



Urban Wood Rescue is a part of a nonprofit called the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

The foundation has been in existence for 37 years – we’ve planted over 1.5 million trees in the Sacramento region. It’s a well established organization with a strong reputation.

SACRAMENTO Tree FOUNDATION



We have a number of long-standing programs in the foundation, listed here.

Urban Wood Rescue is the newest program and is an urban sawmill that is taking logs from the urban area and milling the wood into lumber. We sell that wood to the public and we do community benefit projects, as well.

Why would a nonprofit start a venture such as Urban Wood Rescue? We want to help close the urban forest loop, from planting and management to removal and reuse.

As a foundation, we've told the story of beginning of the life of a tree, now we're telling the story of the end of the life of a tree.

This is an example of how we're doing it: <https://youtu.be/TnpYozdwrsm>

What Jennifer and I have come to realize is that our two cities have similar issues – Jennifer is going to talk about some of that in detail, but what I'm going to talk about is public perceptions and the storytelling we do to educate and help shift those perceptions.

“WHEN YOU CUT DOWN A TREE, WHAT YOU MAKE FROM IT SHOULD BE AT LEAST AS MIRACULOUS AS WHAT YOU CUT DOWN.”

- The Overstory, by Richard Powers

URBAN WOOD RESCUE
SACRAMENTO TREE FOUNDATION

It really begins with this idea.

Urban Wood utilization is, in many ways, about honoring the tree; recognizing the contributions, value, and benefit of that tree, recognizing its environmental and carbon benefit, it's social impact, and more. It's about making sure this wonderful, renewable resource doesn't go to waste.

All trees are miraculous, truly. But how do you take it from that sort of ethereal concept and bring it down to a practical level? How do you tell the story of a single miraculous tree that produces a selection of wood pieces, set among other wood pieces from other miraculous trees, and then connect that back to that tree once an object is made?

That's where the tracking of the provenance of the wood comes into play, which is enormously challenging but something we've found solution for!



All of the logs that come to our yard get entered into a database that records things like species, address where the tree grew, why the tree had to be removed, who delivered it, etc. All logs get tagged with an inventory number that is entered with its associated data into the database.


When we mill the log, the slabs that come from that log are tagged with a slab inventory number (that remain connected to the log number). Those connections are maintained within our database, so we can tell the story and the *customer* can tell the story of the wood, too.

Happy to show you what that looks like during one of our breaks.



STORYTELLING IS AT THE HEART OF UWR
Telling the story of a tree's second life, creating tree-to-table champions

We also tell the story a number of ways – through signage on the yard, displays, species and drying information cards, social media initiatives, and more.



REDWOOD
2951 Truxel Rd
Sacramento, CA

**LONDON PLANE
EUCALYPTUS**
321 Eliza St
Sacramento, CA

ENGLISH WALNUT
Wheatland, CA

ELM
630 Alhambra Blvd
Sacramento, CA

URBAN WOOD RESCUE
SACRAMENTO TREE FOUNDATION

THE STORY OF THE WOOD

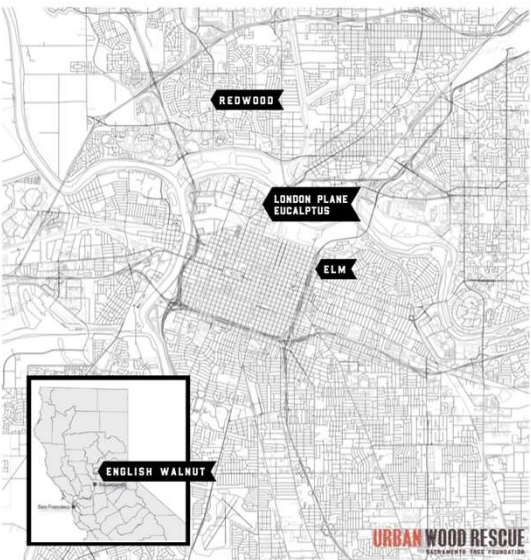
The redwood cookies were milled from logs donated by the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District. These trees were removed as part of efforts to ensure power lines remain clear of hazards. Although redwood isn't indigenous to the Sacramento Valley, redwood seedlings were handed out at the State Fair for many, many years – community members planted them in their yards and, since they grow so rapidly, the city has a plethora of mature redwoods in nearly every neighborhood.

