In 2002 the Emerald Ash Borer found its way to the United States and has since been killing ash trees in Ohio, Maryland, Indiana, and Michigan. Illinois realized the threat and took preemptive action, but the pest found its way to the suburbs and then into the Chicago life size borer.

Our project started over the summer semester with a thought for a solution to the problem of and excess of trees infested with the Emerald ash borer. This was to create a business that used the wood for products. Our goals and ideas have grown and changed since then into a business that deals with a much wider range of problems surrounding urban wood.

Urban Wood is all wood found within the city. It includes all trees as well as discarded wood not directly from a living tree. Most of this wood, after the tree dies, is discarded in to a landfill or chopped into mulch. This is a local issue, and demands a local solution.

Our plan is not to create a business that relies on wholesales or manufacturers of urban wood, hundreds of small privately owned companies have already implemented such businesses into local markets. Our goals are to create a network to unite these companies, their associates, and customers. We do not see potential competitors, but possible opportunities for partnerships.
Growing urban population worldwide will inevitably create a rise in the demand of the age old resource of wood.

How much wood can come from the urban environment?

City of Chicago survey says

Trees in Chicago
530,000 parkway trees
250,000 trees in parks
2,000,000 trees on private property

Trees are essential to the urban environment:
removing Co2, providing shade, absorbing water, reducing wind speed, moderating climate, improving air quality, and harboring wildlife.

Urban trees have shorter life cycle that rural tree, which creates a continuous cycle of planting and removal of trees. Most trees are mulched, breaking the tree down into an almost zero dollar product. If handled in the proper way by sawyers and craftsmen, a large value products can emerge from the urban trees. This is where Urban Wood Exchange knows a business opportunity lies, which makes money in a naturally sustainable process.
Creating Awareness...
In order to raise awareness about our project, as well as urban wood in general, we have developed a marketing strategy aimed at reaching a specific target audience, including but not limited to green-conscious consumers, industry professionals, and green-minded corporations. Ways in which we have approached publicizing include:

Magazines
Architectural Record
Interior Design
Domus
Architect
Abitare
GA
AU
GreenSource
etc.

Blogs
Treehugger
EcoGeek
Environmentia Law Prof Blog
New Scientist Environment Blog
AutoblogGreen
Eco-worrier
Grist Mill
Inhabitat
Ecomoto
Alternative consumer ...etc.

Marketing Opportunities...

designing products - napkin holders from reclaimed wood to put in local potbelly’s
urban wood coasters in starbucks

Industry events-
speaking to industry professionals about the benefits of urban wood, handing out brochures

writing Article about LEED... By using or re-using Urban Wood, design professionals can receive up to 10 LEED credits for construction waste management, materials reuse, recycled content, regional materials, rapidly renewable materials, certified wood
Results...

- all individuals involved in the process of making good use of urban wood connected to each other
- raising awareness about Urban Wood through articles, blogs, and products
- continually educating the public about the benefits of reclaiming materials: new processes, opportunities etc..
- expanding network of participants in the process and creating worldwide business

Conclusions...

if products look good the public will become more and more interested in the subject or project. The interest generated makes the website possible, making the project worth pursuing.

Further Recommendations...

development of website
  a. setup unit of measurement of product
  b. create efficient software to administrate listings
  c. add custom made special features
  d. update with news on the field

collaborate with schools, organizations, and other institutions that have any interest in what we do, like building, construction, art, environment related fields.