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Quarterly Newsletter from *Source Verified Good Wood®* | *Fall 2025*

The Quarter Round

Upcoming Events
Mark Your Calendar!

Ponderosa Pine Utilization Summit

November 18-20, 2025
Flagstaff, Arizona
Advancing Ponderosa Pine Markets in the West: Building a Vision for the Future

Join us to develop a strategic vision addressing key challenges and opportunities in the Ponderosa Pine industry-focused on innovation, infrastructure, policy, and market expansion. Hosted by the Council of Western State Foresters.
More information:
https://www.westernforesters.org/events/ponderosa-pine-utilization-summit

International Mass Timber Conference

March 21- April 2, 2026
Portland, Oregon
Celebrating 10 Years

Explore cross-laminated timber (CLT), nail-laminated timber, glulam, mass plywood panels, dowel-laminated timber, and laminated veneer lumber; and the opportunities and obstacles in global design, construction, development, manufacturing, and more.
More information:
https://masstimberconference.com/

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

Source Verified Good Wood offers an opportunity for individuals and businesses to align their name with their beliefs. Through source forest verification and tracking chain-of-custody, the *GoodWood®* program empowers its members to endorse something they truly stand for. We are a collaborative community of open-minded leaders committed to forest stewardship, community well-being, and local economies. GoodWood membership is open to anyone who shares this commitment! Our source-verified branding initiative is accessible and affordable, and we are also the only program that verifies wood from National Forest System lands.

Our **members** gain visibility for their products and their commitment to supporting forests and communities. Our **consumers** demonstrate support for healthier forests and mindful choices with each purchase. Together, we are a committed community finding harmony between forests and commerce. To become a member or find out more about *Source Verified Good Wood* and *GoodWood* products, please visit our website: ***www.goodwoodverified.com***.

GoodWood is eligible to accept donations to support our mission of *Creating healthier, more resilient forests through verification of sustainably harvested and managed products.* To join us in putting your name on what you believe in, make a donation today!

A note from Rachel

As we move into fall, it felt natural to reflect on growth, renewal, and preparation. This season of *The Quarter Round* highlights the innovative use of small-diameter wood in projects like the Darby Library and spotlight the leadership of WholeTrees in structural applications. We see how these innovative wood uses can transform underutilized material into lasting value.

In New Mexico, momentum continues to build around creating a wood grading training program to support our producers, strengthen local markets, and help meet the needs of our communities. Closely tied to this is the understanding of managing wood moisture content.

The inspiring work at the Mora Forestry Research Center reminds us that resilience begins with seedlings and grows through partnership, persistence, and vision. Their efforts in restoration are a good reminder of the long term commitment needed to care for our forests and communities. Thank you to Owen Burney, Professor and Director of the JTH Forestry Research Center for providing up-to-date information on the NM Reforestation Center.

And thank you to Katie Fernholz, Grace Simmons, & Maria Golden of Dovetail Partners, for putting this newsletter together.

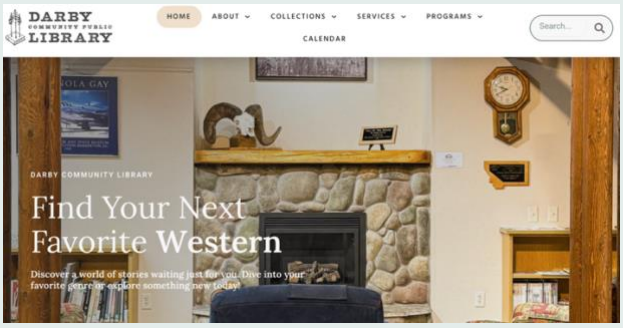
Enjoy the fall colors, roasted green chile, and beautiful fall weather!

The Quarter Round has been produced with funds from the USDA-Forest Service, Wood Innovations.
Grant Number: 24-DG-11030000-053 *Project Title: GoodWood: Expanding Market and Lumber Grading Opportunities for New Mexico Wood Grant Project Period:* 09/05/2024 – 07/31/2027

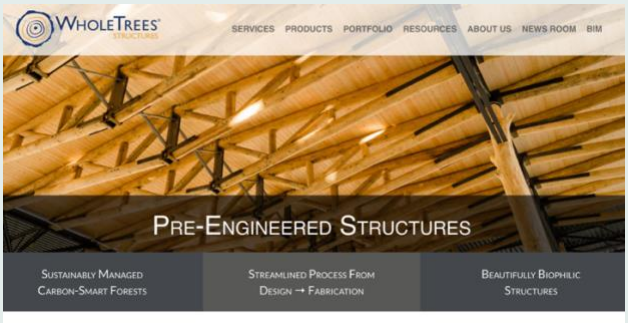
Recent Activities & News

Spotlight on Innovative Wood Uses

We're keeping an eye on projects that highlight creative applications of wood products, from cross laminated timber and biomass to innovative use of small-diameter trees.



