

**Your chair.
Your choice.
But what's
the real story
behind it?**

Choose Wisely. Your choice makes a difference

So you're trying to choose a new wood product, such as a chair. You look at price, you look at quality. But do you know where the wood came from, the condition the forest was left in, or where the chair was made? Maybe it's time to look again.

Wood is a good choice over metal and plastic. Metal requires mining and is very energy intensive to produce, while plastic relies on shrinking oil supplies. Forests can be a wonderful renewable resource – depending on how they're managed.

How do you know? Look for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label on locally made products. When you buy an FSC-certified item – a chair, lumber for a building project, or even a pencil – you'll know just what you're getting, and where it came from: wood products made from trees that have been cut with care from a forest managed to protect water quality, soil productivity, and wildlife habitat. On FSC-certified forests, looking out for the future is part of the job.



Think globally, buy certified

Free trade between nations can generate mutual benefits. But for this to work according to economic theory, partners in trade should have similar information about the goods or services being traded. Also, product prices must reflect the actual costs of production.

In the rapidly growing international trade in forest products there is scant information about sources of wood products or how they are made. Governments routinely subsidize logging, and allow costs of production to be shifted onto society and the environment. As a result, international markets in forest products often fail basic tests for economic "efficiency." So as international trade in forest products increases, forest communities and wildlife are suffering from rising timber extraction globally, while regions like New England are losing thousands of manufacturing jobs.

Fair trade based on fully valued forests and fully informed citizens can create economic opportunity and help relieve poverty, while sustaining natural resources for future generations. To help reduce potentially damaging impacts of global trade:

- ▶ Be informed – ask questions about wood sources and forestry practices;
- ▶ Be demanding – ask for FSC-certified wood and wood products; and,
- ▶ Be creative – what forests can provide ecologically may not be what conventional markets want. With good design, species of wood that are more abundant, and "common" or "character" grades of wood can be used in many products instead of the more expensive and high-environmental impact "select" or "clear" grades of wood.



Log raft on Saruyan River near Tanjung, Puting National Park

Do you really need new?

Visit antique stores, furniture restorers, consignment shops and even neighborhood garage sales – by choosing to re-use or refinish furniture, you'll help reduce the need to cut more trees.



The Story Behind a Wood Product

"Take the best, leave the rest" describes a logging approach called "high-grading" that reduces forest health and species diversity. Extensive clear-cutting of forests destroys wildlife habitat and can cause erosion or mudslides. Shipping wood products around the world can introduce invasive pests like the Asian longhorned beetle. Products made from tropical hardwoods, including ramin from Indonesia, agarwood, sandalwood, rosewood, and South American mahogany have been linked to bad or illegal forest practices.



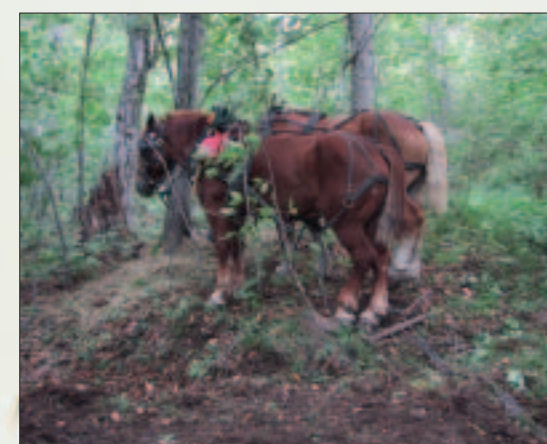
FSC standards require saving "snag trees" for wildlife.

Growing public awareness of the story behind a wood product is the first step to changing these common, unsustainable practices. By seeking out certified wood, consumers can help support better forests.

From lumber to a fine hand-crafted table, when you purchase FSC-certified wood and forest products, you help create further demand for sustainable forest practices. As demand increases, foresters and wood product manufacturers will shift their practices to meet the need.

Not every story is a bad one, but there are so many unknowns. And it's certainly not easy to try to track down the story behind a given item. But when it comes to wood products, there is an alternative that gives you the information you need.

