



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2018

Contacts: Patrick Koepele, 209-588-8636

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Announces Public Meeting to Kick Off a Biomass Utilization Facility Feasibility Study

The [Sierra Nevada Conservancy \(SNC\)](http://www.snc.ca.gov) and the [California Department of Housing and Community Development \(HCD\)](http://www.hcd.ca.gov) will be hosting a public meeting to present the proposed process and approach for a Tuolumne County Biomass Utilization Feasibility Study and to receive public input on suggested study plans. The meeting will be held at Stanislaus National Forest Headquarters, 19777 Greenley Road, Sonora, CA 95370 on Wednesday, April 18 at 5:00 PM, and will be facilitated by The Beck Group, the consultant who will be completing the Study on SNC and HCD's behalf.

The purpose of completing the study, which will contain both a feedstock analysis and economic feasibility assessment, is to lay the foundation for development of a Biomass Utilization Facility in Tuolumne County. A Biomass Utilization Facility will be operated in concert with other activities, described below, to maintain healthy forests and provide economic opportunities to local citizens.

The Beck Group will incorporate public and community input into its report to help identify options for the Biomass Utilization Facility. Anyone with an interest in the development of such a facility is encouraged to attend. Representatives from the Beck Group team will be present to provide background into the study as well as answer questions.

In 2013, the Rim Fire burned over 257,000 acres of forest, primarily in Tuolumne County. HCD was awarded \$70M from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) program to undertake recovery efforts. HCD, in collaboration with SNC, Tuolumne County, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, CalEPA, CalFire, and the U.S. Forest Service, is using this funding to design and implement three activities ("pillars"): (1) forest and watershed health and restoration, (2) construction of one or more community resilience centers, and (3) development of a woody biomass utilization facility. Connecting the actions of these three pillars together will assist in recovery efforts from the 2013 Rim Fire and provide long-term community resilience to future threats.

The Biomass Utilization Facility feasibility study is the first step in the development of the woody biomass facility or campus in Tuolumne County. The vision for a Biomass Utilization Facility is to utilize woody biomass from forest restoration activities and complement existing wood processing infrastructure in Tuolumne County, improving both environmental and economic benefits to the community at-large. The feasibility study will also inform the design and location of the facility.

More information about the Biomass Utilization Feasibility Study, or the work being completed through the National Disaster Resilience Competition grant can be found at <http://www.snc.ca.gov/NDRC> and <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/disaster-recovery-programs/ndrc.shtml>.

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