

# NORTH COAST FOREST BIOMASS STRATEGY

*Enhancing Community, Watershed, Wildfire, and Economic Resilience  
through Improved Woody Biomass Utilization*

## Welcome to the NCRP Woody Feedstock Aggregation Pilot Project Cohort Newsletter

This newsletter will be created on a semi-regular basis to best serve all sub-region pilot projects and their interested parties. These resources are specifically selected from a growing literature and resource base on the subject as the most relevant to the topics of interest. We encourage you to engage with these resources in your own time. We are available for discussion on any topic and may be able to provide you with additional contacts to further pursue an interest. We will refine the types of information and resources included in these emails throughout the next year and can expand to include further depth as requested. All resources will be made available through this [Google Drive](#).

### Save the Date!

---

Our kickoff cohort meeting will occur over zoom at the beginning of the new year. Please put a placeholder on the calendar for **Thursday, April 11th from 9-11am**. This meeting is intended for recipients of the NCRP Woody Feedstock Aggregation Pilot Project RFP. A draft agenda looks includes the following:

Topic: Entity Types

#### Agenda

- Round robin - project updates
- Group Discussion:
  - Discussion on SOW for consultant to support region-wide legal and economic questions
  - Next meeting – Biomass Pathways
- Collective needs and next steps

# Stories of Wood Product Infrastructure Development

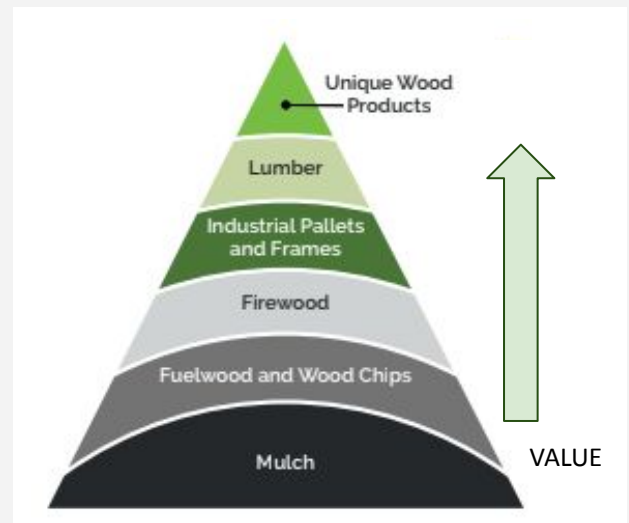
## Urban Wood Utilization and Far West Forest Products

Most people view forests as valuable, whether trees are standing in a wooded grove or loaded into a truck as logs. Strangely, we don't value our urban trees in quite the same way. Cities, neighborhoods, and homeowners lovingly plant and nurture trees to give streets beauty and value, resulting in the four billion trees that make up America's urban forests. But when these trees have to be removed due to death, disease, or development, their stories end. They become just another thing to discard. The [Urban Wood Network](#) (UWN) believes that our trees deserve a better ending. The UWN aims to find the highest and best use for every urban tree and to invest that value back into the local community. The UWN works to connect tree managers, arborists, lumber producers, and others to connect the links in the urban wood supply chain.

Why are we talking about urban wood? Urban wood markets exist at a scale similar to the biomass coming from community wildfire protection occurring in the WUI. An obvious difference would be the way wood is procured: urban wood might be sourced one tree at a time due to damage or disease, while procuring wood in a WUI environment requires the coordination and processing of log decks. The UWN has developed comprehensive tool kits to set up a wood network across the nation. When reading these resources, it becomes clear that there are many commonalities to the research being developed under the North Coast Forest Biomass Strategy. These guides have an immense amount of information to help think about the scale of "operation yards", or a comprehensive list of questions to ask your team when thinking about wood procurement, capacity and logistics, business structure, wood product options, or effective partnerships.

Review these resources to see if they might complement existing efforts by Cohort members.

- [Establishing an Urban Wood Program](#)
- [The Urban Wood Toolkit](#)



The UWN was launched in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin to support the industry. However, [Far West Forest Products](#), based in Yuba County CA, is the Director of the UWN Western Region, product representative for Wood-Mizer, and an innovator in the State for urban, salvaged, and reclaimed lumber. With help from US Forest Service, Jenn Alger, executive director of Far West, leveraged the UWN to make use of trees killed in northern California from bark beetle infestation. "We developed markets for that wood so smaller landowners, under 40 acres, who could not interest larger logging contractors, would have a place to sell their logs or wood products."

Additionally, Alger developed the first ever Urban Lumber Standards for North America. The standards enable chain-of-custody and certification for urban wood, known as [USRW Certified Urban Woods](#). The chain-of-custody tracks the sourcing, processing, drying and labeling for sale in order to legitimize the urban wood products and industry. Alger worked with...

