



# Redwood Forest Foundation

Winter 2011

## RFFI Takes Stock!

As 2011 draws to a close the Redwood Forest Foundation's Board, advisors, staff, volunteers and community partners are taking stock of our accomplishments and preparing to address the tasks before us. 2011 was a seminal year in RFFI's development. RFFI turned a major corner in its work to advance socially responsible, free-market solutions to timberland ownership and management. It is demonstrating a model for acquiring, managing and restoring depleted forests for the long-term benefit of the community. By placing a conservation easement on the 50,000-acre Usal Redwood Forest, we have laid the groundwork for promoting healthy, sustainable natural systems -- that nourish both natural communities and human communities, sustainably -- long into the future.

## RFFI Milestones:

- **1997** Diverse, grass-roots organizers put aside years of mistrust and strife to establish the Redwood Forest Foundation.
- **2007** RFFI buys Usal Redwood Forest - the world's largest working redwood forest in non-profit ownership.
- **2007-11** Engages thousands of supporters in planning and community-based forest-focused activities.
- **2008-11** Invests more than \$2,000,000 in forest and stream restoration; salmon return to our streams.
- **2008-11** Injects more than \$3,000,000 into the regional economy in management and timber related jobs.
- **2011** Permanently protects Usal Redwood Forest - largest working forest conservation easement in California.
- **2011** Permanently protects, assures public access to 957-acres of coastal redwoods via sale to Save the Redwoods League.

## RFFI Says Thank You.

Thank you to all our loyal supporters, generous donors and volunteers. Your help has made this all possible. The ambitious and complex transaction that now protects 50,000 acres of redwood forest was made possible by the support of a strong coalition of national and local elected officials, conservation organizations, industry leaders and committed RFFI supporters. This landmark transaction will permanently protect a landscape almost twice the size of the city of San Francisco. We hope you will continue to support us as we move forward in our joint effort to make community forestry a reality.

## RFFI Moves Forward to Make Community Forestry a Reality:

- Engage the community in the development of our Forest Stewardship Plan.
- Develop a long-term Forest Management Plan.
- Secure Forest Stewardship Certification.
- Submit our first timber harvest plans.
- Create community access to Usal.
- Actively pursue plans for Native American and Nature Study Center.
- Provide access to tan oak orchards for Native American acorn-gathering.
- Complete planning and open mobile biochar plant on Usal.

# Biochar and Torrefaction

## Community Forestry in Action

As reported in the fall, Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI) and its partners have received partial funding for the Biochar Demonstration Project from the Dept. of Water Resources. Now RFFI and its partners must secure funding for the first year of plant operation. After that, the plant is projected to be able to pay for itself from the revenue generated by biochar sales. This community project explores alternate uses for unwanted young, crowded, tan oak-dominated stands within the Usal Redwood Forest. The project is a community-based effort to create environmentally, economically and socially beneficial alternatives to traditional herbicide use.

Biochar is created through a process called pyrolysis, where wood is heated in the absence of oxygen. The end product is a charcoal-like substance called Biochar - a useful amendment that can increase the nutrient exchange capacity of degraded soils, as well as reduce leaching, increase microbial activity, improve water drainage and infiltration, and adjust soil PH.

Biochar consists mostly of the carbon that was originally stored in the wood. Once buried, this carbon can remain trapped for hundreds to thousands of years creating an effective carbon sink.

Partnerships with the UC Extension, North Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council and the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan have integrated this small project into regional efforts that allow for information sharing and project replication throughout the North Coast. RFFI is expanding this collaborative approach to include the Forestry Department at Humboldt State University (HSU). The Humboldt county partners are working on a torrefaction plant that may have applicability for dealing with unwanted biomass.

Torrefaction is a thermal process to convert biomass into a coal-like material, which has better fuel characteristics than the original biomass. RFFI's biochar plant will be tested at HSU, and RFFI will consider the applicability of torrefaction to Usal based on the results of the HSU studies. Stay tuned for more news about these beneficial collaborative projects. It is one small piece of our emerging restoration-based economy in which removal of small-diameter brush and trees helps create healthier forest ecosystems, local jobs and movement towards a sustainable and equitable resource-based economy.

Read the fall newsletter at [www.rffi.org](http://www.rffi.org) for a detailed review of the Biochar Demonstration Project.



Photograph by Frances Freyberg: [www.francesfreyberg.com](http://www.francesfreyberg.com)

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# RFFI Needs Your Help To Make Community Forestry A Reality

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We sincerely appreciate your continuing support.

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