

**NACD Southern Regional Biomass Conference**  
**Planning Meeting Notes**  
**February 8, 2005**  
*(DRAFT)*

A program planning meeting was held at 8 am on 2/8 in Athens, Georgia at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education. The program was led by Bill Horvath, NACD, and the objective was to set the final format of the August conference.

It was made official that the conference would be held in Athens, GA on August 29-31 2005 at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education. The Center can comfortably accommodate 600 participants in a general sessions setting, more if needed, and can conduct break-out session as large as 300. Participants can be housed in the Georgia Conference Center as well as the area's surrounding hotels, such as the Holiday Inn Select. Participant fees would include conference materials, housing, and partial meals. The NACD would contribute \$20,000 towards conference fees with the RC&D providing scholarships to select participants. An official binding contract will be constructed between the NACD and Ben Jackson, University of Georgia-School of Forest Resources.

The Conference will be titled "Status, Trends, and Future of the South's Forest and Agriculture Biomass". It was felt that this title represented several key important foundations for success. First, it makes the impression that this conference will be broad in scope of audience and topics. Including "forest and agriculture" expands the potential audience beyond Conservation Districts and RC&D programs to include rural community development programs and forestry practitioners. Focusing topics on both woody and non-woody biomass provides an expanded view of the situation before us and builds potential collaboration between parties that might not traditionally work together. The wider audience also allows everyone to start from the same point, with the same understanding of technical issues and assistance. "Status, trends, and future" implies that the conference will not only look forward at the possibilities surrounding biomass but will examine the present levels of understanding and management as well as establish a base of knowledge for all the participants. Dale Threadgill, UGA-Agricultural Engineering, reinforced the basic message that biomass management is a different thought pattern, stressing that without long term guarantees for pricing, supply contracts and volume the economics behind the process will crumble before the option collects enough support in the marketplace. This specific conference will focus on issues the South faces, with other conferences planned for the Mid-West, the West, and the Northeast. States included in this conference include the Forest Service's Region 8 states (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA) as well as Missouri, Maryland, and West Virginia.

Daniel Cassidy, University of Georgia-Biomass Project Director, presented the committee with a draft 'needs assessment'. The assessment will be used to gain a deeper understanding of participants' interests and needs. The conference would have specific issues to discuss and the survey would assist conference planners in giving more direction to the invited speakers. A discussion surrounding the needed changes in language, to include agricultural biomass sources, was productive in moving the survey towards a more useful tool. The survey will be Internet based and results and statistics will be gathered in real time. The length of the survey was

questioned and additional areas of concern such as the need for more information regarding the conference pricing and registration were addressed. The committee agreed to a verbal commitment to add a link to the survey on their respective websites once it is launched in order to reach a wider audience. Cassidy committed to having the survey ready for distribution by the end of February and in return requested e-mail lists and databases from the NACD, NASF, NARC&D, SAUBR, and the National Network of Forest Practitioners. These lists will be used for survey distribution as well as promotion of the conference. The lists should be provided to Cassidy by Feb. 22 in either Excel or Access formats. Results from the survey will be shared with conference sponsors and might possibly be used in a publication evaluating the current levels of knowledge and interest in biomass issues.

The planning committee moved onto finalizing the format of the conference at this point. Sponsorship for the conference currently includes:

- National Association of Conservation Districts
- Southern Forest Research Partnership, Inc.
- US Forest Service State & Private Forestry
- USDI Bureau of Land Management
- National Association of State Foresters Southern Group
- National Association of RC&D Councils
- USDA National Resources Conservation Service
- National Association of State Conservation Agencies
- Southern Alliance for the Utilization of Biomass Resources
- National Network of Forest Practitioners
- Southern Regional Extension Forestry
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives (potentially)

The conference will host exhibitors and posters (technologies, RC&D success-stories, assistance groups). There was also discussion, but nothing decided, as to the production of a book of abstracts or a toolkit for participants. Continuing Education Credits were also discussed and it was asked that planners contact Ben Jackson regarding what groups or certification agencies would need these units. The remainder of the meeting was used to establish the conference agenda. The draft agenda follows, speakers were not assigned for every portion but a list of potentials has been provided. Planning members were asked to use their contacts to arrange for speakers to attend and keep Bill Horvath up-to-date with their progress. The meeting concluded just past 2pm.

