

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

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VOLUME 69

**Logging wasn't the Plan
Josh Hull Forest Products**

**Gypsy Moth Quarantine
Agreement Reached**

**TPA Annual Meeting -
Grand Rapids**



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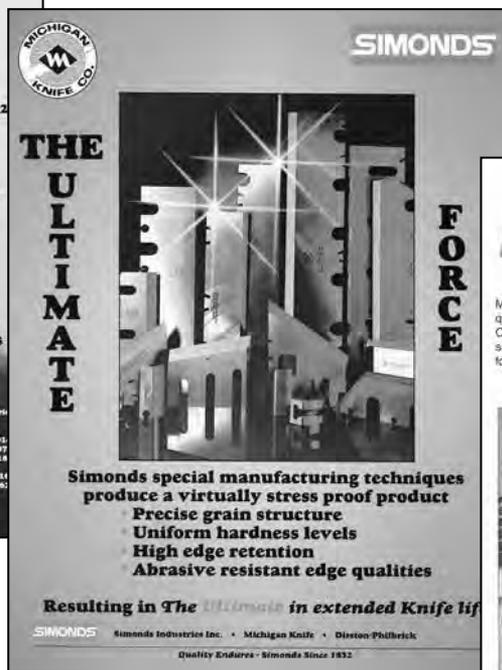
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IN THIS ISSUE

TPA Annual Meeting Set for Grand Rapids ... **4**

Logging wasn't the Plan
Josh Hull Forest Products **8**

Timber Talk **14**

Gypsy Moth Quarantine
Agreement Reached..... **16**

Loggers of the Past **18**

North Star Expo Returns
to Bemidji in 2014 **21**

Scheff Logging Minn. Logger of the Year **22**

On the Markets **24**

Classifieds **26**

Advertisers Index **26**



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ON THE COVER

Kyle Ledin of Josh Hull Forest Products operates a John Deere 160 delimeter with a Pro-Pac. For more on Hull's company, please turn to page 8.

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Well, another winter is in the books. I hope the snow goes with it. It's the middle of April and it still feels like we could be logging in the spruce swamp. It is my understanding that road restrictions went on later this year than any other year in MnDOT's North Zone.

LogSafe and MLEP classes are on everybody's list of things to do this quarter. They started a little early for us in the border country this year. Most of the area loggers were still cutting and

President's Column



hauling wood when the classes were scheduled for our area. Maybe next year they can be a couple of weeks later unless global warming comes back.

I need to thank the Lake of the Woods County Highway Department for the forestry road plowing they did this winter. It is a great help for any logger in that county to have the forestry road maintenance in the winter.

Repairs and maintenance of equipment and trucks seems to be on the list for the mud season again. There is always plenty of work to do on that side of the operation. Lots of checks going out, not many paychecks coming in this time of year.

I hope it warms up soon. Have a good and safe spring.

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

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TPA Annual Meeting Set for Grand Rapids

Meeting Combined with Golf and Fishing Event



Golfers at the 2013 TPA Event didn't let a little rain stop them from having a good time. (L-R): Andy Shermoen, Ryan Milette, Ted Kromy, Mike Rieger, John Rolle, Dave Hensel, Cam Hardwig, and David Haley. They'll be hoping for sunnier skies at this year's golf outing.

Mark your calendars for Thursday and Friday June 5 and 6 for the 2013 TPA Annual Meeting, Board of Directors Meeting, Golf and Fishing Event, and Annual Membership Banquet at Ruttger's Sugar Lake Lodge just south of Grand Rapids.

Both days will not only feature information to help members run their businesses, but also with the opportunity to socialize with fellow loggers and vendors.



Mike McKinley

Highlighting this year's Annual Banquet will be guest speaker Mike McKinley. A graduate of Grand Rapids High School, McKinley has had a successful career owning several small businesses. In addition, he is an accomplished and highly-sought after speaker throughout the

country on a variety of topics, including motivation, change, and leadership.

Ruttger's Sugar Lake Lodge features a beautiful golf course and clear, blue Sugar Lake. We've again chosen this location not only because of the success of previous years' events, but also because it is centrally located just south of Grand Rapids.

Registration forms for the 2014 Annual Meeting, Board of Directors Meeting and Golf and Fishing Event will be mailed. Watch your mailbox and join us for these great events!

Schedule

Thursday June 5

Morning – Annual Meeting
Afternoon – Golf and Fishing Event
Evening – Social Hour and Banquet

Friday June 6

Morning – Board of Directors Meeting

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The most significant item for us that has become law this Legislative Session is the repeal of the sales tax on machinery repairs. This tax was enacted in 2013 as part of the "fix" to the state's budget problems.

Repealing this tax will save loggers \$250,000 per year according to the Minn. Department of Revenue. It will also save mills, from small to large, a significant amount of money as equipment needs to be repaired during the

Executive Vice President's Column



important work for TPA.

As part of the first tax bill this year the sales tax on warehousing was also eliminated.

A big thank you to the Legislature and the Governor for eliminating these unwise taxes.



