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Check Out This Month's Hardwood Flooring Sale

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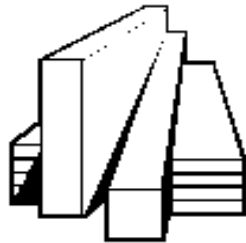
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New Bear Creek Lumber Catalog Available

Once a year, we update the catalog to reflect the company's inventory and direction. With the help of new employee Bonnie Carlson, we are moving in this direction. Please contact us if you would like a new copy for your records. Call (800) 597-7191 and we'll mail one to you!

At the same time, we are updating the website to match the changes in the catalog. We are going to host our own website with an ISP. To date, it's been a limited site because our old host only allowed us so much space. By self-hosting with a larger amount of space, we will be adding and enhancing the features that highlight our products. Look for more of all the things you like, as well as new stuff.

Penofin For Your Deck

Bear Creek Lumber recommends Penofin for use on your exterior decking products. The best time to apply stain is when the weather is warm. Do not apply the product when the weather is below 45 degrees or above 70 degrees. Allow 24 hours drying time before rainfall.

Thoroughly clean the deck before application, using a stiff natural bristle brush with a mild solution of detergent and water. Rinse thoroughly. Apply Penofin with a sprayer or a brush (do not use a roller). Allow the Penofin to penetrate the wood for 20-30 minutes and then wipe the entire surface with a clean nap-free cloth. Bear Creek can supply you with Penofin if you need it and cannot find it in your local area!

Product Spotlight: Red Oak

Oaks are the most important and widespread hardwood trees in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere. They range from the mountains of Cuba to the forests of old England and the arid hills of Eurasia. Botanists say there are between 300-500 species of oak with many variations and hybrids. Of the approximate 60 native oaks growing in the United States, red oak is considered the champion when it comes to adaptability and usefulness. It is a tree that is prized both for its lumber and as a shade tree. It is easy to transplant, can tolerate growth in cities, and it provides generous shade. As a lumber, it is exceptionally strong and dense. It is most popular as flooring and for industrial uses.

Red oak gets its name from the fact that it exhibits many tendencies towards a redder color. Its unfurling leaves are pink, transforming to red in autumn. Its twigs and buds are reddish-brown and the inner bark is pinkish. The heartwood is light brown or reddish brown, a trait that led early lumbermen to call the wood "red."

Bear Creek Lumber recently purchased a large quantity of oak and maple flooring for its inventory. Red oak is a large part of this stock. Prices are listed on the back page. Take advantage of this purchase while the product is "overstocked!"



Decking photo courtesy California Redwood Association

Doing the Best for the Forest

For centuries, lightning-caused fires ripped through forest lands, opening the canopy to ensure new growth. Because of the frequency of fire, undergrowth was minimal and certain species thrived, while others were held in check. Even native American populations used fire, purposely setting forest fires to clear brush, smoke out game, and improve access.

Modern timberland owners have better choices. They can manage their properties by selective thinning, taking a combination of small trees and overly mature trees to create the best spaced and aged forest. Limbs can be pruned to eliminate knots, so that the best timber/lumber can be produced. A healthy tree forest is also the best wildlife habitat, creating open forest floor where new trees, shrubs and grasses can grow.

Besides creating more of a fire danger, an unthinned forest has almost no growth because the trees are so crowded. Nutrients, sunlight, and water cannot support overall growth. Without fire, insect infestation and disease become the primary thinning agents. These also create extreme fire conditions as fuel builds up over time. The burn can be so intense and strong that most trees are killed and the forest may not regenerate for many, many years.

With select harvest and forest health thinning, forests get the best of all worlds--trees are spaced for optimum growth, fire can burn through without harming overall forest health, and wildlife has the habitat it needs. At Bear Creek Lumber, we hand thin our trees, working towards an old-growth forest model. Let us know if we can select a nice log for you for that special beam or timber!

Bear Creek's Timber Thinning Operation



An overgrown, unthinned (doghair) stand. An extreme, potential fire danger! Left unthinned, Douglas fir grows thickly, shading out all other species.



Selecting out small trees to thin. Trees should be spaced 20 feet apart for best growth. Trees are flagged for overcrowding, disease or deformity. Trees may be anywhere from 3-10 inches in diameter. Good wildlife trees are left standing.



Thinned trees are hand piled and later will be used for rail fencing. The remaining trees have room to grow. Tree tops should not touch one another.

No Logging/No Power

California's energy crisis has been caused by a lack of generating capacity. One of the generators not functioning in the state is one of its most modern and efficient. Built as a biomass plant (using natural waste materials as fuel), the HL Power Plant on the Nevada border was supposed to be an environment friendly, low pollution method of power production. It eliminated the need for hydroelectric plants, as well as coal or other fossil fuel plants.

This particular plant was created to run off the wastewood and chips produced from logging operations on national forests. While this plant was fairly small, it depended on 75% of its fuel from California's National Forests. The plant normally produces enough power (35 megawatts) to light up a city the size of Berkeley, CA. However, when forest service directives shut down most logging in the area, the plant could no longer afford to operate, although it did try to import from other parts of the state. Its closure follows the shutdown of two other biomass plants in northern California.