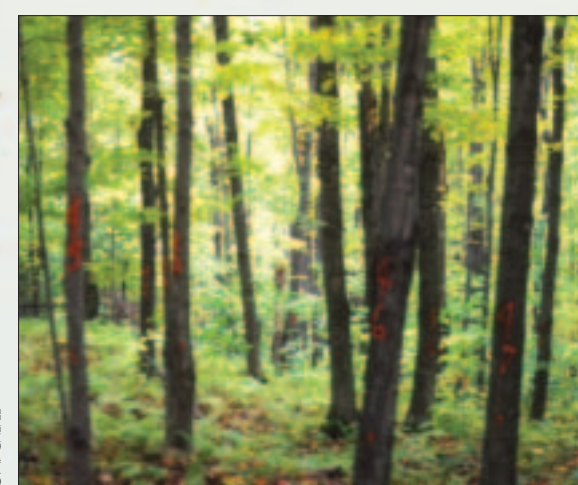
You can choose healthy forests and healthy communities through purchasing FSC-certified wood products. The FSC standards encourage environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. The certification offers consumers an assurance that they're making a sound purchase. The program is increasingly appealing to New England foresters and woodworkers alike.



Low-impact logging on certified operations protects water quality

Foresters Choosing Ecological Forestry

Most of the 30 million acre Northern Forest of New England and New York is held by private individuals and families. Increasingly, timber investment management organizations and conservation groups are also holding large forest tracts. How these lands are managed can have a big impact on the health of the forest, water quality and wildlife habitat throughout the region.



FSC-certified forest

For more than 30 years, Ross Morgan has worked with New England landowners to help them manage their lands ecologically and to promote and practice high-quality silviculture. This consulting forester and co-founder of the national Forest Stewards Guild, feels strongly about applying good forest management standards like the FSC's. Morgan believes "every acre designated for timber production should

be managed this way. We've addressed all kinds of environmental issues, from clean air and water to soils," he said. "The market can drive good forest practices."

Managing forests to meet or exceed FSC standards is one way to ensure that impacts are not destructive. FSC certification involves an annual on-the-ground assessment of forest practices, evaluating the ecological, economic, and social aspects of the operation in accordance with regional standards. The certifiers consider environmental issues such as minimizing clear-cuts, reducing pesticide use and protecting old-growth forests. A well-managed forest maintains the essential characteristics of a natural forest.

Dave McMath is the forester in charge of the 26,000-acre Atlas Timberlands, which includes 23 tracts of land in 17 towns in north central Vermont. The land, jointly owned by The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Land Trust, has received FSC certification.

McMath follows the example he learned from the foresters he apprenticed with when he started out: "You always have to leave something for next time." That philosophy has led him to educate the other landowners he also works with that "the forest comes first, and economics comes second, but not too far behind."

McMath says a lot of our wood resources in the past 20 years has been cut through forest liquidation, rather than forest management. As a result, he's concerned about a shortage of saw timber, and believes we need more mills buying certified wood.

"It's our future. For me, that's the bottom line. We have to use our science and our silviculture to make sure we have forests in the next 100 years."



FSC-certified sawmill

Craftspeople Choosing Certified Wood

"We want our furniture and other products to be as close to 100% certified as can be," says Don Maiolo, of Island Pond Woodworkers, an employee-owned company in Vermont. According to Maiolo, IPW "believes in sustainably harvested timber, and we're trying to get as much as we can. We always ask for FSC-certified wood first, but we can't always find it. So we're trying to encourage everyone to get certified."

The company began after the Ethan Allen furniture plant in Island Pond closed, leaving 120 people out of work. A group of former employees decided to open their own business, with the aim of "employing people, giving them a good working environment, protecting forests and promoting cleaner air." When customers buy certified products, they help to support that, Maiolo explained.

The company's larger customers to date include Middlebury College, Dartmouth College, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. IPW is certified through an FSC "manufacturer group certificate" held by Vermont WoodNet on behalf of fifteen members. Vermont WoodNet works to strengthen opportunities for Vermont wood product businesses based upon their commitment to the sustainability of the forest.



