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Weyerhaeuser Company: The Next 100 Years

In 1997, George Weyerhaeuser Sr., the grandson of Frederick Weyerhaeuser, founder of Weyerhaeuser Company, sat in his office in Corporate Headquarters in Federal Way, Washington. He pondered the future of his family's legacy which had become the world's largest private owner of standing softwood timber, North America's largest producer of softwood lumber, and the world's largest supplier of softwood pulp. Looking back, Weyerhaeuser felt the company had worked hard to become a leader in the forest products industry. For a while, public perception had seemed to turn against the company as it was caught up in the industry's negative image. In response, the company had embarked on an effort known as 'Project Legacy' to reevaluate and reinvigorate its approach to both the natural resource base and the stakeholders that were impacted by its operations.

The company had spent years investing in a model of forestry they now called Weyerhaeuser Forestry and looked forward with much anticipation to the 'Wall of Wood' that was expected as high-yield plantations began to come on line over the next decade and produce a seemingly unlimited supply of timber.

As the company's centennial celebration for the year 2000 drew near, Weyerhaeuser wondered what the next 100 years would bring to Weyerhaeuser Company. He looked out his window at Mount Rainier 35 miles away and thought about the steps that needed to be taken to strengthen the organization that carried his family's name.

Company History

The Beginning

In 1900, Frederick Weyerhaeuser and a number of partners, founded the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company with a purchase of 900,000 acres of forestland in Washington belonging to Union Pacific Railroad. Weyerhaeuser was one of the first U.S. forest products companies to move to the west coast from the midwestern lake states at the turn of the century. As the midwestern forests of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota neared exhaustion the great forests of the Pacific Northwest in California, Oregon and Washington clearly held the most promise to supply America with the timber it required for westward expansion and growth.



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