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**Competence development for forestry**  
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**Rural Biomass Development:  
NCSU's Approach to Sustainable Forestry Knowledge Exchange**

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**Abstract:** Since 2006 Extension Forestry Specialists at North Carolina State University have provided education, outreach and technical training, literature and resource assessments to aid resource professionals and policy makers develop sustainable biomass markets and enterprises. Using an interactive needs assessment and the Logic Model delivery system, the group has identified knowledge and research gaps concerning policy changes, environmental opposition and resource availability. To address identified knowledge gaps about biomass removal and its impacts, Extension Specialists have partnered with colleagues within the research, academic, regulatory and non-governmental organizations; at times seeking research grants directly to answer these vexing questions. Recent economic pressures have focused attention on industry recruitment, resource assessments and sustainability issues – with the expressed goal to maintain traditional forest product industry in light of biomass processing facility expansion. To that end, Regional Economic Development partners have been engaged in a needs assessment effort to guide and facilitate sustainable biomass industry recruitment. This presentation details the interactive process that was used to gain input from Economic Developers and subsequent extension actions to inform, assess and interpret resource information. The balancing of forest industry recruitment and rural job generation advocacy actions against the quest for academic, research and outreach neutrality are reviewed.

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