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Featured Project: Offshore Logic



Birth of a Boat



Pictured clockwise from top right :
 the frames; setting frames and level; 15 to 1 scrafs; the shop; the crew using their lumber for
 an informal bench; scraffing down; tapering frames. This project can be seen on our website
www.bearcreeklumber.com in the Featured Projects section.

Bear Creek Lumber clear
 Alaskan Yellow cedar 2 x boards
 and Port Orford 5/4 inch cedar
 were milled and assembled by
 R&S Crowe/Offshore Logic
 from southern CA, as seen in
 these photos supplied by Richard
 Crowe, below. An amazing piece
 of art we thought readers would
 love to see!



More Customer Photos/Comments

Knotty Pine : Great for Desert or Mountain Homes

Dear Bear Creek,
The completed house!
60 miles west of Las Vegas in
the desert. Roof decking, raf-
ters, porch decking, all interior
pine,walls, doors, cabinets and
doug fir T&G supplied by Bear
Creek Lumber. We are
extremely happy with the
quality of the materials and the
service we received.
Thanks again,
ER Hansen
Pahrump NV



**Pictured in upper half
of page:
cedar decking
and rails;
pine tongue
and groove
in kitchen.
Pictures by
ER Hansen.**

Beat The Blues With Trees

A study by Texas A and M University has proven what the ancient Greeks and Romans knew all along. Working in a place with trees and plants around you significantly improves your ability to do complex tasks quickly and accurately. The Romans would prescribe time in parkland settings as therapy for depression. The new study found as little as four minutes a day in a parklike setting "will reduce stress, improve mood and steady the vital signs."

New York's Grand Central Park was created for precisely this reason as a "remedial... for influences of urban conditons." Often trees are planted in memorials for this same reason. Rooftop gardens have become very popular in many cities.

Finally, trees have the added benefit of acting as a natural air modifier, cooling in the summer as well as holding back winter winds. This adds to the qulaity of life in any city.



Trees Need Your Help

Urban trees are in decline throughout most of the US. Much of this problem is due to the coming of age of trees planted a century ago. With disposal rates and maintenance costs soaring, city managers are inclined to remove trees and replace them with shrubbery, flowers or nothing at all. Even cities such as Washington D.C. have lost 60% of its tree canopy, according to American Forests, the nation's oldest conservation organization.

Not only are cities tearing out trees, they are throwing away valuable logs. Many urban trees are valuable hardwoods, but maintenance workers take the trees to the dump regardless of their species. This adds to landfill costs. American Forests urges citizens to demand that trees get more respect, both in planting and disposal.



**Photos pictured on lower half of
page supplied by Bruce Miner of
Carmichael CA. Product shown is
knotty pine tongue and groove, with
blue stain in the top pictures and
standard pine knotty in the bottom
picture.**

Industry News

The Northwest Forest Plan Ten Years Later



Housing construction rebounded with gusto in March, rising by 6.4 percent, the largest increase in 10 months.

Lumber and plywood prices have shot up so rapidly in recent months that they are tearing the profit out of home construction for some builders, and threatening to dent the booming housing market. Runups are due mostly to supply and demand. While record lumber supply was available in 2003, up 5% from 2002, demand has been exacerbated by the increase in Canadian starts as well as those in the U.S.

Canadian starts were up 14% in 2003 and have continued to rise this year. Solid gains were recorded in all but the Prairie provinces.

Adding to the problem is shipping. Bottlenecks are being seen at ports, railyards and other terminals, both with domestic lumber and imported. With bullish expectations for this building season, mills and importers have been producing at full bore but cannot always get their product to their outlets in a timely manner. With at least 1.7 million homes expected to be built, manufacturers are concerned that new trucking rules, combined with a lack of railcars will slow the entire construction momentum. Some mills are even buying their own freight cars, called centerbeams. But the need for these cars is in competition with steel producers who are facing their own dilemma with the upturn in the economy. The situation could become worse unless demand eases from a housing slowdown, not a pretty picture for builders.

The interior West is looking at a serious fire season, where years of drought, and brush buildup have set the stage for more massive fires this year.

New framing publication answers construction questions. Western Lumber Framing Basics is a compilation of framing recommendations based on contractor input and building code officials suggestions. It can be found at the Western Wood Products Association website (www.wwpa.org).

To gauge how well the Northwest Forest Plan has worked, just ask those invited to celebrate its 10th anniversary. But bring taxi fare. While one group of participants celebrated the program's success in Portland OR this spring at the city's convention center, another group met across the Columbia River, on the Washington State side, to gripe about the Plan's failures. The party at the convention center drew conservationists, scientists, former government officials, and environmental groups. The other, a meeting of the American Forest Resources Council, drew timber industry leaders and workers who have seen the promise of a billion board feet per year of timber virtually disappear in a war of words.

Lawsuits continue to volley back and forth between the two groups, over the management of the 24 million acres of federal timberland in the Northwest. There are bright spots. Gradually both sides are seeing that they need each other when it comes to getting anything done. Forest fires have woken both sides up to health issues and new logging considerations. The Bush administration is proposing more thinning on overstocked lands, but much of the product that is being proposed for cutting has little value for timber/lumber production use.

Most commercial timber is now harvested on private lands in the Northwest, and the supply restrictions have kept prices for the best timber fairly steady. This is good news for the landowners, but hard for mills who are facing increased competition from imports.

"Zero cut was the goal. Environmentalists and various 'advocates' operated on few premises. They wanted commerce banned from the Northwest's forests. They wanted the potential for profit eliminated from public lands. If you asked them, they would tell you that's how we will save the world.

The Clinton forest plan fit perfectly with this ethic. Sold as a compromise, it was to end a decade of intense battles over the region's forests...there would be a much smaller but reliable supply of timber from national forests to support what mills were left. In return, 85 % of federal lands would be off limits to commercial logging.

It was no compromise. Loggers promised 1 billion board feet never saw even 10% of what they needed. The majority of mills in the region, (and with them 30,000 high paying jobs) are gone. Promises were made, promises were not kept and the people most affected have gone somewhere else."

Tracy Warner, Editor
Wenatchee World April 2004

Forest Service officials are working hard to get competing interests to the table to at least talk about increasing cutting on federal forest lands, with some success. Conservation groups, on the local level, are usually open to forest fire concerns, and willing to sign off on limited logging in the urban interface areas (where housing and forest lands meet). In the Gifford Pinchot national Forest, 3.7 million board feet of timber, enough to build about 250 new houses, was opened up after such a discussion.

Clearly, this kind of leadership is needed before more good timber burns, while

opposing interests fiddle. The promise of better forest health is in everyone's interest, because lands devastated by fire don't work for wildlife, and timber dollars lost to our treasury don't help pay for good stewardship of our shared National Forests. Getting together in one room is paramount to talking together and for that to happen, the government has to stand up for both sides, rather than taking the easiest route (Just say No) to timber management.

A logo for Bear Creek Lumber. It features a stylized house shape with a brown outline. Inside the house, there are several dark green pine trees and a red and yellow sun in the center. Below the house shape, the text "Bear Creek Lumber" is written in a serif font, and "TIMBERLINE" is written in a larger, bold, blue serif font. Below that, the address "P.O. Box 669 Winthrop, WA 98862" and website "www.bearcreeklumber.com" are listed, followed by the phone number "(800) 597-7191" and fax number "fax (509) 997-2040". At the bottom, it says "Sage Bannick, Feature writer" and "Ela Bannick, Editor".

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