

Forests

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*Happy
New Year!*

Sustainable
east-side
forests

4

Women's
group shares
forestry know-
how

8

It's flooring
and cabinets,
not firewood

10

ALSO: Keynote speaker explains why
today's kids vitally need time outdoors.

It's flooring, not firewood

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Education often creates opportunities to see things differently. Many who attended a recent Society of American Foresters (SAF) field trip and came away with a new appreciation for down wood might agree with that. Attendees on the September tour got to see things up-close and personal, inspiring great appreciation for what one man's imagination, creativity, and character can do with one log.

Wise resource use:
standing inside his kiln,
Pender proudly points to
various wood products,
including wild cherry,
bigleaf maple and black
walnut he's curing for
various customers.

Photos by Cynthia Orlando, ODF



Pender deftly demonstrates his efficient and portable mill on a cherry log he cuts into boards for a local teacher, who is using the wood for woodworking projects at Fall City High School. Cherry that went for forty dollars per square-foot years ago now sells at \$475 today, says Pender. "Boards can be worth \$6.50 - \$8.00 per board foot, depending on grain pattern," he adds.





It's flooring, not firewood. . . Continued from page 10

Frank Pender, owner of Tanglewood Timber Products outside Dallas, offered a lively demonstration for SAF Capital chapter members eager to spend a Saturday afternoon to learn how ingenuity and lots of hard work can save a homeowner thousands of dollars in home construction costs – just by using logs that might otherwise fuel a fireplace.

Pender is the proud owner of a portable Mobile Dimension saw, a fascinating “mini-mill” that maximizes the amount of wood that can extract from each log, with the added benefit of producing edged boards. One person can operate the saw, as Pender deftly demonstrated. It uses three saw blades—a main vertical blade and two horizontal edger blades—that work in unison, moving along on a saw carriage while the log remains stationary.

Bringing the saw to the logs can save hundreds of dollars in transportation costs, making small amounts of wood and even single logs economically feasible to mill. Powered by a gasoline Volkswagen engine, the saw is portable and mounted on a trailer that can be pulled behind a truck.

“I was most impressed with Frank’s story of using a single maple tree out of a yard to make new flooring and cabinets for a house,” said Dan Clough, one of the SAF participants. “It saved the homeowner thousands of dollars,” said Clough, “and (made good use of) what normally would have been cut up into firewood.”

In addition to his portable mill, Pender has a kiln he built using a Taylor hot water furnace for heat, and an Ebac 800 Dehumidifier to remove moisture. Pender believes lumber that cures “naturally” reduces checking, especially for oak, maple, cherry, madrone, and other less commonly milled hardwoods and conifers. So, before his lumber sees the inside of a kiln, Pender cures it outdoors for anywhere from two to several months.

Pender’s pedigree includes Master Woodlands Management Certification from Oregon State University, Master Watershed Manager Certification, National Tree Farm member, NW Dry Kiln Association member, and Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA) member. OSWA members are family forestland owners that promote and advocate for family forestland ownership in a variety of ways, including hosting tours and demonstrations on privately owned forests.

SAF Capital Chapter Chair Terry Droessler organized the tour to promote salvage of storm-damaged trees into products of higher value than firewood. “Pender is passionate about maximizing the utility and exposing the ‘character’ of logs with otherwise low commercial value, and he eagerly shares that passion,” says Droessler. Pender’s passion and enthusiasm, and his willingness to share his knowledge and experience changed the way many on the tour look at logs some call “non-merchantable.”

As Pender said when he fired up his planer, “watch me make a silk purse out a sow’s ear!” 🌿

A little history

“I reckon it all began when I was just a very young whippersnapper,” says Pender on his website (his father was in the retail lumber business). “As a boy of 6-7 years old, I would often get to ride with my father to many of the mills in his 1949 forest green Studebaker pickup . . . from these sorts of experiences, I suppose the sawdust became part of my brain and bloodstream.”

“As the years passed I met a young lady that had a 70-acre timber/tree farm near the community in which I taught. As time would have it, I asked her to marry me. I asked the question on our first date, after visiting the tree farm. It worked!”

You can read the rest of the story and find out more about economical milling at www.tanglewoodtimber.com