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P.O. Box 669 Winthrop, WA 98862  
www.bearcreeklumber.com

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Winter in the Methow Valley means time to get out into the snow and explore. Photographer ( and salesman) Merle Kirkley is out and about with friends, exploring an unnamed peak (7,200 ft) in the North Cascades mountains, and enjoying the new digital camera he received for Christmas. The Methow is famous for its dry snow and sunshine.

## Hardwood Products at Bear Creek Lumber

### Foreign-grown Hardwoods Increase In US Market

Rapidly increasing imports have captured a significant share of America's hardwood markets. Total imports of hardwood raw materials and building products are now four times as large as exports. Before World War II, the U. S. was a net exporter of hardwoods, and imports were limited to high-quality mahogany and specialty logs and lumber. Availability of large volumes of competitively priced imports has led to a doubling of U. S. consumption of hardwood plywood in the last 10 years. Lumber, principally from tropical areas, comprises an increasing share of the fine hardwood used in furniture and other manufactures. Imports of wooden consumer products such as housewares, furniture, and sporting goods have also risen rapidly.



Walnut from Bear Creek  
Floor and photo by Gary Stroth



Bear Creek Lumber has never had a large inventory of hardwoods but what we keep in stock is of the best quality and is ready for shipment for the right customer. Bear Creek has extended and diversified its inventory with a selection of foreign hardwoods, including Santos mahogany, ipe, teak and jatoba (Brazilian cherry). These are available in a variety of sizes, but in limited quantities. They come from sustainable plantations.

In domestic hardwoods, the inventory is all flooring products. These include, ash, hickory, maple, red oak, white oak, and walnut. Many of these products are featured this month in our special sale section. We hold a once a year inventory clearance of floorings every February. If you like the price but are not ready to receive any of these products, we would be happy to hold them for you until your project dictates. Meanwhile, we are stocking up on our cedar and other inventory lines for spring. Keep us in mind for all your coming fine wood needs!

## Customer Comments from Our Annual Questionnaire



photo of BCL fir beams from [www.AlternativeTimberStructures.com](http://www.AlternativeTimberStructures.com)  
Says Porter Broughton, Driggs ID  
"Great Service, great sales people, great shop people!"

"Products were well above expectations, prices are very competitive with prices here on the East Coast"-Gary Krause, Quakertown, PA



Thanks, Tom and Mary Ipsan for all the GREAT photos of your fir sided Iowa barn!

Dear Cloud,  
The lumber looks great! We re-stacked the spruce you sent this morning. The 12 ft. pieces were OK and the other pieces were EXCELLENT. Your driver stacked them carefully in our garage and we only found one cracked board ( which i consider quite good!) Lowe Construction told me you were very good with length and delivery you promised and I concur. I will pass on to friends and neighbors our satisfaction and your willingness to flex when we were unable to be home on the delivery date. Thanks again, Jennifer Bryan  
Friday Harbor, WA



Walnut flooring from Bear Creek Lumber

I am returning your questionnaire by regular mail, but I wanted to send some photos of a walnut floor which I installed in a spec house that I built last year in the mountains west of Golden, CO. The wood was beautiful and the finished product turned out great. We sold the house this past January and found out recently that our sales price represented the highest dollars per square foot sales price for the area for the entire year! While we had included many upgraded features throughout the project, I'm sure that the walnut floor contributed greatly to our success. Thanks for the top quality products and service, and we'll look forward to installing Bear Creek hardwood flooring on our next project. Gary Stroh, President, Bend InThe River Cedar Homes at Mt. Crested Butte, Colorado (Photos attached)-Gary Stroh

Thank you also for your service and quality products, not only in this past year but for nearly fifteen years now. Home owners, architects, and contractors frequently comment on the quality and beauty of the cedar we use in our houses. We never fail to credit you and your company for supplying us with this top-notch material.

Look forward to working with you in 2003 and for years to come.

Sincerely,

Jeff Anderson

Caledonia Construction  
Pittsboro, NC



Here's a before and after of a cottage I was the architect for. 80% of the wood materials were from BCL.

