

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

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VOLUME 72

Wimpy February Puts Pause on Logging Itasca County Fairgrounds to host 64th Expo





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ON THE COVER

Black spruce at the Verso Duluth mill waits to be made into paper. For more on how loggers were challenged by warm February temperatures, please see page 8.

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I hope everyone is having a good winter. It certainly has been another challenging one. Little to no frost in the ground has made more work and cost for everyone. Now with February temps in the 50s, it could be one of the shortest. Thanks goes out to TPA staff for working with MnDOT on road postings and keeping us informed.

Earlier this winter, RMS brought a Komatsu 220 excavator with a Quadco Forestpro telescoping delimber for us to demo. It pinned on the excavator with no major modification. It uses the same

President's Column

valving on the machine. The telescoping boom



added length that sped up delimiting. It's always fun to see how the manufacturers are trying to make logging easier and more efficient.

Keep Wednesday June 14 open for TPA's Annual Meeting at Ruttger's on Sugar Lake. I look forward to seeing you there.

Spring is coming and so are the MLEP and LogSafe Training sessions. Remember to sign up early.

With breakup coming, we need to be safe and take time to be with our families.

David Berthiaume

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There are a few topics that tend to spark lively debates in the woods. One of those is sealed bid versus oral auction timber sales. In Minnesota, public landowners use each to varying degrees. All US Forest Service sales are sealed bid. Our county land departments have a mixture though overall predominately use oral auctions.

The Minnesota DNR began ramping up sealed bid sale volumes

**Executive Vice
President's
Column**



more than a decade ago. This culminated with a policy of selling one-third

of their volume via sealed bid sales. TPA members expressed significant concerns about both the manner in which sales were being

selected to be offered as sealed bid sales and the total volume being sold as sealed bid sales.

With one-third of DNR volume being sold via sealed bids our members expressed concern that these sales were being "cherry picked." I think it's clear that they were. I'm not so sure that there was bad intent in these decisions. Area foresters tended to fill their quota of sealed bids by selecting larger sales. This limited the number of sealed bid sales they had to offer to meet their volume quota. To purchasers, it was clear that the larger, frequently better, sales were being offered via sealed bids because they were.

This also resulted in a false view that sealed bid sales brought higher prices to the seller than oral auctions. While this may be what the data shows, it is also clear that the reason for these sales going for higher prices was that they were bigger and better sales. There have been many studies in Minnesota and around the country of whether or not sealed bid or oral auctions bring higher prices. Some of these studies show that oral auctions bring higher prices. Some show that sealed bids bring higher prices and some show that there is no difference over time. My read is that there is no difference in prices

over time for similar sales.

The DNR has implemented a new system for selecting which sales will be offered via sealed bids to meet their volume quotas. The sales are now being randomly selected. This is a big improvement.

The DNR is also in the process of phasing down the volume that will be offered via sealed bids. From the current one-third they will move to one-fourth, followed by incremental steps down to twenty and fifteen percent in subsequent fiscal years. They intend to continue to seek feedback from purchasers on this issue as they implement the phase down in sealed bid volumes.

TPA has spent a lot of time with DNR on these issues over the past year. The TPA Board of Directors had a lengthy discussion of this topic at its December 2016 meeting.

We appreciate the DNR Division of Forestry's willingness to discuss this issue and implement changes in the selection process and total volumes for sealed bid sales.



As I write this column we are in the midst of the President's Day weekend warm up. We've seen this before, some years with very bad results. TPA, particularly vice president Ray Higgins, has worked very closely with staff from the Minnesota Department of Transportation on when Spring Road Restrictions will be implemented. The relationship that we have built with MN DOT has given us credibility on this issue. They know that we are not in there whining every year and asking for a few more days. They know that

as users of the roads we don't want to see them wrecked. I believe that MN DOT, county highway departments and county land departments were also impressed with the voluntary suspension in hauling during this warm period that was initiated by many of our individual members and individual mills. This helped get us some breathing room. Hard to say what the next few days and weeks bring, but for now we're doing the cold weather dance here in the office.



I know many of our members have been working sales at night when the temperatures drop. This can bring its own set of safety concerns. Working at night is like any other change in routine and can cause our focus on safety to slip. When a routine changes make sure you think about and work with your crews to keep working safely.