The [Darby Community Library in Montana] is a standout example of building with small-diameter logs. Constructed after the 2000 wildfires, the library showcases how thinned forest materials such as 6-inch round ponderosa pine and even blue-stained pine can be structurally graded and used in trusses and columns. It serves as a model for turning under-utilized wood into community infrastructure.



Another pioneer in this space is [WholeTrees,] a Wisconsin-based company that transforms small or "waste" trees into structural building components. By applying advanced grading methods, they have demonstrated that round timber can be both strong and sustainable, sometimes rivaling steel in performance. Their work also points to opportunities for using species such as aspen, cottonwood, or hardwoods from urban treatments in decorative or structural roles.

Upcoming: Pfeifer Studio & GoodWood PopUP Shop

GoodWood will be featured at an upcoming Pop-Up event with Pfeifer Studio, a GoodWood member and furniture maker, at Temple Home in Santa Fe. Join us on Friday, November 21, from 5–7 p.m. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with the GoodWood® community and explore how design and sustainability come together in New Mexico.

News: New Mexico Wood for New Mexico Buildings

Implement a New Mexico in-state structural wood grading program to support local wood producers by expanding markets and increasing wood value while reducing wildfire risk and ensuring New Mexico wood is available for construction.

Problem Statement & Background:

- The number of New Mexico sawmills and the amount of volume processed has decreased since the 1960's, while the number and severity of wildfires increased.
- We need to support New Mexico forest industry and the businesses that thin our forests, manufacture valuable wood products, and create jobs.
- Building codes have become more stringent and require grade stamped wood for structural uses.
- New Mexico does not have any accredited wood graders, so sawmills must bring in an accredited grader from Texas and pay for their travel as well as expensive annual and intermittent fees.
- The nation's wood supply could become unstable due to tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imports.
- Homes need to be rebuilt after wildfires and there is already a shortage of housing. We need more New Mexico wood available for construction.
- Forest industry can utilize burned trees more easily and affordably if there are better markets for structural wood products.
- The economic impact of selling wood for less value and in more limited markets is particularly pronounced for small, rural producers in New Mexico. Quality un-graded wood often ends up being used for corrals and chicken coops, or for decorative purposes, instead of more valuable use as graded lumber, beams, and vigas.

Solution

Create an in-state structural wood grading training program allowing inspected and verified New Mexico wood to be used in construction applications. The benefits include increasing the value and marketability of New Mexico forest products; sustaining forest industry and the infrastructure for forest thinning; and increasing the supply of wood to address New Mexico's housing needs, including rebuilding after the South Fork, Salt, Hermits Peak and Calf Canyon fires. An in-state wood grading program will support New Mexico's traditional building styles. The program concept was developed in consultation with New Mexico sawmill owners, builders, NM Construction Industries Division, other state's wood grading program developers, and national wood grading experts.

Moisture Matters: Aspects of Lumber Drying

Moisture content may not sound like the most exciting part of lumber production, but it plays a major role in determining strength, stability, and performance. Dry wood is stronger than green (wet) wood. Wood at 10% moisture content is about double the strength of wood at 28% moisture content. Each of four state's lumber grading handbooks reviewed set their own language around the issue, yet all align on a key benchmark: dry lumber means a maximum of 19% moisture content, with only a small percentage of pieces in any shipment allowed above that level. While kiln drying is often used to reach those lower moisture levels, it's not always necessary, especially in New Mexico, where the naturally dry climate helps air-dried lumber perform well and where only a limited number of kilns are available across the state. Here's how different the states define and manage it and how New Mexico's unique climate factors in.

In Tennessee, lumber is categorized as green (over 19% moisture) or dry (19% or less). Kiln-dried lumber can be labeled separately, since the high heat speeds drying, kills pests, and stabilizes resins in species like Pine. Moisture content is measured on an oven-dry basis, though handheld meters are commonly used for quick checks.

Wisconsin provides more detail, noting that dry lumber often averages closer to 15–17%. The handbook emphasizes that wood is never static, it gains or loses moisture with the seasons, swelling in humid summers and shrinking in dry winters. Kiln drying is the primary method, offering precise control over the process. However, as stated in the Wisconsin Handbook, *"Using good practices, sawmills can do a good job with air drying, particularly with well designed and well operated drying yards. It is very easy to do a bad job of drying lumber in a kiln, so it is inaccurate to say that kiln dried lumber is automatically "better" than air-dried lumber, or that air-dried lumber is not as high a quality as kiln dried lumber."*

Green: above 19% MC.