Tom Berentes  
Hannacroix  
Nantucket, MA



# Industry News



## Expensive New Regulations Go Into Effect In March

### Don't Neglect The Mold Issue

Mold is a major issue. Information Center ([ww.mlaic.com](http://www.mlaic.com)) put on a day-long mold seminar. Speakers included an industrial hygienist, a mold remediation company, a microbiologist, and individuals from an insurance company, the EPA, OSHA, the state Department for Energy and a legal firm.

Here are some of the things the seminar covered:

Mold is everywhere. "Uncontrolled" mold can be a problem. Certain molds can be a health concern. The media has sensationalized the mold issue. Information on the Internet is not reliable. No state or federal standards exist to tell you when a structure becomes "contaminated" with mold. Plenty of such companies are offering to test homes for mold contamination. Air samples alone in a structure are not a reliable indicator of contamination or lack of it. There are no state or federal standards to tell you when a clean up effort has successfully eliminated the problem. A lot of quack companies are advertising mold remediation services. Insurance companies are scrambling to exclude mold claims from coverage. Other insurance companies are offering special policies with special premiums to cover mold claims.

The final speaker, Michael Duffy from the Chicago law office of Childress and Zdeb now specializes in prosecuting mold cases. They have 10,000 plaintiffs in 30 states, have won \$18.5 million for clients in two years, and have never lost a mold claim. Getting the judge to let a jury hear a case is the biggest hurdle.

Duffy says mold has become a hot legal issue because the health effects of mold are now documented in synoptic journals. Documented health effects provided the science to win an award. But to win a guilty jury verdict, Duffy says he counts on the arrogance and indifference of the defendants.

This led to the most important nugget of advice from the seminar - if you face a complaint about mold from a client, investigate and take care of it. Juries get angry, he said when they hear that people with a health complaint have been ignored while no attempts to remedy the situation were made. And while taking action may imply some legal liability, Duffy said there is a right way to do it - hire experts to do the testing, make recommendations and handle the clean-up if one is necessary. If you want more information about the mold issue, several speakers recommended visiting [www.epa.gov/iaq/molds](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds) to download a brochure.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expanding its authority to apply Clean Water Act storm water permitting requirement more construction sites. The federal and state National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting requirements currently apply to any person involved in construction activities that disturb five or more acres of land, including clearing, grading and excavation activities. But in 1999, the EPA enacted its Phase II Storm water Regulations, which will apply to sites between one and five acres. After March 10, 2003, all sites larger than one acre (or even smaller individual sites that are part of a larger common plan or development) will be required to obtain a state or federal NPDES permit issued pursuant to the Clean Water Act before beginning site disturbance.

The application fee will vary from state to state. Many states will also include an annual compliance demonstration fee that will be assessed as long as the permit is active. The actual content of the permits will vary depending on the agency with the permitting authority. Either the property owner, consulting engineer, developer, or his or her contractor may apply for and obtain the required permit. Whoever is the applicant and ultimate permittee will be legally responsible for ensuring compliance, including the maintenance of appropriate sediment and erosion control measures. In the case of a permit violation, the agency will take enforcement action against the party named on the application.

The permit will continue to apply, and be assessed annual fees, until the operator notifies the permitting agency that it should be terminated when the agency determines that all soil disturbance activities are completed and the site has been finally stabilized through vegetation or other measures.

For most site operators, dealing with a state or federal environmental agency is a new experience and many may be tempted to downplay the significance of the permitting requirements. However, failure to obtain a necessary permit, or failure to implement and maintain the erosion and sediment control practices can result in hefty civil penalties - up to \$25,000 per day for each violation though most agencies, including the EPA, seldom seek the full available penalty. Obtaining the necessary permit can often take several months, an unacceptable and expensive delay for most construction projects.

As the world of environmental regulations clam down tighter and tighter on the construction industry, savvy site operators will stay abreast of changes in the law to avoid and unanticipated "surprises" that may cause delay. Wishful thinking aside, these regulations will not easily go away, so operators should consult with engineers and project managers with storm water permit experience and the necessary plans, and treat these permits as much of an indelible part of the process as ordinary development permits.

from NW Builders Magazine

**Bear Creek Lumber**  
**TIMBERLINE**

P.O. Box 669 Winthrop, WA 98862  
[www.bearcreeklumber.com](http://www.bearcreeklumber.com)  
(800) 597-7191 fax (509) 997-3110

Sage Bannick, Feature writer Ela Bannick, Editor