

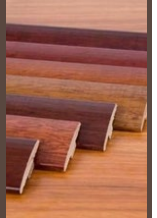
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Quarterly Newsletter from *Source Verified GoodWood*® - December 2023

# The Quarter Round



## Member Spotlight

### Silver Dollar Wood Products

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**Silver Dollar Wood Products, LLC** is a family owned and operated business serving their agricultural customers for over 25 years!

Silver Dollar Wood Products manufactures quality animal bedding from trees harvested to restore and protect our forests and watersheds.

Their high-quality **animal bedding** is produced by shaving down logs then drying and screening the material to create a product with great absorption and minimal dust. The screening process allows them to create different size shavings to suit their customer's needs.



## Source Verified Good Wood - An opportunity to put your name on what you believe.

Through forest verification and chain-of-custody the Source Verified GoodWood® program gives its members a chance to put their name on something they believe in. We are a collaborative membership community of open-minded leaders who are committed to the stewardship of our forests, communities, and local economies.

GoodWood® membership is open to anyone who shares this commitment! Unlike other certification programs that are complicated, lengthy, and expensive we are a source-verified branding initiative that is accessible and affordable. We are also the only program that verifies wood from National Forest System lands.

As a **member**, you gain visibility for supporting our forests and communities. As a **customer** you support healthier forests and mindful businesses with each purchase. Together, we create a committed community helping to find harmony between forests and commerce. To become a member or find out more about Source Verified GoodWood visit our website: [www.goodwoodverified.com](http://www.goodwoodverified.com).

## A note from Rachel



Happy New Year to you and yours! I was excited to see December begin and end with some snowfall in New Mexico!! More snow may be on the horizon as forecasters are seeing "El Niño's" signature on our winter climate outlook. While no two El Niño winters are the same, it generally means colder and wetter conditions in New Mexico. We have included an article on El Niño and La Niña, or what scientists call, "the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle" in this issue of *The Quarter Round*.

Also, in this issue we are discussing a recent article on old growth forests and providing an update on our effort to make lumber grading affordable and accessible in New Mexico. We have been very excited by the positive responses from everyone we talk to about an in-state lumber grading program and are optimistically making this effort our New Year's resolution! We will be reaching out for your input and hope you will share your ideas.

We are also listing our accomplishments and looking ahead. We know your time is valuable, and we appreciate the time you spend reading this this issue of *The Quarter Round*!



## Old Growth Forest: How Much is Enough?

Marie Rodriguez, Promise PCES, LLC

My first job for the U.S. Forest Service (45 years ago) was on a 20-person fire crew in the Bull Run Watershed. The watershed is a 102 square-mile temperate rain forest located less than 30 miles east of Portland, Oregon and provides most of that city's drinking water. To protect the waters of the Bull Run, public access and use of the watershed including logging, grazing, and recreation has been limited in some form or another since the late 1800's. Its forests are characterized by towering Douglas-fir and western hemlock with cool, rich layers of plants, moss, lichen, and decaying logs and humus, teaming with life beneath their canopy. Creeks and rivers flow everywhere. When I think of an old growth forest, I can see, hear, and smell the ancient forest of the Bull Run Watershed.



Figure 1 - Bull Run Watershed, Mt. Hood National Forest

I have a friend, Alex, who is a teacher in Costa Rica. For Alex, the term "old growth" evokes the tropical or cloud rain forests of his home. For our team member Katie Fernholz (Dovetail Partners), it is the northern hardwood forests that come to mind when she thinks of an old growth forest. For many New Mexicans, old growth means an open forest of large and old ponderosa pine or golden aspen leaves trembling in the breeze on the Sangre de Cristo mountains.

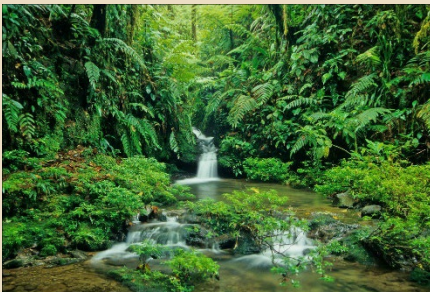


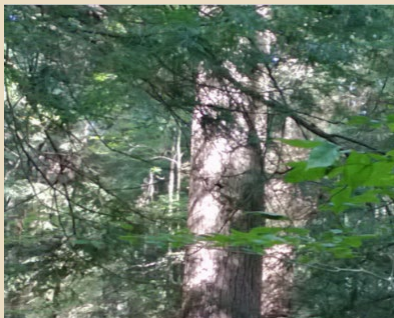
Figure 2 - Arenal Volcano National Park, Costa Rica



Figure 3- The Forest Cathedral old-growth area is considered Pennsylvania's finest and largest old-growth forest.



