

TO SAVE A FOREST, CUT HERE

FSC is your guide to the good wood.

Forests and lumber: Who can blame us for wanting it all? After all, the West Coast is a region of astounding natural beauty, and wood is a renewable resource that's abundant right here. It's easier on the planet than steel or concrete, and provides good jobs for the people who live in our communities. Unfortunately, industrial-style logging all too often damages our vistas, rivers, and wildlife.

Yet there is a better way — a way to take some trees while still protecting the forest. We aren't talking about old-growth. Almost all the West Coast's timber harvest comes from younger forests. And on those younger stands, it matters a great deal how carefully and thoughtfully the logging is done.

These days, a growing number of landowners have made a commitment to leave the forest standing when they take some trees for timber. They've been inspected according to the rigorous standards set by the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)**. If you know what to look for, you can bring that lumber home with you.

In this issue of SectionZ:

Lumber You Can Feel Good About



TAKE A
FOREST
TOUR
WITH
SALLY
SALMON!

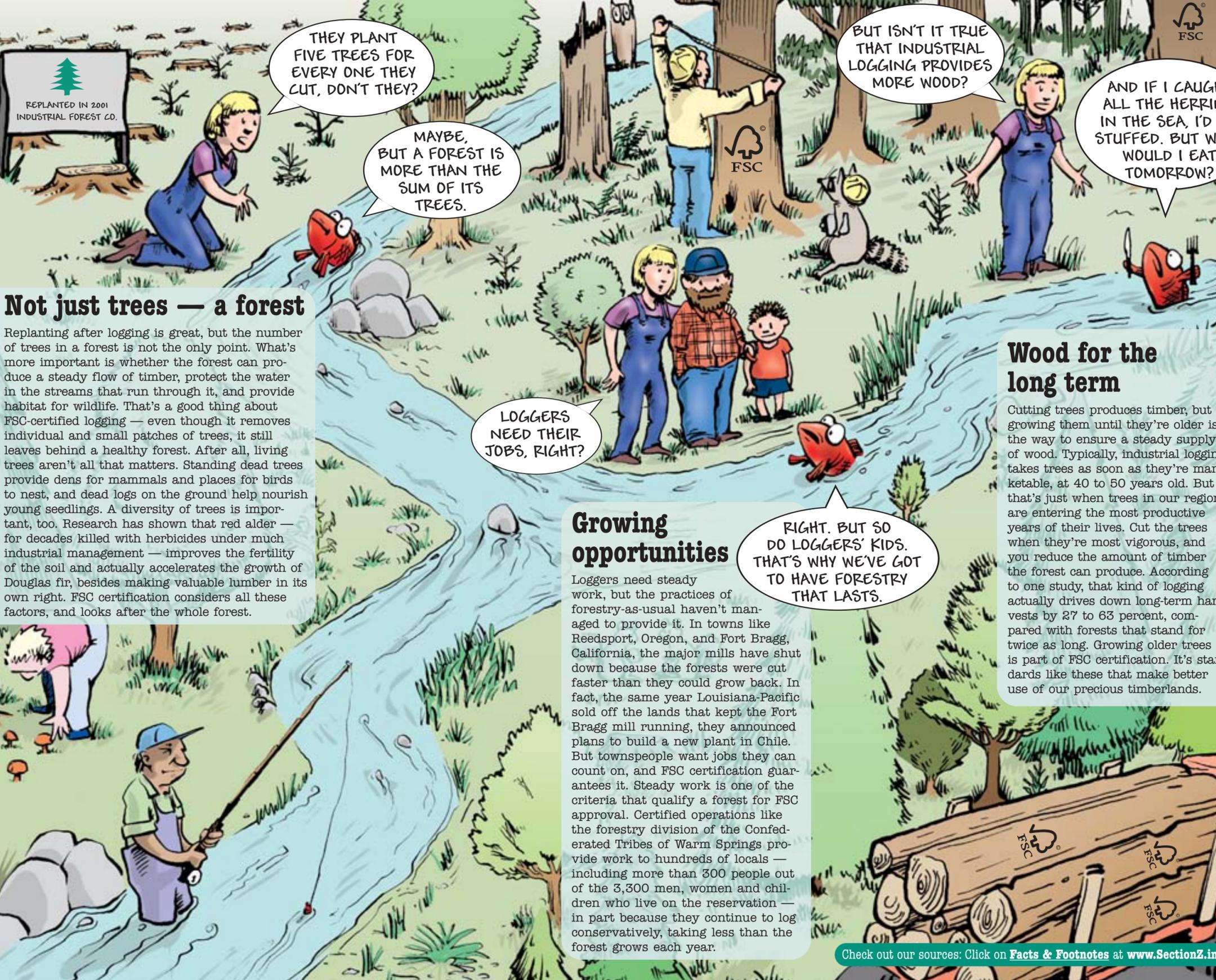


Think it takes a huge clearcut to make a two-by-four? Think again.

