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In This Issue

Recycled Redwood Cabin
Holy Cedar Boards, Batman!
Industry News
Canadian Compromise
Natural Poles and Posts Pics
June Inventory Specials

Cloud

I thought I would send a couple foto's your way. These are the Conway & Williamson projects. Nice looking siding, huh!

*Tim Coulter
Madison Master Builders
Fall City WA*



Featured Product: Alaska Yellow Cedar

Natural Alaska Yellow Cedar makes a terrific siding product. Pictured here are two types: Pattern 105 drop siding and sidewall shingles. Photos by Tim Coulter.

Alaska Yellow Cedar As Natural Mosquito Repellent

The Yellow Cedars of Alaska have many marvelous traits. They are rot resistant, termite resistant and now it has been determined, they are even mosquito resistant.

The trees, a major resource of Southeastern Alaska, have been dying. Scientists are not quite sure what is causing the die off, but it appears to be climate related (due to warm weather and drier snow conditions). Lack of snow is causing roots to be exposed to blasts of lethal cold air.

Utilizing the dead trees has become a goal of the U.S. Forest Service. Scientists Rick Kelsey and Nick Panella of Corvallis, Oregon, from that agency, are studying the essential oils that are produced by the tree and have been testing them. Their findings are that three of those compounds, nootkatin, valencene and carvacrol are effective at killing mosquitos. Another compound, nootkatone, is an effective mosquito repellent for the types of mosquitos that carry yellow fever and dengue in tropical countries.



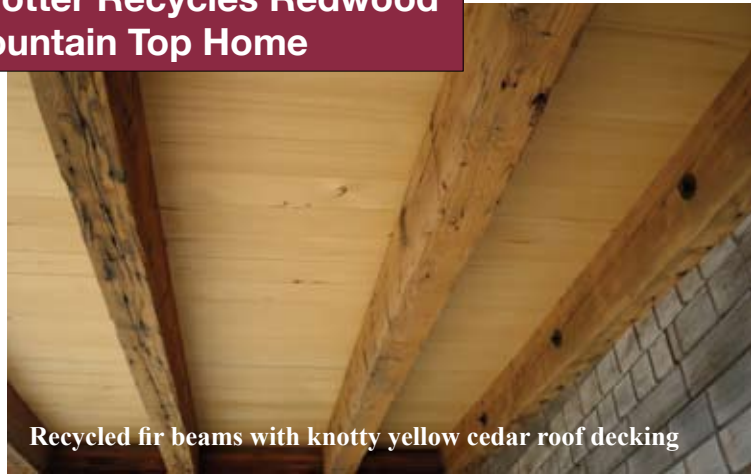
Yellow cedar compounds also repel ticks and fleas with a low toxicity to mammals. For more information, see www.gi.alaska.edu/ScienceForum/ASF17/1757.html Patents are pending on these uses of cedar oils as a natural pesticide and insecticide. The scientists are looking for investors to help them develop the oils commercially.



Doug Potter Recycles Redwood Into Mountain Top Home

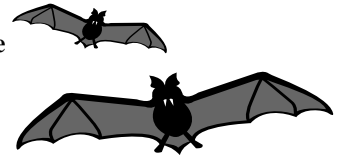


photo by Merle Kirkley



Recycled fir beams with knotty yellow cedar roof decking

Old water tank plankings (with the steel-banding marks visible) create a sturdy and interesting siding for this mountain top home. Doug Potter varied the boards to give the effect of horizontal shingles.



Holy Cedar Boards, Batman! A Bat Loft for Upper Twisp River

by Steve Bondi, Methow Conservancy Director

Scott and Suzie Jennings of Upper Twisp River have harbored a little secret the last few years. No, Sasquatch does not live in the woods behind their house. But the old log cabin on their property is home to the only known nursery colony of Townsend big-eared bats in the Twisp River drainage. In fact, in the Methow watershed, this is the only known nursery colony outside of Mazama! Since 2002, the Jennings and the Methow Conservancy Stewardship Program have annually noted between two and five bats including adults and young nestled in the rafters of the cabin. The Jennings and the Conservancy completed a conservation easement on the property in 2002, permanently protecting 50 acres of Twisp River riparian, wetland, and meadow habitats.

FYI, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists the Townsend big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) as a Federal Species of Concern. In Washington State, this bat is a Candidate for Washington's Threatened and Endangered species list. The U.S. Forest Service designates the Townsend's big-eared bats as a sensitive species for Washington. Five nursery colonies are known in structures around Mazama, yet nobody knows the winter whereabouts of any Townsend big-eared bats.

