

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Office of Fire and Aviation  
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September 9, 2002

In Reply To:  
9210 (FA-630) P

EMS Transmission 09/09/02  
Information Bulletin No. OF&A 2002-058

To: All Field Offices  
From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation  
Subject: Biomass Utilization

The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to communities and the environment identifies four specific goals. Two of those goals, reducing hazardous fuels and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, can use mechanical fuels treatments as one method to achieve those results. Reducing the fuel loads is only one step in the fuels management process. Utilization of the biomass generated by mechanical fuels reduction projects is just as important.

The problem is that conventional uses of wood products, building materials and dimensional lumber are not economically viable options with the small diameter material generated by most fuel reduction projects. For a long-term fuels management program to be successful, it is vital that new and creative uses for small diameter trees and brush be identified and supported.

We need to move beyond thinking in terms of fuels projects and the tons of fuel removed. Every area in which the BLM is involved, forestry, range, wildlife, watersheds, fire management, energy, minerals, threatened and endangered species, need to evaluate the raw materials and products developed from mechanical fuels management projects. For this reason, I am now requiring that all fuels treatment projects identify the amount of biomass that will be produced and describe how the material will be utilized.

We need to involve our partners and local stakeholders in this exploration. Collaborating with companies and individuals will allow us to draw on the best each has to offer.

Providing equipment such as brush hogs, chippers, portable mills, etc., for contractor use during project work will attract micro and small business participation that in turn will expand local area capabilities and capacity.

This work will lead to new outreach efforts and new partnerships. These contacts can often provide the foundation for success on other resource management issues. The use of partnerships and outside contractors will be the key to solving these problems. A long-term fuels management program will rely heavily on the use of contractors. In order for these contractors to survive, they will need a steady supply of raw materials and diverse markets for their products. The critical element is the establishment of markets for either the raw biomass, or the value added products derived from fuels projects. Ultimately, commercial utilization of these materials on some scale will be the desired goal.

The information included in the attachments are just some of the current biomass utilization efforts. Offices at all levels are encouraged to look beyond these examples and develop local, innovative uses for the materials generated by fuels projects. By working cooperatively at all levels, especially with the states and local communities, we can identify uses, develop the infrastructure, and create the markets necessary to finish the fuels management loop.

Signed by:  
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Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Authenticated by:  
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2 - Attachments  
Brain Storm (3 pps.)  
Mechanical Fuels Treatment (6 pps.)

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