



September 2014 News from the International Biochar Initiative

Final Days to Cast your Vote on Proposed Policy Revisions to the *IBI Biochar Standards*

There is less than one week remaining in the balloting period to vote on proposed policy revisions to the *IBI Biochar Standards*. **As a reminder, the balloting period is open for 30 days from September 2nd until October 1st.** If you are a dues-paying member in good standing, IBI encourages you to vote on the proposed policy revisions which address: 1) testing requirements for weathered biochar; 2) timing of testing for post-processed biochar; 3) provisions for high carbon biomass ash; and 4) biochar sampling procedures. If you wish to vote but are not an IBI member, [please join IBI](#) and vote using the link at the bottom of this article.

After the 30-day balloting period, [each of the four proposed revisions](#) will be individually approved or rejected by a simple majority based on the tally of votes of IBI dues-paying members. Approved policy revisions will be published in Version 2.0 of the *IBI Biochar Standards*. Thank you to all members who have voted to date! We are grateful for the continued participation and support, and the constructive feedback received from our members, stakeholders, and the biochar community—and also to our panel of experts who helped sort through feedback to develop the most relevant revisions possible during this ongoing effort to enhance the utility of the *IBI Biochar Standards*. [A summary of comments received during the public comment period and webinars along with IBI responses is available for review.](#)

To read more about the process and [submit your vote click here](#). Please add your voice!

Placer County, CA Biochar Carbon Methodology Webinar Held on September 6

IBI has partnered with The Climate Trust and The Prasino Group to adapt the Biochar Carbon Offsets Methodology currently undergoing the evaluation and approval process with the American Carbon Registry (ACR) for potential use in California. Placer County's Air Pollution Control District is seeking to adapt the protocol for use in the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association Greenhouse Gas Registry (CAPCOA GHG Rx). Upon approval and adoption by Placer County, the protocol will be available for adoption by any CA county. A webinar to review the protocol was held on September 6 for Placer County stakeholders, and marked the start of a public comment period for the Placer County Air Pollution Control District. IBI's Executive Director Debbie Reed participated in the webinar and reviewed the IBI stable carbon methodology embedded in the protocol on behalf of the protocol development team, and participated in the question and answer session at the conclusion of the team's presentation. The Placer County Air Pollution Control District website contains an audiovisual recording of the webinar, a copy of the draft protocol, a link to the PowerPoint presentation utilized during the webinar, and a link for further information on the CAPCOA GHG Rx on its website, located here: <http://www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/Air>.

The portal also contains a link to submit comments on the protocol to Placer County during the public comment period, which ends on October 5, 2014.

World Bank Hosts Launch Event Held for World Bank Biochar Report Co-Authoring by IBI

On Wednesday, September 3, 2014, the World Bank hosted a launch event on Biochar Systems for Smallholders in Developing Countries, a report co-authored by a team of IBI's staff and Executive Director. The event, which was moderated by Gerhard Dieterle, Manager of the World Bank Forest Investment Program, was open to the public, and drew a wide range of interested participants from within the World Bank as well as external stakeholders. IBI Executive Director Debbie Reed participated in the launch, presenting on *Developing Biochar Systems Globally: Tools for Developing Biochar Systems* (standards, methodologies, and policies). Discussants included Ellysar Baroudy, Lead Carbon Finance Specialist at the World Bank, who reported on some biochar projects underway, and plans and prospects for further project investment; Alessandro De Pinto, Senior Research Fellow with IFPRI, who discussed the economics of biochar projects; and Katie Freeman, Agricultural Economist at the World Bank, who discussed promising small-scale opportunities for biochar systems development. The Banks' specialists and panelists discussed the future potential for biochar as part of Climate-Smart Agriculture approaches.

Deadline Extended: Participate in a Survey on the Global Biochar Industry

As part of our ongoing efforts to identify trends in the evolution of the biochar industry, [IBI has launched a survey to gather data on global biochar enterprise activity in 2014](#). We request the participation of any individual or business that is actively commercializing a product or service related to biochar. The data collected will be analyzed and published in aggregated form later this year in our *2014 State of the Biochar Industry Report*.