Figure 4 - Aspen Forest, Sangre de Cristo Mountains, New Mexico (USFS)



### Old growth forests: How much is enough?

Lead Authors: Kathryn Fernholz and Ed Pepke, Ph.D.  
Contributing Authors: Mark Jacobs, Eliza Meyer, Harry Groot, Dave Bubser, Sarah Harris, Kathleen Preece, Gloria Erickson, Maria Golden, Tamberly Conway, Ph.D.

November 2023



Old growth may conjure varying images in our minds but we are all affected emotionally or even spiritually when we enter an ancient forest. In their report, "[Old growth forests: How much is enough?](#)", (November 2023, [Dovetail Partners](#)<sup>1</sup>) lead authors Kathryn Fernholz and Ed Pepke, Ph.D., acknowledge our spiritual, emotional, and deep cultural connections to old growth forests and they discuss the science behind it. Their report highlights the complexity, difficulty, as well as the importance of defining old growth for both management purposes and scientific understanding. In it, they explore the different definitions of "old growth" applied globally and in regions of North America and Europe, including their scientific basis. From these definitions, they examine where old growth forests exist in the world with a focus on the United States and the European Union.

This thought-provoking report considers why we need old growth forests, discussing the critical ecosystem services uniquely provided by ancient forests including their ability to capture and store carbon dioxide over centuries. The report conversely discusses why we do not need old growth citing how technology has allowed us to manufacture wood products of incredible strength and durability from smaller trees and waste-wood, reducing (or eliminating) the need to harvest large and old trees. The authors discuss old growth forest protection and management. The report concludes with a discussion of how much old growth is 'enough', how we can create more, and how our understanding of the relationship between people and forests is evolving.

<sup>1</sup> Dovetail Partners' mission is to provide authoritative information about the impacts and trade-offs of environmental decisions, including consumption choices, land use and policy alternatives. Dovetail Partners is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

## An In-State Lumber Grading Program Unique to New Mexico

Interviews with small sawmill owners and others in the wood products industry highlighted the need for an affordable and accessible program for lumber grading in our state. We have been talking to people who have experience with in-state grading programs and looking closely at existing programs in Alaska, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. We find the programs in these states are similar but customized for the specific needs of each state. In this article we summarize the similarities and differences of some existing programs put forward ideas on a program unique to the needs of New Mexico.

### Summarizing Existing Programs

The programs in Alaska, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and Wisconsin are limited to load-bearing dimension lumber; certification requires attending a 1-day training course and passing a test; and recertification requirements vary from every two to five years. Alaska and Wisconsin both allow education or experience to be substituted for the training. The enabling legislation in all four states authorizes funding and assigns the authority and responsibility for carrying out the program which is typically shared between state agencies and state universities/cooperative extension services. The legislation frames the general requirements, leaving the agencies to work out the details. Table 1 below summarizes the basic elements of the various states' programs. Click on the individual state for a link to the legislation.

Table 1 - In-state lumber grading program summary

State	Year Enacted	Implementing Authority*	Graded Products	Course Duration	Recertification	Alternatives for Certification**
<a href="#">Alaska</a>	2023	AKDOF, UAFCES	Load-bearing Dimension Lumber	TBD	TBD	Yes
<a href="#">New Hampshire</a>	1994	UNHCE, NHDFL, NHDAMF	""	1-day or self-study	5-years	No
<a href="#">Tennessee</a>	2016	TDOA, UT	""	1-day	2-years	No
<a href="#">Wisconsin</a>	2008	WDNR/UWCES	""	1-day	5-years	Yes

\* AKDOF – Alaska Division of Forestry, UAFCES – University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, UNHCE – University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, NHDFL – New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, NHDAMF – New Hampshire Division of Agriculture, Markets, and Food, TDOA – Tennessee Department of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, WDNR – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UWCES – University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service.

\*\*Education and experience can be used to meet training and certification requirements.

### What should an in-state lumber grading program in New Mexico include?

We think a program in our state must include vigas and timbers in addition to dimensional lumber. Vigas and timbers provide the highest value use for small diameter trees harvested to protect and restore our forests and watersheds. Vigas and timbers are also integral to New Mexico's architectural style.

Not all states brought the regulators to the table early in the process, we think New Mexico's Construction Industries Division (CID) should have a role in developing the standards for our program. CID are the experts in construction standards; they have the authority to approve changes to our building code and have the final say in permitting construction and accepting the materials. Their early input could ensure the final program produces the best outcomes (for builders and consumers) during permitting and construction.

We would also like to see legislation that establishes an in-state grading program, provides the authority and lays the foundation to develop, innovate, and promote our state's forest product industry.

