Montana Forest Products Marketing News

MSU Extension Forestry

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Montana's Private Forest Landowner Survey Results

In recent years, Montana's private forest landowners supplied about 30% of the annual timber harvest despite comprising only about 20% of the forest land.

To better understand this important group, Peter Kolb, forestry specialist with the MSU Extension Service, surveyed nearly 1.900 of the state's 80,000 private landowners. 197 landowners responded, representing nearly 90,000 of Montana's 3.7 million acres private forestland.

The results showed that creating/maintaining wildlife habitat, growing large old trees, fire hazard reduction, having insect/disease free trees, and controlling noxious weeds were rated highly important landowner objectives, regardless of ownership size. A difference between large and small ownerships emerged when the objective was growing trees for future log harvests. Large landowners (> 100 acres) rated this important, while small acreage owners rated it somewhat less important than other objectives.

The property objectives held by family forest landowners have implications for conserving Montana's natural resources and the future of the state's wood products industry. This survey suggests that overall, private landowners showed a tendency towards conservation values as opposed to maximizing timber related profits.

Contact Peter Kolb at 406-243-4705 for more information about this study.

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Student Project Aims to Support Montana's Forest Industry

Missoula—As part of a class project, a group of UM Environmental Studies students in Professor Neva Hassanein's environmental organizing class are preparing to ask university officials to adopt a policy requiring that all new buildings on campus use locally manufactured wood building materials.

According to Jason Brininstool, one of the project's organizers, "We are trying to build a partnership between the University and locally owned timber companies. We really care about the well being of local communities and hope that the connections we establish contribute to the continued stability of local mills."

Up to this point, the group has been busy researching the timber industry. For example, tours of several local sawmills are planned so that the students better understand the manufacturing process and develop key contacts with forest industry representatives. The group is also planning to present their ideas to leaders in several rural Western Montana communities. Later this month the group will offer their proposal to University officials.

Check it out:

- Housing Market Slows Down click here
- Tiny Trees Spur New Growth in Logging Business click here
- National Association of Homebuilders—Green Building Conference click here

Super Studs—A New Approach to Marketing Structural Lumber

Thanks to Dr. Adam Taylor, Assistant Professor & Wood Products Specialist at the University of Tennessee, for passing along this story idea.

Engineered wood products are pieces of wood glued together to form materials with specific, definable strength properties. Examples include wooden i-joists (see photo), glulam beams, and oriented strand board, all of which are being used to make modern houses stronger and less costly to build. Advances in the use of engineered wood products, however, come at the cost of lost market share for traditional structural lumber. For example, in California nearly 90 percent of the floors in new homes are made with wood i-joists rather than solid lumber.

Building contractors are generally the party that decides whether to use solid wood or engineered wood products. Some insight into their decision making process comes from a survey of United States builders, which revealed that straightness was the most important attribute of structural lumber. The results also showed that straightness was the attribute that made builders the least satisfied with solid lumber.

Recognizing this problem, a company in Scotland has decided to take a new approach in marketing solid-sawn lumber. They introduced UltraJoist — a line of solid lumber that has been dried to

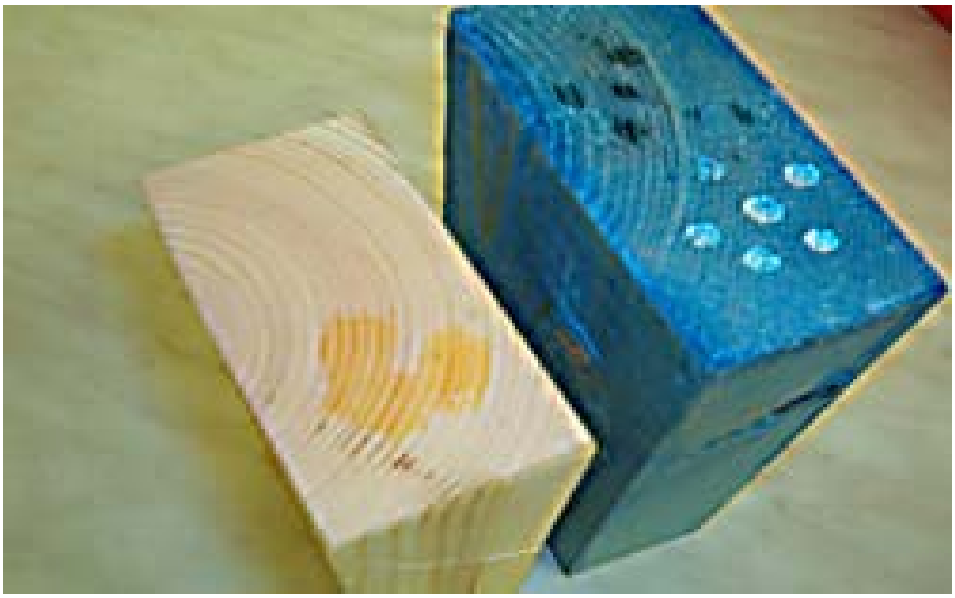
Wood I Joists—an Engineered Wood Product often used in place of solid sawn lumber to frame floor systems in homes

14 percent moisture content, thereby providing increased dimensional stability. Most solid structural lumber manufactured in the United States is dried to 19 percent moisture content, or sold green. The higher moisture means that conventional lumber is likely to bow, warp, or twist as the moisture in the piece equilibrates with the ambient air conditions where it is being used.

