



Woody Biomass Removal Case Studies: Lessons Learned and Strategies for Success

Woody biomass is a hot topic in forestry. Rising energy costs, concerns about carbon emissions from fossil fuels, and risks from catastrophic wildfires have greatly increased interest in using woody biomass from forests. Managers across the country on public, tribal, conservation, and private lands have utilized a wide variety of strategies for removing biomass. To help share these strategies, the Forest Guild has collected over 45 case studies of biomass removal and analyzed the themes, strategies, and lessons learned from these examples.

The case studies highlight that the motivation for taking low-value trees and other woody material from forests is not just to reduce fuel loads or generate energy. Forest managers remove woody biomass for many reasons, including: increasing fire safety in the wildland-urban interface, restoring ecosystems, improving wildlife habitat, conducting forest stand improvement, generating climate friendly heat or power, and providing products from poles to pellets.

Though there are a myriad of reasons for woody biomass harvesting, the case studies highlight consistent elements of success across projects:

Early and substantial public involvement –

Involving the public early and building support for any harvesting operations, including biomass removal projects, can mean the difference between success and failure.

Partnerships with efficient contractors –

Loggers, truckers, and others involved in operations transform plans into action. Partnerships that ensure their economic survival benefit all parties.

Existing markets with favorable prices –

Projects implemented in an area without existing biomass markets have an additional hurdle to overcome.

Mechanization where appropriate to the stand type –

While increased mechanization is not a guarantee of success, equipment such as feller-bunchers and masticators can help make biomass harvests safe and efficient.

The complete report, [Synthesis of Knowledge from Woody Biomass Removal Case Studies](http://biomass.forestguild.org) is available to download at: <http://biomass.forestguild.org>. The Joint Fire Sciences Program and the U.S. Forest Service funded the Forest Guild's nation-wide biomass removal case studies and analysis of their themes, strategies, and lessons learned.



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