The Legislature is in full swing in St. Paul. Committees are settling down to their work and new members are getting acclimated. I have had a lot of meetings with newly elected members of the Legislature who are serving on the committees that we deal with or who are from the areas where we operate. I have been very impressed with this years' group of freshmen. They come from varied backgrounds, but seem quite grounded in their communities and work. This has been nice to see.

Wayne E. Brant



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Harvested spruce is offloaded at Verso's Duluth mill. With warmer temperatures on the way, loggers attempted to get wood delivered as soon as possible.

Wimpy February Puts Pause on Logging

Loggers, mills, and agencies all respond to warmer-than-expected conditions.

By Ray Higgins

Just off of Highway 210 west of McGregor sits the intersection of DeMenge Lane and Stockpile Avenue, at least unofficially. But the names on the street signs are appropriate because this is where Jerry DeMenge lives and stockpiles harvested timber in his yard.

As of the middle of February, DeMenge had 300 cords of aspen yarded here, with another 1000 cords piled at sites not far away, not bad for this time of year in a normal winter.

But this winter is anything but normal. By the middle of February, temperatures were soaring into the 40s and sometimes higher, causing loggers to scramble to harvest and stockpile as much wood as possible—while still protecting the ground and following the forest management guidelines—in fear that these unseasonably warm temperatures would result in an early break-up, closing the winter logging season.

"This is the worst I've ever seen it in all my life," says DeMenge, who's

been in the logging business for 50 years. "I've never seen anything like this.

* * *

Loggers are constantly monitoring forecasts throughout the year, but weather reports are watched even more closely during the winter months so they can not only gauge where best to take advantage of frozen ground conditions, but also predict how long those conditions will last. That's particularly



Wood is stockpiled at the corner of DeMenge Lane and Stockpile Avenue, just west of McGregor.

important for those harvesting black spruce, which grows in soft, swampy ground.

Concerns about the weather started to percolate on Monday, February 13. High temperatures for later that week were predicted to climb above freezing and into the 40s in most places in the forested regions of the state, even in northern-most communities like Littlefork, International Falls, Ely, and Birchdale.

It's usually March when these conditions hit Minnesota's north woods. When that happens, loggers are used to working overnight when it's the coldest, and even hauling through the night in order to deliver as much timber as possible before the weather gets too warm and stays that way. When that happens, MnDOT engineers not only remove the winter load increases—the extra ten percent truckers of all commodities are allowed to haul when the ground is frozen and road surfaces can handle the extra weight—but spring load restrictions are also implemented, which in many areas results in

posting roads lower than 10-ton in an effort to protect those surfaces.

Three years ago, things were different. An unusually cold month of March in 2014 resulted in the latest imposition of spring load restrictions ever, April 4. This allowed loggers to complete their planned winter harvests, and then some. In addition, haulers were able to maximize their loads and deliver timber to Minnesota's mills more profitably.

Not this year. November was damp, and then temperatures weren't cold enough for MnDOT to allow higher weights on the state's roads until the middle of December. On top of that, most areas of the state never saw those frigid numbers in the -30 to -40 range that most Minnesotans despise, but that loggers love because it allows the ground—particularly the spruce swamps—to freeze solid.

At MnDOT, engineers have developed an objective numbers-based metric to determine when winter load increases begin and end, and also when spring load restrictions are implemented.

Factors from frost tubes placed in the pavement at strategic points around the state are viewed, temperatures on road surfaces and the subgrade are monitored, and a variety of other weather-related factors are considered. In addition, the agency has developed the "cumulative thawing index" (CTI), which helps calculate how much freezing an area of the state has experienced, and also predicts when enough thawing will occur—based on extended forecasts—to guide the decision-making process.

By Monday the 13th, the CTI, based on the forecasted temperatures in the 50s, was telling MnDOT to remove winter weights and implement spring load restrictions statewide within a week. Agency engineers had already decided to implement restrictions in the areas of the state from the Twin Cities and south, and the so-called "frost zones" north of the Cities—the "Central," North Central," and "North" frost zones wouldn't be far behind. When loggers and foresters realized how warm it was going to get, the only chill in the air was the

thought of ending winter logging before the end of February, and leaving thousands of cords on the ground, unable to be hauled—or unable to generate revenue—until the ground dried up in the summer. If then.

