

Building a Woodshed

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Our new woodshed

We need to build a woodshed. Up to now, we've stored our wood under the house – the house is on pilings and there's lots of room for wood under there. However, the minks, martens, and rodents have been building homes in the wood stacks, and this is not so good for the cabin. Also, the wood represents a bit of a fire hazard. With all these dry summers, we've decided that maybe that's not the best place to store the wood.

Of course, like any project out here, nothing is as simple as going to your local hardware store and buying a load of lumber, some nails, and a few packages of shingles.

Firstly, we had to clear more land. The logical place for the new woodshed was out behind the cabin, and not too far away so that it is easy to access the wood in the winter. The best site was a place where we had piled brush when we built the cabin 5 years ago. So, we had to move all of that, burned a bunch of it this spring while the weather was still damp, and piled the remainder further up the slope, awaiting future burning when it's not so dry.

Even after all of the old brush pile had been moved, we still needed to clear extra space. We wanted to build a 20' x 8' woodshed with 2' overhangs, and lots of room to access the shed both front and back with a wheelbarrow, so that meant cutting and uprooting more salmonberry, English ivy, and wild rose (and a couple of alder stumps). And then we hit an old spruce tree root mass with a pile of soil and rocks that was taller than I was which had to be broken apart and raked flat. That took a couple more days ...

Anyways, we eventually got a site cleared. We had decided to make a pole-and-beam structure, using material sourced on site. We cut the cedar poles (mostly small cedar saplings that were being choked out by older and larger cedar trees), brought them back to the cabin using our herring skiff, peeled them (I'm getting pretty good with the draw knife), and then fitted and bolted them together. Although a pole-and-beam building might seem very simple, there's a lot of fiddly work getting the logs fitted together and all the beams of matching sizes. Like a boat, at the end of the day there isn't a right angle to be found! Add to that the fact that we were on sloping terrain, and didn't want to make the foundation flat as this would have involved digging into the slope and then reinforcing the dirt banks. So ... we went with the best aesthetically pleasing structure we could build!

And finally ... the roof. We used some salvaged metal from a local cabin that was demolished recently by its owner. Not pretty, but much more sustainable (and cheaper) than buying new metal. Lots of silicone to patch the old screw holes, and voila! A new woodshed. It rained this morning, and there were no leaks. It may not be the most beautiful structure we will ever build, but I think it's categorically a success!

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