



Fenwick Avenue Housing

Location: North Portland
Type: Affordable housing
Developer: Portland Housing Authority
General Contractor: Walsh Construction
Units: 27

Forests:

- Warm Springs Forest Products - 430,000 FSC-certified acres in Central Oregon
 - Roseburg Forest Products - 200,000 FSC-certified acres in Northern California
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Wood Products:

- fir framing lumber
 - fir plywood
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FSC-certified Warm Springs lumber and Roseburg plywood arrives at the Fenwick construction site.

Building Partnerships

Pacific Northwest-based Walsh Construction handles dozens of projects each year, but it wasn't until Ecotrust's redevelopment of the Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center that they had ever bid on a job that specified FSC-certified wood. "Back in 1999, that was the first time we ever used FSC in a project," recalls Walsh Project Manager Dan Snow. "We did our best to use FSC on everything, even concrete formwork. We bought every stick that we could find."

Ecotrust Vice President Bettina von Hagen managed the redevelopment of the century-old warehouse, and since the 2001 reopening, von Hagen has shown her mettle in leveraging the partnership that Ecotrust and Walsh built together on the construction site. "When Walsh got the Fenwick project last year," Dan Snow continues, "Bettina was on the phone right away, calling us about FSC."

That phone call demonstrates the unique role that Ecotrust has developed - along with its downtown Portland base. The organization has parlayed a one-time urban real estate foray into a strategic program for industry-wide change: Ecotrust Market Connections. "Being a player in this field gives us a credibility that we wouldn't otherwise have," says von Hagen.

On the Fenwick Avenue Housing project, Walsh proved receptive to Ecotrust's solicitation. The company agreed to specify FSC for the framing of the new three-story housing development. But getting good wood into a construction project can be a tricky business. When Walsh put the Fenwick framing job out to bid, the sub-contractor who won the contract found that his usual distributor - Matheus Lumber - had no experience sourcing FSC and didn't know where to find it.

“These deals can break down all along the chain,” explains Ecotrust Director of Market Connections Kent Goodyear. “People just aren’t used to searching around for product.” Goodyear followed the project closely as it evolved and put Matheus in touch with Lumbermens, which operates an FSC certified distribution center in Clackamas, Oregon.

Goodyear had forged the Lumbermens link in the FSC supply chain just a few months earlier. Throughout 2003 he worked to broker a deal encouraging the Portland-area outlet of the 60-store chain to stock wood from the newly certified Warm Springs Forest Products. As Lumbermens Marketing Vice President Doug Grover tells it, “Kent has worked diligently to help us stay informed of what’s happening with FSC certification and which mills are doing what. He brokered the deal with Warm Springs. The logistics all worked out, and now we have our first outlet that’s stocking FSC on a continual basis.”

The relationships that Ecotrust has built with both Walsh and Lumbermens have given the Market Connections Program a big boost. “Everybody working in Portland and Seattle knows Walsh,” Goodyear says. “When I point to them as a company that has used FSC, people start to realize that they can too.”

Learn how to source the good wood now.

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