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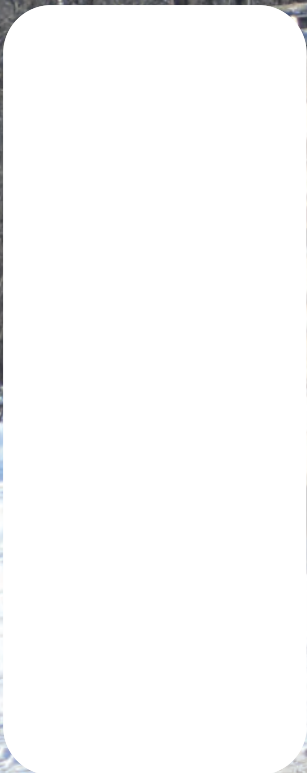
TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020

VOLUME 75

Final Harvest - Berthiaume Logging Operational Cost of Trucking Rises





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ON THE COVER

Nels Kimball III loads aspen onto a Berthiaume Logging Truck. For more on the Final Harvest of Berthiaume Logging, please see page 8.

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With the busiest season we have in the logging industry ticking away, it seems mother nature just won't let the logger have a break. A very snowy December into early January on top of above normal rainfall in the fall have made for a very challenging winter production season. Working to plow snow and freeze low ground has been an all too familiar story. We do thank the DNR and some of the local agencies for making a decision on extensions earlier than usual. There are certain areas where we all know there is no possible way it will be an option to freeze up tight enough to operate.

TPA's new Executive Vice President Mike Birkeland has been on the job for a month now and has shown to be a great asset to our organization.

President's Column



He has been to several meetings to get to know people in the business, and taken several tours of area mills and meeting TPA members. He has new ideas and I think many processes that will make our group more efficient. The legislative session has begun and Mike has several issues that he will be working on. I am very optimistic he will be a very effective lobbyist for our common interests. As you all know, the many policies that we must follow, or want to change, start with a legislative action. Please know that TPA staff is available to talk to you about any issues you may run into. Thanks to Ray and Ann at the TPA office for making Mike's transition a smooth and welcoming one.

Another thank-you goes out to the mills that have extended delivery hours to alleviate long lines. There is nothing more aggravating than waiting in line, not only for drivers, but for the woods crew who depend on trucks to get the wood cleared away in a timely fashion.

While most of you have received notice of dues payment, please take a couple minutes and invite one friend to join. Many changes have taken place recently and I believe that the TPA is stronger than ever! Participation is key to a healthy organization and the TPA has proven to be a very effective group in maintaining and improving the timber industry. While sometimes it may seem we need to change our stance on a topic, it has always been on the TPA's agenda to do what is best for the majority of its members.

As the winter draws to an end, and the days are getting longer, especially this year with abnormally hard working conditions, I know that all the folks will be working extra hours to get that added production out. Truckers will be yarding and trying to get that extra load in. Please be safe. Landings get slippery, mill yards get slippery, and we all need to get home safe!

Executive Committee

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 Dave Berthiaume: 218-380-9783
 Kelly Kimball: 218-849-5222

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**GOT
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In a day and age where many people find “community” through social media apps, it’s refreshing to see friends and neighbors with common interests come together to support one of their own. I saw that first-hand in Bemidji during my second week in this job.

The logging community, and hundreds of neighbors of the Lundberg family, came together at a benefit to show

Executive Vice President’s Column



support for a third-generation Minnesota logging family. The Bemidji Eagles Club was packed wall to wall on a

Sunday evening in January to help Matt and Anne Lundberg and their family through a difficult time.

Their seven-year-old son Paul is battling a form of cancer called Medulloblastoma. Ray Higgins and I attended the event. We walked away impressed with the kindness, generosity, and good that a community can do for each other when it comes together to help a family going through challenging times.

And Minnesota’s logging community can still help—either financially and with prayers for healing and hope for Paul and the Lundberg family.

Ray and I also spent some time with TPA members Chad and Corey Lovdahl in the woods near their shop in Effie. It was a cold and crisp winter morning (one of the few we’ve had this winter). The Lovdahls were cutting a 3700 cord Itasca County aspen sale.

It was beautiful pulpwood. Most of it 12 to 20 inches in diameter, with very little rot. The wood was also accessible.

It was accessible because the sale was a half-mile or so off a county road, and was situated on high, fertile ground. The road into the site had snowbanks piled higher than



Chad and Corey Lovdahl chat with TPA Executive Vice President Mike Birkeland on their Itasca County logging job north of Effie.

a pick-up on either side, but with extra hours of work, and hundreds of gallons of fuel, the Lovdahls were able to pull the wood out and haul it to market.