Both the London Plane (Sycamore) and the Eucalyptus came from the Twin Rivers Housing project (formerly known as Dos Rios), which was a 218-unit housing development on 22 acres in North Sacramento. The development was first built in the 1940's and was one of the first in the County of Sacramento's public housing inventory. As part of a long-term strategic revitalization plan, the development is being torn down and rebuilt for mixed use (and replanted!). As we've milled logs from this housing project, we've found all sorts of "historical artifacts" embedded in the wood, including marbles, nails, bolts, and bullets. We can't imagine all the things these trees witnessed during their lifetime!

Sacramento is located in the center of a vast agricultural valley. In early 2018, we were contacted by an orchard owner about a 60-year old section of his orchard that he needed to remove and replant. We were able to salvage hundreds of English Walnut logs during that process. English Walnut wood is unique in its appearance due to the striking contrast between the sap and heart woods. Every single one of our logs has stunning figure in the sapwood and has beautiful, rich color tones.

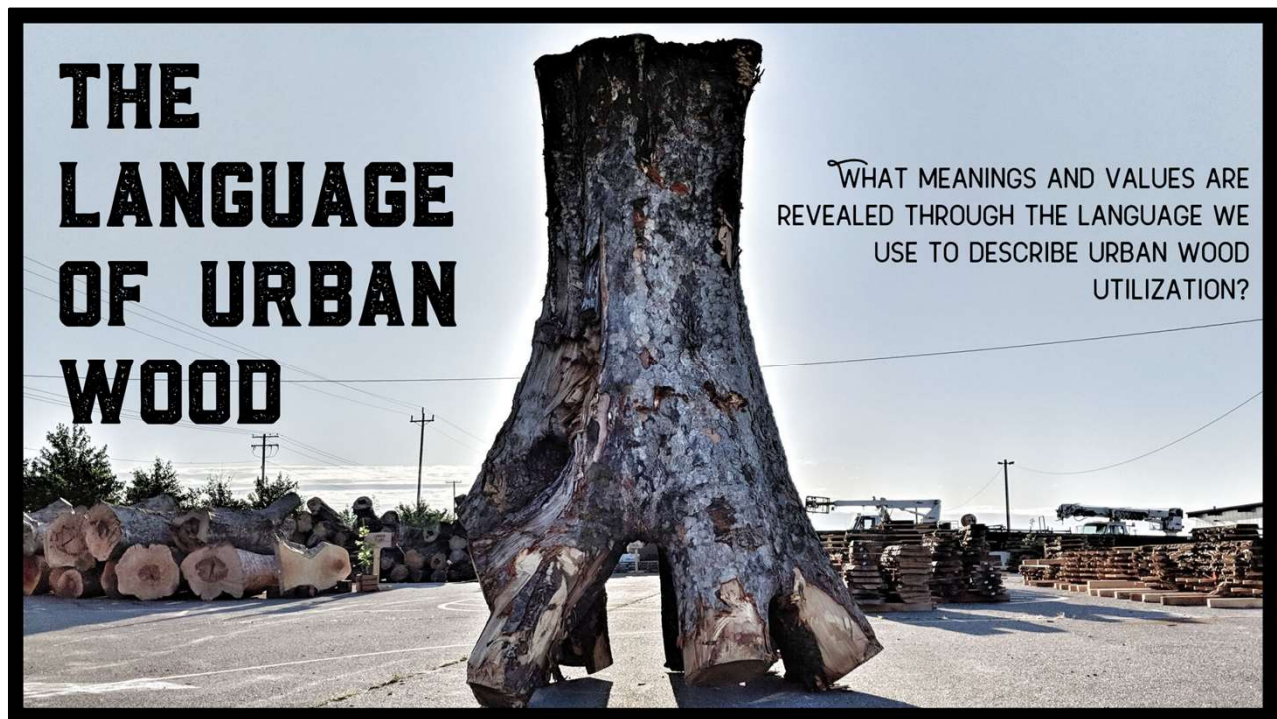
Elm trees all over the world have been impacted by Dutch Elm disease (DED) and Sacramento's elms are no exception. The Sacramento Tree Foundation runs a citizen scientist program called the Save the Elms Program (STEP), where community members adopt elm trees in their neighborhoods to monitor for signs of DED. When City elm trees have to be removed because of DED, we receive the logs and follow strict protocol to mitigate the risk of DED spread. The elm cookies were milled from logs donated by the City of Sacramento and were a part of our STEP program.

SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA



URBAN WOOD RESCUE
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This is an example of some storytelling we did for a commercial client, sharing the actual location of where the trees grew on a map and talking a little bit about the history of the area/neighborhood, etc.



THE LANGUAGE OF URBAN WOOD

WHAT MEANINGS AND VALUES ARE
REVEALED THROUGH THE LANGUAGE WE
USE TO DESCRIBE URBAN WOOD
UTILIZATION?

