

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

# TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

VOLUME 73

## Going Strong Jeremy Stecker & JATCO 65th North Star Expo is Big Success



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Volume 73  
September/October 2018  
Duluth, Minnesota

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## ON THE COVER

The 65th Annual North Star Expo was a family affair. Coverage of the 2018 event begins on page 20.

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Looking out my office window, I can't help but wonder what the winter holds in store. I think we have witnessed aspects of all four of the seasons we enjoy here in 2 weeks! Undoubtedly the number one topic of conversation amongst loggers is the weather, followed closely, I am sure, by markets for timber. We hope that with this wet, unseasonably cold weather, the mills are running at full speed, chewing up the volumes that have been plentiful

## President's Column



this past production season, and turning profits. In the last issue of The Timber Bulletin I mentioned the North Star Expo. It was nice to see the turnout for the Expo and in particular, the event held at Timberlake Lodge. The reports back were fantastic! Many thanks to all the vendors and sponsors of this great show. MFI/TPA also met with gubernatorial candidate Jeff Johnson at the Expo, along with running mate Donna

Bergstrom. We appreciate their interest in the occupation that so many of us take part in. Thanks to Rod Enberg for making the trip to St. Paul to meet with DFL candidate Tim Walz along with TPA staff the following week. Tim also appreciates all that the timber industry does for the state of MN.

TPA is working with the state DNR on training topics relating to new foresters. If you have comments or questions, feel free to contact the TPA office and voice your opinion, it matters! Thanks to the staff for bringing up this important issue.

In closing, the busiest season is approaching. We all know the time constraints that exist in this industry. Please remember to be safe when working in the woods or on the roads this winter. Safety IS important, and we all want to be around to enjoy the next season! The trees will always be there.

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It was great to be at this year's North Star Expo at the Itasca County Fairgrounds. We are grateful to all of our vendors who were there in force with all of the products and services that our members use every day. The attendance was strong and a lot of business was done during the course of the two day event.

Many thanks to the Expo Committee along with our staff, Ray

## Executive Vice President's Column



Higgins and Ann Todd who all do a great job in putting this big event together every year. Events like the Expo don't happen without a lot of planning and the Expo Committee and staff began working on

next year's show right after the last equipment left the fairgrounds.

Thanks to all for making this year's North Star Expo another great success.



Some things take a while. That was the case with a little known program called AGREET. The program was funded by the legislature several years ago and designed to help build capabilities in agriculture and forestry at the University of Minnesota by building faculty capacity in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences and the College of Veterinary Medicine. Unfortunately the powers that be at the University saw fit to fund exclusively agriculture positions in the first several rounds of funding decisions. Finally a position has been funded in the Forest Resources Department. It took a lot of work to get this done but forestry is finally getting a small part of its due.



Congratulations to Rick Horton who has been hired as Director

of Forest Policy by our sister organization Minnesota Forest Industries (MFI). Rick is a wildlife biologist who has worked for the MN DNR, the Ruffed Grouse Society and the National Wild Turkey Federation all here in Minnesota. He has represented wildlife interests on the MN SFI State Implementation Committee and has served for a number of years as an alternate on the MN Forest Resources Council. Rick brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and contacts to his new role with MFI. I know that he will do an outstanding job.



With the fall hunting season in full swing it always reminds me of taking gun safety training when I was a kid. The training was strongly oriented to safety as I recall and it made a strong impression on all of us who took the class.

As you head afield I know that you will be thinking and talking about hunting safely with your partners. You might even stop to



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Folks running for office were at the North Star Expo in full force. I was glad to see them as it's a good way for them to get to know us and us to get to know them. The TPA Executive Committee has met with both major party candidates for Governor; County Commissioner Jeff Johnson, the Republican candidate and Congressman Tim Walz, the Democratic candidate. Briefings like this are something that we do on a regular basis. They are a good way for us to share our concerns about the DNR, state land management, transportation and other issues with the candidates before the election. We appreciated the time that each of the candidates for Governor gave us and their interest in our industry and issues.

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## Member Feature...



Jeremy Stecker

# Going Strong

**Jeremy Stecker and business JATCO have charted a strong path in Minnesota's logging community.**

It's mid-October in central St. Louis County and it's drizzling across the northern part of the state. That's no surprise, because it seems like it's been raining for three weeks, certainly enough to make it difficult to remember what the sun looks like, and more importantly, difficult for logging crews to get their work done.

And yet, Jeremy Stecker's logging operations are going strong on not one, but three separate sites:

a cut-to-length harvester working a federal contract in the Superior National Forest at "Skibo Vista", southeast of Hoyt Lakes, his cut-to-length forwarder about a mile away on another federal site, and he has a feller buncher operating on a St. Louis County sale, 20 miles to the south near Brimson, with 3,800 cords of mostly aspen. It's a big enough site with varying soil conditions that typically, it's possible to work somewhere on a given day, despite the wet weather. That's the situation today.

"The first mile of the road is some of the nicest gravel and sand you'll find," Stecker says of the Brimson site. "It does change. I don't know if the site's going to be workable in the back when we get back that direction, depending on how the weather continues. We'll see."