### How does it cost and who pays?

We looked to the most recent legislation (Alaska 2023) to estimate costs for establishing and operating a new program. The [Fiscal Note](#) accompanying their recent legislation estimates two hundred twenty-one thousand dollars in annual operating costs citing a position to oversee the program, contracting services for training, professional development, and outreach through the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Services. The Fiscal Note includes that the new position could build additional training opportunities for mill operators and help develop traditional and innovative wood-based markets in Alaska.

We would like to hear comments and feedback from you. Rachel will be reaching out after the new year to ask for your thoughts on several topics related to lumber grading, we hope you will take time to respond.

## El Niño and La Niña - What Do They Mean for New Mexico's Weather?

The natural climate phenomenon called the *El Niño Southern Oscillation* (ENSO) has two opposite states - *El Niño* and *La Niña* - both of which significantly affect global weather.

*El Niño* (the boy) and *La Niña* (the girl) are natural climate patterns that occur in the Pacific Ocean. In a typical year, the trade winds move the sun-warmed surface water of the eastern Pacific westward. This movement of the warmer surface water allows colder, nutrient-rich, water to upwell to the surface in the eastern equatorial Pacific. The net result is warmer water in the western Pacific and colder water in the eastern and central equatorial portions of the ocean.

During a *La Niña* year, the trade winds exhibit a marked increase in strength. This results in unusually cold water extending from the eastern to the central equatorial Pacific. *La Niña* seems to magnify typical patterns – typically dry areas are drier and typically wet areas are wetter.

However, during *El Niño*, the trade winds become weaker or even reverse, causing the warm surface waters to flow back towards South America. As a result, the eastern Pacific becomes unusually warm, disrupting the typical distribution of temperature across the ocean. Our normal weather patterns also weaken or reverse with *El Niño*, bringing unusually wet conditions to the normally dry southwest and unusually dry conditions to the normally wet pacific northwest. *El Niño* can also bring wild weather like powerful storms, strong winds, and unusual changes in temperature.

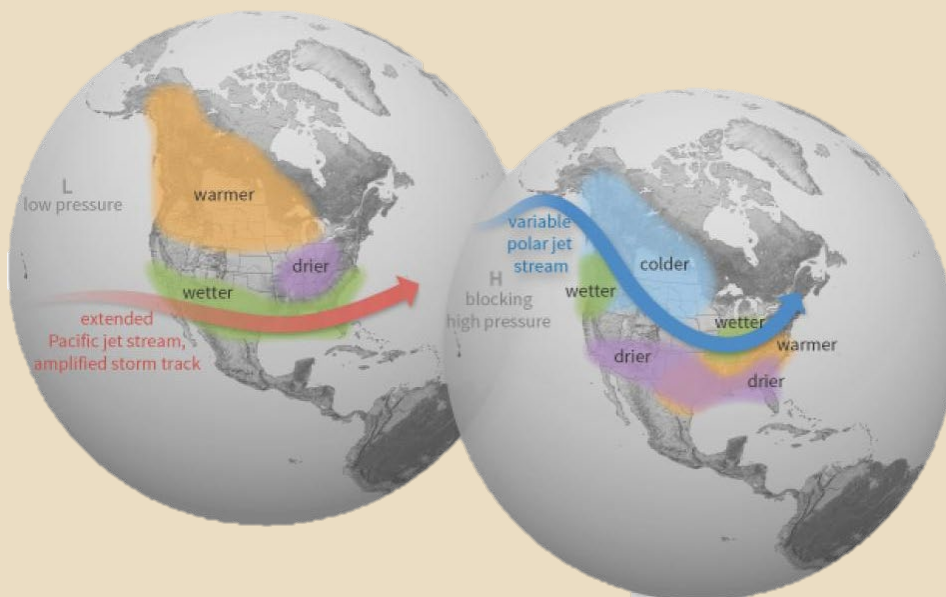


Figure 2 – *El Niño* winter shown left; *La Niña* winter shown right (NOAA climate.gov)

The winter of 2023 – 2024 is showing the signature of *El Niño* with forecasters from the National Weather Service office in Albuquerque (NWS Albuquerque) predicting a wetter than normal winter with normal temperatures. The image to the right shows how previous *El Niño* winters have played out in our state. As you can see, *El Niño* winters typically, but not always, mean a wetter than normal winter for New Mexico. The probabilities appear somewhat higher for the western half of our state. As we say in New Mexico when it comes to rain or snow, “we will take whatever we get!”

You can follow the [NWS Albuquerque](https://www.weather.gov/abq) online for daily and seasonal forecasts.