Dry: At or below 19% MC

Alaska recognizes three categories: green, dry, and partially air-dried. Because of its cool, damp climate, air drying is slow and kilns are often needed for consistency. The handbook also cautions against mixing green and dry lumber in structural systems, as each responds differently to its environment. As elsewhere, kiln drying is valued for both resin control and insect prevention. They also note that both green and dry lumber are suitable for use in construction.

New Hampshire keeps it straightforward: green lumber is above 19%, dry is below, and kiln-dried boards usually fall between 6–12%. The handbook also underscores the connection between moisture content and strength, noting that wood at 10% moisture can be nearly twice as strong as wood at 28%.

Both air-dried and kiln dried lumber can be sold in the four other states' programs. Across many regions, kiln drying is highlighted as the most reliable way to control the drying process. Unlike air drying, it allows producers to regulate temperature, humidity, and airflow, reducing warping and case hardening. It also stabilizes resin and eliminates insects, ensuring a more uniform and construction-ready product. Though it can expedite the drying process, if done improperly, kiln drying can lead to stresses in lumber. Well-operated kiln drying or well-managed air drying systems can both provide high quality outcomes.

New Mexico's naturally low humidity accelerates wood drying, which can be both a benefit and a challenge. Rapid drying of wood can result in warping or cracking if the process is not carefully managed. Benefits of air drying are that it does not require expensive kilns or fuel, and it is a practical option in remote or low-tech settings. Also, it takes advantage of natural heat and airflow, reducing carbon footprint. Arid air discourages mold, mildew, and decay fungi, which need moisture to grow. Best practices for air-drying include considering covered spaces and using stickers to stack the boards and allow for sufficient airflow. For beams, timbers, and vigas, air-drying promotes the development of natural "character" (e.g. checking, texture, color variation) that is often desirable in southwestern architectural styles. For both kiln and air-dried wood, special attention is needed to balance speed and quality.

Growing Hope in the Wake of Wildfire: Inside Mora's Forestry Research Center

By: Grace Simmons, Dovetail Partners

In Mora, New Mexico, the John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center at NMSU has become a lifeline for the state's forests. Their mission is straightforward but powerful: lead the way in climate-smart reforestation, from seed to seedling to forest. By blending research, hands-on nursery work, and partnerships with groups like tribal communities, landowners, and conservation organizations, the center is helping burned and stressed landscapes bounce back.

While part of NMSU's agricultural research network, the Mora Center is now focused on restoring forests in the face of wildfire and climate change. The results already speak volumes. In 2021, the team produced about 138,000 seedlings, enough to replant nearly ~700 acres. Then came the Hermit's Peak, Calf Canyon Fire in 2022, which devastated northern New Mexico. Even as flames threatened their own facilities, the staff managed to save 70,000 seedlings from their greenhouses, a powerful sign of their dedication.

Their recovery work shows how complex reforestation really is. It takes more than planting trees and hoping for the best. Researchers test everything from fencing and shelters that keep deer away to drought-conditioning seedlings so they're more resilient in dry years. They've even tried "nucleation planting," where small clusters of trees are planted to expand outward over time. Every experiment builds a smarter playbook for the future.

Photo: Owen Burney, PhD.

The toughest challenge is scale. New Mexico needs an estimated 150 to 390 million seedlings to meet reforestation demands, yet only about 250,000 are produced each year. Closing that gap is one of the center's biggest goals. Looking ahead, the impacts of wildfire and climate change will only grow, making the need for large-scale, science-driven reforestation even more urgent.

At its heart, the Mora Center isn't just growing trees, it is growing resilience, hope, and the future of New Mexico's forests.

In response to the growing reforestation needs of New Mexico, the New Mexico Reforestation Center (NMRC) was established in January 2022 through a Memorandum of Agreement as a partnership between New Mexico State University, New Mexico Highlands University, the University of New Mexico, and the Forestry Division of the state's Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department. Its mission is to address current and future reforestation challenges in the Southwest through an integrated approach that combines seed banking, nursery and planting operations, research, education, and outreach.

To carry out this mission, the Center is developing a new facility designed to produce up to 5 million seedlings annually. This large-scale effort will not only meet urgent reforestation needs but also support forest-based economic growth and the delivery of critical ecosystem services. Construction of Phase 1 is supported by $38.5 million in state and federal funding and includes a greenhouse system capable of producing 1.1 million seedlings per year. The facility will be located on New Mexico State University property in Mora, adjacent to the JTH Forestry Research Center.

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of the Quarter Round!

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Administrative Contact
Alexandra Merlino, Partnership for Responsible Business
Program Manager
Rachel Wood, Rachel Wood Consulting, LLC
Team Members
David Breecker, David Breecker Associates; Katie Fernholz, Grace Simmons, & Maria Golden, Dovetail Partners, Inc., Vicki Pozzebon, Prospera Partners