Beyond book learning

The richness of a College of Forestry education
Learning on the job. Forest engineering student Pat Gaylord at work on McDonald Research Forest.

Spring 1992
Volume 5, No. 2

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The College of Forestry at Oregon State University is a very special place to study, learn, and grow into a professional in a natural resource field. What makes it special are the many opportunities for a rich and diverse educational experience. Part of the richness comes from the setting. Oregon has some of the most magnificent forests in the world, and they are very diverse—coastal rain forests, high-elevation forests of mixed conifers, mixed conifer and hardwood forests in southwestern Oregon, and the great pine forests east of the Cascades.

Another part of the richness stems from our outstanding faculty, with expertise ranging from fundamental biology to engineering to social and behavioral sciences. Students are exposed to a variety of viewpoints and ways to solve problems.

Yet another part comes from the University itself, Oregon's only Land Grant, Sea Grant, and Space Grant university. The opportunity to explore other ideas and professions contributes greatly to the learning experience.

Our College has also been blessed with caring people who have provided significant gifts that have enabled us to add that extra dimension to students' education often unavailable elsewhere. We have a 12,000-acre research forest within 20 minutes' drive from campus that was given to us by friends and alumni. Students travel to professional meetings and take lengthy field trips thanks to several generous donors. Our equipment for teaching is the most up-to-date available because donors make that possible. We have excellent scholarships and cooperators from industry and government: they provide internships, work-study cooperatives, and summer jobs.

Finally, the richness of the educational experience is enhanced by an excellent group of students with very diverse backgrounds. I'm very proud of our students and their dedication to learning, leadership, and professionalism. And they're also a lot of fun to work with! We've featured several students in this issue of Focus on Forestry—you'll see what I mean.

If you're considering a career in natural resource management, or if you know of someone who is, we hope you'll think about our College. If you'd like more information, send me a note and we'll get right back to you!
Richness is the hallmark of a Forestry education

Summer jobs, state-of-the-art equipment, field trips, guest speakers, and fun—this is learning!

Trees—as every forestry student learns—grow best in the environment that supplies their needs. Like a seedling, an education is a living, growing thing. Students need a rich and nourishing environment to achieve their full potential.

Here at the College of Forestry, the learning environment is full and rich. Surrounding the essential core of classroom study is a wide array of opportunities for growth—for learning, for skill enhancement, for service, for fun.

Many field trips are required in connection with classes—tours of a mill or a demonstration forest, for example.

Forest Management sophomore Steve Teitzel was along when his forest economics class, taught by Forest Resources professor Brian Greber, toured the Trus-Joist plant in Eugene in March.

Teitzel, who grew up in Stevenson, Wash., along the timbered banks of the Columbia, has seen sawmills before. But a visit to Trus-Joist, a leader in wood composites manufacturing, showed him something new. He was impressed, he says, with the process the company uses to produce 2-by-10 and 2-by-12 structural timbers from layers of veneer and glue.

Such engineered products are designed to replace the solid-sawn beams that are becoming scarcer and more costly as supplies of large logs decrease. “The company seems to be one of the more advanced, up-and-coming places,” says Teitzel, “one of the ones trying to stay competitive. It was very enlightening to see an example of where the forest products industry is headed.”

Sometimes the students themselves organize a study tour. That’s what Forest Science student Jeanne Panek did, and for two good reasons—to help her fellow graduate students get acquainted with the region’s landscape and flora, and to help them find the camaraderie that she had craved as a newcomer, back in January of 1991.

In this issue, we show you a few of those little extras, those nourishing tidbits that make a College of Forestry education so fulfilling for future forestry professionals. And we’d like to introduce you to some of these leaders of tomorrow, students who take advantage of the many-faceted learning experience offered here.

A lot of good ideas. FM students Sue Stewart, left, and Heidi Hubbs share a light moment at the Portland fire symposium.

Seminars, field trips, and other off-campus tours are almost everyday events at the College of Forestry.
"I’m from the East Coast," she says, "and I hardly knew what a Douglas-fir was." So just before classes started last year, she and fellow student Eric Hanson led 14 other students on a four-day field trip.