Down the road apiece, we met up with Mike Reiger and visited one of his jobs near Wirt. Rieger’s crew

was cutting a mix of aspen, birch, ash, and balsam. With 8-wheel drive cut-to-length equipment, his harvesters and forwarders were making progress and getting around on trails fortified with tops and limbs stacked in the nearly hip-deep snow.

But the going was slow. It’s been that kind of winter. Loads of snow and very little frost.



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Add to that an extremely wet fall, and it's made for a challenging winter in the woods.

Much of the next few months will be spent in St. Paul where a seismic shift has taken place. And the results for the logging and forestry communities remain to be seen as this session of the Minnesota legislature unfolds.

Specifically, the shift pertains to a dramatic turn of events less than two weeks before the start of the legislative session. The issue: control of the Senate DFL caucus. The challenger: Sen. Susan Kent, D-Woodbury. The incumbent: Sen. Tom Bakk, DFL-Cook.

In the end, Ms. Kent endured -- wresting control of the Senate caucus from a strong supporter of the Minnesota logging and forest products community - Sen. Bakk.

For the past ten years, Sen. Bakk has been leading Minnesota Senate DFLers, as either Minority Leader or Majority Leader. He's been a long-time leader on our issues and a

common sense advocate for our way of life.

His skills during conference committee negotiations at the end of each legislative session are legendary. Those skills helped secure funding for forest roads and bridges, DNR reforestation programs, data and forest inventory analysis, increases in public Private Forest Management foresters, Minnesota Forest Resources Council funding, and rural economic development initiatives.

Where this goes from here is anyone's guess. Sen. Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, (R-Nisswa), grew up on the Iron Range. And Eric Simonson (DFL-Duluth) has been named Assistant Minority Leader. Both will be important to our interests and way of life going forward. Not surprisingly, many metro legislators are not familiar with our issues. Truthfully, some don't care -- or have other priorities closer to their own homes that occupy their time and attention.

In the short term, it means we'll be spending a significant amount of time visiting Metro legislators

this session. And it means we'll be working with legislators to get them into the woods after the session, to help them see the faces, the families, and the future of Minnesota's logging community and forest products industry first-hand.

It also means we'll all have to work harder, and work together, to help decision-makers understand the importance of responsible, resilient, and sustainable management that contributes to the health of our forests, rural communities, and Minnesota's economy.

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Dave Berthiaume at the site of his first—and last—timber harvest.

Final Harvest

The road into Dave Berthiaume's logging site is a familiar one, on St. Louis County forest land, north of Sawyer.

"I was born and raised here, you could say," Berthiaume says. "I know every piece of ground. I go through it and think, 'oh I remember this rock, this ash swamp.'"

The road should be familiar. It's where he joined his father Richard and brothers Don and Duane in harvesting timber for the first time, when he was 14-years-old. Sure, Dave had been helping in the woods since he was 6, picking rocks off the roads his father had just built. But this is the site where he felled

trees with a chain saw for the first time after officially joining his dad's Berthiaume Logging.

"We got here in 1969, to this landing right here," Berthiaume recalls. "It was a lot smaller then, and we started cutting this chunk a little at a time. It goes a half a mile to the north. It probably took us five years to cut it by hand in those days."

And now, 51 years later, for Dave Berthiaume, the first harvest shall be the last.

Berthiaume turns 65 in May, which makes it a good time to retire. And there's no better place, no more important piece of ground to him on which to complete his career in

logging, than right here.

And so, the first shall be last.

"I started here," he says. "I might as well end here."

As special as it is to work in the woods long enough to harvest the same site twice, and as special as it is to start and end a career in logging in the exact same spot, this part of the world means more to the entire Berthiaume family than just that. The family has been coming back here year after year ever since that first logging job.

"This was our deer hunting country," Berthiaume says. "It's been 50 years right here with the deer shacks, right here on this landing. We used to have a couple

of old buses that we used as shacks, then we built a little shack on wheels. We'd have that for us kids when we were up here. We'd haul it in and out every year. Finally, three years ago I built a shack on a goose-neck trailer. It hooks up to my pick-up and away I go."

The site is so ingrained in the Berthiaume family that the road into it—the road Dave's dad built in the first place—is known as Berthiaume Road.

"Dad built this road with a D2 Cat, just a little one," Dave recalls. "This time, we fixed it up with a D6. It would have been a lot straighter if we'd had that D6 in those days. With the little cat you went where you could. The road follows the ridge, and the high ground as much as possible."

