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Dead Wood Plays Lively Role in Developing Renewable Energy in Southeast U.S.
Producing Energy from Wood Biomass Can Affect Air Quality, Clean Water, Wildlife

(Raleigh, NC – February 15, 2011) Understanding the long-term impacts of using wood biomass to produce renewable energy is the critical first step in developing a biomass energy strategy that protects water quality, air quality, public health and wildlife in the Southeast United States. That's the conclusion of a new [report](#) that will help foresters and landowners design harvesting standards that recognize the key role of dead wood and decaying trees in forest ecosystems. The report released by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and The Forest Guild says reducing the dead wood in a forest may affect its ability to support wildlife, provide clean water, sequester carbon and regenerate diverse plants.



"Historically, dead wood was considered to have a low economic value," said [Will McDow](#), manager of the EDF Southeast Center for Conservation Incentives. "There is increased interest today in dead wood for energy and fuel, and more intensive harvesting of biomass could have long-term consequences for Southern forests. Stripping the forest floor to create energy is imprudent."

"Southern forests have less dead wood than other regions of the United States, yet it plays a crucial role," said [Zander Evans](#), research director of The Forest Guild. "More than 55 mammal species, more than 20 bird species, as well as numerous reptiles, amphibians, arthropods and gastropods rely on dead wood in the Southeast. Landowners and foresters should incorporate ecological science into discussions about harvests that could affect this often neglected part of our forests."

The report was reviewed by a team of 12 scientists and experts from across the Southeast. It includes southern Appalachian hardwoods, upland hardwood and mixed pine-hardwood forests, bottomland hardwoods, and piedmont and coastal plain pinelands. See www.forestguild.org/SEdeadwood.html.

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Environmental Defense Fund (edf.org), a leading national nonprofit organization, creates transformational solutions to the most serious environmental problems. EDF links science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships. See twitter.com/SouthernForests; facebook.com/EnvDefenseFund.

The Forest Guild (forestguild.org) is a national organization of more than 800 foresters, natural resource professionals, and supporters who practice and promote ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. See facebook.com/forestguild.