The tour began at McDonald Forest, and went from there to the Andrews Experimental Forest, in the Blue River country of McKenzie Pass. The group headed east over the pass, along the Deschutes River through the high pine country of central Oregon, and then drove back to Corvallis over Santiam Pass.

Jeanne, who grew up in the Northeast, was especially taken with the climatic zones of the mountain passes, revealed in their characteristic vegetation patterns. "I know the woods where I came from, but I wasn’t familiar with the plants out here," she says. "This was a great chance for me to see a whole bunch of different species because of that (climatic) gradient."

The tour offered more than scientific interest: "It was a chance for students to get to know each other. People relax and become friendlier when they’re out in the field, don’t you think? We got to be a fairly tight group."

**Jeanne Panek**

*Age: 30  
Hometown: Lake Placid, N.Y.  
Study program: Forest Science, doctoral candidate in forest physiology*

"I came here for a lot of reasons—because OSU has a good plant physiology program, and it offers a lot of good ecology, too. And I wanted to locate somewhere close to skiing and climbing. Corvallis is accessible to everything—ocean, woods, mountains, desert."

Jeanne and 14 other students on a four-day field trip.

**Heidi Hubbs**

*Age: 32  
Hometown: Granite Falls, Wash.  
Graduated Granite Falls High School, 1977  
Major: Forest Management*

"After I graduated from high school, I worked seasonal for the Forest Service on a district fire crew. But after a while I saw that it would become a dead-end street unless I went to school. I definitely feel that a lot of doors have opened for me with the education I’m leaving here with. I think I’ve achieved all my goals—maybe more."

Heidi Hubbs.

**Pat Gaylord**

*Age: 23  
Hometown: Milwaukie, Ore.  
Graduated Rex Putnam High School, 1987  
Major: Forest Engineering*

"Land surveying is where I’m headed. I’ll be going into business with my dad—he’s a land surveyor in Milwaukie. My goal is to do forestry consulting, too. I could see myself as a manager, helping clients follow through on a management plan for their woodlands."

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Pat Gaylord.
There's financial help, too

Thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends, the College of Forestry's scholarship program awards about $100,000 each year to some 50 forestry students.

Elyse Benson and Linda Bryant are two of them. They've each received a $750 scholarship from the National Hoo-Hoo-Ette Club, an organization of women working in forestry and the wood products industry.

Benson, 45, is pursuing a double major in forestry and wildlife and range management. This is her first Hoo-Hoo-Ette scholarship, and she's grateful for it. "I'm a single mother with a teen-age daughter," she says, "and this will be a welcome supplement to my financial aid."

A very recent source of scholarship funds is the Catherine Bacon fellowship, awarded for the first time this year to Melora Geyer, a Forest Science master's student.

Studying under Forest Science professor Kermit Cromack, Geyer is interested in mycorrhizae—the beneficial associations between soil fungi and the roots of plants. The fellowship provides $500, but it signifies more than money to her. "It means a lot that I was chosen for it. It's a great way to honor (Bacon's) memory, and I think it's really terrific that the department decided to start this fund."

Cathie Bacon was a promising young silviculturist and Forest Science faculty member who died of cancer in 1990. The Forest Science faculty established a fellowship in her name to help support outstanding women students.

Pat worked more than full time on that project last summer. During the school year he works one full day a week. "I could probably get by without it," says Pat. "But it's nice to have, both for the financial benefits and because I like the work. And it's excellent professional experience."

Janet Zentner, a senior in Forest Management, does a lot with her limited free time—she's secretary-treasurer of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) student chapter at the College of Forestry, she's the co-treasurer of the Forestry Club, she's on the logging sports team, and last summer she was chosen for a 12-week internship with the SAF's national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

On top of all that, Janet works part-time at the Self-Learning Center to working on the logging crew out on the College's Research Forests. And some professors employ students as teaching assistants or to help them with research projects.

