Design & Build with FSC®

The primary objective of green building is to achieve higher levels of environmental and social performance, going beyond legal requirements.

While people frequently evaluate green buildings based on their onsite performance, the impacts also extend back through supply chains to places where the building materials originated, such as forests, mines, and agricultural fields.

When it comes from an FSC-certified responsibly managed forest, wood is arguably the most sustainable building material. It is renewable, non-toxic, biodegradable, and it sequesters carbon.

Yet not all wood is the same. The quality of the forest management plays an outsized role in determining whether wood-based products are environmentally destructive or beneficial.

GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS

While the US Green Building Council's LEED standard may be best known, there are many green building systems with varying degrees of rigor and integrity. In addition to LEED, the Living Building Challenge and Passive House are two rigorous standards with high levels of credibility, for example.

Whether large or small, all credible green building standards have elements in common:

- **High performance requirements** that drive transformation of the marketplace.
- **Diverse, open and democratic governance.**
- **Precautionary approach** to do no harm in the face of uncertainty.
- **Verifiable** environmental and social benefits that go beyond legal requirements.

PHOTO: The Bullitt Center © John Stamets.

FSC AND LEED V4

LEED v4, which was approved by USGBC members with 86 percent support, is designed to "challenge the marketplace to go further, to make the next great leap toward better, cleaner, healthier buildings where people live and work." (Source: USGBC)

And while LEED v4 represents a dramatic change from LEED 2009, at least one part remains the same: It maintains credit recognition for use of FSC-certified forest products.

The credit related to FSC is called "Building Product Disclosure and Optimization – Sourcing of Raw Materials" (MRc3), which has two options, including one focused on "Leadership Extraction Practices." To earn the credit, a project team must use at least 25 percent by cost of the total value of permanently installed building products from a set of approved options, including FSC certified products. Products sourced from within 100 miles of the project site are valued at 200 percent of their base cost.

GREEN BUILDING IS BIG BUSINESS

By 2015, up to 48 percent of new non-residential construction will employ green design and construction techniques, representing as much as $145 billion in economic activity (Source: McGraw-Hill). More than 2.7 billion square feet of building space is already LEED certified (October 2013).

In short, green building is big business, including for the forest products industry.

Yet not all wood is the same. If a forest is responsibly managed, wood is an excellent environmental choice. But destructive forestry still exists, even in the US. How the forest is managed matters. And when it comes to responsible forest management, no other system comes close to FSC's world leading standards.

So whether you are an architect, builder, manufacturer, lumberyard or homeowner, there's a simple solution: Choose FSC.

For more information visit **WWW.FSC.ORG**.

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