North Carolina Division
Appalachian Society of American Foresters

Professionals advancing the science, technology, practice and teaching of forestry to benefit society

POSITION STATEMENT:
Utilization of Forest Biomass[1] for Forest Restoration, Health, Energy and other Value-added Products

Position

The North Carolina Division of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) supports policies that promote utilization of forest biomass that:

- restores healthy forests;
- improves forest health and vigor;
- improves the nation's energy security by providing an abundant, renewable fuel resource as a substitute for imported fossil fuels;
- reduces the accumulation of hazardous fuels;
- improves wildlife habitat for species requiring early successional habitat;
- expands the markets for low-quality and small-diameter trees;
- creates cash flow for landowners to encourage retention of property in forest management;
- improves the productivity and quality of hardwood forests;
- reduces the overstocking in coniferous forests;
- maintains jobs and economic stability in rural North Carolina; and
- does all of the above in ways and at levels that are sustainable using sound silvicultural practices.

As the collective voice for professional foresters in North Carolina, The NC Division (SAF) recognizes the multiple benefits that private and public forests provide to our citizenry. Our forests provide watershed protection, numerous forest products, cleaner air, as well as employment and recreational opportunities that our citizens depend on and enjoy. Therefore, it is in our state and national interest to reduce the threat of wildfire, control insect and disease damage, and improve forest health with the assistance of the marketplace. Profitable markets for woody biomass can ensure that the state's forests will be healthier and more productive in their capacity to provide these benefits for generations to come.

Increased utilization of forest biomass can help public utility and industrial power generation facilities and figure prominently as a potential domestic source of transportation fuels. To be successful in the utilization of forest or other cellulosic biomass, we must ensure that the necessary research and technology is in place to develop cost-effective production, delivery and processing systems, and new value-added products can utilize forest biomass in a sustainable manner.

Currently, forest biomass does not enjoy a favorable economic position relative to fossil fuels. Realizing forest biomass utilization as an energy or other valued-added resource

will require governmental and agency support for forest biomass in dependable quantities and investment in processing and delivery systems.

The NC Division (SAF) encourages the incorporation of forest biomass into the mix of recognized sources of energy for the GREEN Power Program. Moreover, our organization supports the inclusion of forest woody biomass as a significant component of the N.C. Clean Energy Portfolio currently under development. The long-term health and economic well-being of our citizens requires a shift away from the pollution attributed to fossil fuel electrical power production in the state. We firmly believe that renewable woody biomass has a place in the sustainable energy and valued-added product mix.

SAF supports strategies and policies, including those authorized in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (PL 109-190), that promote development of economically viable forest biomass production.

[1] Forest biomass: Non-merchantable materials or precommercial thinnings that are byproducts of preventative treatments, such as trees, wood, brush, thinnings, chips, and slash, that are removed to reduce hazardous fuels, to reduce or contain disease or insect infestations, or to restore forest health.

Proposed by the NC Division of the Society of American Foresters on March 22, 2006 and approved by The Appalachian Society of SAF on April 19, 2006

POSITION STATEMENT APPROVED BY NC DIVISION of SAF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON APRIL 11, 2006