



PHOTO PRINTED WITH PERMISSION BY BR-111 EXOTIC HARDWOOD FLOORING

BR-111 FOUNDATION FUNDED SCHOOLS OFFER AN ARRAY OF SERVICES FOR UNDER-PRIVILEGED CHILDREN FROM AREAS SURROUNDING THEIR MILLS.

What are the threats to today's forests?

Legal and illegal forest conversion for charcoal production, cattle ranching, and for agricultural pursuits, such as soybeans, are the biggest causes of deforestation.

What is the best opportunity for the future of forests?

Sustainable, legal trade in forest products offers material and financial benefits to developing countries.

Do it Right

There's been an evolution of business thinking from the iconic advertising tagline of "just do it" to "do it right."

The model of doing business as usual is a thing of the past. Today, a growing population of pressure groups are striving to hold businesses to higher standards and consumers are becoming more driven by their conscience in their purchases – whether it's buying fair trade coffee, products manufactured under moral labor standards, or green-friendly production.

The practice of "doing it right" presents a tremendous opportunity for the imported wood products industry because we have many great stories to tell. Proudly telling these stories is particularly important in the current climate where many seek to mislabel our industry for market advantage or misguided policy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FORESTRY TRAINING CENTER IN GUYANA, SA – A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE TROPICAL FOREST FOUNDATION, THE GUYANA FORESTRY COMMISSION AND THE FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION OF GUYANA.

There are industry leaders who “do it right” for their customers and overseas suppliers every day. These companies have been practitioners of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) long before there was even an acronym for it. They demonstrate their commitment to customers by trading in quality, safe, environmentally responsible products and, in doing so, sustain the communities from which they source wood.

“DOING IT RIGHT” FROM THE START

Industry leaders came together in 1956 to form the International Wood Products Association (IWPA). For more than fifty years, IWPA members have continued to lead by example showing that actions are, in fact, louder than words. They have voluntarily contributed to and supported a whole host of social and environmental programs. Their businesses have generated positive financial returns to the entire supply chain and for the communities in the developing countries where they operate.

It stands to reason that a business based on a natural resource would do everything it could to ensure that the resource thrives. From the forest communities in developing countries to U.S.-based consumers, trade in wood products is a catalyst for economic empowerment.

WHY IMPORTED WOOD?

Because trade increases standards of living, here and abroad, and keeps the forests forested – an environmental and social win-win!

Forest sustainability is compatible with international trade in timber. Global trading in wood products creates economic incentives, encourages communities to sustainably manage their forests and leads to their long-term conservation by preventing them from being converted into farms and ranches.

Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, former counselor for biodiversity and economic affairs at the Smithsonian Institution stated, “The key component in preserving and maintaining the tropical forests is to ensure these resources maintain their economic value.”

The World Conservation Union, United Nations Environment Program, and the World Wildlife Fund went even further when they stated, “An important part of the strategy to conserve tropical forests is to increase the economic benefit for forest nations and communities from using forests rather than converting them to farmland. We, therefore, need a strong sustainable tropical timber industry.”

Trade does not solve all problems. Developing countries also need international aid and assistance with sustainable development. U.S. agencies and international organizations work closely with IWPA members to ensure that products are sourced in a legal and sustainable manner.

“DOING IT RIGHT” ON-THE-GROUND

Most recently, IWPA was part of a broad coalition supporting new legislation to prevent illegally logged material from entering the United States. While studies show very little suspicious material was previously entering the U.S., customers can now have greater confidence in their suppliers and the material they purchase.

IWPA members also promote selective harvesting of trees using the techniques established by the Tropical Forest Foundation to protect forest canopy, seed trees and water sources which provides for conservation and utilization of forest resources. In fact, IWPA members played a major role in founding this organization in 1990 and remain active contributors and volunteer leaders.

The Lesser Known Species (LKS) project is another on-the-ground initiative of IWPA. The idea to develop a LKS resource collection began at the urging of participants of an IWPA workshop who felt they could better manage their forests if they had a wider range of species to market from their countries.

IWPA members work with their suppliers, customers and technical advisors to match lesser-known species for appropriate applications such as decking, flooring, veneer, mouldings and millwork. The initial list can be viewed from the “Industry News & Resource” link at www.iwpawood.org. Using LKS helps promote sustainable forest management in developing countries and helps these countries keep forests managed as forests, not destroyed and converted to farms and ranches.

“DOING IT RIGHT,” GIVING BACK

Members act on their own to give back to the communities where they work. Below are just a few examples of many members who give back to their forest communities:

BR-111 Exotic Hardwood Flooring advertises its beautiful flooring in glossy fashion magazines. What they don’t advertise is their commitment to provide education to children in Brazil. Through the BR-111 Foundation, funds are allocated to schools which in turn provide education, social services, healthcare and daily nutritional meals for under-privileged children from areas surrounding their mills. BR-111 pledges a portion of each and every sale for such projects.

TRADELINK "PAYS IT FORWARD" BY PROVIDING JOB TRAINING SKILLS AND MATERIAL FOR CRAFT WORKERS.

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Providing job training skills and income is the purpose of Tradelink's social project in Belém, Brazil. There, in a nearby community, Tradelink donates the off-cuts from their production to the community's arts and crafts association. Profits from the sale of these products are distributed to the workers of the association – creating jobs and a stable community, and improving environmental conditions through waste recycling.

Christmas was celebrated along the Amazon River near Breves, Brazil due to the generosity and corporate stewardship of the Robinson Lumber and Flooring Company. For the past three years, Robinson and its Brazilian subsidiary, Robco Madeiras Ltda., have distributed gift baskets with toys, food, books and medicines. The food baskets contain several pounds of beans, rice, flour and other staples of a nourishing diet.



ROBINSON LUMBER AND FLOORING COMPANY HELPS SANTA DELIVER GIFTS, FOOD AND MEDICINES THROUGH ITS "CHRISTMAS IN THE AMAZON" PROGRAM.

PHOTO PRINTED WITH PERMISSION BY ROBINSON LUMBER AND FLOORING COMPANY.



CHILDREN ARE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THROUGH THE HELP OF CIB, A SUBSIDIARY OF DLH NORDISK. CIB ASSISTS WITH BUILDING AND MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THEIR FOREST CONCESSIONS LOCATED IN CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE.

PHOTO PRINTED WITH PERMISSION BY CIB

Operating in Africa, CIB, a subsidiary of DLH Nordisk, provides free medical exams at one hospital and four clinics to all inhabitants in their forest concessions, regardless if they are employed by CIB or not. The hospital is considered the best equipped hospital in the northern part of Congo-Brazzaville. CIB also assists with building and management of public schools in their forest concessions. In 2005, 3,600 children were enrolled in schools in CIB's concessions.

These are some examples of IWPA members supporting social, cultural and environmental programs.

AMERICANS WANT IT "DONE RIGHT"

Make no mistake, good deeds come with a price tag. Luckily, imported wood products provide the elusive but much sought after "win-win." American consumers value imported woods – flooring, furniture, cabinetry, moulding and millwork – for their natural beauty, durability, uniqueness and affordability. This consumer-driven demand pushes architects and designers to increasingly specify imported species in projects; thereby, creating jobs in developing countries and the U.S., while supporting long-term conservation of these amazing forests.

Sustainable forest management, economic development and cutting-edge design are all great success stories attributable to an industry that is doing it right. **iw**

IMPORTERS PROVIDE:

- U.S. workers with jobs
- U.S. consumers with quality wood products
- Architects, designers, and distributors with an enhanced palette of species and product possibilities
- Sustainable forests for future generations' use
- Essential human and social services in developing countries
- Workers in developing countries with jobs

Tropical Sustainable Forest Management

The increasing U.S. market for imported hardwoods has led some to question the impacts of this trade on tropical forest management. Ninety percent of the 1.2 billion people who live in extreme poverty depend on forests to satisfy their livelihoods. The more value brought to these developing countries through international trade, the more incentive there will be in sustainable management.

What impact am I causing on tropical forests by using imported wood products?

A: Positive! Creating economic incentives encourages communities to manage their forests and leads to their long-term conservation, preventing them from being turned into farms and ranches.

In a publication by the U.N. Environment Program, World Conservation, “buying tropical veneers and other valuable tropical hardwood products that have been produced sustainably would encourage maintenance and even improvement of selective wood extraction.”¹

Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, Counselor for Biodiversity and Economic Affairs at the Smithsonian Institution states, “the key component in preserving and maintaining the tropical forests is to ensure these resources maintain their economic value.”²

How can I help “save” tropical forests?

A: In addition to using imported wood products, you

can support organizations working for their sustainable management and development. The Tropical Forest Foundation (www.tropicalforestfoundation.org) is one example of an on-the-ground collaborative effort by industry and environmental organizations to use reduced impact logging techniques for sustainable forest management.

What are foreign governments doing to enforce their illegal logging laws and sustainably manage their forests?

A: Each country has different laws and regulations, and in many cases they are stricter than in the U.S. For example, in Brazil you must have an approved forest management plan prior to harvest, whereas in the U.S. this is not a requirement.

The U.S. government, through the President’s Initiative Against Illegal Logging, is working with countries in Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia on capacity building to help them increasingly crack down and enforce their laws and regulations in efforts to expand sustainable forest management.

¹ “Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living,” International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources/ United Nations Environment Program/World Wide Fund for Nature, Gland, Switzerland, 1991

² Smithsonian Institution. 1990 “Tropical Forestry Workshop.”

Know the Facts: To learn more about sustainable forest management and the latest best practices, visit www.iwpawood.org or call 703.820.6696.

IWPA is the only association in the United States committed to the promotion and enhancement of legal and sustainable trade in the imported hardwood and softwood products industry. Our diverse membership includes 225 U.S. importers, manufacturers, transportation companies, port authorities, customs brokers, and overseas producers from 30 countries around the world.