I was saddened to learn of Paul Lundberg's passing. Paul served many years on the TPA Board of Directors and was the chair of our Transportation Committee. Paul had voluminous knowledge of trucking issues, requirements, regulations and laws that he shared for the betterment of all loggers and truckers. He was well respected in our business and also by the people we deal with. My heartfelt sympathy to Paul's family.



We ended the winter logging season with good safety results in the woods. A big thank you to everyone for making sure that safety was a priority even with all of the weather challenges that we had this year.

Safety needs to be an everyday priority in order to be successful in preventing injuries.



The State Legislature will return to work after their Easter break. We can expect a lot of action in the final days of the session. But, that won't end the political season for the year.

We can expect lots of campaigning as their will be elections for Governor, Attorney General, State Auditor, State Treasurer, all 134 seats in the Minn. House of Representatives, one U.S. Senate seat and all eight seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Each of these races will impact our members no matter how they turn out. The important thing is to be informed and involved. By November it may also help to have a good strong mute button on your TV remote.



Make sure to mark your calendars for the TPA annual meeting on June 5 and 6 at Ruttger's Sugar Lake Lodge in Grand Rapids. We're working on a top-notch program that will be informative and enjoyable.

While you have your calendars out mark down Sept. 12 and 13 for the *North Star Expo*. It's back to Bemidji for this year's show which will be held at the Sanford Center. It's exciting to be back in Bemidji again.



The University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) is currently searching for a new

dean. Dr. Al Levine, the original dean when the Colleges of Natural Resources and Agriculture were merged, stepped down to return to a faculty position last year.

Our industry has a long-standing relationship with this important UM College. From foresters to paper and wood science engineers it provides many professionals that we need to succeed. The faculty at the University of Minnesota also conduct important research, extension and outreach programs that benefit us in many ways.

The Department of Forest Resources, which is part of CFANS, has many active faculty members that we interact with on a regular basis. We all know Dr. Alan Ek, the department head, Dr. Mike Kilgore and Dr. Charlie Blinn from their frequent appearances at TPA annual and board meetings and their involvement with the *North Star Expo*.

I'm very pleased that UM Provost Karen Hanson asked me to serve on the search committee for the new dean and look forward to identifying an outstanding new leader for the college.



Everyone seems to have a little more spring in their steps and smiles on their faces as this winter for the ages begins to loosen its long grip on us. Enjoy the spring and remember to keep working safely.



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Josh Hull

Logging wasn't the Plan

But after three deployments in Afghanistan, Two Harbors native Josh Hull was ready for something different. Now he calls logging, "A Godsend."

by Ray Higgins

Josh Hull loved his 10 years serving in the U.S. Army Reserves.

"Where else," he asks, "do you get paid to jump out of a helicopter?"

Hull enlisted in 2002, spending most of his time in Afghanistan, working with the locals on a variety of programs. Often times the sorts of activities he was involved in are termed "nation building."

"That's a good description," Hull says.

"I loved the military. It was my niche. The only drawback was I didn't get to be home at night. I

got to be home periodically every couple of years."

That was the problem. The "short" deployments were still a year in length. Hull had met his wife a month before he headed for Afghanistan for a second time.

"Amazingly enough she stuck with me for an entire deployment," Hull says.

The Hulls were married when he got home, but Josh found himself back in Afghanistan a third time. That's when he realized it was time for something else.

"It's not a married man's game," he says of the military. "When you're married and start having

kids, it's time to go. I thought, 'maybe I need to spend some time at home.'"

Once the decision to return to his family in Minnesota was made, he faced another dilemma: What to do next?

Hull was born and raised in Two Harbors, the son of a sawmill owner, "so I grew up kind of in this industry," he says.

"He bought the first sawmill when I was 11. It was just a little band saw and it slowly developed into a bigger and bigger operation from there. I learned how to run circle saw, band saws, how to stack a lot of wood. It was good manual labor."



Roger Campbell of Hull Forest Products harvests birch with a Timbco 425 feller buncher.

Josh was home-schooled, actually finishing high school at Lake Superior College in Duluth, and ultimately earning a two-year degree there in machining/computer numerical control. From there it was into the reserves, with a job or two back in Minnesota between deployments, but nothing he wanted to pursue on a full-time basis once he was through with military life. That's when he ran into Tom McCabe.

A longtime and well-respected Duluth logger, McCabe was starting to think about retirement. He'd purchased the business from his father, Tom McCabe, Sr., but didn't have a succession plan. Until he met Hull.

"I had met Tom at church," Hull recalls, "When I got back, he said he had a dozer if I wanted to do some woods road work and some odds and ends. So I started running around with Tom just to get back into normal life again.

"Logging wasn't the plan," he says. "It was a Godsend."

"He came back with no job," McCabe says, "and just asked if he could tag along behind me because he was looking for somewhere to go and decompress a little bit."

That was October 2010, and it

didn't take long for the two to figure out that Hull's abilities were a good match for the woods and for logging.

"I did a lot more wrenching than I did anything else right off the bat," Hull says. "Tom found out that I could figure out how to put things together and take things apart. My time at Lake Superior College helped, but I also grew up around a small sawmill. And from being in Afghanistan, you'd be amazed how learning how to make whatever piece of equipment you had work – in the middle of nowhere with nothing – applies to being able to keep logging equipment running. When you're in the middle of nowhere, and your truck doesn't run, and you have to make it run, you learn a lot."