But, the folks at MnDOT also saw the extended forecasts that called for several days, well into March, of sub-freezing temperatures during the day and single digit temperatures and lower at night, in the northern third of the state. If these longer-range forecasts proved to be correct, loggers would be able to get plenty of wood harvested well into March. On the other hand, if the warm snap caused MnDOT to implement spring load restrictions sooner rather than later, much of the harvested timber couldn't be hauled on gravel rural roads until summer.

MnDOT engineers weren't the only ones concerned. County highway engineers were also watching the situation closely. They typically follow MnDOT's lead on road postings, but they were eager to protect the roads in their respective counties. And of course loggers and truckers also understand that damaged roads make their jobs more difficult, and working conditions less safe.

As the week wore on and daytime temps climbed, loggers shifted their working hours to overnights when it was cooler. That's common around break-up time, just not in February.

Foresters at Minnesota's forest products manufacturers were rightfully concerned about an early break-up, worried that they wouldn't be able to procure enough wood to supply their mills in the short term. Plus, foresters for public land agencies were also worried that timber sales that had been purchased and needed to be harvested on frozen ground wouldn't be completed. Several agencies considered extending timber permits, particularly those expiring during 2017 and requiring frozen ground access.

By Thursday the 16th, folks started getting creative. In Koochiching County, Land Commissioner Nathan Heibel wondered what would happen



Thousands of cords of harvested black spruce around northern Minnesota await colder temperatures so it can be hauled to the region's mills.



Aspen from DeMenge's woodpile is loaded so it can be delivered to Sappi's Cloquet mill.

if loggers agreed to haul only at night to protect the roads. After consulting with the county highway engineer, who recognized how devastating an early end to the logging season would be to the local economy, Kooch officials circulated that request. Officials at the Packaging Corporation of America paper mill in International Falls responded with a message to haulers requesting deliveries only between 10p.m. and 10a.m.

Others followed suit. In Itasca County, officials also asked haulers to limit themselves, and mills discouraged loggers from delivering, not only to save the roads, but to also send a message to decision-makers on road restrictions.

"We told our suppliers to be careful," one company procurement official said. "We thought it would send a good message to the state that we're good stewards and that we want what they want: good, safe roads."

In St. Paul, MnDOT officials considered all factors, including voluntary actions from the forest

products community, the extended forecast that showed a return to colder temperatures, and the CTI.

Fortunately, two other factors were at play. First, MnDOT's "technical memorandum" on starting and ending seasonal load limits says to consider not only the CTI, but also longer-range forecasts when they "predict continued warmth." Second, MnDOT's policy is to keep spring load restrictions in place no longer than eight weeks. So, imposing spring load restrictions in February would mean removing them in April, and if the longer-range forecasts were correct and cooler temperatures were to remain well into March, there'd still be frost in the ground when road bans came off. MnDOT engineers had to consider whether that would do more damage to the roads than simply delaying their decision.

As a result, MnDOT's decision was to begin the process of removing winter load increases in the Central Frost Zone—roughly south of Highway 210—but leaving everything north of there open to hauling at full weights, at least

through the weekend.

"The state really went above and beyond the call," one logger said, "That was as sensible a decision as they could have made."

By Friday, the feared warmer weather hit the northern part of the state, and loggers responded in a variety of ways. Based on the voluntary requests from public agencies, wood deliveries at the state's mills plummeted, with truckers not wanting to risk any damage. Some harvesting work was able to continue, but not much. Many worked overnight where possible.

"We worked overnight until 4:30 this morning," said one St. Louis County logger. "We're willing to work again tonight if it gets cold enough, but if not, we'll hold off and hope for the best. If we go now, we might not have a road to haul on when it does cool down in another week."

Through the weekend, nearly every logging operation was idle. Loggers worked in the shop, performing routine maintenance on their equipment, or just took a



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rare February day off and enjoyed the sunshine—at least as much as a logger can when they are normally working. But they also continued to keep an eye on weather forecasts that were predicting a fair amount of rain for Monday which could really soften up the ground and pull frost from it.

