

## International Wood Fuel Meeting in the Forest of Dean

An international meeting to investigate the potential for wood fuel in the Forest of Dean took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of June at Beechenhurst Lodge near Coleford.

The meeting was co-ordinated by Severn Wye Energy Agency and involved the Forest of Dean District Council, the Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise and partners from Spain, Portugal and Ireland.

13 European partners from the Interreg 111c *Biorreg Floresta* project began arriving in the area on Tuesday evening. The partners stayed at the Speech House Hotel from where they were able to walk to meeting venue at Beechenhurst Lodge.



**Figure 1: Welcome to the Forest of Dean**

### Day 1: Trans-National Meeting

The chairman of the Forest of Dean District Council, George Read was on hand to officially welcome the guests on Wednesday morning and handed over Forest of Dean Shield to the Vice President of the County Council of Avila (Spain).

The project partners then spent the morning at Beechenhurst Lodge and presentations were made by a representative of each organisation about the development of wood fuel in their respective regions. Of particular interest was the presentation by the partners from Las Navas del Marques (Spain) who outlined their plans for a large scale wood fired district heating plant that will heat 600 new houses, a sports centre, a health centre and a local college.

In the afternoon the group was taken to see a 25kW wood chip boiler at the Organic Farm Shop in Cirencester which is the first automated wood heating system in the county.

### Day 2: Projects for the Forest of Dean



The second day of the meeting was opened up to the public and local forestry institutions in order to discuss the potential for wood fuel in the Forest of Dean

The 35 delegates were welcomed by long time employee of the Forestry Commission and current chair of Severn Wye Energy Agency Bart Venner.

This was followed by a presentation by Richard Tompsett of South West Wood Fuels (SWWF). SWWF are a not for profit organisation based on the edge of Exmoor who have significant experience in the establishment of wood fuel supply chains throughout the south west.

**Figure 2: Wood Fuel Discussion led by SWEA**

Richard talked through all of the steps required for getting from 'tree to heat' including the sourcing of forestry resources, correct fuel processing and handling, fuel quality specifications and transportation issues. The talk paid close attention to the economics of wood fuel supply and also provided a useful look at some lessons learnt in other regions.

After a short break the meeting resumed with a series of presentations about the different projects currently taking place in the Forest of Dean and neighbouring areas.

Kierson Wise outlined the **Forest Heat** project which is co-funded by the Building on What's Special program. This scheme aims to develop the wood fuel supply network and support wood fired heating installations in the Forest of Dean. Match funding for the scheme comes from the EU funded **Biorreg Floresta** project that aims to encourage trans-national exchange on bio-energy good practice.

SWEA can offer free wood heating scoping studies to local organisations under this project. Please use the contact details at the end of the page if you are interested.

Graham Ayling then gave an end of project summary for the **Bioscope** project. Bioscope aimed to establish exemplar biomass heating projects across the south west region, in particular within landscape designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Graham gave details of the scoping study for the Cotswold Heritage Centre in Northleach which is in the Cotswold AONB.

Ben Sang from SWEA rounded off the morning with a short presentation about the **Biomass Partnerships** project which is another European (Energy Intelligent Europe) funded project that aims to link potential wood fuel suppliers with users across Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Monmouthshire.

In the afternoon delegates visited the 700kW wood chip boiler that heats the offices for the 1,000 staff working at Worcester County Hall.

Worcester County Council has set up a 10 year heat supply contract with the wood energy company Econergy. The Council pay per kWh for the delivered heat whilst Econergy are responsible for the supply of the wood chip and the running and maintenance of the boiler.

20 tonnes of wood chip are delivered weekly during the heating season resulting in savings around 260 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year compared to gas fired heating.

The presentations from the meeting and further information on the different projects are available on request from:

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Figure 3: Wood Chip for Worcester County Hall

