

Zena Forest Products

Company Leader Bios

Ben Deumling, Owner and Sawmill Manager

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Ben Deumling founded Zena Forest Products' sawmill and millwork operations in 2007 with the purpose of finding better uses for the oak trees growing in his family's forest. Ben's family has managed the Zena Forest since 1987.

In the wake of his father's passing, 14-year-old Ben received a crash course in forest management from three forest workers he began managing. Ben then spent half of his sophomore year in high school working as a logging apprentice and learning how to fall timber in Germany. By age 17, Ben spent his summers as a full-time logger at home in Oregon.

Ben's deep love and respect for the forest and all it has to

offer, led him to attend Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA where he earned a BA in Environmental Studies & Politics. Since then, he has been involved in many business leadership programs, and for the last five years has been actively engaged in the Chemeketa Small Business Management Program. His studies in natural resource policy combined with his knowledge in forest management and desire to be a good steward of Zena's forest has shaped his views and influenced his strategic policies for Zena Forest Products.

Ben has worked to build a business that supports his family while sustaining their forest, which happens to be the largest remaining Oregon White Oak reserve in Oregon. His policies reflect his commitment to conservation, forest management and incentivizing partners that are committed to retaining and restoring hardwood stands.

Sarah Deumling, Owner and Zena Forest Manager

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Sarah Deumling manages Zena's 1300-acre forest. In that role, Sarah oversees all restoration, logging and planning, and guides tours for schools and university groups.

Sarah earned a BA in Political Science from

Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash, and a Master of Arts (MAT) from Reed College in Portland, Ore. After graduating from college, Sarah worked in Norway, married Dieter Deumling, taught on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona and then raised four children.

In 1996, Sarah's husband passed away, and she took

over the management of the forest, which was then owned by a German company. Ten years later, the German company decided to sell the forest property and the Deumling family became the new owners. The forest has been managed by the Deumling family since 1987.

The forest is protected by a conservation easement, stipulating that the forest will remain a working forest in perpetuity. No development is allowed, and strict harvest levels, as well as habitat preservation and enhancement, are mandated by the easement. Sarah is committed to creating an ecologically sustainable and economically viable, uneven aged and mixed species forest including all tree, plant and animal species native to the area.

