

## Connecting Communities and Forests through Sustainable Energy

Community wood energy (CWE) projects use local wood to heat community buildings in an ecologically sustainable way. CWE projects are win-win-win-win propositions: The community gets less expensive energy and benefits from local dollars circulating in the local economy; the landowner gets a reliable market for low- grade material and the benefits to his forestland from excellent forestry; the consulting forester develops a local client base and a chance to practice excellent forestry; and the environment benefits from better forest practices and a replacement of fossil fuels.

Major benefits of community wood energy projects include:

1. Increased rural community economic competitiveness and increased local economic multiplier effects.
2. Enhanced community networks and connections to neighbors and the land.
3. Reduced cost of energy to heat municipal buildings.
4. Assistance to family forest landowners to practice excellent forestry.
5. Addition or expansion of new markets to support excellent forestry practices.
6. Promotion and support of local forestry consulting businesses.
7. Reduction in cost of energy and travel time for consultants and associated service providers.
8. Reduction in the boom-and-bust cycles that plague the forestry sector.

The Forest's Guild's report *A Market- Based Approach to Community Wood Energy: An Opportunity for Consulting Foresters* makes the case that consulting foresters can use the new interest in renewable fuels to implement an innovative approach to reach, educate, and work with family forest landowners. The model centers on local consulting foresters who join forces with a community to start up a CWE program. CWE projects encourage consultants to establish a healthy roster of client landowners by building a local network of family forest owners willing to supply woodchips that are **Sustainable, Efficient, Local and Fair (SELF)** to heat local community buildings.



The full report is available on the Forest Guild website:

[www.forestguild.org/biomass.html](http://www.forestguild.org/biomass.html)