By the time McCabe realized he wanted Hull to join the crew on a full-time basis, a plan was already in its early stages.

"When I offered him a job," McCabe remembers, "he said that was fine, but that he was going to be logging on his own in four or five years."

Hull recalls McCabe's response: "He kind of went, 'I'm only going to do this for so many more years. If it turns out that this is something that

will work, great. If not? Then we'll have a good five-year run and you'll be on to the next thing.' I said, OK, that works for me."

After Hull spent time building roads with the dozer, he obtained his Class A CDL and drove truck for a winter. Then McCabe purchased a rubber-tired feller buncher, and Hull ran that the following winter, gradually learning the logging business bit by bit from several different angles. And he loved it.

Both men soon realized the collaboration was working out as well as they could have hoped, and eventually started talking about a purchase agreement that would give Josh a path for the future, and Tom the succession plan he'd wanted. They decided McCabe would retain

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Hull Forest Products utilizes two skidders on most jobs. Here, Royal Abrahamson drives a John Deere 648G-III. In addition, Rick Olson operates a John Deere 648G. Both men have worked with this crew for more than 40 years.

the trucking side of the business and do all of the hauling, while Hull would purchase the entire woods operation. In October 2013, at the age of 29, Josh became owner of Hull Forest Products.

"I had the chance to buy an intact business, with a great reputation, from a great guy, with an established crew," Hull says. "What a great opportunity."

One thing McCabe couldn't guarantee in the sale was whether that established crew would stay on to work for Hull. Buncher operator Roger Campbell, and skidder drivers Royal Abrahamson and Rick Olson had all worked for the company for more than 40 years. So long, in fact that they'd initially been hired by Tom McCabe, Sr., before Tom Jr. even owned the business. Fortunately for Hull, the trio – along with chipper/slasher operator Tony Ernest, who's been with the business only 17 years – all agreed to stay.

"It was amazing," Hull says. "They worked with me long enough to all say, 'yeah, I'll work for him.'"

Talk about a Godsend. Having an experienced crew enables Hull to know the harvesting operations will be performed properly by these veteran logging professionals.

"It's huge," Hull says. "I can say,

here's a sale, and here's the way that we want to do it. I don't have to go out there and micromanage anybody. They know what to do. They've been doing it for so long. They work together seamlessly."

In addition, Hull also gets immediate feedback from the crew on whether he's making the right decisions when planning a harvest, like on the current St. Louis County

job they're working.

"For example," Hull says, "I was looking at how to do a portion of this sale. And I said let's head south first and get that up, then we'll head north. And then I was second-guessing myself and Rick says, 'well if we go north first, if stuff starts getting thawed out, south will be easier to get out. But right now let's head north.' So, that's what



Tony Ernest gets ready to climb into the Morbark Model 20 Chipper. Ernest also runs the slasher and oversees operations on the landing for Hull Forest Products.



While Tom McCabe still handles much of the hauling for Hull Forest Products, contract truckers are also utilized. Here, Bryan Beede loads harvested timber for delivery to the mill.



Tom McCabe

we did. So drawing on their years of experience allows us to do the right thing. Otherwise I would have messed up so many times if I didn't have them to consult with."

Hull's father is also a valuable resource, drawing on his years of his experience as a small-business owner. Plus, he's in daily contact with McCabe regarding the hauling, and Josh's grandfather was a logger years ago. So advice isn't hard to come by.

"I think I've struck the perfect balance," Hull says. "I think I have a good enough relationship with

all of them that I can go to them for advice. Tom will just tell me if he thinks there's a different way. And

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Harvested birch from Hull's harvest site on St. Louis County land.

he knows if I disagree, I'll just tell him I disagree. There isn't a, 'well if Tom says I have to do it then I have to do it' mentality.

"What I didn't want," he says, "was to have Tom say, 'OK, here are the keys to the logging operation, see you later.' I would have been in trouble. But at the same time I'd never be able to accomplish anything for me as a business owner if Tom still ran everything and let me have my name on it. So I think we have that perfect balance."

Still, there have been questions from Hull's peers on why he'd want to buy a logging operation, particularly at this time in the industry.

"There aren't many people my age saying, 'hey, I want to go do this,'" Hull says. "Because it's not a 9-to-5 job. It's not two weeks of vacation every year. It isn't someone else saying everything's all right, here's your paycheck. There isn't that security perception that my generation tends to want. I have a lot of friends that go 'I don't want to go out on my own and try something because what if I fail?' Well, what if I fail? I have a good

chance I could fail doing this, but you know what? I'm going to give it everything I have. And I have people that are willing to help me through, and make sure that I make the right decisions. And as long as I realize I don't know everything and I have them as a resource, I'll take my chances."

Also helping the transition is Chris McCabe, Tom's wife. She'd long done the books for McCabe Forest Products, and Josh asked her to continue doing the same for Hull Forest Products.

On this sale, Hull and his crew will cut approximately 1000 cords of timber, roughly a 50/50 split between aspen and birch, with some balsam and spruce as well. It will be hauled to either Louisiana Pacific, Hedstrom Lumber, NewPage, Futurewood, or the Besse mill in Wisconsin, depending on product and species. Some of the wood is also being chipped and hauled to either Minnesota Power or to Sappi.