By Monday, the rain did fall, and loggers stayed out of the woods.

“We have 6000 cords on the ground waiting to be trucked,” said one Carlton County logger. “About half of it is already limbed, and we need to limb the other half. But if we get in there and disturb the ground, we’re just going to take out whatever frost is still in there. So we’re probably going to sit tight for the week and hope it gets cold.”

Said another logger in St. Louis County, “we had thunder and lightning this afternoon. You don’t see that very often in February. It’s disheartening for your employees because they want to work, and this is the time of year when you build up inventory to get through the summer.”

Back in McGregor at Stockpile Avenue, Jerry DeMenge had one of his drivers loading aspen to be hauled to Sappi’s Cloquet mill. It will be one of the relatively few deliveries there on this day. It’s good to get some wood delivered, but DeMenge is also worried about safety, as he always is this time of year.

“Everybody’s in a hurry, trying to get as much done as fast as they can,” DeMenge says. “That’s when things go wrong that shouldn’t ever go wrong. That’s the way it always gets at break-up, but I’m especially worried about this year when things are warming up so early. So I’m telling my guys to take it easy.”

Fortunately, the working season might not be quite over. The longer-range forecasts continue to show colder temperatures, and MnDOT is remaining patient with reducing weight limits in the North frost zone, north of Highway 2. If the forecast holds, northern Minnesota loggers may get the chance to keep working well into March.

As one logger said, “we’re keeping our fingers crossed.”



With break-up quickly approaching, 76-year-old Red Haley jumped in a slasher to process wood on the landing for his sons Dean, Jeff, and Dave of Haley Logging. Jeff Haley is operating the slasher behind his father’s.



Trucks wait in line at Verso’s Duluth scale, waiting to deliver black spruce.

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Industry Study says Consumers Still Prefer Paper

Advances in technology and increasing environmental awareness are spurring more companies to go paperless with their communications. Whether it's billing or information sharing, businesses view — and often promote — paper-free outreach as a more sustainable option.

But such claims are often inaccurate and misleading. A new survey commissioned by longtime Domtar partner Two Sides North America and conducted by leading international research firm Toluna shows that a majority of Americans want to retain the choice for a paper option rather than be forced into digital-only communications.

The research found that consumers are suspicious of companies that push paperless communication: 85 percent of the more than 2,000 American respondents said they think businesses promote paperless campaigns for cost savings, not environmental stewardship as advertised. Fifty-seven percent of respondents questioned the truthfulness of such green campaigns. And a majority said they prefer paper communications over electronic-only messages.

Forcing paperless correspondence also places undue hardship on millions of Americans without reliable internet access: 49 percent of survey participants did not have reliable internet access. Eighty percent of participants said they wanted to receive paper communication because of a sense of increased safety and permanence over electronic documents, especially when it comes to money management.

For years, Domtar and Two Sides have worked to dispel myths about paper production and to educate businesses and consumers about the earth-friendliness of paper. As Two Sides notes, U.S. forests have grown 3 percent in area and 58 percent



in wood volume over the past 60 years. Paper is also among the most recycled products on the planet, with a 66 percent recovery rate in 2015.

"Paper is indeed a sustainable product," said Bill Koehn, vice president of communication for Paper Sales and Commercial Printing Papers Sales at Domtar and a previous chairman of Two Sides North America. "Through our work with Two Sides, we have helped educate customers, business partners and the general public about the great environmental story that print and paper have to tell."

The work seems to be gaining traction. Eighty percent of survey respondents agree that it is environmentally acceptable to use trees to produce construction materials and paper when doing so is responsibly managed. And 91

percent of participants agree that when it's responsibly produced, used and recycled, print and paper are sustainable ways to communicate.

While technology evolves, consumer preferences don't always follow, and most Americans agree that paper communication is both a trusted and responsible option for ongoing information sharing.

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Itasca County Fairgrounds to host 64th Expo

The North Star Expo is returning to the Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids for its 2017 event.

The 64th annual Expo will be held September 15 and 16, and will again include the latest in logging equipment from all of the region's top vendors.