Pat Gaylord, a senior in Forest Engineering, works on the McDonald Forest survey crew. Last summer he surveyed the boundaries of properties adjacent to the forest. The information he gathered will be included in a planned GIS (geographic information system) of the forest. A GIS is a multi-layered, computerized map involving everything from checking videotapes in and out of the Self-Learning Center to working on the logging crew out on the College's Research Forests. And some professors employ students as teaching assistants or to help them with research projects.

"I'd like to be a forest manager on the research side for companies doing their own silvicultural research. I enjoy trying to optimize things—finding better ways of doing something."

Janet Zentner
Age: 26
Hometown: Scappoose, Ore.
Graduated Scappoose High School, 1983
Major: Forest Management

"I have a co-op with the BLM, so I'll go to work for them in the Eugene District after I graduate. I'll probably work in timber sale layout.

"My time here has been a combination of hard work and fun—I don't think I've had a dull moment.

Our professors have given us a good base of knowledge and experience. What I do with it now is up to me."

Tim Truax
Age: 23
Hometown: Corvallis, Ore.
Graduated Crescent Valley High School, 1987
Major: Forest Management

"I'd like to be a forest manager on the research side for companies doing their own silvicultural research. I enjoy trying to optimize things—finding better ways of doing something."

Tim Truax, a senior in Forest Management, does a lot with her limited free time—she's secretary-treasurer of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) student chapter at the College of Forestry, she's the co-treasurer of the Forestry Club, she's on the logging sports team, and last summer she was chosen for a 12-week internship with the SAF's national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

On top of all that, Janet works part-time at the Self-Learning Center, a reserve library of videotapes, slide-tapes, and other learning materials assigned by professors for classroom work. She also checks students into and out of the Lundeen Communications Laboratory, a videotape studio where students refine their public speaking skills, and the "mapograph" room, where they can draw maps from the projected images of photographs.

Janet's friend Kristi Cochrane, a junior in Forest Recreation Resources,
works across campus in the Career Planning and Placement Center. Employed by the College of Forestry, Kristi performs as a liaison between forestry students and jobs available through the University-wide career planning office. Kristi's professional demeanor was an important qualification. Her job is to help other students write effective resumes and to coach them on how to fill out job applications competently. The goal, she says, is to shape your application to catch the eye of a potential employer. She has led several 40-minute seminars on professional job-seeking techniques, and "you can really tell which students took them" by the improved look of the resumes and job applications the students turn in.

The job not only enhances her own professional skills, Kristi says, but it's an opportunity to help her peers—a responsibility she takes seriously. "Giving these help sessions is a lot different from giving a speech in class," she says. "These people are relying on you for good information."

A few students with special skills are tapped by their professors to help with research projects. Tim Truax has been using his computer know-how on a large study being conducted by Forest Resources professor John Tappeiner and other College of Forestry faculty members. The study, called ECO6, which gives projections for other attributes of the stand that are harder to measure, such as leaf area and stem density. The computer model's precise information helps managers understand at a very detailed level the changes that take place under different cutting regimes.

Tim taught himself to use ECO6, and now he is helping to teach it to Tappeiner's silviculture students, both undergraduate and graduate. The job pays $6.50 an hour, and Tim has authority to hire help when he needs it. The hours are variable: "I'm on the honor system," he says. "Whenever I get time I just go crunch some numbers."

Ken Borchert, a senior in Forest Management, believes you can't get too much work experience. Ken has worked for two years on the Research Forests in inventory, and he's also had two summer work sessions with the Forest Service in resource planning on the Oakridge Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest. Looking forward to graduation this spring, Ken has already turned down one job offer and is considering another.

"Tell the young guys coming into forestry to get jobs in the field while they're in school," he advises. "Some (students) do other things, like construction work, to make more money. But it really hurts them. It's not the money—it's the experience that's most valuable."

A COLLEGE OF FORESTRY EDUCATION, indeed, is no ivory-tower enterprise. Professors keep their course work grounded in the realities of politics and the marketplace outside the College's walls.