It helps that Stecker operates a hybrid of conventional and cut-to-length logging equipment. The feller buncher harvests the tree, then the cut-to-length harvester processes the trees of bunched piles, before the forwarder comes through to





JATCO's John Deere 853M feller buncher is operated by Ryan Weidendorf.

pick up the timber and bring it to the landing. Both the buncher and the harvester are tracked machines, while the forwarder has eight rubber tires. All are light on the land.

In addition, Stecker's crew typically utilizes non-merchantable wood and lays it down as slash to drive on, sort of like a mat, particularly in dreary, drizzly weather like this. This bunching technique which incorporates the high rotation felling head, along with soil conditions in this region, and the fact that his equipment is suited for varying conditions, allows Stecker's crew to typically work fifty weeks out of a year.

"If you're in thick hardwood," he says, "utilizing the non-merchantable limbs and tops and laying them out in a mat to drive on, it's like driving on pipeline mats when it's all said and done. There's good ground in this region that we can go to when needed."

By using what has been branded as "hybrid cut-to-length," Stecker and his crew can work small areas of soft terrain within a timber sale that might be off limits to other conventional crews.

"I like to call it shovel logging" he says, "with the buncher using any available slash to drive on. At times we've used full trees for this

purpose and later picked them back up. We have the ability to reach 30 feet, then spin and dump behind itself. Then our tracked processor can reach for those trees and also spin itself to process towards higher ground for the later forwarding portion to happen. Those two big machines can stay up quite well if the tracks are standing still and only the boom is moving. Likewise,

coupling those two machines like that can take a tree from where it's growing and place it eighty to one hundred feet towards higher ground for current use, just with boom motions."

Stecker was first exposed to the logging business at an early age, growing up in Aurora. Jeremy's father Tom worked in grandfather Ray's logging business before



Ted Posch of Jackson Trucking leaves JATCO's St. Louis County harvest for the mill. JATCO outsources its hauling to Jackson and to Jon Nelson of Finland, MN.





Jeff Sandnas operates the John Deere 803 processor, featuring a Waratah 622B cutting head. JATCO uses the machine to process wood at the stump, after it has been harvested.

taking a job at the LTV Steel mine in nearby Hoyt Lakes. But Tom was laid-off from LTV in 1999 while Jeremy was a junior at Mesabi East High School, so the pair bought a used buncher and started their own custom bunching business they called JATCO, standing for Jeremy and Tom's Company. When Jeremy graduated in 2000, he went to Mesabi Community College in Virginia for two years, and then to UMD for a chemical engineering degree.

"I figured out after a summer internship that engineering wasn't the avenue I wanted to walk down," Jeremy says. "I switched during that summer to the ADEP (Accelerated Degree Evening Program) at St. Scholastica and finished out my business administration degree in about a year and a half."

While in school, Stecker continued working in the bunching business with his father.

"Getting a degree truly has helped create a foundation that made the business what it is today," he says.

Jeremy and Tom continued working together for the next nine years, adding a second buncher to their company, and working as subcontractors for a variety of logging companies. In 2014, it was

time to head in a different direction.

"We saw the marketplace changing in front of us with the people that we worked for," Jeremy says. "Dad decided to go a different direction. Now he's hauling wood. Aside from that he's buying firewood and marketing that. He likes to deal with the customer that way, so it's a perfect fit for him."

When Tom left the business, still known as JATCO, they sold both bunchers and Jeremy purchased a cut-to-length system, running a new John Deere harvester, and hired Rick Godden, Jr. to operate a used Ponsse forwarder. Stecker started buying his own wood rather than working for others, and developed his own markets. Two years later, he decided to add a feller buncher, moving to a hybrid cut-to-length operation.

"With the buncher," Stecker says, "you make larger piles for your processor to work at, and while you do that, you make larger piles for your forwarder, so your forwarder is driving around less time looking for a bucketful of wood here, there, and everywhere, in comparison to processing it right off the stump. When you cut off the stump, you might only get two or three trees of the same species in one pile, where we can make a forwarder load or

more at times, depending on how heavy of an aspen or spruce cover we're in, for example." Stecker feels adding a buncher to the cut-to-length system allows him to be more efficient.

"I can't say you're always gaining a higher profit margin with the added buncher, but more dollars turned at the same margin create a larger net at the end of the day," he says, "there's no doubt we've sped up the system. Each machine costs money to run, but it costs money to run a processor at a slower speed, and a forwarder that's not putting out as much wood every day. So it's a fine line. My job is to look at our system and try to fix bottlenecks with the people and machines we have. It's all about balance and maximizing efficiency.

"The hardest thing on a processor that we dealt with in the past while cutting off the stump was undersized wood. So to help deal with the non-merchantable species, for which most agency contracts have the clause that two-inches and above of any cut species has to be severed, we implemented the buncher to aid with this issue and help in other efficiencies as well. There is no gain for our processor to harvest non-merchantable trees because you're not going to use it to





Rick Godden, Jr. operates the John Deere 1210G forwarder. JATCO purchased the 8-wheeled machine in January.

put on a semi load. So our buncher cures that side of the story. When the processor's working, he's only working on wood that actually generates revenue. Our buncher is taking all the non-merchantable stems, stuff that's like 2-to-5 inches, and just laying it down and either using it for slash or just putting it on the ground so it meets the specifications of the sale."

