

USBI Newsletter February 2021



"Biochar is one of the most scalable and cost effective means of sequestering carbon..."
Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change, 2018

US Biochar Initiative Newsletter

February 2021

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WHAT'S NEEDED TO GROW YOUR BIOCHAR BUSINESS?

By Tom Miles, Executive Director

Consistent quality, reliable delivery, and reasonable cost are all you need to grow your biochar business, according to a supplier who has been in the business for several years. This month we are happy to feature a company that does that - Wakefield Biochar.



New biochar production has been announced in Maine, New York, Tennessee, and Washington. We are pleased to see that North American producers are beginning to take advantage of European carbon markets, that new methodologies for carbon removal credits from biochar are in development in North America, and that Microsoft has invested in carbon sequestration with biochar. Don't miss the upcoming USFS biochar Forest Management for Increasing Carbon Sequestration with Biochar [webinar](#) on February 18.

We can now deploy our biochar supplies on farms with assistance from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Soil Carbon Amendment 808 cost share program described by Soil Health Program Director, Dr. Brandon Smith. His presentation to National Biochar Week (December 2020) is linked [here](#) along with more than 51 presentations which are posted [here](#).

Help us direct biochar buyers to your company by listing in our new online [Directory](#).

USBI LOOKING FOR PARTNERS TO INTRODUCE BIOCHAR'S VALUE



Kim Chaffee, Chair
USBI Fundraising Committee

Many farmers, ranchers, horticulturists, and other potential users don't yet know the value of biochar. That is why biochar education continues to be a major focus for USBI.

One way to raise biochar awareness is to redouble efforts to build partnerships with businesses or industry organizations whose members would benefit from biochar use (or expanded use) through joint grant proposals and demonstration projects.

If you know of any organizations who would be interested in a partnership, please contact [Kim Chaffee](#), USBI Fundraising Committee Chair and use "Partnership" in the subject line.

NEW, ENHANCED USBI NORTH AMERICAN DIRECTORY FOR BIOCHAR INDUSTRY

Join the Directory - Get your free biochar listing now!

USBI's new searchable directory includes biochar suppliers, equipment manufacturers, researchers, consultants and organizations.

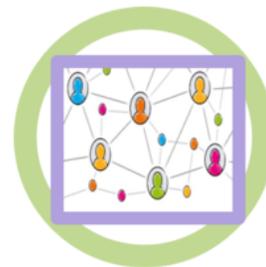
- Help customers find your business
- Find out who needs your services
- Discover organizations that are working on biochar solutions

Join the directory and use it to connect with the North American biochar network. Make it easier for others to find out about your biochar company or project. Be sure to fill out as much as you can about your sector, products, applications, technology, and the scale of your operations.

Together we are putting the world's carbon budget back in the black and building the most comprehensive biochar directory for the US market!

Once you enter your information, you will be taken to a donation page. We ask for a suggested contribution of \$25 annually for your directory listing. Please give more if you can afford it. Your contribution helps to keep the USBI website alive and growing!

Add your USBI listing - [HERE](#). After review, your listing will be published in the [USBI Biochar Directory](#).



MEET A BIOCHAR PRACTITIONER

TONY MORERRO
Wakefield Biochar, Columbia, MO

To scale up, "we had to find a high quality, high volume supplier of biochar with consistent properties."

Learn how consistency and focus led to Tony's success.

NEW BIOCHAR LEARNING CENTER (BLC) RESOURCES

The USBI Education Committee has been busy reviewing and adding new resources to the Biochar Learning Database.

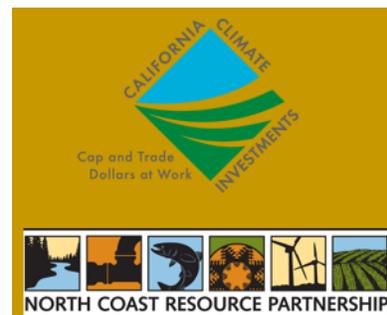
Visit our Biochar Learning Center here.

BIOCHAR EVENTS CALENDAR

February 18, 11:00 am US/EST US Forest Service Webinar - Forest Management for Increasing Carbon Sequestration with Biochar [Register here](#).

March 10, 2:00 - 3:30 pm US/PST Biochar Production in the Forest Virtual Demonstration led by Deborah Page-Dumroese from US Forest Service, Kelpie Wilson from Wilson Biochar Associates, and Raymond Baltar from Sonoma Biochar Initiative. Sponsored

by the Redwood Forest Foundation with support from California Climate Investments, the California Natural Resources Agency, and Department of Conservation through the North Coast Resource Partnership. [Register here](#).



March 16-17 The [International Biomass Conference and Expo](#) virtual conference is a true one-stop shop – the world’s premier educational and networking junction for all biomass industries. [Register here as an attendee](#) or [join USBI as an exhibitor](#).

