4.4.1 Informed Stakeholder Assessment Study

In recent years, there has been significant attention paid to the technology required for the creation of biofuels from various cellulosic feedstocks. In the Pacific Northwest region of the US, this focus has resulted in several alliances addressing numerous feedstocks relevant to the region (safnw.com; nararenewables. org; ahb-nw.com). This research addressed the impacts of social acceptance on biofuel project success. While scientific, infrastructure, and community physical asset development are significant and important to the success of this emerging industry, key questions must also be addressed regarding the perceptions, experiences and potential acceptance or rejection of this emerging industry by local stakeholders and communities.

The informed stakeholder assessment study examines informed stakeholder perceptions regarding the social factors which impact a biomass-to-biojet industry based on forest residues in the WMC. Key issues under investigation using a mixed-method approach include forest management practices, trust, communication, knowledge, experience, social acceptance, local community impact, and environmental concerns.

STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT METHODS

A mixed methods process was used to administer an in-progress survey, which consists of open ended, multiple choice and Likert Scale questions. The instrument was pilot tested using in-person interviews with 10 WMC informed stakeholders. Using pilot test feedback and in collaboration with other USDA-NIFA agricultural and food research Initiative grant researchers the instrument was refined. Those collaborators include: Dr. Stanley T. Asah, Advanced Hardwood Biofuels Northwest (AHB), University of Washington; Dr. Sudipta Dasmohapatra, Southeast Partnership for Integrated Biomass Supply Systems (IBSS), North Carolina State University; and Dr. Darin Saul and Priscilla Salant, University of Idaho.

The preliminary findings are presented below. Data collection continues and will include additional geographic areas of interest to the NARA project in the Pacific Northwest, including the I-5 Corridor and the Columbia Plateau. Ultimately, we anticipate triangulating the results with existing county level, national, and local data sets for cross-validation and further statistical analyses to allow informed selection of optimal community sites for NARA project activities.

STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

To date, preliminary analysis was conducted on 52 responses from the WMC; 41 surveys were completed online, one via phone interview and 10 through in-person interviews. Figure 4.4.1 shows the location of respondents in the WMC by zip code.



Figure 4.4.1 WMC Survey Respondents by Zip Code

Survey participants were categorized into three large stakeholder groups consisting of government, industry and environment (see figure 4.4.2). Within the government category, we included local, state and federal agencies, as well as elected officials; in the industry category we included all participants associated



Figure 4.4.2 WMC Survey Participants by Stakeholder Category

with private industry ranging from forest operations to refineries; the environment category captured nonprofit organizations and regional collaborative organizations. To further understand survey participants, we asked them to provide their political preference. Figure 4.4.3 shows the participants' self described political preference.



Figure 4.4.3 WMC Survey Participant's Self-Described Political Preference

The following figures show the participants' responses to a number of questions regarding their support and concerns for a biofuels industry in the region. Figure 4.4.4 shows the level of participants' support for a biofuels industry in the region. The graph shows that the majority of participants (86.2%) believe development of a biofuels industry in the Pacific Northwest would be good for the region, even though some (27.5%) had concerns.

Figure 4.4.5, shows participants' level of concern regarding multiple topics. From the items listed, the 'local economy' in their region, 'forest health in the Pacific Northwest,' and 'forest management practices on public lands in the Pacific Northwest' show the highest levels of concern.



Figure 4.4.5 Participants' level of worry regarding several topics related to biofuels



Figure 4.4.4 Participants' opinions regarding the development of liquid biofuels from woody biomass in the Pacific Northwest

We asked participants to indicate how much they agree with or disagree with a number of potential sources of woody biomass (Figure 4.4.6). There was significant agreement among the majority of participants that woody biomass from multiple forest management activities should be collected and used to produce bioenergy. Their sentiments suggest that biomass from areas treated for insect disease, restoration thinning and from logging operations should be considered.

Participants were also asked to select the entities they trust to monitor forest management activities, especially as it relates to bioenergy production. Figure 4.4.7 shows responses that indicate significant trust in state foresters, independent 3rd party certifiers, university scientists and the US Forest Service.



Figure 4.4.6 Participants' agreement with statements about sources of woody biomass



Figure 4.4.7 The expressed level of trust in groups of people potentially responsible for monitoring forests used as a potential source of woody biomass

The survey provided participants with the opportunity to discuss the potential benefits that might result from using woody biomass to create liquid biofuels. The word cloud in Figure 4.4.8 shows the words that participants used to describe benefits. The larger the word, the more often it was used. 'Forest health,' 'fire reduction,' and 'jobs' stand out as three benefits identified most often by participants.

4.4.2 K-12 Education Efforts in the WMC

The K-12 NARA Education group consists of faculty, staff and graduate students from the McCall Outdoor Science School (MOSS), staff from Facing the Future, Imagine Tomorrow representatives and supporting faculty from the University of Idaho and Washington State University. This group works on research as well as programming and curriculum projects that enhance energy literacy at all stages in education. Engagement opportunities are focused on the development of curriculum and on delivering teacher professional development. The research, outreach and planning that goes into the WMC reporting (by UI and WSU faculty and students) in 2012-2013 informs our education efforts the following year (2013-2014)

The K-12 education efforts also include in-service teacher professional development. For example, in the summer of 2013, MOSS hosted a workshop that one Montana teacher attended, the Fall 2013/Spring 2014 Imagine Tomorrow Competition Mentoring will target 15 teachers and 60 students from Montana, and the NARA Education Team presented workshops at the 2013 Montana Education Association (MEA) conference in October 17-19 2013. Also at the MEA conference, the NARA Education group recruited 15 teachers to work on our K-12 biofuels literacy project and they will receive \$1000 each in support of their work. Finally, the 2013 Imagine Tomorrow Competition (funded by NARA) awarded 1st place to the Sentinel High School team from Missoula, Montana for the categories of 'Most Innovative' and 'Best in the Behavioral Challenge' categories. Their research focused on this question: How can we use popular media to influence behavior and encourage individuals to take personal responsibility to improve the environment? Read more about the NARA K-12 Education projects at: http://imagine.wsu.edu/past/2013/schools/sentinel.aspx



Figure 4.4.8 Benefits from using woody biomass for biofuels