As a result, days like today when the three machines are working different sites are the norm.

"You must have distance between equipment," Stecker says. "Generally, we're always working on more than one site or cutting block. A few days between each piece of equipment allows for better layout for the next person and allows for the rare unplanned downtime day if it comes along. If my buncher needs fixing, we don't want to stop the forwarder from hauling out wood to the roadside. In the dead heat of summer, we'll run closer together, just because how fast stuff dries out, especially in tree length form."

The company currently runs all John Deere equipment: an 853M feller buncher, an 803MH processor with a Waratah 622B head that is being upgraded in November

with the same combination, and a 1210G forwarder, which was just purchased at the start of February. The business also has a 700H dozer, a 160G excavator, and 333E track loader to help with continual road building activities. Stecker prefers to purchase new harvesting equipment on a regular basis to replace machines whose warranties are expiring.

"I'd rather have dependable 'uptime' than the chance of downtime," he says, "so I keep those machines very fresh. I've researched what I paid for my maintenance and parts on old machines we used to run. Plus, downtime is huge. It's difficult to put a number on downtime. I've had old used equipment in the past that I spent countless hours working on—not making money, but working on—and I have chosen to go the route of new. We have a great relationship with John Deere and their financing side and with the local McCoy team. They even come out and do all of our regular maintenance. It's rare for my crew to do oil changes, we only change needed hoses and other small items. McCoy takes care of the rest. Sometimes it's a preventative maintenance program where that's

part of the deal when we buy the machine. And when machines need major maintenance intervals done, we take it to McCoy's shop. There's downtime when the machine's gone, but we plan for it. An example is this week, one guy's going to be gone starting tomorrow, so I'm going to get a couple more days of wood on the ground and that buncher is actually going in for maintenance. We planned it around our schedule."

"I just decided that, I can see what it costs me on a monthly basis for my machine payments, depreciation, and parts; there's rare unplanned downtime involved with the new equipment, so I can rely on that when I go out and I want that machine to run, it's going to produce wood. And that's much more dependable on my checkbook than a machine that's older, that maybe doesn't have as high of a monthly cost of a payment, but it has the complete unknown of a breakdown, and what that's going to cost. There's nothing cheap about parts."

JATCO's crew is versatile, with Godden, Ryan Weidendorf, Jeff Sandnas, and Stecker all able to run more than one piece of equipment. In addition, Nick Wehmanen has



also been hired and will be trained to fill in where needed.

Stecker doesn't anticipate getting any larger in terms of buying additional equipment for another crew. If he needs to increase production, he'll add another shift. In fact, the forwarder is already running a second shift, from 4 p.m. to midnight, with the processor adding a second shift once the ground freezes.

"I don't care to add another machine into the system," Stecker says. "I would rather add another shift. So I'll add people, if a machine needs more output to balance the system, but I do not want to add more machines right now. "Whether the machine is running or not during the 'off shifts' it's depreciating and costing money. The hourly rate of depreciation on equipment seems less if you put a bunch of hours on it in a short amount of time."

At age 36, Stecker is on the younger side of logging business owners. But during those years of working with his dad as sub-contractors for other loggers, he learned a lot.

"Some of what we do was gained through the thirty-plus loggers that we bunched wood for over 14 years in our other business, seeing all these different companies and how everyone did it," he says. "The other keys to our success are having strong relationships with our trucking contractors—we don't own a semi—as well as having great relationships with our markets that we deliver product to. Communication is so important. Whether it's about equipment with McCoy, deliveries to be made by our trucks, planning future deliveries to local mills or talking with foresters at the local agencies that we buy wood from and the upcoming auction tracts that he or she may have setup.

"We've utilized two trucking subcontractors from Finland over the last several years," Stecker says. "Jon Nelson manages how the group of trucks deliver product between his trucks and the ones from his dad's company, Jackson Trucking. I know these guys are subcontractors, but they are a very important part of my team. We want them here and we like

them here, and I truly believe they like being here. Respect and thankfulness to our employees and subcontractors is always on my mind and given. I allow my trucks flexibility to take advantage of situations that are given to them at different times, too. Allowing those guys that flexibility and the strong relationship and steady delivery plan goes a long ways with them."

Stecker says another key to his business is having a tentative twelve month harvest and delivery plan on paper.

The plan must be something that has the ability to change and adjust for good or bad market conditions," he says. "But have a plan and a built-in backup plan to boot. This ensures that we are operating as many weeks out of the year like we do."

The coming winter figures to be a busy one. In addition to the St. Louis County sale they're currently on, Stecker also has a DNR permit adjacent to it, plus there's timber on private land as well, for a total of 5500 cords, some of which will have to wait for frozen ground conditions. As for the federal jobs, one is JATCO's own permit, and the first federal job Stecker has ever purchased. It features around 2200 cords harvestable on summer ground, with another 3000 to cut this winter. They also had the chance to pick up an additional 300 cords on an adjacent stewardship

sale at the nearby "Skibo Vista" which the feds wanted to open up for better views.

