

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service
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USDA FOREST SERVICE ANNOUNCES WOODY BIOMASS UTILIZATION GRANTS; PRE-APPLICATION DUE MARCH 15, 2005

MADISON, Wis. — The USDA Forest Service is requesting proposals for projects to increase the use of woody biomass that is removed from National Forest lands in the effort to reduce hazardous fuels. Administered by the Technology Marketing Unit of the Forest Service's State and Private Forestry division at the Forest Products Laboratory here, the Woody Biomass Utilization Grant program seeks proposals that would improve the utilization of, and create markets for, small-diameter and low-valued trees removed during forest-thinning activities.

Improved utilization and expanded markets for biomass material, it is believed, would help reduce forest-management costs by increasing the value of woody biomass, create incentives and decrease business risk for increased use of woody biomass, and help remove economic and market barriers to using small-diameter trees and woody biomass.

Of special interest are programs that accelerate the adoption of technologies employing biomass and small-diameter materials, or create community-based enterprises through marketing activities and demonstration projects, or establish small-scale business enterprises to make use of biomass and small-diameter materials. Such projects are expected to help revitalize rural communities whose forest-based economies have suffered in recent years.

A total of \$4.4 million is available for grants this year. Individual awards will be between \$50,000 and \$250,000.

The two-stage application process calls for pre-applications to be submitted to Forest Products Laboratory by March 15, 2005. Following screening, selected applicants will be invited to submit full applications, due May 16. Awards will be announced June 1.

The fuel-reduction program and grants implement the administration's Healthy Forest Restoration Initiative. The grant program was further authorized as part of the Biomass Utilization section of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-148) and funded in the FY 2005 appropriations.

The request for proposals was published in the Federal Register, February 10, 2005, pages 7078-7080.

Complete application requirements and procedures, definitions and evaluation criteria are available on the Forest Product Laboratory website at <http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/tmu> (under Biomass Grants) or by phoning Sue LeVan-Green at FPL, at 608-231-9518/9504.

The USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory, located in Madison, Wis., was established in 1910 with the mission of conserving and extending America's wood resources. Today, its research scientists explore ways to promote healthy forests and clean water, and to improve paper manufacturing and recycling processes. Through the Advanced Housing Research Center, FPL researchers also work to improve homebuilding technologies and materials.

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