As a new feature for the 2014 report, we will include case studies of several biochar businesses which will be chosen from the survey respondents, so be sure to take the survey. (Note that we will reach out to all the potential case study subjects prior to publication for more information and to ensure their desire to be included in the case studies). [Click here to learn more about the survey and report](#).

IBI Webinar Series: A Conversation with Dr. Johannes Lehmann

IBI is thrilled to welcome world-renowned biochar researcher and IBI Chairman of the Board, Johannes Lehmann, who will deliver a webinar on October 21st as part of the *IBI Webinar Series*. These webinars allow us to connect IBI members to leaders in the biochar field, from business professionals to producers and academics, who will present cutting-edge information, research, and updates to our IBI membership. Each participant will have an opportunity for real-time interaction with the presenter by submitting questions before or during the webinar for live responses, as time permits. [Registration is open now](#).



You must be a dues-paying member to participate in these special events. [\(If you are not an IBI member and would like to join, please click here\)](#). **A recording of the webinar will be available afterward, in the member's-only area of our website.**

Our next webinar will be held on Tuesday, October 21st at 3:00p.m. Eastern Daylight Time with Dr. Lehmann, professor of soil biogeochemistry and soil fertility management at Cornell University. Dr. Lehmann will give a presentation titled "Managing diversity in biochar properties: from material properties to products", and will discuss how biochars come in many "shapes and sizes", and how the choice of feedstock and pyrolysis conditions can dramatically change the properties of biochars, including the pH value, ability to retain water, persistence in soil, or nutrient content. This variability can be an asset since soil constraints vary, but also a challenge when it comes to assessing suitable biochars for specific soil fertility issues, and to communicating the many potential values of biochar on a global scale.

If you are interested in participating in the October 21st webinar, scheduled at 3:00pm EDT (New York, USA time), you can reserve your place now at: <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/788854694>. (Note: Please convert the 3:00 pm EDT start time to your local time by [using this time converter tool](#))

For more information on this program, including a link to last month's presentation recording by Dr. Steven McGreevy, please see: http://www.biochar-international.org/webinar_series.

Biochar Briefs: News Roundup for September

We update the website daily with new articles on biochar. For more information, please see: <http://www.biochar-international.org/newsbriefs>.

Australia

[The New South Wales Department of Primary Industries](#) (NSW DPI) has been conducting biochar field trials at their center since 2001; these are believed to be the world's longest running biochar trials. Dr Lukas Van Zwieten, the chief research scientist conducting the trials, commented, "Biochar is a recognised soil amendment and it's recognised as being able to sequester carbon in soil as well as providing a lot of other potential benefits—especially to crop growth."

Malaysia

[The largest rooftop garden in South-East Asia, located on a shopping center called 1Utama](#), opened to the public in 2009. The garden designer and manager Dr Francis Ng used biochar to overcome challenges with both the weight of using soil on the roof and with water—in fact, the garden's source of water is the cold water discharged from the shopping center's air-conditioning system. Says Ng, "There is an international movement to use charcoal in agriculture as a way to fight climate change and improve soil productivity, but even they (producers using biochar as a soil amendment) do not use more than 10% charcoal in the mixture," he said. "When some of the representatives were brought here to visit this garden, they were blown away as we actually use pure charcoal in some zones!"

Peru

[A team comprised of researchers from Wake Forest University in the U.S. and the Amazon Conservation Association in Peru](#) are working on making biochar from native Amazonian bamboos. The researchers brought a kiln to rural Peru and are testing different formulations of biochar made from bamboo feedstock—with the goal to see which formulations are most effective at holding nitrogen, carbon, and other nutrients in the soil while simultaneously taking up heavy metals like mercury. They are using bamboo due to its quick growth in deforested or mined areas—holding a lot of potential for local farmers.

