BEYOND THE BASICS:
FSC Certified Lumber

Written by Greg Crabtree, Isaman Design

What is the FSC?

In 1993 the FSC, Forest Stewardship Council, was created as a way of seeking solutions to the global problems of deforestation and illegal logging practices throughout the planet. The FSC has developed standards and principles that help guide the forestry industry as well as forestry management towards sustainable harvesting of trees for lumber, paper, and other forest products. The FSC is an independent, non-profit, third party certification organization that certifies the source of the wood – that it came from a sustainably managed forest.

The FSC evaluates two main attributes in order to measure the sustainability level of lumber: the harvesting process and the chain of custody. The harvesting process is evaluated based on how trees are planted, grown, cut down, and replanted in order to ensure the long term health and existence of the forest. The chain of custody evaluates how the lumber is handled from harvest to marketplace – who processes and by what means they process the lumber.

What makes FSC certified lumber a "green" building product?

FSC certified lumber guarantees that particular product was harvested from a FSC certified forest. These particular forests are managed in order to protect the long term health of the forest as well as the other resources that these forests contain.

By substituting FSC certified lumber into a building project in place of "typically" harvested lumber you will be protecting the environment and helping to ensure clean, healthy forest for future generations to enjoy and continue to build with.

Cost & Availability

FSC certified lumber comes in a wide range of products from general framing members such as 2x4's and 2x6's to plywood and interior finish grade woods and veneers. Also available are engineered wood products, such as OSB, wood I-joists, LVL's, and glu-lam beams. Certain products may not be carried by your local lumber yard and require some forethought when beginning a project due to additional lead times.

In general, FSC lumber costs tend to be around 15% higher than non-FSC lumber depending on availability of the specific product required, but this price could be higher or lower based on quantity of order and local resources. It is recommended that you check with your local lumber yards to determine cost and availability of products in your area.

SLO Green Build Points:

Category D. Structural Frame & Building Envelope

3. Use FSC Certified Wood, for Dimensional Studs and Panel Products (up to 6 points)

Category L. Finishes

6. Use Environmentally Preferable Materials for Interior Finish, including cabinets, trim, shelving, doors and countertops (up to 5 points):

Category M. Flooring

1. Use Environmentally Preferable Flooring for 15% - 75% or more (up to 4 points)

The above information is from the SLO Green Build 2005 edition of New Home Construction

BEYOND THE BASICS:
FSC Certified Lumber

Written by Greg Crabtree, Isaman Design

Green Building Guidelines, published by Build It Green.

LEED Points:
FSC-Certified lumber is the only certified lumber recognized by the LEED program (up to 2 points). Contact a LEED professional in your area for more information.

-Resources:
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
www.fscus.org

FSC Certified forest, after harvest

Non-FSC 'forest' after harvest