Here on the West Coast, in some of the world's best timber-growing country, it's only natural that we build our homes out of wood. But how that wood is harvested makes all the difference to the health of the forest. Lumber that is harvested with care earns a stamp of approval from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). That's good for the cities full of people whose water supply depends on rivers flowing out of those forests. And it's important to anyone who eats wild salmon, which need clear creeks to spawn in, shaded by those trees.

Unfortunately, a lot of misunderstandings have been circulating about logging and how it ought to be done. The result has been a boost in short-term profits, but an erosion in the long-term health of towns, working families, and the creatures of the forest. Sally Salmon can't be fooled, though. Sally and her kind have been living in the shadow of these forests for thousands of years, and she has a few things to say about good forest management. The forest and the lumber: We can have them both. FSC certification makes sure of it.

Lumber You Can Feel Good About



Not just trees — a forest

Replanting after logging is great, but the number of trees in a forest is not the only point. What's more important is whether the forest can produce a steady flow of timber, protect the water in the streams that run through it, and provide habitat for wildlife. That's a good thing about FSC-certified logging — even though it removes individual and small patches of trees, it still leaves behind a healthy forest. After all, living trees aren't all that matters. Standing dead trees provide dens for mammals and places for birds to nest, and dead logs on the ground help nourish young seedlings. A diversity of trees is important, too. Research has shown that red alder — for decades killed with herbicides under much industrial management — improves the fertility of the soil and actually accelerates the growth of Douglas fir, besides making valuable lumber in its own right. FSC certification considers all these factors, and looks after the whole forest.

Growing opportunities

Loggers need steady work, but the practices of forestry-as-usual haven't managed to provide it. In towns like Reedsport, Oregon, and Fort Bragg, California, the major mills have shut down because the forests were cut faster than they could grow back. In fact, the same year Louisiana-Pacific sold off the lands that kept the Fort Bragg mill running, they announced plans to build a new plant in Chile. But townspeople want jobs they can count on, and FSC certification guarantees it. Steady work is one of the criteria that qualify a forest for FSC approval. Certified operations like the forestry division of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs provide work to hundreds of locals — including more than 300 people out of the 3,300 men, women and children who live on the reservation — in part because they continue to log conservatively, taking less than the forest grows each year.

Wood for the long term

Cutting trees produces timber, but growing them until they're older is the way to ensure a steady supply of wood. Typically, industrial logging takes trees as soon as they're marketable, at 40 to 50 years old. But that's just when trees in our region are entering the most productive years of their lives. Cut the trees when they're most vigorous, and you reduce the amount of timber the forest can produce. According to one study, that kind of logging actually drives down long-term harvests by 27 to 63 percent, compared with forests that stand for twice as long. Growing older trees is part of FSC certification. It's standards like these that make better use of our precious timberlands.

Added benefits:

Clean water
FSC You may have heard that clearcuts and logging roads can lead to landslides that muck up clear running streams, and a 1996 study in Oregon confirms those fears. But it's possible to have a working forest and clean water to boot. In fact, FSC guidelines demand it. For example, the City of Astoria, Oregon, has earned FSC certification for its logging in the same lands that produce the city's drinking water. The City's forest will provide enough timber to build 140 homes each year forever, while providing pure water for its ten thousand citizens.

Healthy habitat
FSC A forest isn't just a bunch of trees, standing in a clump. It's a network of creatures, plants, and microorganisms that all fit together — an entire web of life. The loss of these intricate connections is what makes large clearcuts so destructive. For instance, one study finds that salamanders are less than a third as abundant on clearcuts as in mature forests. But some logging — like the kind certified by FSC — can actually be good for wildlife. Thoughtful cutting recreates tree canopies of many sizes and species faster than if the same land were set aside as wilderness, making young forests hospitable to wildlife as quickly as possible.

Greater fire safety
FSC Too many folks have been hurt in recent years by wildfires. We need to remove the underbrush right around where we live, so that wildfires can burn without igniting our houses. But how about farther afield: Can the type of forestry we practice help the situation? Turns out that it can. Scientists have found that replanted clearcuts are the type of forest most likely to burn hot. On the other hand, harvest practices that are common on FSC-certified lands — like selective cutting and thinning — are the same ones that have been found to reduce the severity of fire.

Carbon storage
FSC Our climate is changing. More and more scientists agree that the chief cause is the carbon dioxide released from our burning of fossil fuels. But trees can help. They suck carbon dioxide from the air and use it to build their branches, trunks, and roots. The bigger the trees in a forest, the more they absorb. Studies along the West Coast have found that FSC-style management, emphasizing mixtures of young and old trees, will hold twice as much carbon as the young, even-aged forests that we typically see with industrial logging.

