



NC URBAN WOOD GROUP

6 December 2022
THE URBAN WOOD CHIP

a bi-monthly publication of the NC Urban Wood Group

Felled city trees could grow a new lumber economy *by Alex Brown, staff writer for Stateline*

SEATTLE — When a tree falls in the city, does it make a table? Or a guitar or a cabinet?

It's a question that's increasingly being asked by state and city leaders, arborists, tree care companies and woodworkers. A growing coalition aims to turn urban wood into a valuable resource, rather than a waste product that is chipped up and sent to landfills. ...

While most city wood businesses are small artisans, backers believe the industry has vast untapped potential. A [2019 study](#) found that urban tree removals could produce about 7 billion board feet of wood each year, roughly half of which has the potential to be turned into lumber. That's roughly 10% of the quantity produced in traditional timber harvests. ...

Still, many challenges remain. Urban trees come in a wide variety of species and sizes, and tree removals don't take place on a predictable schedule. Without well-established supply chains, would-be producers are left to navigate a confusing patchwork to get the wood they need. In many cases, it's still more cost-effective to buy traditionally harvested lumber than to procure and process "free" urban trees on a piecemeal basis. ...

Some of the earliest efforts to use urban wood systemically started in the Midwest in the early 2000s, as the invasive emerald ash borer killed millions of ash trees. [Paul] Hickman [CEO/founder of Urban Ashes] and others began to organize a network of mills to use the doomed trees as they were taken down.

Similar efforts have popped up across the country, and several of them have joined to form the Urban Wood Network. As climate change and other pests threaten many more tree species, backers say their early success stories show the model can scale up. ...

Not all urban trees can be turned into finished wood products. Some species, as well as small-diameter trees and limbs, can't be made into lumber. Industry leaders are working to find uses for those trees. Some trees, such as cottonwoods, can be made into pallets. Others may fuel the growing biochar industry. Biochar, a charcoal-like substance, is made by heating organic material without oxygen. It sequesters carbon and can be used to improve soils.

[Read Full Article](#)

Member Spotlight



Meet Randall Williams, co-owner of Fireside Farms and member of the NCUWG Advisory Council. Listen to [his half-hour interview](#) on the Woodpreneur Podcast.

WOODPRENEUR

Want to meet other sustainable woodworkers from across the country? Checkout other podcasts by [WoodpreneurLife.com](#), an organization that Steve Larosiliere created to help professional and hobbyist woodworkers achieve their personal goals.

While there, visit the blog section to learn about [sawmill comparisons](#), [business expansion strategies](#), [kiln drying](#), and many other topics.

At Woodpreneur Life you will also find course offerings and resources that can help you achieve greater business success.

NC Urban Wood Group
urbanwoodnc@gmail.com
[Visit our website](#)



NC Urban Wood Group Advisory Council
Leslie Moorman, *NC Urban Forest Council*
Barry New, *NC Forest Service*
Andrew Pleninger, *NC Forest Service*
Frederik Laleicke, *NCSU Cooperative Extension*
Harry Watt, *NCSU Cooperative Extension*
Loring McIntyre, *NC Department of Ag & Consumer Services*
Damon Barron, *Carolina Urban Lumber*
Avery Earwood, *Wild Edge Woodcraft*
Steve Larosiliere, *Acres of Timber*
Randall Williams, *Fireside Farm & Sawmill*

Proud member of