"You've always been able to see Hoyt Lakes from there," Stecker says, "but now that it's logged, on a clear day you can see thirty to forty miles, including every mine, and every water tower that's on the east side of the Range."

The other federal site is actually a permit purchased by Hedstrom Lumber. It's a pine thinning with around 1000 cords of summer wood, and another 500 cords waiting for colder conditions. The timber harvested from the three sites will not only be delivered to Hedstrom, but also Louisiana Pacific, Sappi, Verso, Blandin, PotlatchDeltic, and Savanna Pallets.

Going forward, Stecker likes JATCO's position. He's lived in Duluth since his days in college, along with his wife of nine years Ellie and their three kids Soren 5, Svea 3 and Elin 3 months. Business always has its challenges, but all things considered, he's happy with how things are progressing.

"I feel like we are at a good place right now," he says. "If we get too big, then I end up being more of a manager, and I'm not in the equipment at all. I'm just making sure all the equipment continues to run. I believe that efficiency suffers if you get too big and spread out. I think there's a happy place, and I think we're there."



Harvested red pine waits to be hauled to the mill.





JATCO's harvest at the Superior National Forest's Skibo Vista. The stewardship sale improved the view from Skibo.



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# Shermer Logging Named Regional Logger of the Year

**W**ausau, WI--The Forest Resources Association and STIHL recognized Shermer Logging of Gheen at the Lake States Regions Fall Meeting held on September 18 in Wausau, Wisconsin.

Earlier in the year, Shermer Logging was recognized as the Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative Logger of the year.

Shermer Logging will now compete for the National Outstanding Logger of the Year with other FRA Regional Outstanding Loggers. The National Outstanding Logger of Year will be announced in May during the FRA annual meeting.

During his acceptance speech, Cliff Shermer recognized his wife Mary and the hardworking employees of Shermer Logging for his success in the logging business. He was also grateful for all the companies that he had supplied over the years that allowed him to grow and be successful in logging.

FRA's Outstanding Logger Award program is designed to raise the visibility of professional logging contractors and to encourage other loggers to adopt the performance of the award winners.

The Forest Resources Association Inc. is a nonprofit trade association concerned with the safe, efficient, and sustainable harvest of forest products and their transport from woods to mill. FRA represents wood consumers, independent logging contractors, and wood dealers, as well as businesses providing products and services to the forest resource-based industries.

STIHL Incorporated serves as the sponsor of FRA's Regional and National Outstanding Logger Awards.



Cliff Shermer (left) is recognized as the Forest Resources Association Lake States Region Logger of the Year. Presenting the award is Matt Carothers of Superior Woodlands Group. Shermer also received a chainsaw donated by Stihl.

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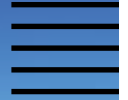
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# New USFS Chief Named

**V**icki Christiansen was named the 19th Chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

Christiansen had been serving as Interim Chief since March of this year.

"As a former wildland firefighter and fire manager, Chief Christiansen knows what's needed to restore our forests and put them back to

## Timber Talk



work for the taxpayers," Secretary Perdue said. "With seven years at the Forest Service and 30 years with the states of Arizona and Washington, Vicki's professional experience makes me confident that she will thrive in this role and hit the ground running."

and fire manager, Chief Christiansen knows what's needed to restore our forests and put them back to

work for the taxpayers," Secretary Perdue said. "With seven years at the Forest Service and 30 years with the states of Arizona and

Prior to serving as interim Chief, Christiansen was Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry where she had oversight of Fire and Aviation Management, Tribal Relations, Forest Health Protection, Cooperative Forestry, Grey Towers and Conservation Education. She joined the Forest Service in 2010 as the Deputy Director of Fire and Aviation Management. Before joining the Forest Service, she served as the Arizona State Forester and Director of the Arizona Division of Forestry. Christiansen also served as the Washington State Forester where she had a 26-year career with Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

## Mark Jacobs Retires/ Courtemanche is new Land Commissioner

**A**itkin County Land commissioner Mark Jacobs retired in September after 13 years leading the department, and nearly 39 years overall working for Aitkin County.

Jacobs was named land commissioner in 2005. He expects

to remain in the Aitkin area in retirement.

Rich Courtemanche was named to succeed Jacobs by the Aitkin County Board. Courtemanche had previously served as assistant land commissioner in Aitkin County since 2011.

## Dallis Miliander continues career at McCoy

**M**cCoy Construction & Forestry is proud to announce that Dallis Miliander has accepted a regional position as Technical Communicator. Miliander has been servicing John Deere equipment in the field for the last 42 years. He has now transitioned from field work to working behind the scenes assisting McCoy technicians across the Midwest with diagnostics and trouble shooting.



"We are lucky to retain Dallis and to be able to utilize him in a new way to serve our customers while supporting and strengthening the rest of our team," said McCoy General Manager Rich Miska.

Miliander will continue to work out of McCoy's Grand Rapids location.

