

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a woody biomass facility?

A woody biomass facility uses wood waste to create an energy source. Wood waste, also referred to as “fuel”, comes from sawmills in the form of sawdust or woodchips, from small diameter trees and underbrush that are removed during timber harvest, from urban brush clearing and landscaping, or any other process that produces wood with a low economic value. This fuel undergoes a technologically specific conversion process to produce several possible energy sources. For example, steam generation plants burn woody biomass to create electricity; pellet plants compress woody biomass to create pellets that can be burned in a woodstove; pyrolysis plants use heat to transform woody biomass into bio-oil and charcoal; anaerobic digesters use microorganisms to convert woody biomass into several different products such as biogas and fertilizer.

What is the relationship between this group and the Ft. Bragg woody biomass group?

The Ft. Bragg biomass group is currently trying to locate a 15MW steam generation biomass facility at the old Georgia Pacific bark landfill just outside of Ft. Bragg. We are working with the Ft. Bragg biomass group to ensure that our goals do not impede with Ft. Bragg’s ability to continue work on their project. While both of our groups are looking to promote woody biomass facilities in the County, the work of the two groups is very different. The Ft. Bragg group is looking at one specific location and technology. The Mendocino County Woody Biomass Group is exploring between five and ten different locations throughout the County. Based on the characteristics of each site we will create a matrix that lays the groundwork for investment in a number of possible biomass facilities.

What is our work leading towards?

Ultimately, our group hopes to contribute to the creation of an environmentally and economically sustainable biomass infrastructure in the County. Our work will lay the groundwork for future investment in woody biomass facilities by exploring potential sites, educating the public about the benefits of woody biomass facilities and seeking out investors.