CA ad hoc Forest Biomass Working Group – eNewsletter 16/2025

Intro to Forest Entrepreneurship Bootcamp. The Sierra Business Council, Sierra Commons, and North Coast SBDC are hosting a free two-day Intro to Forest Entrepreneurship Bootcamp. This Bootcamp is designed to help aspiring entrepreneurs launch and grow successful and sustainable forestry-based businesses. The forest industry, which includes everything from prescribed fire application to home hardening to bioenergy, is rapidly expanding amid increasing wildfire risk mitigation efforts. Participants will gain insight from industry and business experts and connect with a network of like-minded professionals. This training is designed to help aspiring entrepreneurs launch and grow successful forest-based businesses, equipping them with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate this expanding industry. The curriculum is designed to provide: Technical training to launch a broad range of forest and wood-based businesses; Business development strategies, including pricing, cash flow management, insurance, marketing, and navigating government contracts and permits; Guidance for transforming businesses from individual ownership to cooperative businesses that support economic justice; Opportunities to showcase emerging business opportunities in wood product development and outdoor recreation that have co-benefits of wildfire reduction and economic development; A nexus to existing markets and identified needs such as forest thinning and management, application of prescribed fire, small mass timber product manufacturing, small diameter timber utilization, biofuels manufacture, logistics and support. This program is administered by Sierra Business Council, and funded by a Good Jobs Challenge EDA-funded grant through the Foundation for California Community Colleges to conduct forestry and fire mitigation training programs throughout California. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. May 3 & 4 at the North Coast SBDC in Arcata. Learn more and register here.

Sawmill 202 Workshop. The Forest Business Alliance is hosting an opportunity to learn advanced sawmill techniques at this hands-on Sawmill 202 Workshop – perfect for those looking to take their skills to the next level. Continuing the Sawmill 101 Workshop offered in 2023, the Sawmill 202 workshop will feature expert panels on Sustainable Finance, Secondary Wood Treatment, and Marketing. There will also be plenty of opportunities to interact with colleagues and ask questions to panelists. Tuesday, May 20, 9:30am – 4:30pm PDT, Sacramento. More Information and Registration here.

Return to Logs? We never left. A year ago, BECK Group Consulting introduced Return-To-Log (RTL) as an analytical tool comparing the difference in value that various forest products manufacturing technologies confer upon the raw material they process. From a known amount of input raw material, an RTL value is calculated by determining the value of all the products produced. Then the manufacturing cost for converting that material into products is subtracted from the products' value. The remaining amount, if greater than zero, is the break-even value that the manufacturer could pay for the raw materials delivered to the manufacturing facility. Pay less, profit; pay any more, and the result will be a net loss. Since then, they had the opportunity to work with the North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) in Northern California to calculate RTL values in the region. The key parameters in conceptualizing the businesses were that they be: Small-scale; appropriate for the types of raw materials produced from the forests of Northern California; in proximity to accessible markets for the products produced. Additionally, to help ensure apples-to-apples comparisons among the RTL values for each business considered, they assumed consistent cost rates for labor, salaries, power, depreciation schedules, etc. across all businesses. Full report here.

Understanding real CO2e Emissions in Mass Timber Production. As the AEC (Architecture, Engineering, and Construction) industry seeks environmentally sustainable alternatives to construction materials, Mass Timber (MT) has emerged as a promising solution owing to its renewable nature and its inherent biologically sequestered carbon, resulting in lower embodied carbon compared to typical structural materials such as steel and concrete. Understanding and accounting for hidden emissions from MT harvesting and fabrication is crucial, as these significantly impact a project's carbon footprint and are essential for sustainable construction practices. In 2023, the World Resources Institute (WRI) published a report challenging the AEC industry's assumption that MT is carbon neutral, causing industry contention and sparking widespread discussion. This study by Corgan's research and development and sustainability teams highlights the significant CO2e emissions from slash left after logging, impacting the carbon footprint of MT projects. It identifies tree species used in MT, evaluates slash management scenarios, and provides a qualitative analysis of embodied carbon through an office building case study. The paper also examines the effect of raw material transport on embodied carbon and offers recommendations for designers to manage it effectively.