How well does Berthiaume know this part of the world? Over the years he's walked the roughly sixteen miles between the site and his house several times.

"Because in the old days," he chuckles, "when things broke down, there was only one way to get home."

That's the way it was 51 years ago when Berthiaume started logging. Then when he graduated from Carlton High School in 1973, he joined the family business full-time, still working right here on this spot.

"I was cutting trees and limbing them with a chain saw," he says. "Me and my brothers and cousins and dad. We cut rough on these hills here because it was good summer ground. And then over those hills it gets lower, but it was nice wood so we peeled there in the summer, and we had the two shacks here and we stayed all week long and we'd go home on the weekends."

That started a lifetime in the woods with Berthiaume Logging. Once Richard retired, Dave co-owned the business with Don and Duane, but his brothers eventually left the business around ten years ago.

It's been a good career for Dave, which has included serving on the TPA board of directors, a stint as TPA president, and most notably being named National Logger of the Year by the Forest Resources Association in 2010.

As retirement neared, Berthiaume



Bob Berthiaume harvests aspen with a Tigercat X822C feller buncher.

knew St. Louis County would eventually be offering this tract for sale. Because of its history in the family, Richard had always wanted to be there to see it harvested again. But he didn't live to see it, passing away in 2011, one month shy of his 89th birthday.

"This was his dream, to cut it again, to see us cut it, but he never made it," Dave says. "I was going to retire last year, and then this sale came up."

"I spent darn near every day of my life with my dad, so it's special to do it."

When the site appeared on the St. Louis County auction, Berthiaume approached Sappi forester Ross

Korpela.

"I didn't sleep for 2-3 nights," Berthiaume says. "Should I or should I not do this sale? But I talked to Ross to see if they could get it. If they could, then I'd do it."

"We targeted that sale for Dave," Korpela says. "He and his family showed a commitment to our mill for decades. He requested that timber sale be purchased so he could cut it, and we made sure we got it for him. We want to support those that support us. We can't do it on all occasions obviously, but we were able to get this one done for Dave."

It's special for Berthiaume, not only because he gets to end his



Dave Berthiaume, with yellow lab Rowdy riding shotgun, drives down Berthiaume Road toward the Sappi mill with one of his final loads of timber.

career where he started, but also because it's the only site he's ever had the chance to harvest twice.

And so, Berthiaume started the harvest on this 3000-plus cord sale late last winter. Unable to complete it then, he and the crew moved back in to finish the job in August.

"I thought, 'it's nice and dry so we'll finish this up,' and then the rains came," he chuckles. "And here I am, still here in December. I should've been done October 1st, but we could only work one or two days a week, sometimes three. There were two weeks when we didn't work at all. It was too wet."

Now Berthiaume and his crew have a day left of falling, a day-and-a-half of delimiting, and a week-and-a-half or so of hauling, and they'll be done with the harvest, and Berthiaume will be done logging.

The guys on Berthiaume's crew—Bob Berthiaume (Dave's son), Andrew Berthiaume (Dave's nephew) and Nels Kimball III—are all looking ahead to their next jobs, but Dave has no doubt they'll be just fine.

"They have jobs they've been talking about," he says. "They should be able to get jobs easily, because they can run all the equipment, and they can all drive truck. People need good workers, and these guys are all good."

As for Berthiaume, he won't be too far from the business. He'd like to buy firewood from other loggers



Andrew Berthiaume drives a John Deere 748G-III skidder.

and haul it to customers. There's also the matter of his father's old D2 Cat, which still sits in the yard by his home.

"That's my retirement project, to re-build it."

But once the trees are cut and the timber is hauled, that won't be the last Berthiaume will see of this place where he's spent so much of his life. He plans to follow in his father's footsteps, literally.

"Dad always hunted right here,"

Berthiaume says. "I'd move the buses in a week before deer hunting and he'd move in and he'd stay up here for three weeks. That's what I want to do. I'll still hunt here for as long as I can. Come up here for a week in the fall and grouse hunt, work on deer stands, and just walk. That's what my dad always did. He'd get up here and he'd just be gone. He'd see what he'd cut, what it looked like. That's my dream to be doing."



Nels Kimball III operates a Hood slasher/loader for Berthiaume Logging.



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On the Markets

The *Timber Bulletin* publishes information regarding results of a sampling of recent timber sales and other market indicators, as well as other market-related news items.

DNR Announces Extension Program

DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen announced the availability of Emergency Adverse Surface Conditions permit extensions in February.

