



BUILDING & REMODELING WITH FSC

For Residential Projects



Making it Happen: Homebuilders

Strategies for Making it Happen as a Homebuilder

Locating FSC Products

Here are a few resources that will make locating FSC-certified products easier:

WWW.FINDFSC.ORG is a product inquiry form which you can fill out and it refers your product inquiry to hundreds of companies that make and sell FSC products.

WWW.CERTIFIEDWOOD.ORG is a large database full of manufacturers and products from several forest certification systems. Make sure you select the FSC designation in the 'Certification System' drop-down menu.

The Rainforest Alliance has developed several SmartGuides to assist with locating FSC-certified products, please look in the resources section of this book for the website.

WWW.GREENSPEC.COM is Building Green's premiere product information service, containing detailed listings for more than 2,000 environmentally preferable building products, including manufacturers and suppliers of FSC-certified products.

Photo Credit: Warm Springs Forest Products

In 2006, close to two million new homes were built in the United States averaging about 2,414 square feet in size, per home. Industry experts believe it takes about 15,000 board feet of softwood lumber to build homes close to the industry average size. By calculating these industry averages one can see that a significant amount of forest land is being logged to build new homes in the United States. Forest land is additionally impacted by the production of panel products such as softwood plywood, Oriented- Strand Board (OSB), etc.

The connection between building green homes and improving forestry is evident. Whether your company is working within the parameters of a green building standard and you simply want the credits from



Your wood purchases can positively contribute to better forestry practices.

building with FSC or the benefits in marketing the use of FSC building materials, you can be assured that the products you are building with come from industry leading forestry. And by building with FSC-certified wood you are rewarding those forest managers with market recognition for responsible forestry. Imagine, your wood purchases can positively contribute to better forestry practices and provide you with a market and brand advantage.

Like many of the new green products that have been coming to the market, FSC-certified wood products can be hard to find in certain regions of North America. However, this is only a matter of encouraging your suppliers to call manufacturers. One of the strengths of FSC certification is the Chain-of-Custody (COC), which tracks products from the log to the lumber in a house. Many pro-contractor lumberyards and wholesale distributors have not earned their COC certificate or investigated the possibility of bringing FSC products to their region because their customer base has not asked for it. Where this is viewed as





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Photo Credit: Warm Springs Forest Products

a barrier to some, to others it is viewed as an opportunity to encourage suppliers to carry a FSC line of doors, lumber, panel products, flooring or other building materials. Building material suppliers are reluctant to carry products that are not asked for by customers and in the past few years many suppliers have resisted to stock FSC-certified wood products until their customers asked.

Convenient steps and strategies for bringing FSC-certified wood product to your region:

- Develop a list of building materials that are made of wood.
- Research manufacturers and suppliers of FSC wood products (www.findfsc.org).
- Negotiate and discuss with the manufacturers and suppliers the options for bringing specific FSC products to your region.
- Present a list of manufacturers and suppliers with FSC certificates to your local supplier for the appropriate products.
- Discuss with your supplier how you would like them to become familiar with these manufacturers and suppliers and begin to offer these products.
- Once specific FSC-certified building materials are found and your supplier (s) is on-board, provide training to sub-contractors on where to source FSC materials.
- Build with the FSC-certified products that are a good fit for your company so that you can meet sustainable business goals, green building standards, and marketing needs.

If the initial stage of this process is completed in advance of your project needing the products then you will have a better chance at keeping exorbitant premiums related to last second orders to a minimum. Plus, you may be able to work out better purchasing agreements if you can assure your supplier and the manufacturer that you will need estimated volumes on a regular basis. Removing all the common roadblocks of bringing products to your market and project is the name of the game. Get out ahead of the normal supply curve and you will be better off. Once the supply chain is built you will not have to go through these steps again as your supplier will be more than familiar with the available products.



Case Study: Christopherson Homes is Leading the Way in Northern California

“Our Company is built on the word ‘Responsible.’ This means that we want to be a responsible builder, responsible to the communities where we build, responsible to our customers, responsible to the environment, and responsible to our employees and shareholders.”

Kristi Paganini
*Vice President of Product Design
 at Christopherson Homes*

Photo Credit: Christopherson Homes

Christopherson Homes was founded in 1978 by Keith and Brenda Christopherson, with the vision of building homes known for their extraordinary quality and design in highly desirable locations throughout Northern California. Since its inception, Christopherson Homes has built over 5,000 homes in some 50 communities in Sonoma, Napa, and Solano Counties.

With such a strong history in northern California it was no surprise that in 2001 Christopherson Homes embarked on a new business venture fueled by community interest and the City of Santa Rosa’s development of a green home checklist. Amy Christopherson-Bolton, the daughter of Keith and Brenda, was the catalyst for the company’s shift to green home building.

The initial motivation was obvious; if the homebuilder built homes according the city’s green checklist they would have a faster permitting time and they would be answering the questions of potential buyers in the community. What was not obvious was that the green building practices implemented by the city’s checklist resulted in a better quality home.



Christopherson Homes has built over 5,000 homes in some 50 communities.

Kristi Paganini, Vice President of Product Design at Christopherson explains, “Our Company is built on the word ‘Responsible.’ This means that we want to be a responsible builder, responsible to the communities where we build, responsible to our customers, responsible to the environment, and responsible to our employees and shareholders. Once we realized that building green did not just give you that warm and fuzzy feeling, but that it also resulted in homes that were more energy efficient, improved indoor air quality, used forest products from well-managed forests, well they were just more responsible.”





The overall goal was to develop the necessary symbiosis in order to build homes and ensure that delivery would be efficient and on time.

Photo Credit: Christopherson Homes

By 2004, Christopherson Homes had integrated responsible/green building features into so many aspects of its business that it published its own set of minimum green standards that all Christopherson Homes would adhere to from then on. One of the most important components of building a green home or community is purchasing forest products that originate as trees in responsibly managed forests.

Christopherson Homes believed FSC-certified products would fit nicely into their green building features list due its credibility and acceptance by all green building standards. However, when Christopherson began to look into sourcing FSC-certified wood products for its homes it found that the FSC forest products industry was still being developed. This did not deter the homebuilder from working closely with its wood products supplier in finding solutions to the issues related to an FSC industry that is growing. Kristi can remember, “FSC wood was something that we were excited about but the supply chain had not totally matured in our market. The goal was to open a line of dialogue with our suppliers and the manufacturers of FSC products to improve the supply chain.”

The challenges that presented themselves with sourcing FSC-certified wood could not have been easily solved within the traditional parameters of today’s manufacturer to supplier to homebuilder relationship. This is because relationships are often based on holding information related to pricing, delivery, etc. close to the vest. A new business relationship dynamic was needed to break this old way of making products and delivering them to the market. The new business relationship involved Christopherson Homes, its wood supplier, and the manufacturers of FSC-certified products working closely together to ensure that each company in the manufacturing/supply chain knew what they could expect from the others. The overall goal was to develop the necessary symbiosis in order to build homes and ensure that delivery was efficient and on time.

Oak Hollow at Bennett Valley is a fifteen home community situated among the oak-crested peaks and rolling hills of Santa Rosa, CA. These bungalow, cottage and craftsmen style homes are one of several Christopherson communities offering a Green Features list that provides buyers with insights into all the green attributes of the homes. In addition, this community is being built with FSC-certified lumber and will meet the City of Santa Rosa’s Green Building Standards. To see the Green Features List go to: www.christophersonhomes.com