**The story continues**



...an expert team of developers and customer experience specialists to develop [AncesTREE Urban Lumber Market](#), an inventory management system and enterprise application. AncesTree enables users to adhere to industry standards, track the chain of custody, manage their inventory, and generally better manage and grow their urban lumber businesses.

For the full story, read this article: "[California Woman Wears Many Hats](#)".

## Shared Resource Center

---

For all resource sharing, please use this [Google Drive](#). If you have additional resources or topics you would like to include, please email me. This edition will focus on best available tools and resources. Other editions may include topics such as wood product market, entity frameworks, marketing, or wood science.

Please let me know if you have strong interest in one, know of a great speaker, or addition topics

### Entity Types

Private-public partnerships (P3) are an integral aspect of the US economy, particularly in the transportation and energy industries. Building railways and transmission lines is the responsibility of federal entities, while enabling the private sector to use the infrastructure to work more efficiently. P3s, in this context, may be best understood as partnerships that lower the barrier to entry for private sector innovation.

In forestry, California has a growing cadre of P3, although few are focused on infrastructure development today. Nevertheless, the amount of public funding being made available to implement fuel reduction projects and support new wood-based businesses is substantial. The California Infrastructure Bank (I-Bank) is the most notable example of a public entity attempting to support private infrastructure through their [Climate Catalyst Fund](#). The I-Bank offers debt financing at a low interest rate to large centralized conversion facilities which not only provides a favorable credit rating but also signals to other lenders the viability of investing in such an infrastructure project.

The OPR Pilots (or Cal FRAME) is California's first attempt to encompass existing and initiate new P3 opportunities which are more directly tied to forest resilience and wood product development. Of the P3 model, all OPR pilots are interested in developing a semi-public wood broker or sort yard to manage excess flows of vegetation coming from the rise in land management activities across the state. Currently, the other pilot regions outside of the North Coast have identified a variety of public entity options to select from.

While this concept is large in scope, **the Watershed Research and Training Center will be summarizing all the relevant work products produced through the other regions about public entities through the next quarter.** A draft table of contents is available for your review upon request. The end product will include outcomes from your research on entity types as well, and I hope to integrate them as the year progresses. A brief summary and resources are provided on the next page.

## Public entity options

Developing a public entity assumes there is a certain degree of stability to services, funded through public financing strategies and the ability to share risk between participating members. This can include member contributions, taxes, fees and assessments, or other means of allocated sums for financing. Administrative complexity is high and increases as the type or scale of the service increases as well. Entity types include Joint Powers Authorities (JPA), Community Service Districts, or Special Districts like water agencies or Resource Conservation Districts (RCD). Within each of these options, there are variations. For example, JPAs have the option to own land or equipment, manage administrative processes, or even sell power with the right mix of participating members. If you are interested in learning more before our summary is complete, please review these [resources](#) in the google drive:

- Tahoe Central Sierra Pilot Region - Entity Type Options
- Southern Central Sierra Pilot Region - Entity Type Options
- Northeastern Sierra Pilot Region - Entity Type Options

## Non-public entities

Developing a more private facing entity allows for more nimbleness in services offered, but may also be more exposed to risks in market fluctuation. Some of the entity types being considered by Cohort members include cooperatives, networks, guilds, associations, and granges. The full spectrum of options provides a lot to research. Luckily, there are a lot of great resources on cooperative formation. You all may have a deeper understanding of cooperative formation than what is provided here. It would be great to populate our [Cooperative Literature Resources](#) folder with additional resources you found useful. As a reminder, here are a few forestry-related cooperative development resources already in the drive.

- 2012 [Introductory startup guide for wood product cooperatives](#)
- 2015 [Role of cooperatives in Forestry](#)
- USDA [How to Start a Cooperative](#)

The Dinsmore subregion has had past success with using the [California Center for Cooperative Development](#) (CCCD), who offers a full package of services for cooperative development, finances, and community workshops. Forestry would fall under the “agricultural type” where the most common cooperative purposes are for marketing, supply, or services. Furthermore, within this service category there are various types of business structures which define ownership, liability, earning distribution, and control. The [University of Wisconsin-Madison has a useful table \(page 8\)](#) for comparing this across business structure types. Something similar would be great to reference for a California context.