Of course, there are challenges, not the least of which is a just-completed harsh winter.

"My first winter in business, and it's the coldest, nastiest winter in my lifetime?," Hull says with a smile. "Hydraulic hoses, it's just constant. A constant fight. But you know what? I'm in the spring, and I'm still smiling. I'm still excited to get up in the morning to come out to work. So I'd say we're doing alright."

And the best part? He's not off in a foreign country, but close to his wife Christen and their three kids, spending time on the woods, facing a new challenge each day.

"I get up in the morning," Hull says, "and I'm excited to go to work. And I can see my family at night, I get to do different stuff every day. I'm not doing the same exact thing over and over and over again. I get the challenges, and I get to go at my speed. I have awesome guys to work with. Life is great."



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2014 Break-up is Latest Ever

MnDOT placed Spring Load Restrictions (SLR) on the state's North and North Central Frost Zones on April 4 this year, the latest date ever.

The spring restrictions mark the unofficial start of "spring break-up," the time when the winter logging season ends, and when the Winter Weight Increases, allowing those hauling raw timber to carry up to

99,000 pounds with a 6th axle and a permit, begin.

Timber Talk

The previous latest date for the start of SLR was

March 29, in both 1989 and in 2013. MnDOT began keeping records on SLR in 1986. Since that time, the average start date has been March 17, making this year's start 18 days later than the historical average.

The late start to spring load restrictions was possible due not only the colder than normal temperatures during the winter of 2013-14, but also due to an unseasonably cold March in the northern third of the state.

The extra days on the end of the winter logging season made up for some of the production lost due to the frigid winter. Likewise, mills had been seeing lower than normal wood supply levels as a result of the lost production, and were able to beef up their supplies with the extra days at the end of the season.

According to MnDOT, the start date for each frost zone is determined using a cumulative thawing index, which is calculated from measured and predicted air temperatures from several weather stations. MnDOT indicates that when the index accumulates 25 F degree-days that a critical amount of thawing has occurred and SLR should be in place. The start of SLR is announced for a frost zone when the three-day weather forecast indicates that the index will exceed 25 F degree-days and continued thawing is expected.



Jim Marshall Retires from Blandin

Jim Marshall, long-time forest resources manager at UPM Blandin, retired at the end of February.



A native of Grand Rapids, Marshall worked for Blandin for 33 years in a variety of positions, including in forest development, as a private forest land manager, and in public relations. He served as the mill's forest resources manager for 13 years.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota, Marshall worked for the Minnesota DNR before joining Blandin.

During his years at Blandin, Marshall was also active in a variety of other forestry related groups, including the Minnesota Logger Education Program board and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's Minnesota State Implementation committee, to name two.

In an email to his colleagues, Marshall wrote, "It has been a wonderful career, but the time has come for me to move on and allow

others to take on the responsibilities and challenges of this new era in forestry. I am leaving with mixed feelings – excited to be able to go out skiing, biking, hiking, gardening, hunting, fishing and so forth when the weather is fine and the day beckons. But, I am also sad to leave the camaraderie of this wonderful forestry community as I have known it for almost 40 years."

Marshall and his wife, Patti, will continue to live in Grand Rapids.

Cheryl Adams has been named to replace Marshall as Blandin's forest resources manager. A graduate of Michigan Tech, Adams previously served as the forest ecologist for the Grand Rapids mill, and has been with the company since 1999.

Westbound Bong Bridge Closure Delayed

After requests from several entities, including legislative offices, congressional offices and logging interests in both Minnesota and Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation delayed for five weeks its plan to entirely close the westbound lanes of the Bong Bridge.

Originally scheduled to close

March 31, WisDOT moved the closure back to May 5, allowing harvested timber to move from Wisconsin to Minnesota during the critical break-up time of the year, when other routes between the states are posted at lower weights. Instead, one lane in each direction is remaining open until the full westbound closure takes effect. It is expected to continue until November 1.

Still to be rectified is next summer's proposed closure of both eastbound lanes on the Bong while the bridge is re-conditioned.

The two-year project on the bridge includes an overlay on the existing bridge deck, replacement and repair of arch components, replacement of existing expansion joints, repainting of girder ends, and replacement of street lights and ship navigation lights

Originally opened in 1984 after a five-year construction project, the Bong is a major route for harvested timber between the two states due to its allowance of increased weights on a sixth axle and a raw timber products permit. The nearby Blatnik Bridge isn't a viable option

because it is considered a federal interstate highway and doesn't allow higher loads of timber, while other routes between Minnesota and Wisconsin are problematic during the spring due to lower road postings.

U.S. Demand for Wood Expected to Rise Over Next Five Years

An analysis of the wood supply chain in the U.S., strained due to the Great Recession and by a long-term decline in wood use, indicates a robust recovery is expected over the next five years. However, investment in logging and trucking capacity is needed to meet that expected demand.

The analysis was conducted by RISI, a provider of information for the global forest products industry. According to the study, the U.S. forest products market is in the "foothills" of a recovery. RISI estimates housing starts will reach 1.67 million by 2016, more than double the total of 780,000 in 2012.