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# Dean Richard A. Skok 1928-2018

**R**ichard Skok, former Dean of the University of Minnesota's College of Natural Resources, passed away in September at the age of 90 at his home in Roseville, MN.

Skok was a giant in the state's forest products industry with a keen interest in logging. His area of expertise was forest economics and policy. Skok Hall on the University's St. Paul campus was named in his honor.

In addition, Skok was a frequent attendee of TPA's annual meeting and banquet.

"Dick Skok's research focus was on understanding economic and policy aspects of Minnesota's forest products industry, from landowners to loggers to the primary forest products firms," recalled Dr. Alan Ek, professor emeritus of the U's Department of Forest Resources, and its former department head. "His research covered logging and logging firms, market practices and opportunities, incentive and tax programs, and overarching forest policy. He felt it was crucial to know how things worked and who made them happen. I was especially fortunate to have had his class covering economics, policy and administration. In fact, that is where I really learned what forestry and forest industry was all about. Later, as a department head reporting to Dick, his example



and insight was invaluable. It was clear Dick valued forestry from the ground up...especially the industry that made it all happen. Finally, as Dean of the College of Natural Resources, he was especially attentive in seeing that several generations of U of M forestry and forest products graduates understood the logging industry in detail."

"The big thing I'll remember about Dick was how strongly he felt about being engaged in forest policy and management issues locally," said Dr. Mike Kilgore, current head of the University's Department of Forest Resources. "While he was involved in many national and international forestry initiatives, Dick always had time to help promote forestry and the state's forest products industry. He played key leadership roles in several state forest policy and management

initiatives, including serving as vice-chair of Governor Perpich's Blue Ribbon Commission on Forestry and Forest Products, and co-chair of Governor Perpich's Commission on Wood Products."

"Dick truly was a leader of Minnesota's forestry community," said Bob Buckler, longtime Minnesota timber industry lobbyist. "He was a distinguished academic and a committed public servant. On a personal level, Dick was modest, friendly and welcoming, and he had a terrific sense of humor. He was a mentor to many, who will carry his legacy forward."

Skok was a native of St. Paul. He obtained an undergraduate degree in forestry in 1950, and subsequently a masters and a PhD in forestry, all from the University of Minnesota. Skok was an assistant professor at the University of Montana, before returning to Minnesota in 1953 as a researcher, instructor, professor, and ultimately Dean, retiring in 1992.

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# 65th North Star Expo is Big Success

**T**ake Minnesota's logging equipment show, mix in the picturesque Itasca County Fairgrounds, loggers from all over the state, media coverage—including a reporter from the New York Times—and then throw in some prominent candidates for office, and a brand new—and wildly successful—evening event, and what do you have? The 65th Annual North Star Expo, of course.

"We're extremely happy with the way everything went," said Expo Committee Chair Chad Lovdahl. "The vendors were great, we saw a lot of loggers, and we got more cooperation from the weather than we thought we would. All in all, it was a great couple of days to bring our industry together."

That new event was an evening reception at the TimberLake Lodge in Grand Rapids, replacing the traditional Friday night barbecue. The reception featured a cash bar and plenty of delicious "heavy" hors d'oeuvres for all of the nearly 300 who attended. Best of all, the food was free! Plus, the evening featured dozens of door prizes, including a 60-inch flat screen TV donated by TPA and a Browning Maxus shotgun gun, donated by Lunemann Equipment.

"The reception was awesome," Lovdahl said. "The food was great and it was fun to see so many folks from around the industry."

The Grand Rapids community rolled out the red carpet for the 65th Annual Expo, held again at the historic Itasca County Fairgrounds. In all, more than \$20 million in logging equipment was on display, including the latest and greatest in logging equipment—both conventional and cut-to-length—as well as the trucks, trailers, firewood processors, tires, and other products that go into making a logging company function.

On top of all of that, nearly 300 school kids also came to the Expo to see everything the Expo has to offer. Most of those students were high schoolers participating in the Future Forest Stewards program, sponsored

by The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the regional economic development organization APEX, the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, and the Applied Learning Institute, which strives to enhance technical education in northeastern Minnesota. Students participating in the Future Forest

Stewards event were also taken to a harvest site just north of Grand Rapids.

Add it all up, and it's further evidence why we like to call the Expo, "The Great Minnesota Logging Get-together."

Here's a rundown of the events of the 64th Annual North Star Expo:



In the **Best Display—Large Equipment** competition, the team at McCoy Construction and Forestry received the Blue Ribbon from Expo committee Chair Chad Lovdahl. Titan Machinery took second place, while ZieglerCAT finished third.



In the competition for **Best Outdoor Display**, Laona Machine captured the Blue Ribbon. Multitek was the runner-up, while the Pomp's Tire display was third.



# 2018 Expo Coverage



In the **Best Indoor Booth** competition, Mid-States Equipment received top honors. Corporate 4 Insurance and Wallingford's round out the top three.

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# 2018 Expo Coverage



This year's **Loader Contest**, Bubba Nelson brought home top honors, ending an amazing winning streak. Matt Lundberg had won the event for nine years, but he couldn't make it a full decade, thanks to Nelson. He received a \$100 check for his victory. Left to right: Nelson, Matt Lundberg (with son Paul), third place finisher Kyle Lundberg, and **Masters Division** winner Dan Lundberg (Matt and Kyle's father).

