

# Interior Concerns Newsletter

A Newsletter for Environmentally Concerned Designers, Architects & Building Professionals

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POBox 2386, Mill Valley, CA 94942  
415.389.8049 Fax 388.8322



## **An Opening in the Debate Over Forest Use and Conservation** by Jason Grant

*Where does the wood you specify come from? How was it harvested? What was left in its place? And what can you do about it?*

Many architects and designers are conscious of the fact that, over the years, the cost of forest products has risen substantially even though, in many cases, the overall quality of wood has dropped. This trend is troubling to many in the building industry, and there is mounting recognition these problems in the wood supply are linked to problems in forest management. It seems, too, that an ever increasing number of design professionals, not to mention their clients, are concerned about the deterioration of forests here, at home, as well as in the tropics. They are wondering how to deal responsibly with wood in their specifications.

Anyone who delves into the complex issues underlying wood and forest use risk being put off by the political polarization and the shouted rhetoric that always seem to surround them. There are many who, given the choice, would rather pursue practical and constructive solutions to the challenges we face than sink to finger-pointing and name-calling. These people will be relieved to learn that an opening is appearing in the tangled debate over forest use and conservation.

The breakthrough is due in part to an unlikely coalition of timber producers, traders, foresters, environmentalists, all kinds of wood users, and others, that is taking shape in response to the universal problem of forest degradation and destruction. Old barriers are beginning to crumble as individuals and organizations converge from opposite directions on a small but growing patch of common ground. At its center are new

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HARBINGER CARPET  
1755 The Exchange, Atlanta, GA 30339  
800.241.4216