

The Road Less (or Never) Traveled: The role of policy in guiding wood bioenergy development in the Interior West



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Starting points

“Narratives” of how forest mgmt. and bioenergy link together

- Stories of how different people see the linkage
- Causal assumptions about causes and effects
- Policies are basically rooted in narratives and causal assumptions

Policy subsystems

- Actors, institutions, policies and laws, and outcomes associated with a issue domain
- The renewable energy & climate subsystems are driving forces
- The forest subsystem has lost ground; needs to ‘meld’ into the larger renewably energy/climate subsystems

What I heard...

- “What’s the concern over sustainability...?”
- “The problem isn’t supply, it’s availability.”
- “Assurance comes from social license, not necessarily long-term contracts.”
- “Biomass has a ‘triple win’.”
- “There is no market for biomass energy.”
- “We need to shoot for high efficiency – CHP and thermal.”
- “Forest mgmt. and energy production are new partners.”
- “The Forest Service isn’t set up to deal with biomass.”
- “Forests and forest industry aren’t regarded as national strategic assets.”

National Level

“If government is going to be involved, let’s involve them in the right places.”

- Conduct a systematic review of policy instruments

Tax incentives

Financial cost-share and grants

Financing/loan programs

Rules and guidelines (i.e., RPS)

Public-Private Partnerships

Market-based approaches

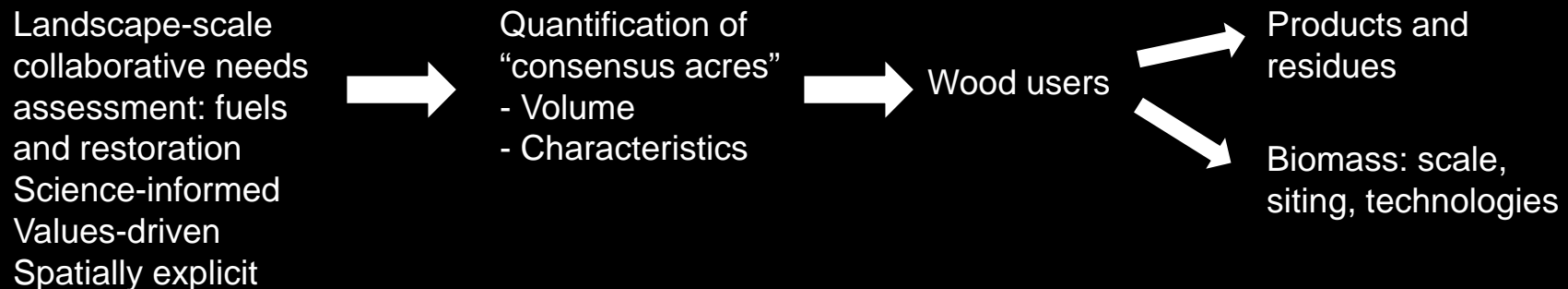
Education and assistance

- Examine across all wood users for disparities, equity – level playing field
- Which instrument or combination of instruments make most sense regionally?

National Level: National forest planning rule

“The Forest Service isn’t equipped to deal with biomass.”

- Given priorities for fuels redux and restoration, might it be time to rethink how timber suitability is conducted in LRMPs? Complement, supplement, or replace?



- May require articulation of economic goals – can’t be totally ambivalent to type and size/scale of industry and still maintain consensus

National Level

“There is no expression of forests or forest industry as strategic national assets.”

- Congressional declaration of all-lands forest policy
 - Forests as a strategic national asset
 - Role of forests in mitigating climate change
 - Forest ecosystem services to society
 - Ecological restoration
 - Community protection
 - Role of forests in energy independence/renewable energy strategy
 - Forest industry as a strategic national asset (we’ve done it with auto, banking, insurance, oil, food, etc. industries)

National Level

“Forest management and energy production are new partners.”

- Tiered national, regional, and state-level task forces on forest management and renewable energy
 - Information clearinghouse
 - Monitor economics vis-à-vis fossil fuels to quickly adapt
 - Systems view of forest and utilities policies
- Joint Fire Science Program-type research consortium on forest bioenergy – geared towards application/practical solutions
 - Pool funding resources from land management and bioenergy industries in competitive research-practitioner grants – thru FPL?

Interior West

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- Examine across all wood users for disparities, equity – level playing field
- Which instrument or combination of instruments make most sense for the region? Sub-regions?

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“There’s no markets for biomass.”

- Incentivizing CHP and co-firing – parity with other renewables
- Arizona and Oregon consumer tax credits for household, commercial, and community applications (Austria, etc).
- Rural electrical cooperatives/associations: potential market and player, with huge interest in bioenergy – but need to work through rules and rel’ns with major utilities
- Financial attractiveness relative to fossil fuel costs...
...but, there may be other community-based social and economic values to move towards biomass production
- Connecting local bioenergy production with local food production – carbon footprint, food security – SYSTEMS!

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Regional supply and utilization assessments

- Collaborative, science-informed, values-driven, spatially explicit – social license determines availability from supply
- Supply: merchantable, non-merchantable
- Existing users and uses: products, logging and mill residues
- Potentials: industry type, sizing, siting, technologies

Need better “systems view” of how everything hangs together – boundaries, linkages, feedback loops, unanticipated consequences

Interior West: Miscellaneous

- “Big Gulp NEPA” – pilot projects to see what works, what doesn’t work, what needs to change
- Matrix tool for contracting: which mechanisms seem to make sense for what contexts
- Expanding the pie: CROP across landownerships – CWPPs, federal land fuels redux and restoration, Tribes?
- Coordinated monitoring and adaptive management framework and institutional infrastructure – multi-party