



Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition

Local Innovation • Sustainable Forests • Growing Small Business

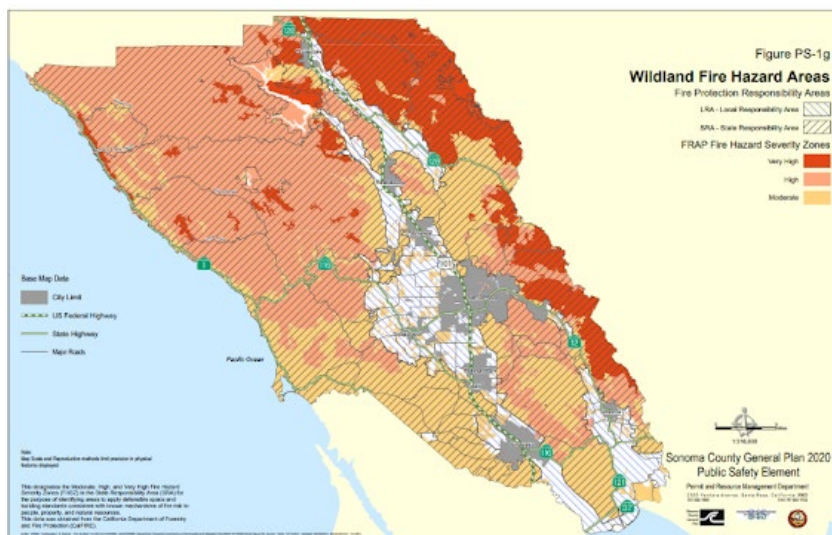
www.NoSoCoAir.org/biobiz.html

Welcome to the Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition Newsletter

This newsletter is hosted by the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District to provide information and updates on the “BioBiz” competition. The BioBiz competition is a multi-agency collaboration to invest in local entrepreneurs as problem solvers and innovators to help prevent catastrophic wildfires, sustain healthy forest ecosystems, and to maintain air quality.

Origin of the BioBiz Competition

Sonoma County and the American West have been experiencing an increased frequency and severity of wildfire. Traditional and academic bodies of knowledge remind us that wildfire is a vital part of our ecosystem, however, decades of fire suppression have allowed for excessive understory and invasive species growth that have reshaped the forest ecosystem, creating dramatically increased fuel loads and the probability and severity of wildfire in the region.



The partners of the BioBiz competition, along with state and federal agencies recognize that innovation and economic sustainability are key to utilizing the existing excess biomass and to creating sustainable, healthy forest ecosystems. The BioBiz competition gathers small business, government, and forest expertise with fiscal and other support services to seed the growth of innovative, local, small business entrepreneurs that best answer the question: What are we going to do with the biomass (wood)?



Opportunities for Innovation

The current wood product industry is vast and the future is evolving quickly through creative entrepreneurs and catalyst partnerships like the BioBiz competition. The wood product industry can be defined in two categories: primary and secondary value. Primary markets consist of traditional sawlogs, also known as “merchantable wood”, but can also be high-value products like Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) or biochar. Secondary markets are those products developed from small diameter or “non-merchantable biomass” which come from tops of trees, culled logs or the excessive brush from forest understories. Ultimately a business model that combines both primary and secondary value will be the best to succeed long-term. Some wood product examples are below:

- Biomass heat and power
- Biofuels
- Biochar
- Niche wood products
- Engineering wood products
- Briquettes
- Cross Laminated Timber (CLT)
- Firewood
- Fuel chips for biomass heat and power
- Pellets
- Post and pole
- Pulp chips
- Shavings

As you can see, there are many existing options to explore for wood product utilization and the potential for new innovations yet to be realized. The BioBiz competition seeks out innovative applicants to propose and present innovative small business plans to an interdisciplinary panel for review and scoring and the winning business plans will be awarded fiscal and support services to launch their business plan.

Competition Format and Timeframe

The Competition will include a two-phase selection process: the initial business plan submission and applicability/completeness review followed by a more extensive review and applicant presentation.

Starting **February 1st**, we will release our submission portal for the first phase which will be a basic concept debut. We do not expect applicants to deliver a fully developed Business Plan; however, foundational concepts should be identified and be sound. The more information you provide the more we can assess the concepts’ potential. In anticipation for the submission release date, Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development Center will be hosting a number of optional workshops on “How to Write a Business Plan”. We encourage everyone to participate in these interactive sessions. The first phase submission period closes on **March 26th**, and immediately following this date the review committee will select a number of promising applicants to move on to the next phase.

The second phase will start on **April 26th** and consists of our review committee following up with general or specific questions on the applicant’s business models. Applicants will have a 6 week period to submit their responses by **June 4th**. The review committee will select the final applicants to participate at the Pitch presentation on **June 30th, 2021**. for the final committee evaluation. .

Winners will be announced in early July. Here is the more detailed timeframe.

Date	Event
February 1st, 2021	Release Request for Proposals
January 27th - February 12, 2021	How to Write a Business Plan Zoom Workshops
March 26th, 2021	Proposals due by 11:59 PM
April 26th, 2021	Executive Committee completes Round One reviews and informs Round Two winners
TBD	How to Pitch your Business Concept Zoom Workshops
June 4th, 2021	Supplemental Documents Due by 11:59 p.m.
Wednesday, June 30th, 2021	Business Pitch Competition
Monday, July 5, 2021	Announcement of winners <i>(subject to delay without notice to proposers)</i>
Wednesday, July 7, 2021	Disbursement of awards packages <i>(subject to delay without notice to proposers)</i>

Additional Questions and Information

The BioBiz Competition has additional information on its web site, hosted by the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, at:

www.NoSoCoAir.net/BioBiz.html

In addition, please email Competition Coordinator Clarke Stevenson for questions or if you are interested in providing sponsorship or support at Clarke@clereinc.net

Growing List of Contributing Partners