After the UltraJoist lumber comes out of the dry kiln it is visually inspected to insure that it meets straightness and appearance specifications. The lumber is also tested with a non-destructive stress rating machine to insure that all pieces meet strength specifications. The UltraJoist product is also treated with a water-based chemical that protects the piece from fungal decay, insect attack, and provides water repellency.

Finally, the UltraJoist product is manufactured from logs that originate in forests certified under the Forest Stewardship Council's guidelines for good forest management.

According to Todd Brinkmeyer, owner of Plummer Forest Products in Idaho, about 40 percent of US consumers prefer and are willing-to-pay-more for high quality lumber like that offered by UltraJoist.



An UltraJoist (blue) stud next to a normal piece of solid lumber

The Quest for the Efficient Disposal of Logging Slash

During logging operations, tree limbs from harvested trees accumulate at the logging site. This material is called logging slash. In Montana's dry climate, logging slash does not decompose quickly, which means that slash left at the site is a fire hazard.

At many logging sites, slash is disposed by simply piling and burning. Burning at the site, however, is costly, potentially hazardous, contributes to air pollution, and is time consuming. In addition no economic value is generated from this activity.

One alternative to on-site piling and burning is to grind the slash into hog fuel—small chips that are cleanly burned in specially designed combustion chambers. Burning hog fuel generates steam/heat or electricity. One advantage of converting slash to hog fuel is that the fire risk at logging sites is reduced. Another is that hog fuel has an economic value, which can be used to offset some or all of the slash disposal costs.

The disadvantage is that there are inherent inefficiencies in the current methods for processing and transporting hog fuel.

At a log landing, a delimber loads logging slash directly into a container that will be hauled to a easily accessible location for grinding and ultimately delivery to a hog fuel market

For example, chip vans—a semi-tractor with a box-like trailer that is filled with hog fuel chips—have suspension systems designed for highway use, not rugged logging roads. And, the long chip-vans often cannot negotiate the tight turns on narrow logging roads. Another problem is that expensive grinders which produce the hog fuel have to move many times at a logging site, resulting in low production rates.

To address these issues a team of researchers conducted a study to assess the feasibility of using rugged hook trucks that could transport containers filled with slash from the logging site to a central location where it could be efficiently ground into hog fuel and easily accessed by a chip-van.

The study results showed significant increases in processing efficiency and transportation ease when using these methods. A spreadsheet model of forest residue transport costs is currently in development and will be distributed later this spring or early summer.

For more information about this study contact Craig Rawlings at 406-728-9234 ext. 203. Craig is the smallwood enterprise agent at the Montana Community Development Corporation.

MSU Extension Forestry

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Montana State University Extension Forestry is a branch of the MSU Extension Service and is housed cooperatively with College of Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana in Missoula, Montana.

The mission of Extension Forestry is to provide education and outreach to non-industrial private forest landowners, forestry industry, and other forestry-related organizations in Montana.

Extension Forestry carries out its mission by providing its clients with educational workshops, publications, news releases, brochures, and videos. Common topics include forest stewardship planning, forest insect and disease, windbreaks/living snow fences, alternative forest management practices, wildfire hazard reduction, forest products marketing, and tree pruning & care.

We're on the Web:

http://www.forestry.umt.edu/hosting/forestproducts/index.htm

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If so, send them to Roy Anderson, newsletter editor

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Montana SAF Annual Meeting

March 17-19
Helena, MT
click here for agenda

Forest Stewardship for Loggers Workshop

April 11-14th
Yellow Bay (UM Biological Station)
406.752.3168 or mla@logging.org for info

Sustainable Forestry Initiative Training

Missoula, April 25
Kalispell, April 28
406.752.3168 or mla@logging.org for info

Small Log Conference - Creating Capacity to Compete

March 30 to April 1
Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, ID click here for agenda

Forestry Mini-College

April 23
Missoula, MT
click here for agenda

Silviculture Workshop

Missoula April 26
Kalispell April 29
406-243-2775 or extfor@forestry.umt.edu for info

Intermountain Logging Conference

April 5th-8th, Spokane, WA
click here for agenda

Business Workshop for Loggers

Kalispell March 14-15
Missoula 21-22
Bozeman March 28-29
Lewistown March 20-31
406-752-3168 or mla@logging.org for info

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