[Submit your North American Biochar story ideas or calendar events here.](#)

BIOCHAR NEWSLINKS

- **Cows Self-Medicating with Accidental Biochar.** It was a lucky accident of sorts for dairy producer Aaron Smith. A broken bag of biochar inside his barn allowed his cows to sample the powdery black charcoal when it spread on the floor near the feeder. “As we were sweeping it up, the cows all came over and next thing you know, two or three of them were actually eating mouthfuls of it, which I had not expected,” said Smith, the owner of Don-Mair Farms near Mount Hope, Ontario.
- **International Biomass Virtual Conference and Expo - Biochar Panel Preview.** [Read a snapshot of this March 16-17 event](#) which will be delivered via an innovative virtual platform. For those interested in biochar, multiple panels will discuss the increasingly popular topic - “Understanding Biochar: Industry Trends and Opportunities.”
- **Study: Biomass Better for Carbon Capture than Energy.** The Innovation for Cool Earth Forum has studied biomass and concludes that it is more valuable when used for its carbon-capture ability than for energy production. Biochar is one way to capture this value.
- **Biomass Facilities Missing in Action.** Piles of orchard prunings have been sitting for months in California’s San Joaquin Valley because of air quality restrictions on open burning. “[Commercial] plants that we thought would be in place by now – ones that are [using] either cellulosic ethanol, renewable diesel, biochar, or pyrolysis to create electricity – there’s nothing commercially available out there to handle a large volume,” said President and CEO of the Western Agricultural Processors Association (WAPA), Roger Isom.
- **Pomo Indian Band Plans New Capacity for Biochar, Energy, and Fire Prevention.** As part of California’s effort to address climate change, the Scotts Valley Energy Co. – a business enterprise of the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians – was awarded a Tribal Government Challenge Planning Grant to create a bioenergy feasibility toolkit to assist other tribes and businesses in determining energy resiliency needs and provide another tool for wildfire mitigation efforts. Biochar as a byproduct will help with the economics.

➤ **Time to Scrap Wildfire Danger.** Fire danger in Colorado is a growing threat, thanks to climate change and past fire suppression. The only way out now is to recover scrap wood and convert it to useful products. Biochar Now is doing its part with 100 biochar kilns which look like “a fleet of rusty UFOs.”



➤ **Washington State Legislators Support Forest-to-Farm Biochar Project.** The problem is woody waste and the smoke that comes from burning slash piles. The first step for the Methow Valley is to test a new pyrolyzer and determine impacts on air quality. State-provided funds would get things rolling.

➤ **Biochar on Paper.** Since 2014, Maine has lost markets for 4.3 million tons of low-grade forest products due to paper mill and biomass power plant closures. But there's encouraging news. Standard Biocarbon Corp. has signed a letter of intent with the East Millinocket Industrials Inc. board of directors to site a pyrolysis plant at the former Great Northern paper mill site. If completed as planned, the plant would convert low-grade biomass into biocarbon.



➤ **Papering Over the Climate Problem.** Robin Wilber, owner of Elmsdale Lumber in Nova Scotia, is convinced that diverting wood chips that once went to paper mills can provide a climate solution by converting them to long-lived biochar instead.

➤ **Not Just on Paper: Partners in Sustainability.** Missouri's Wakefield Biochar and London-based packaging manufacturer DS Smith are working together to convert paper mill waste to biochar. "Working with Wakefield to convert our excess wood ash for growers as a way of rejuvenating their soil is an ideal solution for DS Smith, because the raw materials harvested from our forests are recycled back to the land in a circular model," said a DS Smith representative.

➤ **USDA Fine-Tunes Biochar.** USBI board member, Dr. Kristin Trippe, is one of several USDA researchers looking at biochar for restoring mine sites and other degraded land. "Not all biochar is the same. It's really tunable," explained Trippe. "The raw material base used and the temperature that the material was heated to changes the chemical composition of biochar. The impacts of biochar depend on variables like these, so users can customize it to better match the soil's needs."



Herbaceous plants were transplanted into experimental biochar-amended plots at the Formosa mine (Riddle, OR).



➤ **Biochar Is Not Just for Plants.** Researchers at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences are studying the potential of converting animal byproducts such as crawfish shells and chicken feathers to create biochar materials with a naturally high capacity to absorb pollutants in water.

➤ **Biochar Goes to Pot.** In Washington, Backwoods Biochar is selling a biochar-soil blend to cannabis growers. The pitch, as explained by company Vice President Josh Rasey, is extremely straightforward: "Bigger, better buds." More specifically, he said, that means soil that can help plants grow faster while using significantly less water.

« Malcolm Jackson, a graduate research assistant at UAPB, is currently studying the potential of animal byproducts to degrade pollutants in water systems

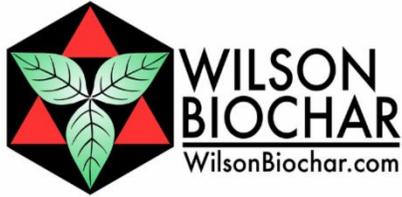
➤ **Wake Up and (Don't) Smell the Bacon.** Iowa State University researchers tested a number of commercially available manure additives for odor mitigation for the pork industry. None of the additives showed any statistically significant reduction in emissions. Meanwhile, in related research, soybean hulls and biochar both showed significant odor and gas emissions mitigation effects



Less odor with biochar.

----- promotional section -----

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Ring of Fire Biochar Kiln Specifications	
Kiln diameter (with heat shield)	77 inches
Kiln height (with heat shield)	44 inches
Kiln total volume:	3 cubic yards
Kiln weight (fully assembled)	240 pounds
Number of kiln body sections	3
Weight of one kiln body section	40 pounds
Burn time to make 1 cubic yard biochar	4 hours

For more information, please visit WilsonBiochar.com.

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