Logging is under strict guidelines in California and has been heavily opposed by a variety of groups. These same groups oppose power generation that results from logging. "National forests are not waste. Are we going to cut down our forests so auto malls can operate stadium-sized lights that blaze all night? Give me a break!" said Chad Hansen, executive director of the John Muir Project, which filed suit to stop logging in all northern California forests, and won.

Last year, one third of the wood product production, the least commercially viable, was sold from Lassen National Park to biomass plants. Most of the wood was the overgrown second-growth material. No old-growth was used for biomass. However, because of new federal policies, there will be so many restrictions on logging in the state, with a 90% reduction over the levels of ten years ago, that none of the biomass plants plan to reopen at this time unless they can find alternative sources for wood chips from private land.



Industry News

Don't Blame Canada

Roger Simmons wrote this letter to the Seattle P-I March 27, 2001. He is Consul General of Canada in Seattle.

The two nations that share the world's longest undefended border also share the world's closest trading relationship. At about \$1 billion a day, it is a mark of success that Canada and the United States have as few trade disputes as we do.

But contentious issues arise and, when they do, we Canadians often find ourselves at a disadvantage in making our case south of the border. This is particularly true on issues like softwood lumber, where a well-organized and well-financed U.S. industry lobby can quickly frame the debate.

The Canada-U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement expires at the end of the month and a good deal of inaccurate information is circulating regarding Canada-U.S. lumber trade and Canadian forest practices.

Subsidy allegations are unfounded.

The subsidy allegations take as their premise that the Canadian system of land tenure and provincial government forest management constitute unfair subsidies to our industry. Provincial timber pricing has been the subject of three U.S. countervailing duty investigations in the past twenty years. In two of the three, the Department of Commerce could not sustain the subsidy allegations; the third was never completed because both governments concluded that a negotiated solution was preferable to a lengthy, costly, and politicized countervailing duty process.

Different systems, different costs.

It is assumed that a U.S.-style system (where land is largely privately owned and timber is put up for public auction) would result in higher stumpage fees. This premise was rejected by Mark Suwyn, Chief Executive Officer of Louisiana Pacific Corporation, a U.S. company operating in both countries: "The U.S. wants somehow for the (Canadian) provinces to go to a free bidding process where everyone can bid on every sale ... this is one of those things you should not wish for if you are a U.S. producer -- because if you get your wish you may be very unhappy as stumpage rates might go down rather than up."

A February 2001 report on Canadian lumber imports by the Congressional Research Service provides a comparison of Canadian and U.S. stumpage systems, and concludes: "Evidence to demonstrate this possible disparity between U.S. and Canadian stumpage fees is widespread, but inconclusive."

The report noted other factors affecting Canadian stumpage fees. "For example, the management responsibilities imposed on the timber purchasers differ. In Canada, licensees are generally responsible for reforestation and for some forest protection."

Canadian forests are subject to vigorous environmental regulation.

Canada has some of the strongest forest protection laws in the world. The vast majority of Canadian forests (94%) are publicly owned and subject to extensive regulations requiring reforestation, protection of water bodies, and preservation of biodiversity. While the U.S. maintains some similar requirements for its public lands (many of which are under review by the Bush administration), private lands are much less carefully regulated in many U.S. jurisdictions and account for 90% of the annual U.S. harvest.

Canada harvests sustainably.

Canadian policies do not encourage over-harvesting. Harvests are firmly based on the sustainable growth rate of the forest. Only 0.4% of Canada's commercial forests are harvested each year, well below sustainable harvest levels. Protected areas in just one province -- British Columbia -- encompass 29 million acres, an area larger than the state of Ohio. Canada, with more commercial forest land, cuts less than half of what the U.S. harvests each year.

Canada is a leader in forest protection.

According to a recent Auburn University study, "contrary to U.S. lumber company complaints ... the province of British Columbia is a leader in environmental forestry protection rules, in comparison to the vast majority of U.S. softwood lumber producing states ... Canadian lumber producing provinces rank at the top of a list of provinces and lumber producing states protecting their lands from commercial development. States in the U.S. south fall at the bottom of this ranking."

U.S. consumers pay the price.

The U.S. National Association of Homebuilders estimates that trade restrictions against Canadian lumber add \$1,000 to the cost of building a typical home and amount to a "thinly disguised tax on home buyers." The extra cost prices some 300,000 U.S. home buyers out of the market. The current system benefits just a handful of lumber producers at the expense of millions of North American workers and consumers.

Lumber imports from Canada are not the cause of mill closures. Closures on both sides of the border result from the cyclical nature of lumber production, driven largely by market demand.

For U.S. producers who claim Canada engages in unfair trade, there are trade rules and dispute settlement provisions available to test these allegations, as they have been tested in the past. Canada is actively seeking to engage the U.S. in a dialogue on softwood lumber in hopes of avoiding another costly and acrimonious trade dispute.

I believe we should start with accurate and fair descriptions of forest practices on both sides of the border.



Bear Creek Lumber
 P.O. Box 669 Winthrop, WA 98862
 (509) 997-3110 fax (509) 997-2040
 bearcreeklumber.com