One thing that's really important to remember is that the language you use to describe urban wood utilization efforts hold meaning – how that meaning is created is really important to consider.

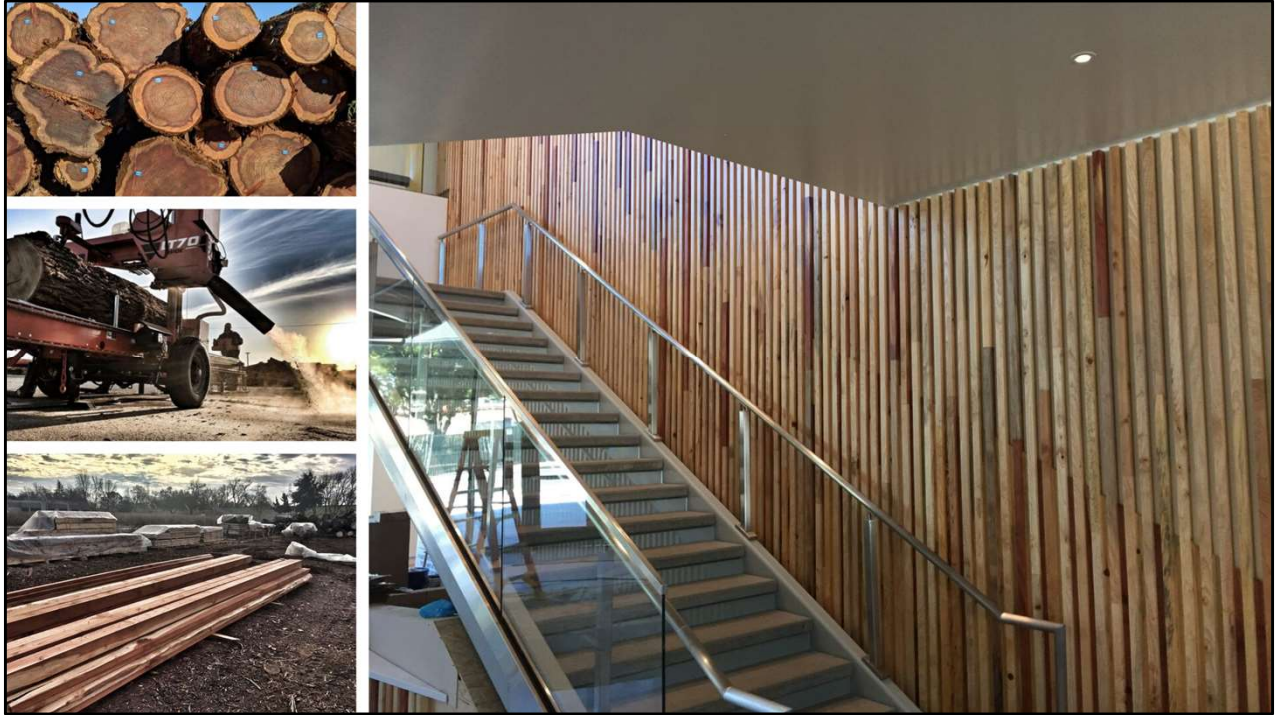
We don't use the word "harvest" to describe our efforts, we use the term "salvaged."

We differentiate between "reclaimed" wood and "urban" wood.

We get asked why we don't have X dimension wood – because we're capitalizing on what nature gives us – urban trees seek the light around buildings and other man-made shade and you can see that tension and stress in the grain of the wood.

There is story and history in every piece of wood, whether it's a historical artifact embedded in the wood (we've found marbles, bullets, nails, etc.), grain patterns showing wet years vs dry years, and more.

If you share that story using language that people can feel, the fact that the wood isn't *conventionally* perfect doesn't matter any more.



In addition, to help share the story of the wood, we work to get it into public spaces.

This slide shows the progression of logs to lumber for a demonstration project we did for Sacramento State University. They had to remove trees from campus to make room for the development of a new science building – we milled those logs into lumber that was then installed back into the same space those trees grew – into the new building. A remarkable and educational effort that enriched the space immensely.



This slide, also showing the logs to lumber process, is another demonstration project we did that used beetle-killed pine trees removed for wildfire mitigation that we turned into paneling for the interior of a new theatre space in downtown Sacramento.

By leveraging the power of public spaces and harnessing the storytelling capabilities of others around you, you increase your reach and support exponentially.

And when someone sees something beautiful made out of wood, and its clear that wood has a personal connection to a sense of place, you are doing something really important and powerful.

And that opens the door to connect with people in other ways and communicate the other facets of urban wood in interesting and compelling ways.



Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions!