the concept stage to the stage where the owner can move forward with implementation. The team also works to ensure that implemented projects provide successful models for future projects.

Since 2009, the team has cooperated with State and private partners across the United States to evaluate more than 200 projects. By 2020, these partners had implemented 65 of the projects the team reviewed.

Combined, these projects may potentially generate almost \$1.3 billion in operational savings over 25 years. During this same period, the team estimates projected carbon dioxide (CO₂) reductions in the range of 90 million metric tonnes.

A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

The initial evaluation of potential projects typically includes conceptual-level values for potential fuel savings, the economic potential for the owner, estimates of greenhouse gas reductions, identifying supplies of woody biomass, and local economic impact.

TALK TO US ABOUT YOUR WOOD-TO-ENERGY IDEAS

The Wood Energy Technical Assistance Team is part of the USDA Forest Service Eastern Region Forest Markets Program. The program's mission is to facilitate interaction and the exchange of information with the forest products industry in order to enhance opportunities to produce sustainable forest products and bioenergy.

FLEXIBLE TAILORED ASSISTANCE

The Wood Energy Technical Assistance Team provides a range of technical services to meet the unique needs of each project:

- Initial introduction to wood-to-energy
- Feasibility study
- Technical assistance with developing requests for proposals for project design or design-build contracts
- Technical support for evaluating designs and technologies proposed by potential vendors
- Additional services as appropriate, including specific fuel-supply analyses
- Operational troubleshooting
- Energy and emissions metering
- Data analysis of existing wood energy systems to document and improve their performance
- General technical assistance targeted to help move projects or State and local programs forward

More Information

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Cover Page Photo:

Representatives of the Veterans Administration (VA) Health Care System, Bristol Design Build Services, LLC, Wolpert, Inc., Wilson Engineering Services PC, and the USDA Forest Service participated in a tour that included a visit to Lockheed Martin System Integration facility in Owego, NY. This tour was developed by the USDA Forest Service Wood Energy Technical Assistance Team to introduce VA Health Care System staff and their contractors to modern wood energy systems. Credit: USDA Forest Service