Sweden

[Stockholm Sweden was one of five cities to win the Mayors Challenge](#)—a competition for European cities to focus on urban challenges. The city's project entitled "Biochar – for a better city ecosystem" will produce biochar from garden waste; the biochar will be used on city trees and in plantings. The project contents that using the garden waste as a biochar feedstock will be much more efficient for them than turning the waste into woodchips.

United States

[The mayor of Minneapolis \(Minnesota\) and the chairman of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux](#), a Native American tribe, recently signed an agreement promoting the use of biochar in five city demonstration gardens. One of the gardens is near the Indian Health Board Facility in Minneapolis. The idea, according to organic farmer Christina Elias, is to grow more food on smaller plots, near communities that need fresh produce. "We moved in 47 tons of soil," Elias said. "It's strong in Native American practices, and we have Oneida corn, we have the black turtle beans, Cherokee trail climbing beans."

[The City of Manteca is setting aside five acres at a school farm in the San Joaquin Valley](#) of California to field test biochar to grow row crops and nurture orchards. "It makes a lot of sense for Manteca to look into

biochar,” said Don Smail, the city’s economic development specialist, “Five of the top 10 counties in the United States for agricultural production are within two hours of Manteca”. Smail also highlighted that the local farmers face the problem of what to do with their field wastes such as almond prunings and hulls, and corn stalks—which make ideal feedstocks for biochar—since they are no longer able to burn them in the fields. The initial biochar used for the field studies will be imported from Oregon, but the city is considering building a unit if the field trials show positive results.

[A new brewery, Seven Arrows Brewing Co, is expected to open by late 2015 at Hermitage Hill Farm and Stables](#) in Virginia. Farm owner Craig Nargi worked with a group of James Madison University students to build a biochar production unit to heat the farm's greenhouse using farm crop waste as feedstock. The warm greenhouse has allowed Nargi to grow some crops year-round and the biochar is used in the farm soils to cultivate the hops for brewing. "We kind of make a big circle with everything," Nargi said.

Opportunities in Biochar

- Download a new open access biochar book: *Biochar Culture*, by Sai Bhaskar N Reddy. The text highlights the use of biochar in communities and its potential for increased sustainable agriculture in smaller scale farmsteads and homes, focusing on work in India. The book can be accessed at: <http://www.biocharculture.com>.
- Job postings in biochar (as well as research/educational opportunities) can be accessed at: <http://www.biochar-international.org/network/jobs>.
- Looking for potential grant funding? Check out the Terra Viva Grants Directory which develops and manages information about grants for agriculture, energy, environment, and natural resources in the world's developing countries at: <http://www.terravivagrants.org/Home>.

Upcoming Calendar Events

- October 3 – 5: Bio-Char Workshop at Quantum Leaps Lodge. Location: British Columbia, Canada. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5149>
- October 5 – 8: Special Symposium on “Biochar: Production, Characterization and Applications” at CLEAR 2014 Conference. Location: Chuncheon, Korea. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/4828>
- October 8 – 9: 2nd annual AIDF Food Security Summit. Location: Jakarta, Indonesia. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5327>
- October 11: Soil Benefits of Biochar. Location: San Jose, CA, USA. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5366>
- October 18: Black is the New Green: Grow it Better with Local Biochar. Biochar Expo. Location: Roseburg, OR, USA. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5373>
- October 23: Making and Firing a Biochar Kiln. Location: San Jose, CA, USA. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5370>
- November 7 – 11: Biochar School: Appropriate Technology for the Small Farm. Location: Sonoma, CA, USA. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5338>

See the [IBI Calendar page](#) for more events. To add an event to the calendar, send the information to info@biochar-international.org.

Recently Published Biochar Research

IBI tracks all published research on biochar and includes it in our [online bibliography](#). The following articles were added in the last month. Please visit the website bibliography for more information on any of

these articles. Due to copyright infringement laws, we cannot provide full copies of articles unless we have permission from the publisher. If you have published work that is not included, [please email us](#).

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