Using Urban Wood: What’s Everybody Else Doing?

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Alternative Approaches

- The location, market, quality, and species of your urban timber provides you with distinct advantages and disadvantages.
  - Nearby industrial wood processors, or lack of.
  - Invasive insects or wood species
  - Established craft industry, or lack of.
  - State, local, extension assistance, or lack of.
Alternative Approaches

Because local solutions and practices have evolved around the local environment ---

Successful approaches to urban forestry can vary significantly and depend on local creativity.

Here are some approaches taken from around the country...
Sarasota, Florida

WoodSlabs.com

- Invasive tropical species susceptible to tropical storm and hurricane damage.
- One company, Advantage Lumber, is sawing slabs from the tropical urban wood and marketing them locally and nationally on line.

Indian Rosewood
Advantage is a traditional brick and mortar supplier that expanded to take advantage of their urban wood situation offered. They say that business is starting to take off.
Warwick, New York
newyorkheartwoods.com

- New York Heartwoods founded to:
  - Reduce volume of trees going into the landfill
  - Create local jobs and regenerate local economy
  - Build relationships that maximize value of “waste” trees.
Several aspects to their business:

- **LUMBER & LIVE EDGE SLABS:**
  green, air- or kiln-dried. Rough-sawn or planed.

- **DECOR & DISPLAYS** for retail stores and events.

- **MISC. FOREST PRODUCTS:** branches, stumps, vines, etc.

- **TABLE RENTALS:** slab tops for weddings and other events

- **CUSTOM FURNITURE:** tables, shelves, stools, etc.
- Extensive and oldest city park system in the nation.
- Over 11,200 acres of parks. Fairmount park is 4,167 acres. Managed since 1850’s.
- 2.1 million trees, including 135,000 street trees.
Philadelphia, PA

- Has wide range of log quality.
- Educating fellers and crews how to cut saw and sort logs.
- Working to demonstrate the value and potential of their resource.
Just starting to develop a plan to utilize logs by the city.

They have a large workshop that has the potential to utilize large amounts of urban wood for the city.

Cooperating with local businesses to develop markets for logs.
Baltimore County, MD

www.baltimorewoodproject.org

- Project is a partnership between the city, local municipalities, US Forest Service, Maryland DNR, and local entrepreneurs.
- Sorting and sawing of higher-quality and valued logs as well as reclaimed timber from demolition.
- Estimated 42,500 tons of wood waste yearly.
- Scheduled to receive a dehumidification dry kiln.
Baltimore County, MD

- Main driving force for Baltimore County, is increase public awareness of importance of their urban forest.
- Plans to achieve a 50% forested Baltimore.
Michigan

- Unique marketing approach for urban forest products.
- Partnership between:
  - Southeast MI Resource Cons. & Dev. Council
  - Recycle Ann Arbor
  - Michigan DNR
  - USDA Forest Service WERC
Michigan

- Originally a response to EAB outbreak.
- Mills and partners have joined to share marketing responsibilities, create new retail markets.
- Since retail market inception, sales are grew 60% second year, 80% third year.
- A second store was opened in 2012.
- Seeking affiliates outside MI.
Wisconsin Urban Wood project is an affiliate of urbanwood.org

Wisconsin Urban Wood is a network of independent businesses and nonprofit organizations recycling urban trees back into the social and economic lives of Wisconsin communities.
Wisconsin UrbanWood has 9 retail locations across WI.

- Data for architects to make it easier to incorporate urban wood into projects.

- State DNR web site lists urban forestry/wood utilization consultants.

- Makes it easy to find assistance.
California

- CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry has substantial grant opportunities for urban wood utilization. (www.fire.ca.gov)
- CAL FIRE has established significant forestry and utilization campaign and partnership network.
Far West Forest products specializes in urban, salvaged and reclaimed timber.

Products marketed to up-scale furniture and cabinet crafters and architectural firms.
Goal: To encourage the harvesting and use of wood from urban and community trees felled in Illinois.

Funded by USDA Forest Service WERC

Team: State and federal officials and industry leaders support a network of urban foresters, municipalities, landowners, wood processors, green builders, economic development organizations and end users.
Industrial Influences

- Wood-Mizer is a strong industrial supporter of urban forestry.
- Encourages small business startups to process urban trees.

“... diseased and dying city trees can find new life in a piece of furniture that could have otherwise gone to waste. Throughout the past decade, Wood-Mizer has seen a major influx of successful businesses who are utilizing urban sourced wood for their sawmilling operations and we are proud to manufacture a product that enables small businesses to be profitable with an underutilized resource. ...”
Industrial Influences

- Woodmizer maintains a contact list that make it easier to find sawyers to process urban trees.
Summary

- Lumber from urban trees can have a great character. Very distinct when compared to commercially sawn lumber.
- One key to success will depend on innovative marketing solutions.
Summary

- Marketing street tree saw logs and products depends on locating cooperative mills and firms in your area.
  - Sawmills
  - Architectural
  - Craft
  - Artistic
  - Pulp/Paper mills
  - OSB
  - Pellet Fuel / Bio Fuel
Summary

Don’t overlook the emotional aspect.

- Wood evokes emotion.
- Urban wood and forest products, more so.

Urban forest product end consumers are not looking for a flawless object.
Summary
Questions?