The following conditions apply for permit extensions:

- Permits eligible for an emergency extension must have an expiration date between February 7, 2020 and December 31, 2020.
- Extension requests will be reviewed and granted on a permit by permit basis as

follows:

- o The permit holder must submit a written, signed request to the Area Forestry Office administering the permit no later than May 31, 2020, or the permit expiration date, whichever is earlier.
- o For all Regular and Intermediate permits, and for all informal winter-accessible only permits, a one-year extension without interest will apply.

According to a statement from the DNR, "The above-average temperatures and precipitation this fall and early winter has had a significant effect on harvest this season. Weather has prevented forming sufficient frost, added time for building and maintaining access, and generally delayed harvest operations. DNR believes Adverse Surface Conditions have been widespread and emergency extensions should be made available for our timber permits."

Permit holders will receive a letter from DNR that confirms the extension was granted for each

eligible permit extension request. All other terms and conditions of the original permit will remain in effect.

USFS Volumes Projected to Rise

Timber sold on both the Superior and Chippewa National Forests is expected to rise in 2020, according to projections from both forests.

On the Superior, timber sold this year is expected to be 70 million board feet, a 6% increase from 66 million BF in 2019. The Chippewa expects to sell 50 million, a 5% hike from a year ago.

This year's increase on the Superior would be the 5th consecutive year-over-year increase for the forest. Achieving 70 million board feet in 2020 would represent an increase of 49% from the Superior's sold level of 47 million BF in 2015.

As for the Chippewa, a rise in 2020 would be the second straight increase for the Forest.

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Recent Timber Sales

Average prices, as reported by each agency

Agency **Regular** **Intermediate**

Lake County

December 13—Oral Auction

Maple P&B	\$ 9.69	NA
Aspen Pulp	\$29.67	NA
Birch P&B	\$ 3.07	NA
Oak Pulp	\$16.00	NA

6 of the 10 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Warroad Area

December 17—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$15.55	\$ 9.88
Norway Pine (PB)	\$28.95	\$35.47
Jack Pine (PB)	\$19.23	\$26.55

26 of the 32 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Backus Area

December 19—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$14.45	\$26.23
Trembling Aspen (PW)	\$17.00	\$22.44
Maple Species (PW)	\$ 8.50	\$15.42
Oak Species (PB)	\$17.14	\$26.73

5 of the 7 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Cass County

December 19—Sealed Bid

Aspen	\$39.63	\$29.47
Red Oak	\$27.01	\$22.65
Birch	\$19.88	\$18.89

All 9 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Bemidji Area

January 7—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$32.19	\$20.47
Trembling Aspen (PW)	\$33.67	\$28.42
Basswood (PB)	NA	\$16.56
Norway Pine (PB)	\$33.20	\$46.87

18 of the 29 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Two Harbors Area

January 7—Oral Auction

Trembling Aspen (PW)	\$ 1.70	\$ 7.77
Norway Pine (PB)	\$ 1.32	\$ 4.01
N. Hardwoods (PW)	\$ 6.29	\$ 9.00
Balsam Fir (PW)	\$ 5.99	\$ 9.90

9 of the 15 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—NE Region

January 9—Sealed Bid

Aspen Species (PW)	\$36.52	\$31.21
Trembling Aspen (PW)	\$13.60	\$28.03
Mixed Spruce (PB)	\$18.16	\$21.60
Aspen Species (PB)	\$16.09	\$33.75
Pine Species (PB)	\$50.07	\$24.50

38 of the 50 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Sandstone Area

January 10—Oral Auction

Northern Pine Oak (PB)	\$ 9.20	NA
Red Maple (PW)	\$ 4.95	NA
Norway Pine (PB)	\$21.96	NA
Aspen Species (PB)	\$ 7.70	NA

2 of the 11 tracts offered during the sale were purchased. None of the 7 tracts offered on the intermediate auction were purchased.

DNR—NW Region

January 13—Sealed Bid

Aspen Species (PW)	\$19.00	\$27.89
Aspen P&B (PB)	NA	\$34.26
Norway Pine (PB)	\$39.99	\$40.40
Jack Pine (PB)	\$30.14	\$27.61

41 of the 59 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Cass County

January 30—Oral Auction

Aspen	\$26.70	\$25.82
Birch	\$18.39	\$12.78
Maple	\$16.30	\$12.00
Red Oak	\$32.93	\$11.00

All 6 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Koochiching County

February 6—Oral Auction

Aspen P/B	\$30.22	\$32.37
Spruce P/B	\$26.09	\$28.10
Ash P/B	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.96
Balsam P/B	\$ 9.00	\$11.11

18 of the 21 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

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- PB=Pulp and Bolts
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- ST=Sawtimber
- WST=Woodsrun Sawtimber
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Court Ruling on Bat Could Lead to More Restrictions

A January federal court ruling calls the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "threatened" listing of the northern long-eared bat "arbitrary and capricious," which could lead to the more restrictive "endangered" determination.

