

Zena Forest

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For over 30 years, the Deumling family has been caring for the Zena Forest, the largest remaining swath of forest in Oregon's Willamette Valley. It includes areas of endangered Oak Savannah and Oak Woodland ecosystems as well as headwaters of the Rickreall, Yamhill and Spring Valley watersheds.

The Deumling family has always managed the roughly 1,300 acre forest for complexity out of a conviction that greater diversity means greater resilience. The Zena Forest is therefore a mixed-species, mixed-age forest. To maintain this diversity, the Deumlings avoid clear cutting and practice selective logging instead. Individual trees are selected for harvest based on overall health to the forest, not maximum profit. They fall trees with a chainsaw and then winch the logs to roads. This protects the soil from being compacted by large machines. As Sarah Deumling is known to say, "soil is our capital."

Since the late 90s, Sarah Deumling has been planting more trees that fare better in drought conditions as a hedge against climate change. These Ponderosa pine, Sequoia and Incense cedar trees have been a boon to the Zena Forest as summers have gotten progressively hotter and drier.

To ensure the Zena Forest would forever be managed in a way that matched their values, the Deumlings legally secured its protection by voluntarily pursuing and entering into a conservation easement in 2008. The easement stipulates the forest will remain a working forest in perpetuity. No development is allowed. Additionally, strict harvest levels, habitat

preservation and enhancement are mandated by the easement; all forest management practices they were already observing. As an added layer of protection for the forest, it must also remain certified by the Forest Stewardship Council®.

While nurturing the woodland to keep the forest healthy and diverse long-term, Zena has developed a business model that will sustain a thriving forest and provide hardwoods for a viable millwork business for decades and even centuries to come. Leading the industry by example, Zena is proving that ecology and economy can live hand-in-hand.

Forest Statistics

- Acreage: 1,300
- Forest Types: coastal redwood, Douglas-fir, Oregon white oak
- Manager: Sarah Deumling
- Primary Uses: watershed protection, education, timber, wildlife
- Certifications:
 - Forest Stewardship Council