



For Immediate Release  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **US Biochar Initiative Offers January Workshop on Methods for Converting Forest Fuels into Moisture-Retaining Biochar On-Site**

PORTLAND, December 27 – In the western US, climate change, drought, and a century of fire suppression have created a wildfire crisis that threatens ecosystems and communities. As forests go up in smoke, we are also experiencing the loss of our most important natural carbon sinks, at a time when we must rely more and more on natural climate solutions to drawdown carbon.

Communities in California and throughout the West are ramping up efforts to remove excess forest fuels in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) in order to protect homes and businesses. However, cutting down trees and brush is only the first step. Removing fuels requires the expense of chipping or hauling material off-site for disposal elsewhere. Material can also be piled and burned, but that generates smoke pollution and harms forest soils with burn scars.

**The USBI Biochar in the Woods Workshop** will teach attendees proven, alternative approaches for treating forest fuels on-site while providing long-lasting carbon for soil improvement and carbon sequestration. Conservation districts, forestry contractors, forest landowners and the US Forest Service have been working together to pioneer this new approach – making biochar in the woods using clean, nearly smoke-free techniques. Biochar left in the woods improves the water holding capacity and resilience of forest soils.

The USBI Workshop offers a combination of online presentations and field demonstrations in Butte County, California. The full-day online symposium is on January 27, 2022, and the free field days will take place on February 1-3. A detailed schedule is available at the [online registration link](#).

US Biochar Initiative board member Kelpie Wilson said: “This workshop will share cutting-edge but simple techniques that anyone can use for converting slash piles and brush into valuable biochar. What we are doing, essentially, is turning smoke into biochar, and sequestering that carbon in forest soils. We need to do whatever we can now to support forest health and resilience, because forests themselves are one of nature’s best carbon sinks.”

**Trainers:** Kelpie Wilson of Wilson Biochar Associates will lead the training in biochar kiln operations. Deborah Page-Dumroese, US Forest Service Research Soil Scientist, will lead biochar forestry applications training. We will also hear from many others who are developing and using these methods in forest settings around the US including: Karen Youngblood, forester for the Redwood Forest Foundation, Kai Hoffman Krull of the San Juan Islands Conservation District, Darren McAvoy of Utah State University, and Mark Vander Meer of Watershed Consulting, Inc in Missoula, MT.

**Who Should Attend:** Forestry contractors, arborists, workforce supervisors, forest landowners, Wildland Urban Interface homeowners, and staff from environmental NGOs and natural resource agencies who may be supervising forestry workers or developing biochar forestry projects and programs.

**Partners:** US Biochar Initiative, US Forest Service, NRCS, Butte Community College, Butte Fire Safe Council, California State University Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, and Applied Biomass Technicians

**Bonus Quote:**

“Fire exclusion has deprived forest soils of natural biochar. The amount of charcoal generated by wildfire depends on fire intensity, fire return interval, vegetation type, and fuel loading, but researchers estimate that 10-50% of the carbon found in forest soils is charcoal. Periodic, low-intensity fire provides a regular input of biochar and minerals to rejuvenate forest soils. When we make biochar in the woods from material that is too expensive to haul out for any other use, this is a form of biomimicry that restores important soil components and helps retain water.”

– Kelpie Wilson, Wilson Biochar Associates

**Workshop Dates**

**Jan-Feb 2022**

***Online Symposium – January 27***

***Field Days – February 1-3***

**[Registration Link](#)**

**Additional Background**

Biochar-US.org

WilsonBiochar.com

**PHOTOS** – Please credit all photos: WilsonBiochar.com



*Figure 1 Forest workers make biochar in a kiln on a property in Paradise, CA in January 2020.*



*Figure 2The Biochar in the Woods workshop will teach clean burning techniques for reducing slash piles to biochar.*



*Figure 3. Burn pile techniques that produce biochar improve forest soil instead of killing it.*



*Figure 4. Producing biochar is preferable to a standard burn pile which makes very little biochar and destroys the organic soil layer.*



*Figure 5. The Ring of Fire Kiln from Wilson Biochar can make a cubic yard of biochar in about 4 hours.*



*Figure 6. The Ring of Fire Biochar Kiln*