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# The Greenest Wood: FSC Certified or Bamboo?

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# Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)



- Founded in 1993 by members from 25 countries
- Funded by public and private donations
- Trademark appears on more than 20,000 products
- Certified more than 29 million hectares of forest lands
- Requires use of independent third party auditors to issue certifications





# Forest Management Principles

- 10 Principles and Criteria
  - 1) Compliance with laws and FSC principles
  - 2) Tenure and Use Rights and Responsibilities
  - 3) Indigenous Peoples' Rights
  - 4) Community Relations and Workers' Rights
  - 5) Benefits From the Forest
  - 6) Environmental Impact
  - 7) Management Plan
  - 8) Monitoring and Assessment
  - 9) Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests
  - 10) Plantations



# Flaws in FSC



- 2002 report by Rainforest Commission cites several issues:
  - Allowing the certification of timber companies that were guilty of human rights abuses
  - Allowing the certification of timber companies that engaged in logging in tropical rainforests with populations of endangered species
  - Conflict of interest for auditors who are paid by the company that they supposed to objectively certify
  - Cost of Certification is burdensome to smaller timber operations

# Bamboo's Benefits

- Reaches full height in 1 year, requires 3-7 to mature to construction quality
- “The Poor Man’s Timber”
- Grows from rhizomes
- Used in products: Flooring, Cabinetry, Structural, Fiber boards, paper, and fabric
- Used to reforest areas left vulnerable to Erosion in Vietnam due to defoliants
- Highly efficient at taking in CO<sub>2</sub> and holding on to the carbon as it exhales pure oxygen
- Typically grows quickly w/o use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides



But wait...  
there's a downside



## ■ NO REGULATION!

- ❑ Pesticides and chemical fertilizers often used to increase yields
- ❑ Hard wood forests or existing lands are stripped to become bamboo plantations
- ❑ No oversight of worker's conditions or indigenous people's rights to land
- ❑ Bamboo is highly invasive in areas where it does not occur naturally

## ■ High CO2 outputs from shipping

- ❑ Only one variety grows naturally in US- not suitable for construction materials
- ❑ Experiments with US varieties have not been successful so far

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If only there were a way to combine the two products...

FSC Certified... Bamboo?

- Bamboo Industry needs oversight
    - Possible application of FSC principles would provide structure for oversight and regulation in areas lacking these
    - INBAR has issued a report putting forward the positive characteristics of a similar certification system
    - No decisive action yet by INBAR, FSC could have **exclusive** market to *sustainable bamboo certification*
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