As a result, demand for roundwood will increase in the U.S.

However, because logging and trucking capacity have declined over the past five years due to the industry downturn and Great Recession, investments in logging operations will be required to meet this demand. According to the RISI report, "whether capital investments are made by existing harvesting and trucking businesses or new entries into the harvesting and trucking business is immaterial. The main point is some entity will have to invest in the equipment to have sufficient logging and trucking capacity to meet the forecasted demand for roundwood."

The RISI report also says procurement professionals need to understand the relationship between increased roundwood demand and the existing logging capacity. Supplier-consumer relations will be critical as the industry attempts to meet the expected demand.

The full report can be read at <http://wsri.org/resources/media/WoodSupplyChainAnalysisFinalRpt.pdf>

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Gypsy Moth Quarantine Agreement Reached

After months of discussions state and federal regulators have agreed on several stipulations designed to ease the burden of a proposed gypsy moth quarantine on Minnesota's timber industry.

The agreement represents an acknowledgement on the part of several agencies that compliance with the proposed quarantine would be difficult for our state's forest products manufacturers. Among the parties to these discussions were personnel from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota DNR, the US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Minnesota Forest Industries, and TPA.

"We're pleased with the responsiveness of the folks from both the state and federal governments," TPA President Kit Hasbargen said. "Our fear was that wood from quarantined counties would have been unmarketable. But with these changes, it appears we'll still be able to utilize the resource while still protecting forest health."

Among the changes agreed to by APHIS and MDA:

- The quarantine for Lake and Cook County will go into effect on July 1, 2014.
- Under the proposed "new" compliance agreement mills will not be required to utilize regulated products (pulpwood, logs, bark and bark products) harvested from quarantine areas by April 30 of a given year. Such a requirement would have made it impossible for companies to utilize timber from the quarantined counties.
- Regulated articles will continue to move from Wisconsin to MN under a limited permit.

Haulers of harvested timber will be responsible for inspecting loads for gypsy moth egg masses before leaving the landing. This is expected to amount to nothing more than a "walk-around" by the logger or hauler.

"This walk around can be accomplished while the load is being secured," said Chuck Dryke of MDA. "We're looking for a partnership with loggers, industry, and Minnesotans to



Paul Chaloux, National Policy Manager for the APHIS Gypsy Moth Program, tours the Louisiana Pacific mill in Two Harbors to understand how Minnesota facilities handle their wood. At left in the orange vest is LP procurement manager Jason Evans.

protect the resource."

Training on what to look for is expected to be offered by MLEP, after which loggers/haulers will be issued an identification number that will accompany the load.

Homeowners, campers and others who live in and visit the proposed quarantine will need to self-inspect outdoor household articles, like RVs, camping equipment and patio furniture, before moving those items out of the quarantine. A checklist is available and may be helpful documentation in crossing the international border to Canada.

Agencies have been tracking and treating gypsy moth in Minnesota for decades. In 2013, MDA captured a record 71,258 gypsy moths, 90 percent of which located in Lake and Cook counties. According to the DNR website, the gypsy moth is an invasive forest pest from Europe that is one of the most damaging tree defoliators currently in the U.S. They are voracious eaters and can completely defoliate entire trees. Repeated defoliation can lead to the death of many trees, changing the mix of tree species and affecting dependent wildlife. Because gypsy moths are nonnative, there are few natural enemies to keep them in check.

Under the original proposed

quarantine, wood harvested during May and June of any year – the prime hatching period for the gypsy moth – consuming mills would have been required to utilize wood from a quarantined county within five days. In addition, all wood harvested during the winter months would have had to been used by April 30th of that year. As a result of the agreement, both requirements will be waived for mills with a signed compliance agreement, and will also need to document loads of wood delivered from the affected counties.

One of the critical steps to reaching this agreement was a visit from Paul Chaloux, National Policy Manager for the APHIS Gypsy Moth Program. He toured the Louisiana Pacific and Hedstrom Lumber mills – both in the quarantined counties – to understand how those companies handle their wood, and also met with representatives from other interested parties, including mills from outside the initial quarantine and with TPA.

"We need to bring the gypsy moth program into the 21st century," Chaloux said during his visit. "We know we need to modernize our program. As we learn more about the pest, you make adjustments to accommodate the new information, new methods, and new technologies."



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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

"The 'Sky Pilots'"

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*



Most of my preceding stories on "Early Loggers in Minnesota" deal with different jobs, types of equipment and methods of logging. This time I will vary a little and deal with a subject that was much more a part of the logging camp than was generally believed. That was religious activities carried on in the camps.

As far as most of our Minnesota camps were concerned, there was always some sort of a religious service conducted some time during the winter. Many of our early lumberjacks were from either French Canada or Maine. The French Canadians were mostly Catholic, while Mainers were of several different denominations. But like most all of our early Americans, most of them came from families with religious backgrounds and had some early religious training at home. All had great respect for any minister of the gospel. And all ministers were well received, as a rule, when they visited the camps. Of course, the jacks had their favorites, but all were well welcomed to the bunkhouses.