The court's ruling was in response to a lawsuit filed by four groups, including the Sierra Club and the Center for Biological Diversity over the USFWS 2015 decision on the bat.

In his decision, Judge Emmet Sullivan also stated that the USFWS's "Significant Portion of the Range" policy is unlawful. The policy says the Service can stop its analysis upon finding that a species is threatened throughout all of its range without evaluating whether it is endangered in a significant part of its range.

Judge Sullivan remanded the threatened listing back to the USFWS to "make a new listing consistent with the Court's decision." However, the 4(d) rule which allows timber harvest during the bat's maternity roost season of June and July, remains in place for the time being.

If the USFWS ultimately lists the northern long-eared bat as "endangered," timber harvests would face restrictions during those maternity roost season



© James Wilson

months. The states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan have been working on a "habitat conservation plan" which would allow harvest within agreed upon parameters.

TPA staff has been working on this issue since the USFWS first signaled a listing decision on the bat in 2014, advocating with other groups for the 4(d) rule that has allowed timber harvest to continue in Minnesota during June and July. TPA has also engaged on the development of the habitat conservation plan to mitigate any negative effects an endangered listing would have.

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TPA Responds to DNR Wildlife Managers

Over the course of the last six months, several articles have appeared in Minnesota newspapers about the concerns of DNR Fish and Wildlife Division managers over increased timber targets as a result of the 2018 Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis. TPA's Ray Higgins worked with Minnesota Forest Industries Director of Forest Policy Rick Horton—a wildlife biologist—on a response. Below is an opinion piece that appeared in the Minneapolis Star Tribune on January 5th, specifically responding to a December Star Tribune article. Similar editorials by Higgins and Horton also appeared in the Duluth News Tribune and Outdoor News during January.

Minnesota's timber harvest already has considered all points of view

By Ray Higgins and Rick Horton

Early in the “Disturbance in the woods” story in the Dec. 22 Outdoors section, representatives of various conservation groups were described as “campaigning” against Department of Natural Resources timber harvesting approaches that were approved in March 2018.

The reality is that those folks already did their campaigning. The new statewide timber-harvesting plan was created nearly two years ago with all stakeholders – including those now doing additional campaigning – participating in the process.

The DNR's Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis (STHA) included a year of rigorous scientific analysis and comments from more than 140 individuals and groups. That was followed by review and recommendations by a 14-person stakeholder group representing diverse interests in forestry, wildlife habitat, conservation impacts and the timber industry, including staff from the DNR divisions of Forestry, Fish and Wildlife, and Ecological and Water Resources.

One of those quoted in the news story said the system was set up to “feed the timber industry” with harvest levels of 870,000 cords per year. In fact, the STHA process revealed that the state could sustainably harvest more than one million cords annually from state land for 15 years, due to the amount of over-aged forest.

While the final number of cords was well below what the industry sought, everyone compromised for the greater good. The process worked.

Minnesotans should be comforted knowing that we're surrounded by a more balanced forest than ever. According to the USDA Forest Service, the acres of aspen over 70 years old statewide is 2.3 times higher than it was in 1977. Minnesota has 20 million more large trees (19" or more in diameter) than it had 60 years ago. Only 1 percent of Minnesota's forestland is harvested each year, and more than three times as much wood is grown each year to replace it.

The DNR administers nearly 5 million acres of forestland, half of which – by law or policy – will never see a logging truck. State parks, Scientific Natural Areas, designated old-growth and other buffer areas provide 2.3 million acres of older forests for fishers and associated species, deer thermal cover, and other values. Similar set-aside lands on national forests, county lands and national parks amount to another 2 million acres.



Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are included in the 2.7 million acres of state land available for timber harvest, and rightly so. Young forests and openings provide prime habitat for game species like ruffed grouse, woodcock, deer, and turkey. Under STHA, there is also old forest—24% of aspen on state land is managed for longer rotation age and another 6% will remain unharvested. Much of this is on or near WMAs.

One of the many positive outcomes of a statewide Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) on Timber Harvesting and Forest Management, and the subsequent Sustainable Forest Resources Act, was the creation of Voluntary Site Level Forest Management Guidelines, which established practices to protect and enhance forest values. Natural buffer areas between waterways and logging, called riparian management zones, help maintain



clean rivers, streams, and lakes. There are safeguards to protect soil productivity and erosion, maintain visual areas, preserve biodiversity, and protect cultural resources.

