

Shevlin-Hixon and Brooks-Scanlon Mills, Bend

By Unknown

This photo shows Bend, Oregon's two largest lumber mills. The Brooks-Scanlon mill is on the far side of the Deschutes River, in the background of the photo; the Shevlin-Hixon mill is in the foreground. In 1916, the mills opened within a month of one other; Shevlin-Hixon in March and Brooks-Scanlon in April. At the peak of their production, the mills processed more than 500 million board feet of timber annually.

In 1950, Shevlin-Hixon was purchased by Brooks-Scanlon because of dwindling timber supplies on their private holdings. Shevlin-Hixon subsequently shut down and their remaining trees were redirected toward Brooks-Scanlon's mills. In 1980, Brooks-Scanlon was absorbed in a merger by Diamond International. During the late 1980s, the timber company again changed hands, bought by the newly formed Crown Pacific Ltd. The Brooks-Scanlon mill continued to produce lumber until 1994 when, because of diminishing timber supplies, Crown Pacific shut it down.

Crown Pacific publicly blamed the closure on logging restrictions put in place on federal lands to protect the northern spotted owl, but the mill's demise was the consequence of a long history of unsustainable logging practices. Shevlin-Hixon, Brooks-Scanlon, and Crown Pacific all had aggressively clearcut their landholdings with little attention to replanting. Over time, when the available harvest on the company's remaining private lands dwindled, the company became increasingly dependent upon the federal government for subsidized timber sales off public lands. When those sales could no longer be sustained, the mill found itself without a reliable source of timber.

Written by Joshua Binus, © Oregon Historical Society, 2005.

Oregon History Project

<https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/shevlin-hixon-and-brooks-scanlon-mills-bend/>