

National Fire Plan

Biomass Plant Lights Up Community

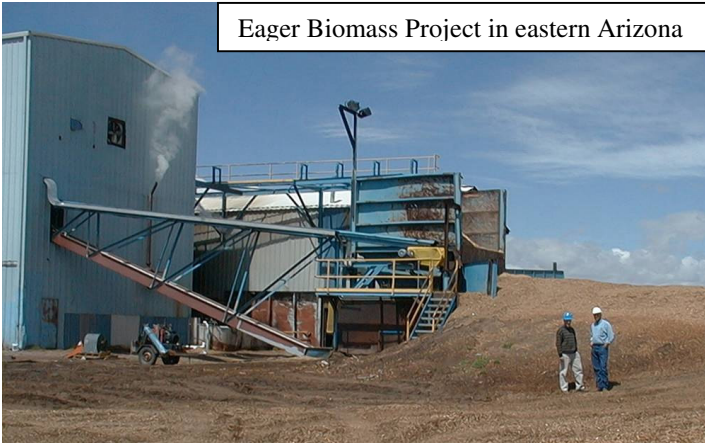
Arizona

2004



There is a new power plant in eastern Arizona that doesn't use the traditional fuels of natural gas, coal, or electric energy to generate electricity. The Eagar Biomass Project in Eagar, Arizona produces three megawatts which is enough power to service up to 3,000 homes and businesses.

Eagar Biomass Project in eastern Arizona



The Eagar plant uses fuel (in the form of harvested trees) from the surrounding Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests and is an integral component in the full utilization of the abundant small-diameter trees in the forest. The Apache-Sitgreaves has been zealous in assisting the wood products industry in developing markets for such trees in order to help pay for the huge cost of forest restoration activities on a landscape scale. Small trees and woody debris are chipped in the forest and hauled to the biomass plant for burning in the boiler which heats water. The resultant steam powers a generator. The forest is cleared of much of the thinning debris which negates the need for subsequent burning of any residual slash, an important aspect in the wildland/urban interface where smoke from prescribed burning is often an irritant to residents. This is consistent with the White Mountain Stewardship

Contract where 8,000 to 15,000 acres of national forest lands will be treated for the next 10 years.

The Forest Service awarded a grant in 2001 to a private, locally owned company to pursue a biomass proposal. Rural Development grant funds of \$415,000 were eventually used as seed money to attract other major investors and in February, 2002, Arizona Public Service Company (APS) agreed to finance the nearly four million dollars needed to complete this

Steve Hall, manager of Western Renewable Energy, shows some the chips being conveyed to the boiler at the Eagar Biomass Plant.

first stage of the project. The project is significant for APS because it lays the foundation for future biomass plants. The Eagar plant will help APS to build other such plants that use similar technology in other parts of Arizona, thereby offering the potential to use forest thinning debris from other national forests. APS will get the green credits to apply to the Arizona Environmental Portfolio Standard which requires APS to generate 1.1 percent of its power through renewable sources. APS expects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 15,000 tons per year and trees that would have been burned in the forest will now be burned in a boiler under controlled conditions.