One way to keep in touch is to bring those realities into the classroom in the form of guest speakers from business and government. Forest Products department head Bob Ethington invites a speaker in every week to talk to his Forest Products 407 Seminar class. The speakers address topics as diverse as personal financial planning, the value of a liberal education, and how to keep job skills current.

Dave Seluga, operations manager of Weyerhaeuser's Springfield container board plant (and a 1977 Forest Products graduate), was a guest in February. He offered some straight talk about what a new Forest Products graduate should expect when he or she hits the street.

"If we hire you," he told the attentive students, "we intend to capitalize on two things: one, your tremendous technical skill, and two, your raw talent to develop and shape over time. Those are the two ingredients you bring to the table."

Technical skills are very important in a new employee, he said, but as a worker matures in the job, the company begins to look for other attributes as well—leadership qualities, business acumen, people skills.
"When I was going to school," he said, "I underestimated the importance of the liberal arts. They help you in using motivational techniques, skills to get people to go where you want them to go."

His education, he said, hasn't stopped yet. "I've picked up another 35 credit hours of classes since I got out of school. It has become clear that I need more education to advance in my career."

Blair Gamble, a senior in Forest Products and member of the seminar class, found Seluga's remarks pertinent. "I really appreciate speakers like him, because they give you a feel for what to expect."

State-of-the-art equipment is another way the College of Forestry keeps education relevant to the outside world. Forest Engineering instructor Julie Kliewer's newest tool is a Global Positioning System, or GPS. This modest-looking instrument receives signals from orbiting satellites to calculate its position on the ground. Kliewer plans to use GPS in her forest surveying courses beginning this spring, to supplement more traditional methods of surveying.

The GPS system was developed by the U.S. Department of Defense. It receives signals from any of 24 artificial satellites circling the Earth at very high altitudes and in very predictable orbits. Using simultaneously received signals from four satellites, the system can locate itself anywhere on Earth to an accuracy of 2-5 meters. Other, more sophisticated units of this type are accurate to within a centimeter, Kliewer says.

The Defense Department has made the GPS system available for civilian use, but for security reasons it blocks some of the satellite signals. For this reason, and because it's primarily a learning tool, Kliewer's GPS isn't pinpoint-accurate. But the GPS system is a very good piece of equipment for a forestry surveying class, says Kliewer, because similar instrumentation is becoming widely used in industry and government.

A healthy community encourages its members to work on behalf of others, to volunteer their time in civic activities. The College of Forestry offers several such opportunities. The Society of American Foresters (SAF) has a student chapter at the College. "We've invited guest speakers in to talk about all kinds of topics," says Janet Zentner, secretary-treasurer of the student SAF.

Recently the student members heard Bob Metzger of the SAF National Council, who talked about what's going on nationally in SAF, and George Ice, from the Mary's Peak (i.e., local) SAF chapter. And last year the students invited Eric Forsman, a Forest Service biologist and one of the first scientists to draw attention to the decline in the habitat of the northern spotted owl.

Student SAF members may also attend Oregon SAF conferences, such as the one held in April of this year on the Oregon Coast. The conferences give them an opportunity to meet practicing foresters who may become mentors, employers, and friends.

The student Forestry Club, by contrast, is mostly for fun. The club sponsors hikes, dances, holiday parties, and the 20-member logging sports team. The men and women of the team compete with those from other West Coast forestry schools in axe throwing, manual and power sawing, speed choker setting, and other timber-beast skills.
The numbers come alive

Susan Stafford conveys love for subject and respect for students

Math has always been fun for Susan Stafford, and she sees no reason why it can't be fun for everybody. This philosophy permeates her teaching, and it may be one reason a committee of students voted her the best teacher of the year in the College of Forestry.

Stafford, a statistician and forest biometrician in the Department of Forest Science, was honored with the 1991 Aufderheide Award, a student vote of appreciation for good teaching. "I was impressed with her professionalism," says Carol Chambers, a doctoral candidate in wildlife science, who has taken Stafford's class on natural resources data analysis. "She's always prepared for class, and she's very creative in her approach to teaching. And besides that, she's concerned about you as a human being. That's a really neat combination—so often you get the professionalism without the warmth." Clearly, Stafford transmits to her students a love for the subject that's as infectious as her smile.