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# 2018 Expo Coverage



2018 **Celebrity Loader Contest** Contestants (L-R): PotlatchDeltic Mill Manager Wade Semeliss, WDIO-TV photojournalist Glenn Kellahan, St. Louis County Commissioner (and Republican candidate for Congress) Pete Stauber, WDIO-TV reporter Taylor Holt, state Sen. Paul Utke (R-Park Rapids), Rep. Sandy Layman (R-Grand Rapids), Rep. Matt Bliss (R-Pennington), UPM Blandin Mill Manager Scott Juidici, and Sen. Justin Eichorn (R-Grand Rapids). Semeliss topped the field with a time of 1:21.56, 16 seconds faster than Sen. Utke. Rep. Bliss was third.

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## 2018 Expo Coverage



The Haverinen family celebrated a victory in the **Best Load** competition. Haverinen Brothers Logging harvested the red pine, and Loren Haverinen Trucking was the hauler, winning the \$500 first prize. PotlatchDeltic sponsored the entry. Greg Cook Logging was second, and DeLack Logging was third.



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# 2018 Expo Coverage



The Danielson sisters of Motley turned in impressive performances in this year's **Expo Coloring Contest**. Laney (above left) took top honors in the 7-9 year old division, and older sister Bridget (above right) won the Blue Ribbon in the 10-12 age group. This year's other top finishers were: Ages 10-12: Kylee Binkley of Hines finished second, with Lana Haverinen of Menagha finishing third. 7-9 age group: Claire Lucking of Pierz was the runner up to Danielson, while Bristol Binkley of Hines took third. 6 and under division: Sophie Pittack of Bovey captured the blue ribbon, with Bristol Berglund of International Falls finishing second and Sierra Binkley of Hines earning third place. The top three in each category received ribbons, while each winner was receiving an art kit.



Coffee and flapjacks were in ample supply at Saturday morning's annual McCoy Construction and Forestry Pancake Breakfast. The Expo institution also featured plenty of sausage, syrup, butter, and juice, all courtesy of McCoy. And best of all, it was free!



# 2018 Expo Coverage



State Rep. Sandy Layman (R-Grand Rapids) addresses over 200 high schoolers about the importance of forest management in our state as part of the Future Forest Stewards program at the Expo.



High schoolers also visited nearby Gunn Park as part of the Future Forest Stewards program.



# 2018 Expo Coverage



UPM Blandin forester Adam Sutherland demonstrates how a feller buncher head works to 4th graders from Murphy Elementary in Grand Rapids. Roughly 75 students made the short walk from Murphy to see a wide variety of the equipment Minnesota's logging professionals use to manage our state's forests, as well as learn about the important role loggers play in proper forest management.

In the **Guess the Weight Competition**, Jason Nelson of Staples had the winning guess of 84,476, winning the \$50 prize, While Cory Kimball of Park Rapids won the **Wood ID** contest.



Republican candidate for Governor Jeff Johnson shares a laugh with loggers Taylor DeLack of Littlefork (left) and Kit Hasbargen of Birchdale. Johnson campaign at the Expo and also received a briefing on the forest products industry from members of TPA's Executive Committee.

## Next Year

TPA's Expo committee is already working on plans for next year. We look forward to seeing you at the 66th Annual North Star Expo!

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# 2018 Expo Coverage



We need more chicken wings!



L-R: Dale Erickson, TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt, and Kent Jacobson.

## Expo Reception

A new tradition was born at this year's Expo: after displays closed for the day on Friday, loggers and vendors re-convened at the TimberLake Lodge for a reception with a cash bar and free hors d'oeuvres, a great way to cap off a great first day at the 64th Annual North Star Expo.



What to take: skewers, breaded shrimp, or pork sliders? What not all three?



Mike Hill of Bovey won the Browning Maxus shotgun, donated by Lunemann Equipment, in the door prize drawing.

## Thank You!

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& McCoy Construction & Forestry**

# TPA Members Tour Unsold Timber Sales

In response to unsold tracts on DNR auctions, TPA members met with state staff in the Baudette, Sandstone, and Tower areas to provide input on how to better design sales to make them more attractive to bidders. Each of the meetings began in the office, and then the participants headed to the woods. Included in the meetings were not only DNR staff from the Division of Forestry, in each area, but also staff from St. Paul, as well as from the Wildlife and Water and Ecological Services divisions in each area. Foresters from various mills also participated. The tours were excellent opportunities to provide feedback to DNR on how to better design sales, and hopefully foster stronger relationships with state staff.



TPA members John Rolle and Corey Lovdahl participated in the DNR's Unsold Timber Sale Tour in the Tower area.



DNR Staff reviews a timber sale near Lake Vermilion that went unsold at a recent Tower Area auction.





TPA Members Dave Berthiaume (left) and Billy Hudson of Carlson Timber (second from right) were among the TPA loggers attending the DNR Sandstone Area tour.