In the early camps along the St. Croix and Rum, missionary priests and mini-

sters working with the Indians often held services in the camps, mostly operating out of Stillwater. While up along the Mississippi and its tributaries, ministers worked out of Minneapolis and many priests worked out of St. Johns near St. Cloud.

As towns sprang up with the logging industry, religious organizations from local towns more or less took over the activities in the camps near their towns. Their reasons were twofold: not only did they find grounds for their activities but they found in their camp collections a considerable source of revenue to build up the churches in the towns.

Many of the small churches in the small frontier logging towns formed singing groups that would visit the camps and hold services. "Landing camps" nearest the towns were visited especially by these groups, and there was often competition between the churches to hold services in the camps. I know of one situation, very near to town, where the foreman had to limit religious visits. In camps that lay several miles back in the woods, one or

two visits a winter would be all that could be expected, and camps that were way back probably had only one visit.

It was in these camps far from the small logging towns that the "Sky Pilot," or traveling preacher, did his work. He went from camp to camp either on foot or by riding the "tote teams," the cabooses of the trains or the river boats. And quite often he found a friendly "walking boss" with a driving team who would give him a lift to the next camp. In fact, most camp foremen made it a point to help him as much as possible as he moved from camp to camp.

There were a great number of these traveling preachers, most of them working the camps only part time. One I remember in particular was Rev. H. Test, who made his headquarters in Mizpah about 1918-19 and who worked all the camps in the Northome, Mizpah, Gemmell and Margie area of the M. & I. as well as the Backus and Brooks and Crookston camps around Kelliher and east of Northome. He was a tall man, about 6-foot-4, very thin, and walked from camp to camp. He carried a portable organ, which he played very well, and at each service always sang a number of songs which the men enjoyed very much.

He walked from camp to camp because one Sunday, when he passed the hat after his service, one of the cooks donated half a pig—which he accepted, strictly against the rules of the camps. This put him in bad with the foreman and made the Reverend walk many extra miles. I knew him well as a very kind man, and he realized he made a mistake in accepting the pig as the cook had no right to give it to him—but this was when he first started making the camps and he did not know all the rules.

However, the man who earned the title "Sky Pilot" best of them all was Frank Higgins, a man who spent most all of his adult life bringing the gospel to the lumber camps. Higgins was a strong, powerful man weighing 235 pounds and standing 5 feet, 8 inches tall. He had a booming voice, a happy disposition and a hearty laugh, was a friend to all lumberjacks and was greatly respected and trusted by them. He often held their "stake" while they were in town cele-

Inside the bunkhouse on a Sunday morning in the early days. Note the watercans on the stove and the grindstone.



Frank Higgins and his dog hauled Bibles, songbooks and reading material from camp to camp on a toboggan. In later years the Sky Pilot rode with his books in a specially built sleigh pulled by two dogs—and he often took a sick lumberjack to a doctor with his dog team. Higgins knew the lumberjacks in the camps—like the group below—as “his boys.”

brating and helped them get back on their feet after a “spell” in town. It was always a happy night in camp when Frank preached. He was an outstanding speaker, and when he raised his voice in singing “Jesus, Lover of My Soul,” the whole bunkhouse rang and vibrated.

For many years Higgins worked out of Duluth and made all the camps along the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad, the Alger Line and the camps throughout St. Louis County. He later moved his headquarters to Bemidji, where he worked the camps in that area and along the Minnesota and International Railroad. For a while he headquartered at Deer River, where he worked the camps along the “Gut and Liver” Line from Deer River to Craigville. He was much concerned with the welfare of the lumberjacks in the Deer River area, as this town was known as being one of the roughest towns in the state.

It was while he was in Bemidji that I got to know this man slightly. He had a small church built at the little town of Farley, a mile from my home at Turtle River. This was the headquarters for Blakley and Farley, large logging contractors of the day. They furnished building material for the church, and it was built along the shores of the Turtle River. I do not remember there ever being services in this church, but when a boy about 10 years old we used to spear suckers in the river and if it rained we would run into the church to stay dry. In later years hay was stored in the church, as the town of Farley went the way of most of the small logging towns. My mother, being a Presbyterian, had taken us children to hear Higgins preach in Bemidji.

While Higgins was stationed at Deer River, he spent some time touring the camps with the author Ralph Connor, who wrote the book “The Man from Glenn-garry,” and it is said that Frank Higgins was probably the man who inspired him to write it. On his trips from camp to camp, Higgins carried a pack sack filled with song books, Bibles and reading matter for the men, and it was said that it weighed at least 75 pounds. And they say that it was the rubbing of the pack on his shoulders that caused the sarcoma cancer that



These are typical of the crews to whom Frank Higgins preached the gospel in the early logging camps in the Bemidji and Deer River areas. At bottom, a typical Higgins "congregation" is posed on bunks and deacon seats.



caused his early death. While in Bemidji he trained a large dog to pull a toboggan with the pack on it, and in later years he had a special sleigh made that was pulled by two large St. Bernard dogs so he was able to ride from camp to camp. This enabled him to keep up his work for a number of years after surgery, but he passed away at an early age.