Your computer paper, 2x4s, oriented strand board, siding, telephone poles, and thousands of other products – yes, thousands – all come from the forests. Responsible and sustainable forest management benefits hunters, hikers, loggers, bird watchers, berry pickers, wildlife, and consumers around the world.

All this while supporting rural economies and providing good-paying jobs for 32,000 women and men in the forest products industry who supply the products each of us use every day.

The Minnesota forest products industry does not dictate how public lands are managed. That occurs in a public process. But we do stand ready as partners to help achieve the many outcomes the public desires from forests, like managing native ecosystems; addressing insect, disease, blowdown and fire risks; providing habitat for all forest wildlife; and sequestering carbon to address climate change.

At the 30th annual DNR Roundtable in late January, many of the same stakeholders who helped develop the Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis will be there to share new ideas for doing things better. We in the forest products industry are looking forward to once again being part of the discussion.

Rick Horton is a wildlife biologist working for Minnesota Forest Industries, representing paper mills, sawmills, and other companies. Ray Higgins represents the Minnesota Timber Producers Association, an association of loggers, truckers, and allied businesses.



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Navigable Waters Protection Rule Replaces Waters of U.S.

In January, the Environmental Protection Agency unveiled its new “Navigable Waters Protection Rule,” replacing the Obama Administration’s Waters of the U.S. rule, which significantly expanded the definition of “Waters of the U.S.”

The new rule is the Trump Administration’s effort to eliminate

Timber Talk

uncertainty over where federal jurisdiction begins and ends, narrowing what qualifies

as a federal waterway as well as providing more regulatory authority to the states.

The final regulation excludes from EPA jurisdiction a number of water features, including the following of particular importance to private forest management:

- Ephemeral streams, defined as flowing only in direct response to precipitation,
- Manmade ditches that do not flow into a regulated water, and
- Wetlands that do not touch a regulated water of the U.S.

The wetlands exclusion will also significantly strengthen the application of “normal silviculture” permit exemption for forested wetlands.

NEPA Reform

The Trump Administration announced the first major revisions to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in over forty years in January.

The proposed changes are still subject to public input and would limit the scope of environmental impact assessments that federal agencies must undertake before moving forward with projects, including timber sales on federal forests.

Among other things, the new rules would:

- Establish a “presumptive time limit” of two years for completing Environmental impact statements and one year for environmental assessments
- Set presumptive page limits for NEPA documents
- Require a joint schedule and single EIS for projects involving more than 1 Federal agency
- Empower the lead agency to resolve interagency disputes
- Clarify definitions including “significance” and foreseeability
- State that cumulative effects analysis is not required by NEPA
- Encourage the use of streamlined environmental reviews, including cumulative effects

According to the Council for Environmental Quality at the White House, the Forest Service produced more EISs than any other Federal agency, nearly 24 percent of all EISs produced by all federal agencies combined.

Last year, TPA submitted comments on the issue, stating the proposed changes would improve the pace and scale of forest management activities through increased planning and efficiency,

“Doing so will increase forest health and resiliency, reduce the impacts of forest pests, disease and wildfire, and help rural economies,” TPA wrote.

Housing Starts Soar to 13-Year High

U.S. housing starts surged to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.608 million units in December, the highest estimate since December, 2006. The percentage gain of 16.9 over November’s total was the largest since October 2016.

The December figure also represented a 40.8% increase on a year-on-year basis, up from an estimated 1.290 million housing units started in 2019.

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Bill in Congress Highlights Forestry to Fight Climate Change

Congressman Bruce Westerman (R-Arkansas) has introduced the Trillion Trees Act, which aims to highlight the benefits of trees in the carbon cycle and their role in reversing climate change.

The focus of the bill will be to plant more trees, grow more wood, and store more carbon, as well as improve opportunities for biomass and alternative forest products.

President Trump referenced the effort to plant one trillion trees worldwide in his State of the Union address in February. Swiss scientists proposed the trillion tree idea last year, calling it “the cheapest climate change solution,” because it would naturally sequester carbon at a cost-effective and faster rate.

Minnesota Congressman Pete Stauber is co-sponsoring the measure, saying in a statement, “I am proud to stand with our loggers in introducing this legislation, as the forest and paper industry is a cornerstone of northern Minnesota’s economy. The legislation will increase our logging output, rightfully recognize the carbon neutrality of biomass, and provide a commonsense solution to carbon in the atmosphere without needlessly driving up the cost of energy. Trees are nature’s solution to cleaning excess carbon from the atmosphere, so I am proud to help encourage communities across our nation to plant trees and properly manage forests.”