TPA member Dale Erickson (left) makes a point during a tour of unsold DNR tracts near Baudette.



DNR Staff receives input from TPA members on an unsold timber sale in the Sandstone area.

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# On the Markets

**T**he *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
<b>Aitkin County</b>		
<i>August 29—Oral Auction</i>		
Aspen P/B	\$30.88	NA
Mixed Hdwd		
Pulp	\$ 8.02	NA
Paper Birch		
P/B	\$15.34	NA
Oak P/B	\$ 9.21	NA
18 of the 19 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.		
<b>Cass County</b>		
<i>August 30—Sealed Bid</i>		
Aspen	\$34.89	\$38.60
Red Oak	NA	\$54.43
Jack Pine Pulp	\$12.01	NA

Red Pine P/B \$41.48 NA  
All 5 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### DNR—Park Rapids Area *September 11—Oral Auction*

Trembling		
Aspen (PB)	\$37.72	\$38.73
Trembling		
Aspen (WC)	\$45.00	\$37.07
Trembling		
Aspen (PW)	\$42.14	NA
Nrthn Hdwds		
(PB)	\$20.54	\$17.76

25 of the 28 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### DNR—Little Falls Area *September 13—Oral Auction*

Trembling		
Aspen (PW)	NA	\$16.22
Aspen Species		
(PW)	\$24.79	\$27.08
Aspen Species		
(PB)	\$21.60	NA
Oak Species		
(PB)	NA	\$27.66

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

### Beltrami County—Salvage

<i>September 13—Sealed Bid</i>		
Aspen Pulp	\$23.97	NA

Red Pine P/B \$37.61 NA  
All 6 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### Cass County *September 27—Sealed Bid*

Aspen	\$27.24	\$34.92
Birch	\$13.56	\$14.42
Maple	\$12.02	\$12.07
Basswood	\$12.00	\$11.39

All 7 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### Crow Wing County *September 28—Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$28.40	NA
Oak	\$15.17	NA
Red Pine	\$49.15	NA
Maple	\$11.37	NA

13 of the 19 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### Becker County *October 5—Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$27.98	NA
Birch	\$14.60	NA
Oak	\$21.07	NA

All 10 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### Hubbard County *October 8—Oral Auction*

Aspen Pulp	\$34.93	NA
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Aspen Mixed	\$37.61	NA
N. Pine Pulp	\$15.98	NA
N. Pine Bolts	\$37.46	NA
White Spruce		
Mixed	\$25.11	NA

All 13 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

# The Lumber Camp Cookee

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*



During this series of stories on “Early Loggers in Minnesota” I have tried to cover the many jobs of the logging camp operations all the way from the “walking boss” to the “swamper” – or from the top to the bottom in a regular logging camp operation. And there were always some special men in some camps, such as a water tank pump man or a railroad crossing watchman, who were used only in some of the camps.

But there was one job – and an important one – that I have not covered so far, and that is the “cookee” – the kitchen helper.

While the camp cookee did not rate very high as far as salary was concerned or in the matter of authority, he nevertheless played a very important part in keeping the men in good health as well as keeping them in a good mood.

A good many lumberjacks have become ill because the cookee failed to get all the soap off the dishes or failed to have the dishes kept free from grease. And while it was the cook’s responsibility to see that this was done, a careless cookee might not always have done a good job, as dishes were not always inspected after each washing. Most camp dishes were tin, and considerable soap was used in keeping them clean, and while there was always plenty of hot water available it took a good cookee to do the job well.

Soapy dishes were one of the things watched for not only by the head cook but by the camp foreman, as it was important that all the men be in the woods working – not in the camp sick from eating from unclean dishes. Many a cookee and also some cooks have been fired for failing at this.

Dishes were never dried with a dish towel as in a home, although a few towels might have been used to dry special pans and tools. Knives, forks and spoons were put into a white grain sack and shook until as dry as possible and then dumped into a large pan on the hot stove to finish the drying.

Cookees worked long hours, were up with the cooks an hour before the men were awakened and worked well into the evening cleaning up after the evening meal and setting the tables for breakfast.

However, they did get a break during the day if they had their work done and the cook was not too cranky. As explained in the earlier article, “Come and Get It,” there was usually one cookee to each 25 men in larger camps, or five to six in a large camp. In many of the 100-man camps, two or possibly three would be all the cookees, and in some camps where

they had a second cook, sometimes only two cookees.

The cooks assigned the work during the daytime hours, with some cookees assigned to dishwashing, some peeling potatoes and other vegetables and others cleaning the floors and tables. At mealtime they were all on duty as waiters, putting the food on the tables and

**This cook and two cookees are ready for a meal. The cook has an Army bugle, so probably got his cooking experience in the Army.**





keeping the dishes filled as the hungry lumberjacks emptied them.

After all the dishes had been washed and dried, the tables were set with all the plates face down and the cups face down on top of the plates, and with the knife, fork and spoon alongside the plate.