The shop at Island Pond Woodworkers

When you buy furniture, what else are you buying?

Twenty years ago, less than one-tenth of all furniture sold in the U.S. was imported. Today, nearly HALF is imported. U.S. consumers spent \$20 billion in 2003 on imported furniture mainly from China, Canada, Italy, Mexico, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Brazil and the Philippines. Wood products increasingly arrive in the U.S. from conflict-plagued nations, including Burma and Liberia – where forests have been cut down to raise cash for corrupt governments.

From January 2001 to May 2003, an estimated 100,000 U.S. jobs making furniture and related products have been lost as companies like Ethan Allen take advantage of free trade agreements to shift production to less developed countries. The forests, communities and wildlife in Central and South America, and Southeast Asia are also at risk from unsustainable logging and trade.

Finding FSC-Certified Forests and Products

In the U.S. there are almost 9 million acres certified by the FSC as well-managed forests. Almost one-third of that acreage is in five northeast states – New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. More than 480 forest product companies in the U.S. now make a wide variety of certified wood and paper products. Foresters, woodworkers and retailers can help you find FSC-certified sources and products in your area.

The following web sites will help too:

- U.S. Forest Stewardship Council – www.fscus.org
- SmartWood – www.smartwood.org
- Scientific Certification Systems – www.scs-certified.com/forestry
- Co-op America – www.coopamerica.org/woodwise
- U.S. Green Building Council – www.usgbc.org
- Vermont WoodNet – www.vtwoodnet.org
- NWF – Northeast Natural Resource Center – www.nwf.org/northeastern

Customers Choosing Certified Products

When customers choose certified forest products, they create a market that encourages sustainable forestry. It's a positive feedback cycle that gives back to the forest and keeps landowners and loggers motivated to practice good forest management at the same time.

Alan Calfee recently purchased FSC-certified flooring from AE Sampson and Son of Maine for his Dorset, Vermont home. According to Alan, "visitors always ask about the unique floor... it's incredibly beautiful and very reasonably priced."

To Alan, "the whole point is to have an idea where the product comes from." The interior woodwork in Middlebury College's 108,000 square-foot Bicentennial Hall all came from certified New England forests. The school purchased much of the 120,000 board feet of certified wood for the project through Vermont Family Forests – recipients of the first FSC group certification in the U.S.

"The use of certified wood in this building is one way that our institutional commitment to both protect the environment and conserve natural resources is translated into action," said David Ginevan, Middlebury College treasurer.



Ross Commons at Middlebury College

National Wildlife Federation perspectives on trade

Forest certification is a way to protect the environment and reward environmentally friendly forestry by providing consumers with the story behind the product. The environmental benefits result from consumer choice rather than protectionism. At the same time, this process encourages local markets to produce environmentally preferable products, both at home and abroad.

Efforts to promote sustainable forestry, protect fresh water, and save endangered marine life are often challenged as violations of global trade and investment rules. For environmental values and economic development to join hands, trade policy and institutions will need to change.

New trade and investment agreements are being negotiated right now. The National Wildlife Federation believes trade rules should promote, rather than limit, the use of certification and product labeling programs like the FSC. The U.S. and other nations should adopt the following environmentally-responsible trade principles:

- ▶ National laws and international agreements safeguarding the environment should be supported, not undermined, by trade and investment agreements.
- ▶ The U.S. and other nations should cooperate to safeguard the environment and to reinforce the capabilities of environmental agencies in poorer countries while also helping them to make economic progress. Environmental cooperation and assistance should be linked to new trade agreements.
- ▶ Trade negotiation and dispute procedures should be reformed to make them more open, democratic, and accountable.

Our wildlife, land and water are invaluable and should be given top priority in trade negotiations. For more information, please visit the National Wildlife Federation's Globalization and the Environment Program at: www.nwf.org

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Protecting wildlife through education and action since 1936, the National Wildlife Federation is America's conservation organization creating solutions that balance the needs of people and wildlife now and for future generations.

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Your chair.
Your choice.
*But what's
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