	Cooperative Corporation (WI Chapter 185)	Unincorporated Cooperative Association (UCA) (WI Chapter 193)	Corporation (C Corporation or S Corporation)	Limited Liability Company (LLC)	Partnership	Proprietorship	Non-Profit
Who are the owners?	Members (individuals or entities)*	Members (individuals or entities); may include both patron and investor classes	One or more shareholders (individuals or entities). An S corporation is limited to 100 shareholders.	One or more individuals who are members	At least two individuals or entities	Individual proprietor	No owners
What are the ownership requirements?	Determined by bylaws, usually one share/fee per member. Bylaws may include other requirements with other rights attached.	Determined by bylaws.	One share of stock, with rights and privileges attached to it determined by the articles of incorporation, bylaws, shareholder agreement, and applicable law.	At discretion of LLC members	At discretion of partners	At discretion of owner	Members may be required to contribute
Who controls?	Board of Directors	Board of Directors elected by patrons, and investor members if any	Board of Directors elected by shareholders	LLC members	Partners	Proprietor	Board of Directors
What is the primary purpose of the business?	Meet member needs for goods or services	Meet member needs for goods or services, earn a return on member investment	Earn a return on owner investment	Provide employment for members and a return on members' investments	Provide employment for partners and a return on partners' investment	Provide employment for owner and a return on owner's investment	Provide or inform
How is the business sold?	Sale of stock/shares to members and outside investors	Sale of shares to patron and investor members; retained	Sale of shares; retained profits	LLC members' investments	Partners' investments	Proprietor's investment	Grants; contributions



## Newsletters to watch out for

---

If you are not already following these newsletters, we encourage you to subscribe for updates. List is in order of relevance:

- [Forest Business Alliance \(CA\)](#) – They provide technical assistance, workshops, and a peer-learning network to increase local and regional capacity for applicants to CAL FIRE's Business and Workforce Development Grant Program
- [Ad Hoc Forest Biomass Working Group](#) - The California ad-hoc Forest Biomass Working Group (CA FBWG) is composed of a variety of forest biomass utilization interests across California. They meet to discuss wood energy policy, project opportunities and barriers, technology progress, funding opportunities and other relevant topics.
- [Urban Wood Network Education Committee \(Far West Forest Products\)](#) – Starting January 2024, the UWN Education Committee will host monthly education webinars/programs to educate members on current topics in urban wood, identify opportunities to collaborate between various urban wood players, highlight how to utilize the UWN to develop your business, and more! Save the dates and stay tuned for future emails once webinars are open for sign-up!
- [Forest and Wildfire Task Force Governor's Monthly Update](#) – statewide updates on all aspects of Task Force accomplishments and forest sector news. Includes policy bulletins and grant resources.
- [Joint Institute for Wood Product Innovation Quarterly Meetings](#) – The Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation is dedicated to providing California forest product information, research, and analysis to increase economic drivers for healthy forests. Institute work focuses on long-term ecological and economic sustainability; education and outreach; increased forest resilience, long-term carbon storage, and local economies; and industry retention and development in California.
- [US Biochar Initiative](#) – For all things related to Biochar occurring throughout the Country, this is a great resource.
- [Forest Business Network \(USA\)](#) – Our weekly forest products industry email newsletter gives you leading news coverage in a time-saving package sent right to your inbox each Wednesday. FBN owns and co-produces the International Mass Timber Conference.

# Grant Roundup



## Community Navigators Program (CNP)

[CNP is creating a bridge for underserved communities](#) to access funding and vital partnership support. We are building a suite of resources to guide communities through the process of applying for funding, implementing effective and sustainable projects, and complying with post-award financial and reporting requirements. The Watershed Research and Training Center is part of the CNP and can support application development or review for many of the **USDA Forest Service Grants** made available through the Inflation Reduction Act.



## North Coast Resource Partnership

[RFP for Technical Assistance for NCRP CAL FIRE Forest Health Project Development](#) The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) is pleased to offer a Request for Proposals for Technical Assistance to Tribes and economically disadvantaged communities to support project development for the NCRP CAL FIRE Forest Health Pilot Implementation Project Grant Program. See if your area falls within a [Forest Health Priorities landscape](#) as analyzed by NCRP. The solicitation for implementation projects is expected to roll-out in late March/early April 2024. Direct technical assistance for project development, prioritizing projects that benefit Tribes and economically disadvantaged communities, is currently available.



## US Innovative Finance for National Forests [Grant Program](#)

**About:** supports the development and implementation of innovative finance models that leverage private and public capital other than US Forest Service (USFS) appropriations to enhance the resilience of the National Forest System (NFS) and deliver commensurate returns to stakeholders. **Amount:** Feasibility: \$150k; Pilot: \$300k; Scaling: \$500k **Deadline:** April 22, 2024. **Best use:** Understanding of capital potential and non-timber market values to catalyze multi-stakeholder benefits

