

Saratoga Forest Management, LLC

Saratoga, Wyoming

TPM Member Since
January 2013



Saratoga Forest Management, located in south central Wyoming, is dedicated to producing the highest quality forest products with a focus on the regional community and a passion to preserve and improve the health of Rocky Mountain forests.

The mill is located in the beautiful town of Saratoga, Wyoming, a community of 1,700 people. Saratoga is nationally known for its active hot springs, some of the best blue ribbon trout rivers in the country, and tremendous herds of elk and other big game in the surrounding forests.

The mill has been an active and important part of Saratoga since 1934. Originally founded by R.R. Crow, the mill produced stud lumber that became known as “Saratoga Straights;” prized for their innate resistance to warping and



Branded with the Saratoga logo, these 2 x 4s are wrapped and ready for shipment.

twisting, common in other lumber. Over the years, the mill grew and saw many improvements while operating under a number of different owners. It continued producing quality lumber until 2003, when Louisiana Pacific, its then-current-owner, idled the plant. In 2012, Saratoga Forest Management, LLC, acquired the idled mill and began a major renovation which eventually led to the mill’s first production run in more than ten years on January 28, 2013. The mill is now firmly re-established producing straight, strong framing lumber (and related products) from the high altitude lodgepole pine and engelmann spruce forests in the area and once again selling “Saratoga Straights” into markets throughout the Midwest and Southern United States.



The infestation of Mountain Pine Beetles and massive wildfires has brought devastation on this Colorado forest.

Saratoga’s mill reopening has provided much needed help to a region of the United States devastated by an unprecedented infestation of Mountain Pine Beetles and massive wildfires. Since 1996, the beetle outbreak in this region has destroyed nearly seven million acres of forests in Wyoming and Colorado. Saratoga sits in the midst of some of the most heavily affected acres. There is no way to stop the wide spread insect infestations in in the area. However, harvesting infected areas within a short period after infestation and before the timber falls, speeds restoration of the forest.



Distressed forest in Wyoming will improve with proper management and reforestation.

Featured Member *continued from page 8*

True to its commitment to preserve and improve the Rocky Mountain forests, Saratoga Forest Management has professional foresters on staff who direct its timberland management programs in conformity with the highest standards of Silvicultural applications and Best Management Practices. By employing such discipline and practices, the company can accomplish a rate of forest growth that is up to four times the rate of natural regeneration. This type of regeneration is essential to restoring the forests. This philosophy is in part why the words “forest management” are in the company name.

One challenge in reopening the mill was to produce quality lumber from these devastated forests. “We figured out



The production crew work diligently to produce some of the best studs available.



The log deck area of the mill.

The process of restarting the mill has had a number of challenges, but Ervin says it has all been worth it. “We have been fortunate enough to open up a mill in an area that desperately needed forest management and we were able to do it with mostly local people,” says Ervin, “As the largest employer in the town, we’ve seen the impact on the community and as the largest processor of timber in the area, we are seeing the impact of restoring these forests.”

Although Saratoga Forest Management is one of the newest sawmill companies in the industry, they are well on their way to establishing themselves as a supplier of quality lumber, while making a needed impact on restoring the health of the forests in their region.

early on that we needed to produce great lumber from not-so-great timber”, says Gary Ervin, the managing partner of Saratoga Forest Management. “Before we restarted the mill, we first invested heavily in process improvements that help us work with small diameter trees that are often marred by checks, spiraling or other defects. Even so, to produce a great product, we have to accept that we are going to have more downfall than most mills.” An early focus on producing a premium stud has paid off as the Company’s premier product, a #2 stud, has quickly gained a reputation as a higher quality product.



Studs outside the kiln, quite an accomplishment for the mill that has only been running since January 2013.

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