Poultney Woodshed Project

Green Mountain College strives to support the local economy whenever possible. GMC's biomass heating plant is fueled by woodchips that can be sourced locally. In an attempt to source chips in a way that directly supports the community around the College, the Poultney Woodshed Project was created in 2010 to investigate the possibilities of securing a local wood supply. Read below for answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

What is the Poultney Woodshed Project?
The Poultney Woodshed Project (the “PWP”) is a partnership between Green Mountain College (GMC) and the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation (HBRF) launched in 2010 to secure a reliable supply of sustainably harvested woodchips for the College from privately owned forestlands located in Rutland County. The PWP is funded by private foundations and public sources, including the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

Who is the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation?
A Hanover, NH, based nonprofit organization established in 1993 to support the world-renowned Hubbard Brook Ecosystem Study with policy and education initiatives, including recent projects on carbon cycling, biomass energy, and ecosystem services.

What does “sustainably harvested” mean?
For the purposes of launching the PWP, GMC has defined “sustainably harvested” as wood coming from forestland that is enrolled in the State of Vermont’s Use Value Appraisal Program (UVA).

How can I learn more about the UVA Program?
Contact Eric Hansen the Rutland County Forester at 802-786-3853, or at eric.hansen@state.vt.us

What kind of wood is acceptable?
The PWP can accept any species of hardwood. Absolutely no off the ground material. No whole tree chips. Hardwood should be long length, relatively straight, 2-inch small end diameter to 19 inch on the large end. Wood should be delivered on a truck capable of self-unloading. Please note that hardwood used for biomass is just one component of a timber harvest, and a relatively low value forest product.

Does the College purchase and burn wood all year long?
Traditionally, the chip-wood buying season has run from August through March. But, this year (FY 2013), the College is experimenting with running the plant all year-long in order to provide hot water in the summer.

What will I get paid?
Payment can vary depending on many variables. The financial relationships between the landowner, forester and logger; wood market prices, diesel fuel prices, etc. Please contact your forester and ask them to contact Ken Gagnon of Gagnon Lumber who can provide information on payment amounts and terms. Ken can be reached at: 802-483-6550, or via-mail at www.gagnonlumber.com
How can I participate in the Poultney Woodshed Project?
Have your forester contact Ken Gagnon.

How does GMC’s wood biomass plant work?
GMC's biomass plant is a gasifier system that burns wood gas to produce steam heat and hot water for campus. It also produces electricity as a by-product of the process.
Learn more about how the biomass facility works.
See a diagram of how the biomass facility works. (PDF)

How much wood does GMC burn per year?
Between 3,000 and 4,500 tons per year.