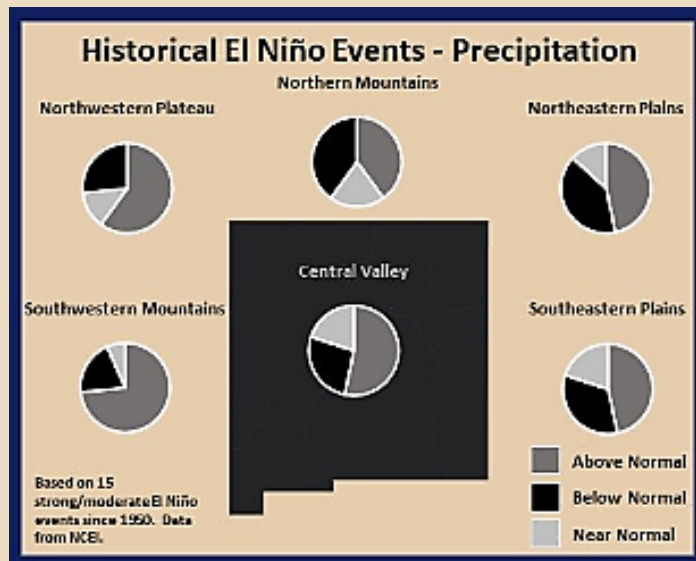


Figure 3 (left) - *Stay Safe and Prepared: New Mexico's Guide to El Niño Winter 2023-2024* (NWS Albuquerque)

## Accomplishments

Our work is funded through a Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) grant titled: *Expanding Market Opportunities for New Mexico Wood*. We put forward four deliverables in our proposal. We are proud to have completed three of the deliverables with work progressing on the fourth, as shown below.

1. Prepare a Buy Local Lessons Learned report for integration into GoodWood buy local marketing strategy (completed.)
2. Qualify GoodWood for use in New Mexico and national green building programs (completed in New Mexico.)
3. Continue to update formerly accepted viga span charts and seek to have them qualified statewide in New Mexico's building code regulations for accepted use in our unique historic building style (completed, published in building code and effective 7/14/23.)
4. Develop an affordable lumber, beam, and viga grading program to allow small diameter trees harvested from New Mexico's forests to be used for structural building use within our state (ongoing)

We are also funded to continue our efforts to "Increase the awareness of and demand for small diameter tree wood products derived from local forest restoration and wildfire hazard reduction projects" and to "Increase markets and market access for this wood".

The CFRP has done so much for New Mexico most notably making collaboration the norm. While differing parties may disagree on how our forests should be managed, we all agree on the need to protect our forests and watersheds now and for future generations. The success of the CFRP in New Mexico inspired the national version, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program.

The [U.S. Forest Service Wood Innovations Program](#) is another federal funding program aiming to promote innovations in forest products recognizing that a robust forest products industry is critical to restoring and protecting our national forests and watersheds. We would like to thank several folks from this program who have been generous with their time and expertise relative to in-state lumber grading programs: Charlie Becker, Wood Innovations Program, U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory; Grace Sorenson, U.S. Forest Service, Wood Innovations Program, Southwest Region Coordinator; Priscilla Morris, U.S. Forest Service, Wood Utilization Specialist; Collin Buntrock, U.S. Forest Service, Wood Innovations Specialist.

We would also like to thank others that have stepped up to offer their support or expertise, helping us to understand how an in-state grading program could be undertaken in New Mexico: Shantini Ramakrishnan, Conservation & Restoration Education Program Manager, NMFWRP-NMHU; Francisco Apodaca, STEM Coordinator, Luna CC; Jamie Knutson, Wildfire Resiliency Coordinator, Luna CC; Carmen Austin, NMSF; Laura McCarthy, NMSF State Forester; Miles Conway, Executive Director, SFAHBA; Ron Ortega, private landowner/small sawmill operator, and Harry Morrison, Consulting Forester. Finally thank you to Senator Peter Wirth for taking time to meet with us regarding the Source Verified Good Wood Program and in-state lumber grading programs.

## Looking Ahead

- As previously noted, we will continue to work on making lumber grading services accessible and affordable to New Mexico's small producers. We will be reaching out for comments and ideas from our members and others. You can also reach out to us any time with questions or comments – [rachel@goodwoodverified.com](mailto:rachel@goodwoodverified.com).
- We will also be continuing our efforts to raise brand awareness and market our members' businesses and the products they produce.



Figure 4 – Nacimiento Mountains, Cuba, NM (Marie Rodriguez)

The Quarter Round is produced with funds from the USDA-Forest Service, Collaborative Forest Restoration Program.

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Project Title: Planning - Expanding Market Opportunities for New Mexico Wood - revision

Grant Project Period: 05/27/2021 – 05/31/2024 (2019 award)

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