There were many other Sky Pilots following Higgins. John Sorenberger, a convert of Higgins, spent many years preaching in the camps—much of the time in Virginia Rainy Lake Lumber Co. camps north of Virginia. The lumberjacks called him "John the Baptist of the North Woods."

The Rev. Herpert Peters, operating out of Tamarack, held services in as many as 16 camps a month in the areas around Aitkin County. He carried a small portable phonograph that he played for the boys, and which they liked very much.

Others were Fred Davis, Jack McCall, Matt Daly, Dick Farrell and Al Channer—all working with or under Frank Higgins. Another colorful preacher was Rev. Gabril, who also operated mostly out of Duluth. He too carried a portable organ on his back to play for the lumberjacks. (This organ is now on display at the St. Louis County Historical Society.)

Most logging companies cooperated with these Sky Pilots and gave orders to their foremen to help them whenever possible. Some camps authorized the clerks to make out checks for the men's donations if the men wished to contribute but had no ready cash. Some of the large timber owners, like the Lairds of Winona, donated funds to the churches so they could send Sky Pilots into the woods.

The Sisters of St. Benedict, in making their rounds of the camps in selling hospital tickets, often held services in the camps.

As stated above, all members of religious organizations were always welcomed and treated with great respect by the majority of lumberjacks when they visited the camps. But to the old time lumberjacks, the real "Sky Pilot," the Apostle of the Pines, was the one and only Frank Higgins, who brought them the word of God as they worked to log off the vast pine stands of our North Star State.



North Star Expo Returns to Bemidji in 2014



After a five-year absence, the North Star Expo is returning to Bemidji in 2014.

The site of the 61st annual event will be the Sanford Center. It will mark the first time the Expo will be held at the new arena and convention center, and the first time in over 20 years the event is being held at an arena complex. The last time was when the Expo was held at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center in the early 1990s.

The last time the Expo was held in Bemidji was in 2008 at the Beltrami County Fairgrounds. The event was held at the Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids from 2009-2013.

"We're excited to be bringing the Expo back to Bemidji," said TPA Expo committee member Joan Pomp. "Grand Rapids did a wonderful job embracing our event, and we'll be back there someday. But now it's Bemidji's turn to host the Expo. The Sanford Center is a beautiful facility and the Beltrami County community has always welcomed us with open arms. We're looking forward to being back there in 2014."

The arena floor of the Sanford Center will be utilized for many of

the vendors who have traditionally purchased "outdoor lots" in the past, including some large equipment vendors. The Center's parking lot will also feature displays of large equipment and other logging needs. "Indoor" vendors will be situated in the arena's concourse and on the main arena floor.

Opened in October 2010, the

Sanford Center is home to the Bemidji State men's and women's hockey teams. Between the arena and convention center, the site is home to numerous other events, including arena football, concerts, conventions, rodeos, and graduation ceremonies.

The 2014 North Star Expo will be held on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 12 and 13.

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Scheff Logging and Trucking Named Minnesota Logger of the Year

Scheff Logging and Trucking has been named the 2014 “Logger of the Year” by the Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Implementation Committee (MN SIC). The award was presented to the Marcell-based business at the Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) workshop held in Tower April 15. James Scheff, owner, accepted the award from MN SIC vice chair Roger Johnson in front of an audience of more than 200 loggers.

The Logger of the Year Award recognizes outstanding independent logging contractor performance with the purpose of honoring Minnesota’s competent professional independent logging contractors. The formal nomination notes that Scheff’s logging operations are testimony to what a modern-day business focused on timberland management can successfully be. The family-owned enterprise supplies wood fiber to Minnesota’s forest products economy, while at the same time harvesting trees in an environmentally sensitive manner.

“Jim and his staff exhibit a professional attitude and work ethic, preceded only by their ability to pay attention to detail,” according to retired U.S. Forest Service Forester and award nominator Dave Roerick. “When conditions change unexpectedly on a logging job, Jim is willing to adjust his operations in a fair and equitable manner, thus ensuring the best interests of the landowner are taken care of,” Roerick added.

Scheff and his employees are known for their willingness to not only take suggestions, but to implement ideas and make adjustments to their harvesting and forest management operations in ways that improve efficiencies whenever possible.

Founded in September 1977, Scheff and his family members, including his mother, have established a thriving business in Scheff Logging and Trucking.



Roger Johnson, (l), vice-chair of the Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Implementation Committee, presented the Logger of the Year Award to James Scheff, owner of Scheff Logging and Trucking.

The business includes five timber harvesting crews, and one chipping operation. The company includes a full fleet of 17 wood hauling trucks and complement of heavy equipment to build and maintain roads, landings, and overall support of the business.

Scheff Logging and Trucking is not all about ‘business,’ however. Jim volunteers for several professional programs and associations that help his logging business meet the challenging demands of his profession.

His membership in the MLEP is evidence of his compliance with legal business requirements; Scheff’s certification as a Minnesota Master Logger recognizes his professionalism as an individual logger, earning Scheff Logging and Trucking the seal of approval as a logging business.

MLEP Executive Director Dave Chura congratulated Scheff, noting that in addition to the high risk and large business investment the family has made, Scheff pays close attention to the safety and needs of the company’s workforce.

Employees are met with on a regular basis to discuss safety concerns; Scheff meets annually in a town hall setting with employees and his insurance agent to ensure that issues are addressed.

