

LUMBER MILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS: WHO KNEW IT WOULD BE THIS HARD?

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Lumber is a crucial element of Washington's economy. Green certifications in the lumber industry, like FSC certification, help show consumers that their wood comes from sustainability-managed forests and mills. However, there is a disconnect between FSC Certification and Lumber Mills in Washington, and Northwest Natural Resource Group (NNRG) wanted to know why. NNRG is a non-profit that does group certifications for forests in the pacific northwest. There is plenty of FSC-certified wood, but when it comes to getting it into certified mills, there is a missing link. The purpose of this study was to visit and interview the various lumber mills in Washington to ask them their general views on certifications and then, more specifically, why they aren't FSC certified, let their certification lapse, or are currently certified with a different certification like SFI or PEFC. To accomplish this task, I created a survey of about thirty questions that took me about thirty minutes to do as an in-person interview. I then took the different responses to these survey questions and compared them to each other to determine the most significant barriers for lumber mills in getting FSC certified. I found that the three most prevalent barriers to the lumber mills were the lack of price premium for FSC-certified wood, the lack of consumer interest, and the cost of certification. For FSC to expanding in Washington, there will need to be large changes that create a monetary gain for the lumber mills, or they will not be getting certified.