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Operational Cost of Trucking Rises

The costs associated with trucking have increased, according to a study conducted by the American Transportation Research Institute.

The average marginal cost per mile incurred by motor carriers across all commodities increased 7.7 percent to \$1.82 in 2018, the most recent year for which data was available. Costs rose in every cost center except tires, with fuel costs experiencing the highest year-over-year growth of 17.7 percent.

Insurance costs saw the second fastest year-over-year growth at 12 percent. As a strategic response to the severe driver shortage that existed in 2018, driver wages and benefits increased 7.0 and 4.7 percent, respectively – representing 43 percent of all marginal costs in 2018.

ATRI uses detailed financial data provided directly by motor carriers of all sectors and fleet sizes, not just logging.

Repair & maintenance (R&M) costs, at 17.1 cents per mile in 2018, have increased 24 percent since 2012



– a counter intuitive increase given the record sales of new trucks and trailers. From 2012 to 2018, overall motor carrier operational costs have increased more than 11.6 percent –

exceeding the 10.8 percent inflation rate for that same time period.

A copy of this report is available from ATRI at TruckingResearch.org.



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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

The January Thaw

by J. C. Ryan

This story is reprinted from an earlier *Timber Bulletin*—one of the first of “Buzz” Ryan’s ever-popular contributions to these pages. The *Bulletin* will continue to reprint selected stories from the memories he recorded for us.—*Editor*



Today’s logger drives out from town in a pickup truck to the area where he is operating. Trees are cut, skidded, loaded onto a truck and hauled as much as a hundred miles or more to the mills where he is paid for each load – all in one working day.

What a difference from the early Minnesota logger who started his operation in August or early September, first running lines around the tract to be cut and figuring out a tote road to bring in lumber and supplies, then laying out the logging roads from landing to the timber, followed by laying out the logging roads

through the tract.

Logging roads were often cut by a few “shackers” before the main camp was built. The camp was constructed during September and was ready for the crew to move in during October, depending on the weather. As a rule the sawing of logs was well under way by Thanksgiving Day and most of the logging roads were graded and leveled as soon as freezing weather set in.

Old-time camp foremen liked to have the skidways cut out and the skids placed before the snow came. Horses as a rule were brought in right after the first snow,

which usually came in most of Minnesota by the middle of November. Some feed and hay was toted in for the horses as soon as they arrived, but the bulk of feed for the horses was brought in later over the ice road.

During the month of November there was always much work to be done around camp by the handymen and the blacksmith – getting the drays, sleighs, jammers and loading equipment in shape as well as all the skidding equipment and hand tools ready. Much of this was done early, as after the logging operation got underway, most of their work consisted of

It looks like a January thaw as these men work bare-handed loading logs with a horse-powered jammer.



repairing equipment that was broken each day.

The blacksmith had a big job in keeping the horses well shod each day. In the very early days when oxen were used instead of horses, they were often brought into camp as much as a month earlier than horses.

The start of building up the ice roads generally got under way by mid-December, as it took as long as a month to build up a foot of ice that would carry the large loads of logs.

The hauling of logs started as soon as the ice road was ready. Most sleigh haul camps planned on getting the four-horse teams on the road by Christmastime or early January at the latest. Most sleigh haul jobs had from four to six four-horse teams on the road, but I have seen up to 10 teams on a two-trip road. The loads had to be spaced so one team was not running down the load ahead of it.

With more than four teams hauling, they would have to have at least two gangs loading and two unloading. Most camps tried to get along with one loading gang loading sleighs.

On some jobs they would spot the last sleighs loaded at night at the camps so as to have the loading gang start on empty sleighs in the morning. Sometimes they would have a four- or six-horse team bring the loads from the skidways to the ice road so the road teams would not have to wait for a load.

By mid-January, everything would be moving along on schedule, with the cutting, skidding and hauling all pretty well as planned. Weather would be well below zero every night, with some mornings as low as 35 to 40 below.

Then the wind could swing around to the southwest and it would warm up to well above freezing. This might continue for three or four days and the snow would begin to melt and the hauling roads get soft – and there was the feared January thaw that raised havoc on many logging jobs.

Lumberjacks did not mind cold weather, but when it warmed up, their clothing got wet and they were unable to get it dry during the night. When they were forced to put on wet clothes in the morning, they would begin to quit, having been in camp for about three months and ready for a few days in town.