“Not only are Jim Scheff’s standards for his operations above the norm,” testified Tim O’Hara, coordinator of the Duluth-based Minnesota MN SIC, “he is a volunteer with several professional programs and associations that help both his, and his fellow logging businesses meet the challenging demands of the logging profession.”

Scheff Logging and Trucking received a plaque and a check for \$500 for the recognition along with several other gifts.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) is a forest certification standard and program of SFI Inc., a non-profit organization. The SFI standard covers key values such as protection of biodiversity, species at risk and wildlife habitat; sustainable harvest levels; protection of water quality; and prompt regeneration.

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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.

Recent Timber Sales Average Prices, as reported by each agency

Agency	Regular	Intermediate
DNR – Two Harbors Area		
<i>January 23 – Oral Auction</i>		
Aspen Species (WC)	\$ 9.70	NA
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$32.60	\$ 6.56
Paper Birch (WC)	\$11.04	\$ 3.87
Black Spruce (WC)	NA	\$ 4.68

4 of the 8 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR – Backus Area		
<i>January 30 – Oral Auction</i>		
Aspen Species (WC)	\$20.69	\$25.15
Oak Species (WMP)	\$17.19	\$20.12
Paper Birch (WMP)	\$ 9.98	\$ 9.89

9 of the 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

St. Louis County		
<i>February 20 – Sealed Bid</i>		
Aspen Pulpwood	\$34.03	NA
Balsam Fir Pulpwood	\$ 9.43	NA
Birch Pulpwood	\$14.90	NA
Red Maple Pulpwood	\$19.29	NA

21 of the 23 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Cass County		
<i>February 27 – Sealed Bid</i>		
Aspen	\$22.36	\$29.60
Red Oak	\$20.42	\$28.74
Maple	\$17.39	\$21.08
Basswood	\$10.97	NA

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

Cass County		
<i>March 27 – Sealed Bid</i>		
Aspen	\$25.55	\$26.66
Red Oak	\$30.52	\$29.04
Ash	NA	\$12.02

Birch \$18.74 \$15.49

All 6 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Crow Wing County		
<i>March 28 – Oral Auction</i>		
Aspen	\$22.43	NA
Oak	\$22.85	NA
Red Pine	\$39.37	NA
Red Pine Pulp	\$13.68	NA
Birch	\$11.50	NA

All 15 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Products:
PB = Pulp and Bolts
WMP = Woodsrun mixed Products
WC = Woodsrun cordwood
ST = Sawtimber
WST = Woodsrun Sawtimber
PW = Pulpwood

Minnesota DNR Announces 2014 Extension Policy

Citing widespread below average temperatures and above normal precipitation that caused a delay in completing some timber harvests in 2013-14, the Minnesota DNR has announced a policy allowing Adverse Surface Condition extensions of one year on permits that depend on frozen ground and expire during 2014.

An extension will be granted on a case-by-case basis for permits meeting the following conditions:

- The permit must expire between

- March 1 and Dec. 31, 2014;
- The permit access or operations must be dependent on frozen conditions as stated on the timber appraisal or approved by the DNR timber sale administrator;
- An Adverse Surface Conditions Extension is available on only those permits that have already used the regular extension;
- Signed extension requests must be received no later than May 30, 2014.

The extension will be for one year past the original permit expiration date. Eight percent annual interest will be charged on all timber harvested during the extension period. If an uncut permit is forfeited during the extension period, eight percent interest will be charged on the full value of the permit from the date the extension started through the date of forfeiture.

If a permit expires without harvest, one year of eight percent interest on the full value of the permit will be charged. If a partially cut permit is forfeited or expires, the full value of the uncut timber will be charged. The permit holder will also pay the eight percent extension interest on both the cut and uncut timber.

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

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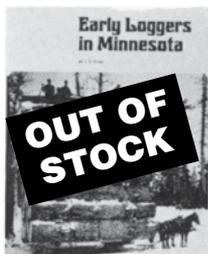
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Early Loggers in Minnesota

by J. C. Ryan

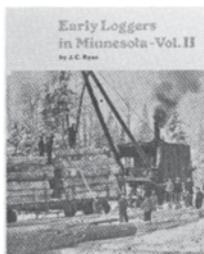
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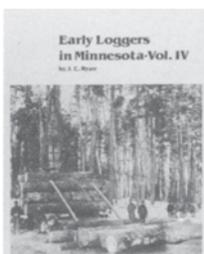
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Central Power Distributors.....	12
Duluth Sign.....	25
Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick, P.A.....	7
Great Lakes Trailers	13
Hedstrom Lumber Co.....	25
Industrial Lubricant Company	24
Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance	13
Northern Engine & Supply.....	25
Northern Timberline Equipment.....	15
Nortrax.....	5, 27
Otis-Magie Insurance Agency.....	21
Petro Choice.....	7
Pomp's Tire	5
Rice Blacksmith Saw & Machine.....	2
Rihm Kenworth.....	7
Road Machinery & Supplies.....	28
Schaefer Enterprises.....	9
Titan Machinery	23
Wausau Sales Corp.....	12
Ziegler.....	17



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