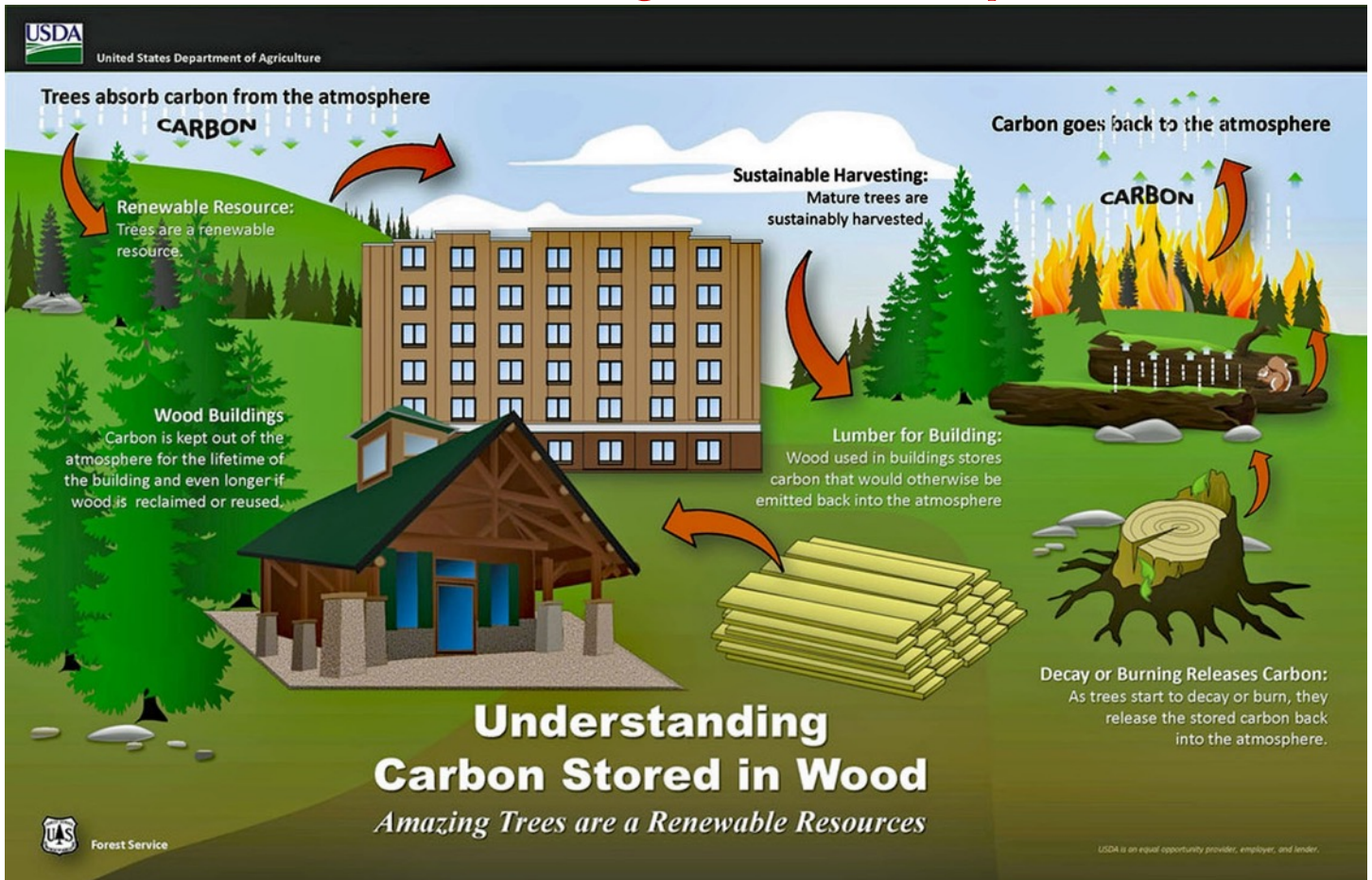


GREEN BY NATURE: Log Homes, a Responsible Choice



While log homes are loved for their natural beauty, they are also a truly responsible environmental choice. Here are twelve specific reasons why log homes also make sense!

Log buildings offer:

1. A NEGATIVE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Think wood! Log homes have the lowest carbon footprint in the building industry. As once living organisms, logs sequester (store) carbon for their lifetimes and beyond! The harvesting of trees for log homes often involves only one trip from the forest to the log builder's yard, then one to the home site. Through replanting, young trees continue to sequester more carbon. On the other hand, the production and transport of traditional building materials for frame construction creates substantial amounts of greenhouse gases. In terms of toxic emissions, log homes have a significant negative carbon footprint. In some cases, they even qualify owners for substantial carbon credits.

