Great Plains Biochar Initiative

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Biochar 2018
WHAT IS THE GREAT PLAINS BIOCHAR INITIATIVE?

• Public-private partnerships
  • Nebraska Forest Service
  • Kansas Forest Service
  • High Plains Biochar (Laramie, WY)
  • Wilson Biochar Associates

• Goal is to improve biochar* awareness and market development in the Great Plains

* Wood Based Biochar
GREAT PLAINS FORESTRY

• Nebraska and Kansas have spent $12 million + in hazardous fuels reduction activities since 2012

• State and federal cost-share available to landowners however it is still often cost prohibitive

• NFS & KFS have forest products programs to develop markets for fuels reduction and forest management residues for cost recovery
• Eastern redcedar encroachment in forests and grasslands is a pressing issue for natural resources agencies, landowners
• Emerald ash borer present in both NE and KS
• Windbreak removal and renovation
WHY PURSUE BIOCHAR?

• Minimal existing markets for low quality wood
• Strong agriculture
• Integration into existing concerns & practices
  • Drought
  • Soil carbon conservation (no-till, CRP)
  • Water quantity, quality, & water rights
  • Manure management
• Good relationships with state NRCS, USFS, Cattlemen’s Association, UNL, K-State, etc.
THE APPROACH

• Education and outreach
  • Speaking engagements
  • Workshops
  • Publications

• Financial assistance
  • Production
  • Market development

• Strategic planning

• USFS Wood Innovations Grant
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

• Speaking engagements
• SAF
• Departments of Agriculture
• Radio Stations
• Sustainable Agriculture Events

• Publications
  • “Small Scale Biochar Production”
  • “Biochar and Green Roofs”
  • Newspaper articles
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

• Workshops
  • Hands-on learning opportunities
  • Wilson Biochar Associates
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- $80,000 awarded through $5,000 mini-grants
- Kansas:
  - 10 Submissions
  - 4 Funded
- Nebraska:
  - 13 Submissions
  - 5 Funded
PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

• Norton Community Garden Coalition
  • Established spring 2018
  • Demonstration of biochar use
  • Long term goal of diverting waste wood from landfills to biochar production
PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Hopfen Prärie
  - Organic hops production
  - Biochar + worm castings
  - 4 treatments
  - Soil testing, yield
  - Developing market for Nebraska hops
STRATEGIC PLANNING

• Based on mini-grant projects
  • Identify market opportunities
  • Identify regional production opportunities

• Next steps for the initiative
  • Funding
  • Technical assistance
OTHER SUCCESSES

• Nebraska just received its first request for the NRCS CSP for biochar

• North Dakota has joined the Great Plains Biochar Initiative
  • Previous work on windbreak renovation biochar
  • Collaborating on educational materials
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Thank you!

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