

An Assessment of Biomass Harvesting Guidelines

Volatile oil prices, concerns about carbon dioxide emissions, and catastrophic wildfires have created new interest in removing wood from forests as an alternative energy resource. In response, states from Maine to Missouri are developing guidelines for the harvest of forest biomass (logging slash, small-diameter trees, tops, limbs, or small trees). The Forest Guild's report, *An Assessment of Biomass Harvesting Guidelines*, provides a comprehensive review of these biomass harvesting guidelines.

Forest harvesting guidelines provide advice to foresters and loggers about woody biomass removal and how much should be left in the woods for healthy watersheds, wildlife habitat, protection of long-term productivity, and other ecosystem functions. Previously developed forest practice guidelines did not anticipate the increased removal of biomass and thus offer no specific guidance on removal limits needed to keep forests healthy. The creation of new guidelines for forestry presents the opportunity to encourage practices that go beyond minimum acceptable practices and focus on enhancing the full suite of ecological values.

Key Report Recommendations:

- Consider the full range of potential impacts of biomass removals when developing new guidelines.
- Use the best available science for the ecoregion(s) covered by the guidelines to determine appropriate recommendations.
- Include as much public input and collaboration as possible in guideline development.
- Define terms such “woody biomass” clearly and appropriately.
- Make clear and specific recommendations to retain standing dead trees, existing coarse woody material (CWM), harvest-generated CWM, fine woody material, and the forest floor.

For more information and to download a copy of the report visit:

www.forestguild.org/biomass.html