She had an early aptitude for the classroom. "I always had a blackboard in my room when I was growing up," she says, "and my younger brother and I used to play school." One time, she recalls, she erased a word that she had written on the board some time before. (The word was "spelling"). Her brother, who would have been 3 or 4, said, "I can write that," and did. "I was so intrigued that he'd really learned to spell," she says.

The environment in the Stafford home was rich with a love of learning. Young Susan spent her elementary-school years in Stillwater, Oklahoma, where her father was completing his doctorate in industrial engineering at Oklahoma State University. "I'd always go with him to the library on Saturdays," she says. "Every night we did algebra problems together at the dinner table." They would work out the equations on the napkins; "that's why my mother would never buy linen ones," she says, smiling.

Her teachers, recognizing her intellectual potential, also encouraged her to excel in math. In some of her classes she was in a distinct minority, but this, she says, never made her feel set apart from the other girls, or from the boys for that matter: "I had friends in all my classes. It was never an issue with me."

Stafford graduated from high school in Syracuse, N.Y., where her father had joined the faculty of Syracuse University. She went right on to graduate school, earning her master's degree in quantitative ecology and her doctorate in applied statistics, both at the State University of New York at Syracuse.

For her master's thesis she devised a mathematical model to measure the degree of impact of commercial fishing on the fisheries of Lake Ontario, and for her doctorate she developed another model to assess the value of forest land for property taxation and valuation.

Thus her training has taken her into the sometimes-nebulous realm of quantifying living processes. "My interest," she says, "has always been the application of quantitative tools to real-world situations. I'm not a theorist. I want to help people apply existing techniques to problems they haven't been applied to before."

Stafford joined the OSU Forest Science faculty in 1979 as a consulting statistician. Her job was to help forestry professors use the mathematical tools to their fullest extent in their research.

She was involved with one of the early studies of the FIR program (Forestry Intensified Research), a large-scale effort to find ways to reforest the dry, rugged slopes of southwestern Oregon and northern California. The study was a good example, she says, of how an experiment sometimes needs to be shaped to meet principles of statistical soundness. "I was telling them all the ways they needed to replicate their experiments, all the things they had to do, and they said, 'Maybe you'd better come down and take a look.' I had never truly understood what a 75-percent slope meant."

She helped the FIR scientists...
A simple, powerful idea

**Master Woodland Managers help Forestry Extension reach out**

When Fay and Sherm Sallee left the migratory life of a military family in 1985, they knew they wanted to settle down onto a tree farm. The couple put down their roots on 16 tree-covered acres alongside the South Santiam. Since then they've expanded their wooded holding to more than 40 acres, working it for profit and pleasure.

"It's about managing the land," says Fay Sallee. "We're not logging and leaving it—we live here, and we replant it."

The Sallees are two of Oregon's 25,000 private, non-industrial forest landowners—a group that holds 38 percent of the state's private commercial forest land. OSU's Forestry Extension service is reaching that group through its Master Woodland Manager program.

Master Woodland Manager Fay Sallee inspects a seedling.

Master Woodland Manager works on a simple but powerful idea: private woodland owners get training in good forest management, and then they're empowered as volunteers to teach it to other woodland owners.

"It really increases the effort we can put forward in forest management education," says Rick Fletcher, OSU Benton County Forestry Extension agent and leader of the statewide Master Woodland Manager steering committee. "This body of trained volunteers can reach more different kinds of people than I ever could. They make the Forestry Extension program much more effective."

Becoming a Master Woodland Manager takes 85 hours of class work, spread over about 10 months, covering topics ranging from harvesting and replanting techniques to business management and forest practices law. The course's final project is a complete management plan—each student must devise one for his or her own woodland.

Since the Benton County pilot project in 1985, the Master Woodland Manager program has graduated more than 100 members in 12 Oregon counties, and it's been adapted for use in other parts of the country. The result, Fletcher says, is a vast "good-neighbor" network of woodland owners who help educate other woodland owners—and the public—about forestry.

