



The Northern Forest Center Renewable Energy Projects

The Northern Forest Center is a non-profit that works through networks and partnerships to build a sustainable economy, revitalize local communities and conserve the landscape of the Northern Forest.

Some facts about the Northern Forest region:

- It spans across the northern areas of ME, NH, VT, and NY
 - [Click to view a map](#)
 - Is it made up of 30 million contiguous acres
 - It is home to 2 million people (237 communities)
- New Hampshire's Northern Forest reaches across Grafton, Carroll and Coos counties

The past several decades have brought constant change for the people, communities, and landscape of the Northern Forest region. While this period has seen significant conservation success, global economic pressures have caused forest-based industries to shed tens of thousands of jobs, altered markets for Northern Forest products and services, and spurred continuous land sales. These changes have brought significant challenges but new opportunities also are beginning to emerge.

High energy costs for both heat and electricity – along with state and national climate change objectives – are driving great interest in the use of wood and other resources as energy sources. New demand for energy from woody biomass in particular has the potential to create incentives for sustainable forest management and conservation—if the opportunity is managed well. The Center is working to advance community-scale energy projects that demonstrate the appropriate balance of economic benefits and community and ecological sustainability.

How our renewable energy work supports the NH Climate Action Plan

We develop tools to provide education and outreach to local leaders, businesses and elected officials about the integration of biomass systems into their communities. [See our northern NH renewable energy scan](#)- this tool was created to illustrate the various drivers that effect renewable energy viability in northern NH.

The Center's goal is to ensure that regional efforts capitalize on emerging biomass energy markets and result in long-term improvements to the forest and communities, and that community benefits (as determined by the community members themselves) are integrated into project planning.

Examples of community benefits include: job quality standards, local resident access to newly created jobs, local wealth creation, sustainable use of local resources, and maintenance of cultural identity and traditions. As community-scale biomass projects are developed with local benefits in mind, we will see increased demand for jobs in the woods, reduced reliance on imported fossil fuels, increased re-circulation of local dollars, and a continued respect for the forest as an economic, natural, cultural and recreational resource.

Challenges and next steps

New England uses 82% of the nation's heating oil¹. The use of biomass will provide an important portion of the renewable energy mix in the Northern Forest. The efforts of partners and leaders across the region are working to develop policy, financial, infrastructure, natural resource and education structures that support a sustainable biomass industry.

¹U.S. Energy Administration Information
http://www.eia.doe.gov/pub/oil_gas/petroleum/analysis_publications/heating_brochure/heatbro.htm