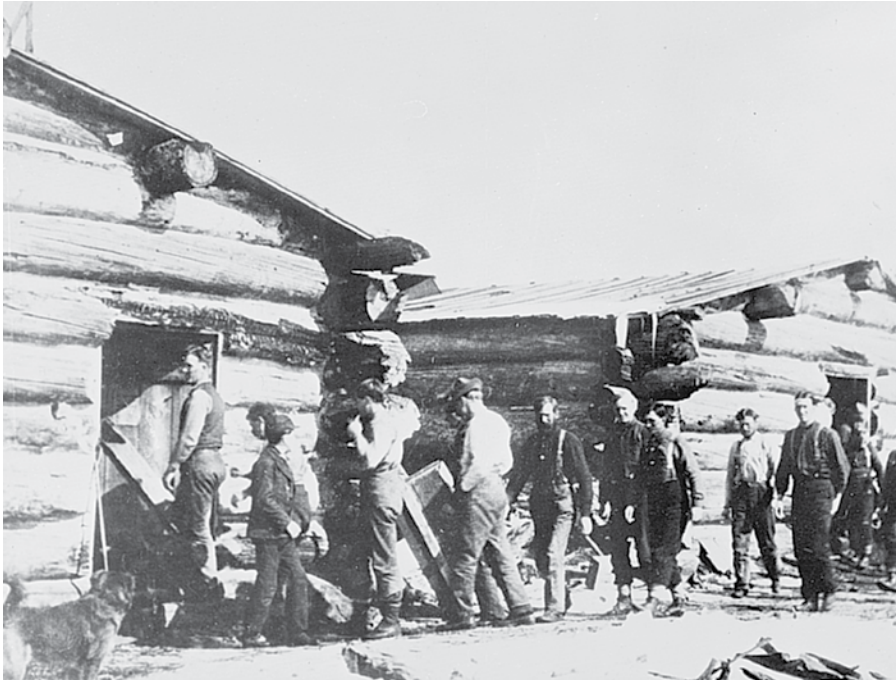
For every six men a setup of salt, pepper, catsup, sugar, etc. was put in place at the time the table was set. Milk and hot coffee were put on the tables just before the meal, followed by all the food. Bread, cakes, pie, doughnuts, etc. were set up with the milk, leaving the hot dishes such as

meat until the last, just before the horn was blown.

Now the peeling of potatoes was no small job, as it took from one to three bushels a day along with the other vegetables, and that made a good half day's work for one cookee. All peeling was done by hand, and it was only in the later days of the logging camps that a few of the larger companies got potato peelers that ran by turning a crank.

As a rule, the cookees would change off at dishwashing and other cleaning jobs, although there were some camps where a cookee would be assigned to dishwashing as a steady job. As a rule tables and benches were washed and scrubbed once a day and tables washed off after each meal. Floors were scrubbed daily around the stove and cooking area, but only about twice a week in the rest of the eating area – except when a lot of dirt was tracked in by the men, and then the whole eating area would be scrubbed daily. Scrubbing of floors usually was done by dipping a broom into a pail of hot water and with the water running off through the cracks in the floor. Every effort was made to keep the cooking and eating area as clean as possible, and it was the cookee's job to see that this was done.

Cookees, as a rule, worked until near 9:00 each night so as to have everything ready for breakfast. As a rule, syrup pitchers were filled and placed on the tables the last thing at night. Syrup came in barrels and was kept in the root



The men above are filing into the kitchen for dinner in an early day camp built from logs. Hot food was brought to the woods (below) when it was too far to walk in to camp for the noon meal.





cellar. I knew of one case when the cookee, in filling the syrup pitchers at night, left the spigot open and a whole barrel of syrup drained onto the floor. When the cook got up at 4:30 in the morning and went into the root cellar in the dark to get something he slipped and fell in about four inches of syrup and was so mad he chased the cookee out of the kitchen with a c l e a v e r .

The cookee ran into the office hollering for help, and the foreman and I had to hold the cook from scalping the poor cookee.

Cookees usually were younger men who would rather work inside than out in the timber. As a rule, they did not stay at the job long, but there were some who worked for years as cookees. Some cooks would take a cookee job at times when a cooking job was not available – but only until a cook's job opened up. I knew a number of men who followed cookee jobs year after year and would not accept a cooking position. However, the cookee job usually was the first step in becoming a logging camp cook, and most camp cooks worked up from a cookee job.

I remember a little Frenchman by the name of Emanuel Casuelette, who worked in many camps along the M & I Railroad for the Crookston and Bemidji Lumber Companies. He was considered one of the best cookees and his services were always in demand.

Cooks liked to keep good cookees, and when a camp cook was hired he often asked that his crew of cookees be hired

also. However, there were cooks who had a hard time keeping cookees because of being hard to work for, and in camps where you had a tough cook there was often the problem of cookees quitting and then having to recruit some young men from the woods crew to work in the kitchen.

So good cookees were very important in keeping a smooth running kitchen and keeping the whole camp crew happy and ready to work each day. So while the cookee was low on the pay scale, he was a very important man in helping to get the logs to the mills.



The group at dinner above is in a small logging camp about 1910. The cook, second cook and three cookees below have their tables all set for dinner with cups and plates upside-down at each setting and with a setup for each six or eight plates.





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