

Objective 9: Developing a diversified value-added forest economy.

It is imperative that the communities of the Central Sierra develop a diversified value-added forest economy. This will require the reestablishment of forest-based infrastructure including, but not limited to, combined heat/power plants (utilizing woody biomass), post and pole operations and new emerging technology based products like Bio-Char and other soil amendments for agriculture, fire bricks, firewood, pellets, nano-fibers and cross laminated beams.

These projects will, in combination, allow this region to become more fire safe, restore forest health, sequester carbon, become better stewards of our watersheds, improve air quality, protect and improve our water quality and quantity, and foster public safety. They will also protect many existing jobs and put hundreds of people in our economically depressed communities back to work in family wage jobs.

Action Item: Keep sawmills and other forest based industries open and operating to reduce waste biomass in forests and therefore reducing fire danger and restoring forest health.

Work with the USFS / Stanislaus National Forest and where possible with private landowners to accelerate green harvest and forest thinning projects to restore forest health. In the process, develop programs to fully utilize the residual bio-mass materials with all of the technologies available.

In partnership with local and regional partners like Valley Sierra Small Business Development Center (VSSBDC), Delta College Small Business Development Center (DCSBDC) and local economic development organizations, work with existing businesses to streamline their processes, find capital, train workforce, navigate regulatory requirements.

By collaborating with the economic development organizations, chambers, and local governments, the needs of biomass-based businesses will be assessed and met. Qualified local consultants will be used whenever possible and, when needed, additional regional consultants will be recruited to meet business needs wherever local consultant expertise is not available.

The program will begin Q4 2018 and run through Q2 2020. CSEDD staff will identify clients and provide referrals to SBDC staff. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to our partnership organizations and/or directly to local business owners to help them create or save 20 additional jobs through an established BRE process and will be measured by the total number of jobs created per year over the next 5-year reporting period.

Action Item: Keep existing infrastructure such as forest roads and transportation routes open and up to date in the region.

In partnership with the US Forest Service, National Park Service, California Department of Transportation, local/regional governments, economic development organizations and private land owners, work together to maintain important roadway infrastructure that allows for productive and efficient transportation of materials used in forest-based industries. Work together to obtain federal and state funding to repair existing infrastructure and build new as needed.

By collaborating with the US Forest Service, National Park Service, California Department of Transportation, local/regional governments, economic development organizations and private land owners, the transportation infrastructure needs of forest-based businesses will be met.

The program will begin Q4 2017 and run through Q2 2021. CSEDD staff will work with the US Forest Service, National Park Service, California Department of Transportation, local/regional governments, economic development organizations and private land owners as a facilitator to bring all parties to the table. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to this partnership.

Action Item: Work on bringing additional infrastructure to the communities serviced by the CSEDD to assist in growing, retaining, expanding and attracting forest based industries.

In partnership with the Economic Development Administration, USDA Rural Development, state/local/regional governments, economic development organizations, private land owners and other partners, work together to attract funding to build necessary infrastructure, such as water, sewer, telecommunication and broadband, that allows for additional business growth in forest-based industries. Also work together to obtain federal and state funding to repair existing infrastructure.

By collaborating with the Economic Development Administration, USDA Rural Development, state/local/regional governments, economic development organizations, private land owners and other partners, the infrastructure needs of forest-based businesses will be met.

The program will begin Q4 2017 and run through Q2 2021. CSEDD staff will work with the Economic Development Administration, USDA Rural Development, state/local/regional governments, economic development organizations, private land owners and other partners as a facilitator to bring all parties to the table. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to this partnership.

Action Item: Train local economic development organizations on how to attract industries that can use materials, such as waste biomaterial, extracted from the forest.

Work with new and existing economic development organizations and local governments to train their staff on how to work with forest-based businesses who want to move to their communities.

By collaborating with the International Economic Development Council, California Association for Local Economic Development, Fresno State Office of Community & Economic Development and other partners, training needs of local economic development organizations will be met.

The program will begin Q4 2017 and run through Q2 2021. CSEDD staff will work with the International Economic Development Council, California Association for Local Economic Development, Fresno State Office of Community & Economic Development and local organizations as a facilitator to bring all parties to the table. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to this partnership.

Action Item: Expand partnerships with regional universities and colleges on how to find new commercial uses for materials that can be extracted from the forest.

Work with regional universities and colleges to find new and productive uses for materials that can be extracted from the forest, such as waste biomaterial, and can be manufactured into a viable product.

By collaborating with the regional universities new and possibility exciting new products will be brought to the market.

The program will begin Q4 2017 and run through Q2 2019. CSEDD staff will work with regional universities and local organizations as a facilitator to bring all parties to the table. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to this partnership.

Action Item: Encourage linkages between industries within the forest industry.

Work with existing businesses and newly attracted businesses to strengthen ties between to create a stronger cluster.

By collaborating with new and existing forest based businesses, new partnerships can be formed that better prepares each business for downturns in the industry.

The program will begin Q4 2020 and run through Q2 2021. CSEDD staff will work with existing businesses and newly attracted businesses as a facilitator to bring all parties to the table. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to this partnership.

Action Item: Work on workforce issues that will appear as technology changes and new technologies emerge within the forest based industry.

Work with existing businesses and newly attracted businesses to develop training programs that will fit the needs of their industry.

By collaborating with new and existing forest based businesses, a new training partnership can be formed that prepares employees for changes in the industry.

The program will begin Q4 2018 and run through Q2 2021. CSEDD staff will work with existing businesses and newly attracted businesses as a facilitator to bring all parties to the table. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to this partnership.