

Southeast Michigan RC&D Council  
City Logs to City Lumber  
Mini-Grant

Summary Report  
November 17, 2008

Prepared by

Saginaw Conservation District

Patti Copes, Executive Director  
Dan Keane, District Forester



The Saginaw Conservation District has been delighted to participate in the City Logs to City lumber program sponsored by the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council. This is a summary of what has been accomplished.

Under the forestry program, Dan Keane has been actively seeking opportunities to utilize urban wood and other Ash logs as a means of recycling and outreach on the importance of sustainable practices for area woodlot owners and municipalities. This mini-grant has been the first available funding to help us with this effort.

**Key partnerships:**

We contracted with Schultz Farm and Log who operates a custom sawing and kiln drying service in central Saginaw County. Mark has been sawing for almost 10 years and operates a Wood-Mizer Band Saw Mill.

Wood-Mizer provided our sawmill owner with a show package including a couple saw blades and other outreach material.

Saginaw County Road Commission assisted with the identification of a nearby road improvement project to upgrade a storm sewer system. Their project began with removal of a number of White Pine trees and other hardwoods. We obtained several of the most suitable trees with permission of the property owners and the contractor hired to complete the tree removal. The timing was fortunate to have the logs available in late September. As soon as they were available the logs were moved to the Schultz Farm.

An additional 14' White Ash log (25' dbh) was also obtained when a Consumers Energy contractor (Davey Tree Service) was noted doing service work of trimming and tree removal to protect an area power line. With permission from the property owner to have the log and service companies' cooperation to follow our cutting request, this resulted in some very nice boards.

We are also obtaining some additional bonus logs from an Ash tree removal project along a state road in the southern part of our county. This has been made available with assistance from the Regional Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), area Forester and their service contractor. These logs will be cut above and beyond our original grant support. They are being cut with proceeds from some of boards that have been sold.

**Property owners support:**

The District has been able to provide donation letters to three property owners to credit some value for the logs they have donated. A very conservative value of .30 to .35 per

board feet has been used for a value. Although a small amount for respective property owners this has been a very effective incentive when requesting their support.

### **The boards produced:**

Over 2200 board feet of Ash and White Oak has been produced as 4/4 and 6/4 boards. A small amount was cut and sold on a custom order basis for fencing.



Our priority for the boards that could be produced was based on what could be readily be marketed and what could be produced from the respective species that were available. For example Ash can is used to produce utility boards, quality furniture boards, future hardwood flooring or turning blanks for baseball bats. Some of the White Oak resulted high quality quarter sawn boards for furniture and some in lower quality utility boards such as posts and fencing. These factors were evaluated by review of the overall log as well as appearance when the log is being sawn.

So our cutting priority plan has been;

1. Cut any boards that can be sold as custom order green lumber
2. Baseball bat blanks (ash 3 ½ x 3 ½ x 40”) and mini bat blanks (1 ½ x 1 ½ x 24”) to be kiln dried.
3. Boards for resale or donation to partners. This includes 4/4 or 6/4 higher quality boards including quarter sawn oak. Much of this will also be kiln dried.



### **How the wood is being utilized:**

About 290 board feet of the milled wood has been sold including two large piles of slab wood for firewood. We have received \$390 for the slab wood and boards which have included fence boards, garden boxes for raised beds and furniture boards.

### **Would we mill additional trees in the future?**

It has been a valuable project both for the saw mill operator and the Conservation District. Mr. Keane has assisted with several aspects of the project including movement of the logs to the actual sawing. This has been an important first hand experience. Now, anytime there is an opportunity to work with other agencies or individuals we can give them a realistic review of how their project can best be managed. This will include what they can expect for a time and money investment as well as what they can likely produce with any given set of logs.

The District will continue to look for opportunities to work on projects like this. A portion of the monies from the sale of boards are going into our Forestry Endowment Fund for future tree planting and youth projects. The other portion is being used to process additional logs and some of the boards will be donated to other groups or organizations that can help explain the story about utilizing urban logs.

Thank you again for this mini-grant opportunity.