Sleigh horses were pulled off the road and things in camp would be tied up waiting for cold weather to return.

One or two days of soft weather could be tolerated, but if it continued for a week, it could spoil the whole winter's work. It was seldom that we did not have a few warm days in late January or early February, and they as a rule were welcomed by the sleigh haul logger as the big loads of logs slid along the ice roads much better, and it was much easier for the horses during weather that was above zero. The loaders put on extra logs and

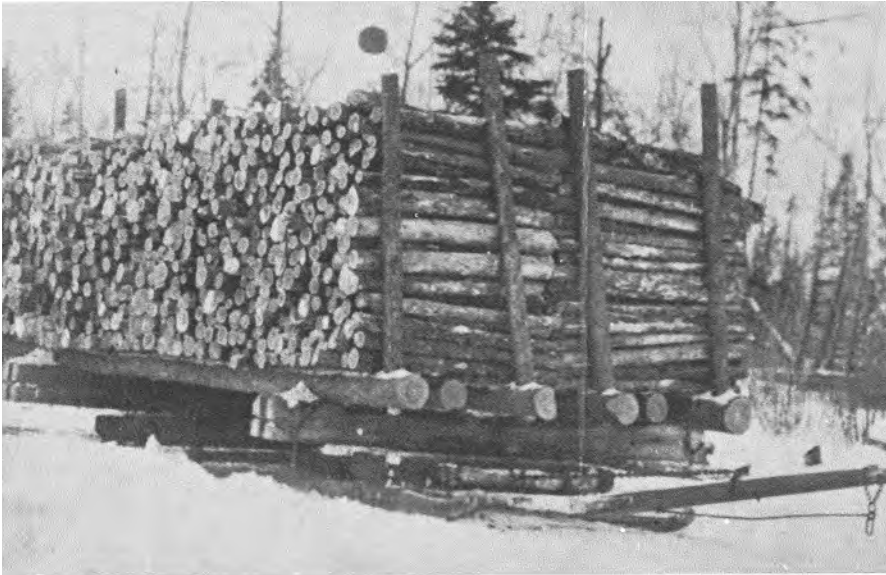


Loads were large on warmer days, smaller on cold days.



Above: Water tank used in making ice roads. Below: A nice load of logs on an ice road.





Cedar posts were loaded two tiers wide on sleighs for ice road hauling.



Above: An early logging camp crew; note the cook and dog standing on sleigh bunk. A January thaw would spell trouble for loads like the one pulled by the steam hauler below.



the horses could pull from 25 to 30 percent larger loads when the “slipping” was good.

When it was around 30 to 40 below zero, the loaders had to load light, and during the first mile on the road on a cold morning one could hear the runners squealing, but after the runners warmed up a little from the friction, the squealing stopped – though the load was still heavy.

So, as I say, the foremen welcomed a little warm spell. However, when it warmed up above zero and stayed there for a week, they were in real trouble.

The real January thaw caused many a logger to go broke. These January thaws did not happen every year, and I only remember three or four in my lifetime. The worst one that I remember was just before the First World War, 1915-1916 I believe. The loggers in the Northome-Mizpah and Kelliher area shut down their camps and let the crews go, waiting for cold weather. The warm spell lasted over two weeks and most of the ice roads were ruined. However, it did get cold and they had a late spring with hauling up into the first week in April, and in some places a little longer.

The spring breakup was expected in most of northern Minnesota anytime after March 15, and camp foremen planned on having their logs all hauled by March 10 to be sure.

However, there were some early spring breakups when the snow went and the ice roads broke up by March 1. Foremen were always on the watch for these early breakups and if weather turned warm around March 1 they would put on extra teams and in some cases even haul nights in order to clean up the hauling.

There were times when it turned warm in early March and it seemed better to pull the teams off the roads until it got cold again. But you could not depend on it turning cold so late in the year, and it was a gamble whether to haul nights or stay off the road.

The last early spring breakup that I recall was in 1929. Lahti Brothers were hauling over ice roads with trucks and sleigh trailers when it got soft on March 1. They pulled the trucks off the ice and it rained for four days, and when it quit raining their ice road was completely gone. They left some 3,000 cords of pulpwood and a million feet of logs in the woods and their winter job was over \$40,000 in the red.

They were logging by contract for the General Logging Co. of Cloquet and had an 11-mile ice road, landing the timber at Twin Lakes east of Stroud. They were old, experienced loggers and this was the first time they got caught by the early breakup.

While the early breakup could be expected, it was the January thaw that was the most feared by the loggers who brought our vast virgin forest to market during the early days of logging in Minnesota.

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