In April 2005, to accommodate the Jennings long held plans to modernize the log cabin, a small group set out to construct an alternative site for this unique colony in the large barn 200 feet from the cabin. We called this the Bat Loft project. Modeled after the Bat House of Mazama and the ball field in 'Field of Dreams' ("If you build it they will come"), the Bat Loft of Twisp River is intended to provide a comfortable and undisturbed site for the Townsend Big-Eared Bats. The 10'x7'x12' triangular loft is nestled into the rafters nine feet off the second floor of the barn. Made of old planks and posts and totally enclosed except for a roughly 2'x3' entry opening, the Loft construction was completed at the same time that the only opening to the old cabin was sealed off... after dusk when the bats were out foraging. Everybody's hope was that the displaced bats will find their way to the alternative site and find it to their liking.

Observers visited the Bat Loft multiple times last summer and no Townsend big-eared bats (or any other bat for that matter) have made a home in the Loft. Suspecting the bats are not favorable to the metal roofing that forms the loft ceiling, the Conservancy Stewardship Program plans to use 100 ft of 1 inch lumber donated by **Bear Creek Lumber** to insulate the loft ceiling in April 2006. In the future, modifications to other unused outbuildings on the Jennings property are planned to make them attractive to Townsend big-eared bats.

Industry News

U.S. construction spending jumped 0.9 percent in March, more than twice expectations, to a record high on the back of soaring outlays on private residential building, a government report showed Monday.

Construction spending rose to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1.199 trillion in March from an upwardly revised \$1.189 trillion rate in February, the Commerce Department reported.

Sales of new U.S. homes rose a much larger-than-expected 13.8 percent in March, the biggest one-month gain since April 1993, but prices fell sharply, a government report showed Wednesday.

The pace of new home sales rose to a seasonally adjusted 1.213 million unit annual rate from a downwardly revised 1.066 million unit rate in February, the Commerce Department said. Analysts polled by Reuters were expecting home sales to rise to a 1.1 million unit pace in March.

Despite gains, the new home sales report showed signs the housing market has slowed from peak levels. The median home price slipped 2.2 percent from a year earlier to \$224,200, the first year-over-year decline since December 2003, the Commerce Department said. Also, the March sales pace was down 7.2 percent from March 2005.

Sales of previously owned homes edged up slightly in March, but not enough to keep the inventory of unsold homes from hitting a record high as the once-booming housing market continued to flash signals of a slowdown. The National Association of Realtors said Tuesday that sales of existing homes edged up a tiny 0.3 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.92 million units.

Home-foreclosure rates soared nationwide in the first quarter as consumers grappled with the rising costs of living. And while Florida recorded a decline in foreclosures, the state still has one of the 10 highest foreclosure rates in the nation, according to a recent report by RealtyTrac. The first three months of the year saw a 72 percent increase in nationwide foreclosures, compared with the same period of 2005. That's a rate of one for every 358 U.S. households. In Florida, the rate declined 14 percent -- a rate of one for every 247 households. Economists said a variety of factors -- including rising gas prices, interest rates, property taxes and insurance rates -- are impacting foreclosures. Many of those expenses will only get higher.



Alaska yellow cedar shingle siding
photo by Rich Hawksworth of Indiana

Canadian Compromise Over Tariffs

The United States and Canada announced an agreement in May to settle a drawn-out, heated trade battle over softwood lumber, a major home-building component.

The U.S. timber industry said it could support the accord. But Canada's Parliament exploded in emotional debate, with vehement opposition from some producers and political leaders threatening to quash the agreement.

The accord was announced late Thursday at a joint U.S.-Canada news conference at the Canadian Embassy in Washington.

"This agreement is an historic opportunity to resolve a dispute that has lasted for more than two decades," U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman said.

Canadian Trade Minister David Emerson called the deal "a watershed moment" in trade relations between the two nations. Separately, Canada's prime minister, Stephen Harper, told a standing ovation in the House of Commons, "Canada's bargaining position was strong; our conditions were clear; and this agreement delivers."

But Bill Graham, opposition leader of the Liberal Party in Canada's Parliament, quickly shot back that it was only good news for the U.S. lumber industry and that the North American Free Trade Agreement, whose mediating panels have often ruled in favor of Canada, had lost its teeth. "Unfortunately, it's a great day for American industry, for American policy and for American trade — and it's a disaster for Canada and free trade," Graham said.

Harper insisted, however, he had the backing of the key lumber-producing provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. The pact is to last for seven years, once fully approved. Americans will keep \$1 billion, but the Canadians will get back \$4 billion in tariffs that have been held, despite rulings against the U.S., in international courts which found in favor of the Canadian position.

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