

Peer Network Teleconference

June 6, 2013
1:00-2:30pm

Facilitator: Angie Eldred, Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition

Participants:

Brad Ryan, Haines, Takshanuk Watershed Council
Sarah Liben, Yakutat City and Borough
Andrew Thoms, Sitka, Sitka Conservation Society
Marjorie Hennessey, Sitka, Sitka Conservation Society
Brandy Prefontaine, Naukati, POW-Watershed Association
John Hillman, Hoonah, Hoonah Indian Association
Erik Wortman, Wrangell, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Angie Eldred, Wrangell, Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition
Bob Christensen, People Place Program
Karen Peterson, Thorne Bay, University Alaska
Jessica Kayser, SAWC
Chandler Kemp, Haines, Legislative Research Assistant
Tis Peterman, Wrangell, Wrangell Cooperative Association

Agenda Topics:

1. Biofuels Presentation/Discussion with Karen Petersen, UAF Cooperative Extension Service
2. Community Project Updates
3. Next Steps for Teleconferences
4. Questions, Comments and Announcements

Biofuels Presentation/Discussion – Karen Petersen, UAF CES

About biofuels in Alaska

- 70-75% of energy use in the state of AK is used in heating; the other 25-30% is used in transportation and electricity
- Biomass fuels are used primarily for heating buildings. Wood heat is the most attainable heating source in Southeast AK
- Where does biomass come from?
 - Residue from Southeast community sawmills and logging practices
 - 50% of every log run through a sawmill becomes wood waste
 - Logging trucks hold 26 tons of logs = 13 tons of biomass
 - Wood waste can be burned as chunks, chips, or manufactured products like pellets or bricks
- How much wood waste available in the region?
 - Difficult to estimate; POW sells 28-40 million board feet per year = 40,000 tons hog fuel + 60,000 tons clean chips. Craig buys 10,000 tons

per year for fuel, rest of waste is shipped to pellet mill in Canada. Smaller mills produce closer to 5 million board feet per year. Logging slash and non-merchantable lumber not included in estimates.

- Current projects and facilities in SEAK using biomass heat: see list with contact information posted on SAWC website @ <http://alaskawatershedcoalition.org/2013/06/alaska-installed-biomass-systems/>
 - Thorne Bay School pilot project: School district awarded grant for biomass system to heat the school. Agreed to work with AK Energy Authority to test prototype “Garn in a box” boiler systems. Cut heating costs in half.
- How many systems in SEAK use locally produced biomass fuels vs. biomass products imported from outside the region?
 - Small manufacturer, Larry Jackson, in Ketchikan supplying boilers in the KTN area
 - Sitka and SEALASKA boilers import pellets out of WA, Chilkoot Center in Haines uses pellets from Prince Rupert
 - No large producers in Southeast currently, need to build an economy of scale, build more infrastructure to get off the ground

Where to go for assistance in biomass projects:

- Alaska Wood Energy Development Task Group: Completes free feasibility assessments for applicants with facilities that demonstrate public use (municipalities, schools, tribal buildings, hospitals, grocery stores)
- Funding resources:
 - Alaska Energy Authority Renewable Energy Fund: Funds government and NGO projects; competes with all other renewable energy projects (wind, solar, hydro). Working to establish a separate fund for biomass
 - Department of Energy: Tribal Energy Program. Highly competitive
 - State of Alaska: Low interest loan program through the Dept. of Commerce. Will loan up to \$25,000 to install renewable energy systems for small businesses
 - Energy Savings Corporations (ESCO): Used in the lower 48; will assess your current heating costs and will install, maintain, and train you on a renewable energy system for 5 years while charging you your current average heating cost.
 - Superior Pellets (Fairbanks): Will install a pellet boiler and allow owner to pay it off at the owner’s current fuel charge rate.
 - USDA Rural Development, Rural Utilities Program: Infrastructure Funding for Substantially Underserved Areas. A funding program for Native Americans in land trust areas. More information @ http://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USEERE/2013/06/06/file_attachments/216400/SUTA+Fact+Sheet+05-2013.pdf
 - See PDF file: DOE Funding for Tribal Energy Projects: <http://alaskawatershedcoalition.org/wp->

<content/uploads/2013/06/DOE-Funding-for-Tribal-Energy-Projects.pdf>

- Entities that assist in reviewing feasibility studies:
 - Alaska Energy Authority: available to review assessments and give critiques
 - Dan Parent at State and Private Forestry
 - Currently no formal process for reviewing feasibility studies, AK Wood Energy Development task group discussing this
- Biomass collaboratives working in the region:
 - Alaska Energy Authority: Holds quarterly statewide biomass teleconferences. Updates on projects across the state. Contact: Helen Trailer
 - Alaska Wood Energy Development Task Group: 20 stakeholders that gather to assess biomass projects and hire contractors to do feasibility projects.
 - Juneau Economic Development Council Cluster Initiative: Renewable Energy Cluster. Mostly focused on biomass, keeping discussion locally in Southeast AK. May be able to assist with small loan funds

Community Project Updates

Prince of Whales Watershed Association – Brandy Prefontaine

- Organizational update: POWWA going through decision making and prioritization on projects utilizing current grant funds
 - Awarded National Forest Foundation grant
 - Increasing capacity for stewardship opportunities
- Project updates:
 - Supported POW marathon
 - Raising awareness for POWWA
 - Supporting POW Kids Fishing Day this weekend
 - Scrap metal barge: Coordinating with partners to clean out streams and pollution points with abandoned vehicles and scrap metal.
 - Future projects: Invasive species, watershed assessments, water quality monitoring, chloroform monitoring, brownfields, macroinvertebrate studies, stream crossing inventory

Wrangell

- Tis Peterman, Wrangell Cooperative Association:
 - Sharing Wrangell biofuels feasibility study with the city, looking for assistance in reviewing the study
 - Received a grant from ACF to travel to Telegraph Creek, BC in July with a few community members to look at proposed mining sites on

the Stikine River in an effort to educate the community on these proposed sites

- Erik Wortman, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
 - Involved with the Forest Service Wrangell Island project, reaching draft stage next week.
 - Hosting community forest stewardship contracting workshop: understanding forest resources, community capacity, and community capacity development. This includes opportunities for biofuels projects
 - Looking into testing feasibility of biobricks
 - Capacity development for timber: school working to develop forest resource conservation program
 - Curriculum development and job training to build workforce for small mill employment and forestry employment
 - Completed stewardship project on the Stikine River with local boy scouts and volunteers
 - Working on starting Wrangell “out in the rain” program

Sitka: Marjorie Hennessey, Sitka Conservation Society

- Young growth and stable timber programs
 - Guide to Young Growth Timber: profiles projects worked on through partnerships in Sitka. Projects focused on community assets and being highly visible as a demonstration project.
 - Awarded grant to continue push for use of local sustainably harvested timber and the development of vocational opportunities
 - Renovating Allen Auditorium on the Sheldon Jackson campus for energy efficiency. Using red alder for wainscoting throughout building. Providing scholarships for local students to be involved in this project
 - Women in carpentry workshop: Instructed by a local builder, using local hemlock and cedar. Women worked together to build benches to be placed in the auditorium
 - Working on small scale timber sales with USFS to support transition framework for 3 small scale sales

Next Steps for Teleconferences, Questions/Comments/Announcements

Suggested topics of focus for next teleconference:

- Tourism and recreation industry development on the Tongass for communities limited by commercial tree harvest limits.
- Feedback on topics to discuss, value found in calls, etc. from participants is encouraged. This teleconference service set up to meet your needs; let us know what works best for you!