2. BETTER THERMAL PERFORMANCE

The thermal qualities of solid wood walls have been enjoyed for centuries. First, log homes are solid wood from top to bottom and essentially eliminate "thermal bridging," a condition whereby a significant amount of heat is lost through exterior surfaces. The cellular

structure of wood acts as a natural insulator. Second, log walls absorb and retain heat. When it is cold outdoors, stored heat is radiated back into the room. In hot weather, wood absorbs the sun's radiant heat and keeps indoor temperatures lower. This adds to occupant comfort while reducing cooling costs. In both ways, log walls contribute significantly to the energy efficiency of a home.

3. IMPROVED OCCUPANT HEALTH

Today's world is full of toxins and pollutants and modern building products contribute to the problem. In fact, drywall can leech both toxins and poisonous gases, contributing to indoor mold and mildew problems. A solid log wall is a natural product that requires no glue or harmful chemicals. Log walls also absorb excess indoor humidity. Again, household utility costs are reduced.

4. A LEGACY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Log homes become legacy homes. Climate experts agree that using renewable resources is the best way to

protect the environment. A typical conventionally wood framed home with drywall, fibrous insulation and vinyl is built for the length of a 30-year mortgage. In contrast, properly built and maintained log homes can last for centuries. It is amazing to realize that a 150-year-old tree used in a log home can still be of use 150 years later. There are excellent examples of mass timber buildings that are centuries old. (See story on pg. 14.) Think about how much greener the earth could be if more people chose to build log homes.

5. BEAUTIFUL CRAFTSMANSHIP

Once an almost forgotten skill, today's log crafters can still build these magnificent homes, homes that can withstand the test of time. These crafters treat each house as if it were their own. Their work is their passion, their name, their heritage and their bond. When you meet a log builder, one thing is certain: they are proud of their skills. Log homeowners reap the benefit.

6. DESIGN FRIENDLY LIVING

Too often, log homes are thought of as dark, boxy cabins—something pioneers might have built for expediency, not something a modern consumer would consider living in. However, today's log homes offer endless design opportunities. These houses can be bright, open and contemporary, quaint, simple, traditional and charming, or anything in between. New log homes can still have the same features as conventionally built homes; it is simply a matter of design, taste and attention to detail. No matter what, log homes possess warmth, comfort and character.

7. PEACE AND SERENITY

People love log homes! Research is showing just how much human beings thrive in the natural environment. There is something special about living in a home constructed from a living thing. The mass, the natural contours, the feeling of protection all come together in a log home. People often can't stop themselves from touching the wood. The natural color, the movement of the grain of the wood, the warm tones and the wood's imperfections give log homes a serenity too often missing in the modern world.

8. REMARKABLE ACOUSTICS

Log homes are quiet. As well as absorbing certain sound frequencies, the shape of logs helps distribute sound waves more evenly. Echo is reduced thereby keeping the sound bright and clean. Combined with well-placed floor and wall coverings, the highest frequencies are modulated. Unlike a home with gypsum board walls, a log home can sound like a concert hall. Grab a glass, sit back and enjoy. Music never sounds better than in a log home.

9. PRE-BUILT CONSTRUCTION FOR QUICK ON-SITE INSTALLATION

Because log homes typically are pre-built at the log builder's site, then disassembled and transported, most are quickly reassembled on their foundations in a relatively brief time. With the walls and roof support structure complete, the house needs only a roof system in place plus doors and windows installed to be weather-tight. This decreases potential damage from inclement weather. Finish construction can then proceed quickly. Log walls are usually pre-drilled for electrical wiring and cut out for electrical boxes. Specialized detailing at the log yard makes installing doors and windows easy.

10. WIDE AVAILABILITY THROUGH LONG DISTANCE SHIPPING

Many log home companies can deliver their structures almost anywhere. By pre-building, the log shell at their facility, they know things will fit well upon reassembly. Whether you live in North America or the Middle East, a log home can be pre-built, easily shipped and re-assembled on your property. Despite additional transport cost, the environmental impact of a log home will still be substantially lower than that of a conventionally constructed building.

11. A STRUCTURE BUILT TO WITHSTAND THE RAVAGES OF MOTHER NATURE

Log homes hold up well in severe weather events, earthquakes and even wildfires. Due to the weight of the logs and the nature of the interlocking corners, they stand up to fierce winds. Because of their inherent flexibility, they withstand earthquakes very well. Because intact logs char and smother a fire, log homes are much harder to burn down than conventionally constructed wood frame homes. Many news stories recount the tales of log homes that have withstood severe natural events and are still intact.

12. NATURAL BEAUTY THAT IS UNSURPASSED

Log homes are beautiful by their very nature. Whether nestled into the edge of a forest or standing by the water, they reflect the beauty that surrounds them and bring that beauty indoors. Even in a more urban setting, the peace and serenity we find in nature itself is brought home to those lucky enough to occupy a log structure.

Editor's Note:

The ILBA has created a campaign to help log builders and the public better that log buildings are an environmentally responsible choice.