Each graduate is asked to pay back the 85 hours of schooling in the form of volunteer work. Many do much more than that, says Fletcher: "They really like what they do."

Through their community leadership, Master Woodland Managers also show legislators and other decision makers a side of forestry they may not have seen before, says A. Scott Reed, assistant dean of the College of Forestry and Forestry Extension program leader. "Part of our mission is to create public awareness about responsible forest management," he says. "People need to have good knowledge to make decisions. We're part of providing that knowledge."

by Doug Schorzman
Dean's Awards given

Two individuals and a team were honored with the annual Dean's Award for Outstanding Service at the all-College awards banquet in December. David Hann, Forest Resources associate professor, was commended for his excellence in biometrics research and for his development of the ORGANON computer model. The model, which projects forest stand development, has become a valuable guide for managing Northwest forests.

Richard K. Hermann, Emeritus Professor of Forest Resources, was elected a 1991 Fellow of the Society of American Foresters. A member of SAF is elected Fellow in recognition of outstanding service to forestry and to the Society. The basic requirements include contributions to the application of forestry, to education and research, and to the advancement of the profession. Thirty-four Fellows were elected in 1991 out of a nationwide membership of 18,000.

"Dick Hermann has had an outstanding career," says Dean George Brown, "and this recognition of SAF Fellow is 20 years overdue."

Hermann elected SAF Fellow

Old growth at the Smithsonian

You're a new supervisor on a National Forest that contains old-growth timber, and you're on the hot seat at a town meeting in a Northwest logging community. The citizens of the town give you their best advice on how to manage the old growth—advice that ranges from clear-cutting it to preserving it all. You must decide what to do.

Earlier this year, visitors to the Smithsonian Institution put themselves onto that hot seat through an interactive video presentation called "The Forest Manager Game." The video, a major component of an exhibit titled "Old-Growth Forests: Treasure in Transition," was developed with the help of Jim Kiser and Perry Brown of the College of Forestry.

Kiser, Forest Resources research assistant and an expert on video simulation, created the simulations for "The Forest Manager Game." A visitor touches a video screen to choose which of three management approaches to adopt, and the videotape then "grows" the forest that will result over time from that decision.

Kiser and Brown, an associate dean of Forestry and Forest Resources professor, helped write the video's script. It hits hard on the complexity of managing forests amid the sharp diversity of public opinion.
“Old Growth: Treasures in Transition” was put together by Creative Media Development, Inc., a Portland firm, as a joint project of the Forest Service and the World Forestry Center. It was on loan to the Smithsonian from December 1991 through April 1992, and is now being prepared for exhibition at the Agricenter International in Memphis, Tenn., where it will run through January of 1993.

A new master’s program

The gulf between natural resource managers and the public sometimes seems wide and deep. The public often doesn’t understand what forest managers are trying to do, and forest managers often don’t have the tools to communicate with them effectively.

Those are the assumptions underlying the newly created Master of Science program in Forest Resources with an emphasis on natural resource education and extension. The degree program is aimed primarily at those already educated in a natural resource field who would like to develop skills in adult education and communication.

Graduates might find themselves working as Extension Service educators, public-affairs officers in agencies or private organizations, education specialists for facilities like parks and arboreta, and liaison staffers for lawmakers.

A bachelor’s degree in any field qualifies an applicant for potential admission to the program, but a substantial background in natural resource management is essential. For more information about the new Master of Science program, get in touch with the Forest Resources Department, College of Forestry, Peavy 108, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 97331-5703.

Schroeder

A couple of formative experiences occurred during his student years. He got acquainted with Ed Aulerich, then a professor of forest engineering at Oregon State, now a private consultant in Corvallis. Schroeder took Aulerich’s classes in logging operations research and helped with the professor’s research projects.

It was Aulerich, he says, who taught him to push himself past the black-and-white thinking of textbook exercises. “He would give exams where there wasn’t any one right answer, because he was more interested in your problem-solving process.” This lesson, he says, amounts to the most valuable tool of all—a knowledge of how to learn.

Also while in school, Schroeder worked for the family-owned Starker Forests, Inc., laying out roads and cruising timber in the company’s second-growth forest lands near Corvallis. The experience opened his eyes to the constant and continuing responsibility that comes with managing forests. “I have a deep respect for the Starkers as resource managers,” he says. “They’re really committed to the long term. And so are we, as a company.”

After he graduated, Schroeder went to work for Stimson as a forester, helping manage the company’s timber lands near Forest Grove, Ore. After six years he was transferred to Crescent City as assistant manager of both processing and timber operations there. In a few years he was promoted to manager. He went on to become vice president for manufacturing for Stimson and now works at the Portland head office. He remains vice president of the Crescent City operations as well.

As chief of manufacturing, Schroeder coordinates production at each of the company’s seven plants with the activities of Stimson’s resource group, which handles raw-material supply, and with Stimson’s overall marketing strategy. Stimson and its subsidiaries, which employ 850 people, produce lumber, plywood, and hardboard at locations ranging from Crescent City north to Clatskanie, Ore., and the company also exports chips from a facility at Eureka.

Stimson owns 120,000 acres of timber lands, containing mixed old- and second-growth timber in northern California and second-growth timber in Oregon and southwestern Washington. About half its raw material comes from its own lands, the other half from public and private timber sales.

Manufacturing at a profit is “a big challenge today, with log prices escalating the way they’ve been,” Schroeder says. Plywood in particular has suffered from a dwindling supply of old-growth logs, so that clear face veneer—the “skin” that tops a piece of plywood—is scarcer and more expensive than ever.

To address this shortage, the company’s plywood mill at Merlin, Ore., is being converted to produce a new, plywood-type siding material called DuraTemp. The product has a face of hardboard rather than veneer. Because these two materials react differently to moisture and heat, laminating them together presents some engineering problems. To solve them, the mill is employing a lay-up process that Schroeder won’t say much about.

Such aggressive pursuit of innovation, he is convinced, is necessary for a wood products company to survive. “A few years ago, almost anybody could make money in this business. Not now. But when things shake out, I think you’re going to see a lean, mean, efficient industry.”

Continued from page 12
The wood products world is changing

It's a challenge, but he's up to it

You could say that Scott Schroeder got into the wood products business at a very young age. In a 1983 book about the venerable, family-owned Stimson Lumber Co., there's a picture of Scott, age 10, helping push the start-up button of a new Stimson sawmill. The mill was Miller Redwood of Crescent City, Calif., and Scott's dad, Darrell Schroeder (OSU Forest Engineering '48), was its manager. The year was 1964, lumber was thriving, and things seemed stable—as stable as they ever had been in this business.

Today Scott Schroeder (OSU Forest Engineering '79) is vice president of that mill—which is still operating, cutting old-growth redwood and Douglas-fir. He's also vice president of Rellim Redwood, the mill's logging operation, and vice president for manufacturing of the parent company, Stimson Lumber. His father recently retired as Stimson's president and is currently chairman of the board.

The 102-year-old parent company continues to do well, but things are hardly stable. Especially in northern California, the battles over timber harvesting, and over natural resource management generally, have been prolonged and bitter. "These days," says Scott Schroeder, "you can get hit with a dozen different crises inside of a week. It's exciting—in more ways than one. In fact, it's a challenge, but I feel up to it. The most important thing I learned at school was how to cope with a changing situation."

Although following in his father's footsteps might have seemed a natural choice for young Scott, it was no foregone conclusion. After graduating from Del Norte County High School in Crescent City, he enrolled at Oregon State, attended for a couple of quarters, then decided to make the world his classroom. "It was a false start, I guess," he says. "I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I put a backpack on my back and went to see the world."

He wandered through the Northwest and Canada for a year, planting some trees, thinking hard about the direction his life was to take. "Once I got my feet back on the ground," he says, "I began to see some value in the wood products industry."

He started his forestry education at Humboldt State in Arcata, Calif., transferring to the College of Forestry at Oregon State in his sophomore year.

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