Daniel Cassidy  
[dcassidy@forestry.uga.edu](mailto:dcassidy@forestry.uga.edu)  
(706) 542-1186

**Monday- August 29, 2005**

**1:00-3:00 PM – Plenary Session**

- 1) Introduction to Biomass (Biomass 101): Fred Deneke- USFS
- 2) Agricultural Biomass Resources: Dave Bransby- Auburn University
- 3) Forestry Primary Resources: Unassigned
- 4) Forestry Secondary Resources: Unassigned  
(Potential Speakers for 3 &4) Jennifer Moore-Myers- USFS FIA  
Dave Ware  
Richard Harper- USFS FIA  
Rusty Dram- USFS Forest Products  
Larry Bishop (Forestry Commission Report)

**3:00-3:30 PM            BREAK**

**3:30- 5:00 PM – Plenary Session**

- 5) Commercialization, Potential Uses  
And Applications in the South: Sue LeVan
- 6) Challenges, Issues, and Barriers: Tom Adams or Dale Threadgill

**5:30-6:30 PM**

Posters and Exhibitors  
Cash bar and heavy snacks

**Tuesday- August 30, 2005**

**7:30-8:30 AM- Continental Breakfast**

**8:30-10:00 AM- Concurrent Session 1**

*A) Harvesting and Transportation Systems:*

Bill Stuart  
Robert Rummer  
Dale Greene  
Tom Gallagher

*B) Rural Community Development:*

Martha Monroe  
Susan O'Dell  
Brian Duff  
Steve Newton  
Bert Bach  
Bo Beaulieu

*C) Trip to UGA Biomass Facility*

**10:00-10:30 AM- BREAK**

**10:30-12:00 Noon- Concurrent Session 2**

*D) Rural Community Development:*

Martha Monroe  
Susan O'Dell  
Brian Duff  
Steve Newton  
Bert Bach  
Bo Beaulieu

*E) Harvesting and Transportation Systems:*

Bill Stuart  
Robert Rummer  
Dale Greene  
Tom Gallagher

*F) Trip to UGA Biomass Facility*

**12:00 Noon-1:30 PM- LUNCH**

Speaker:

Secretary of Agriculture  
Secretary of Energy  
Sen. Saxby Chambliss

**2:00-3:15 PM- Concurrent Session 3**

*G)* Developing Sustainable Systems (Production):

Tat Smith  
Don Mackey  
Jim Gatis (?)

*H)* Environmental/Ecological Issues:

Norm Christianson  
Jim Sheppard  
Al Lucier

*I)* Trip to UGA Biomass Facility

**3:15-3:45 PM- BREAK**

**3:45-5:00 PM- Concurrent Session 4**

*J)* Environmental/Ecological Issues:

Norm Christianson  
Jim Sheppard  
Al Lucier

*K)* Developing Sustainable Systems (Production):

Tat Smith  
Don Mackey  
Jim Gatis (?)

*L)* Trip to UGA Biomass Facility

**5:30-6:30 PM**

Posters and Exhibitors  
Cash bar and light snacks

**Wednesday- August 31, 2005**

**8:30-11:30 AM- Plenary Session**

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|---|------------------------|
| 7) Financing, Planning,<br>and Organizing Biomass Projects: | Undecided              |
| 8) National Legislative Review:                             | SAUBR/Doug Krandel (?) |
| 9) State Level Action and Organizations:                    | Don Nichols (?)        |

**11:30- Lunch**

Speaker:	Danny Day
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**Closing**