

## Yoder Sawmill Tour

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**W**he Clackamas County Farm Forest Association Tour train, with 25 members and guests, rolled into the Yoder Mill site on August 23rd for a two hour tour and demonstration.

The saw mill located in the Yoder area near Molalla and Canby, has been operating as a family business for 124 years. The group was met by fourth generation and current owner Dave Yoder who provided an overview of the mill's history as well a general guide to the mill's layout.

During the walking tour Dave made note of the fact that the mill has survived three major fires, the latest rebuild was back in 1937. The original blacksmith shop still remains on site. The mill was originally powered by steam through a series of flat belts, chains, and cables. Tour visitors had the opportunity to see the original steam engine, still in place beneath the mill. The steam was supplied by burning all types of wood waste in a boiler. The operating pieces of the mill are much the same. Some minor modifications have been made, and an electric power source as the major change.

The mill layout is consistent with most mills: a wood yard; a charge table and log carriage which feeds the circular saw and top saw assembly; a



*David Yoder speaking to Yoder Tour visitors in August.*



*Lowell Boyce removing slab from saw.*

run out table; a transfer table to the edger; and the green chain. The operation is completed by a plainer mill complete with sawdust handling equipment, cyclone, and dust collector.

The mill can handle up to 48-inch diameter logs, preference is for 36-inch or smaller. Minimum log length is 48-inches. They have cut 36-foot length beams/boards, but it takes a lot of maneuvering around to make it happen, and 24-foot is doable but still requires extra effort.

The mill primarily does commercial



*David Yoder indexing to next cut.*

milling for themselves, buying logs, processing them and selling to open market customers. In addition, a considerable amount of custom sawing/milling jobs are done on a per bd. ft. basis or by the hour.

They prefer to mill Douglas-fir, but the wood yard contained western red-cedar, oak, and some maple. While the tour was on site, a mixed load of Oregon Ash, cedar and oak was off-loaded in the wood yard destined for a custom cutting order.

Saw dust and hog fuel purchases can be made and are sold by the truckload. Arrangements for smaller sawdust pickups and other orders can be placed during regular business hours at 503-631-2525.

Dave and 37 year mill veteran Lowell Boyce, set up a demonstration log on the cold deck, for the group to follow along the process from sawing through edging. Scaling of the log was discussed and attendees made guesses as to the board feet available from the demonstration log. Dave pointed out the downside qualities of the demo log, old damage, grain structure, etc. and estimated usable lumber at 250 to 260 bd. feet. The log was then milled into three 4"X6" beams, some 2"X6"

joists and some 1" material. The writer should have kept a more accurate count.

Dave concluded the demonstration with some comments on the process we observed, followed by a question and answer period. Like most such sessions, a lot of good information was exchanged.

The tour included a demonstration of saw tooth grinding and the tooth replacement process in the on-site saw shop.

If you have some mill work to do, this tour would have been an ideal chance to explore the options you have in getting it done.

We want thank The Yoder Mill and personnel for a great tour... ■

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