The Expo's return to Grand Rapids comes on the heels of a successful event at the Itasca County Fairgrounds in 2016, which saw significant increases in the number of vendors and visitors over previous years.

"Last year's Expo in Grand Rapids was the best one we'd had in years," said TPA Expo Committee Chair Chad Lovdahl. "There's no better setting for a logging show than amongst the pines at the Itasca County Fairgrounds, and the community has always given us a warm welcome. We look forward to another great event this year."

Vendor registration will begin



A bird's eye view of the 2016 North Star Expo at the Itasca County Fairgrounds. The 64th Annual Expo returns to the Grand Rapids site later this year.

later this spring when registration packets are sent out. For more information, call the TPA office at (218) 722-5013, or visit

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Logger of the Year Nominations Being Accepted

The Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program Implementation Committee is now accepting nominations for the 2017 Logger of the Year Award.

The award is designed to recognize outstanding independent logging contractor performance, increase the visibility of competent professional independent logging contractors within the forestry community, encourage independent logging contractors to emulate the outstanding performance of award winners, and improve forester-logger-landowner relations by publicly recognizing outstanding logging performance as an essential element of every planned timber harvest.

Among the areas in which nominee loggers will be evaluated are safety, forest management, timber harvesting practices, and business management, as well as community involvement.

The winning logger will receive a \$500 cash award and “2017 Logger of the Year” plaque. In addition, this year’s honoree will be nominated for FRA’s Regional and National Logger of the Year awards.

Previous Minnesota winners include:

- 2016–Hasbargen Logging
- 2015–Greg Cook Logging, Inc.
- 2014–Scheff Logging
- 2013–Rolle Logging
- 2012–Erickson Timber
- 2011–M&R Chips

- 2010–Lovdahl & Sons LLC
- 2009–Berthiaume Logging LLC
- 2008–Pittack Logging, Inc.
- 2007–McCabe Forest Products
- 2006–Rieger Logging, Inc.

Nomination forms can be obtained through the MN SFI Implementation Committee office by calling 218-722-5013. Nominations are due March 7, 2017. The winner will be notified in April and the award will be presented at the MLEP Logger Conferences.

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Forest Service counts 96.6 billion trees in latest tally of U.S. forests

Trees outnumber people 300 to 1 in the United States, with woodlands covering one-third of the country, according to the U.S. Forest Service's latest census.

Only trees at least 5 inches in diameter are counted in the U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program, which has continuously counted the forest population since 1930.

Timber Talk

Jo Craven McGinty in the *Wall St. Journal*. Dennis May, a U.S. Forest Service program manager, tells McGinty the census was established to answer the question, "Are we wisely using the forest without impacting its health, condition and stature?"

An acre with at least 10 percent tree canopy qualifies as a forest for purposes of the census, reports

The U.S. exported \$8.7 billion in forest products in 2016 – lumber, paper, logs, veneer, pulp, wood pellets, casegoods and other items – putting the sector right up there with soy beans and corn.

For purposes of the survey, sample areas are surveyed each year, and data is projected to get totals. The FIA program, which has extensive data on its website, received \$75 million to carry on its count last year. Each state's forest is summarized annually, and a comprehensive reported is produced in five-year intervals. McGinty reports that in the South, longleaf and slash pines are in decline, but overall the forests are stable, she says – though not mentioning the effects of highly visible challenges such as the emerald ash borer, walnut blight, or oak wilt.

As the nation's continuous forest census, FIA projects how forests are likely to appear 10 to 50

years from now. This enables the USFS to evaluate whether current forest management practices are sustainable in the long run and to assess whether current policies will allow the next generation to enjoy America's forests as we do today.

FIA reports on status and trends in forest area and location; in the species, size, and health of trees; in total tree growth, mortality, and removals by harvest; in wood production and utilization rates by various products; and in forest land ownership.

Cost Share Funds Available for Private Landowners

Priate landowners looking to practice good forest stewardship can access state funds for their woodland projects.

Cost share is financial assistance to woodland owners for completing

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projects to practice good forest stewardship on their land. A typical project is between 3 and 20 acres but could be smaller or larger depending on land goals. Woodland owners in Minnesota can receive up to \$10,000 per year for activities in their woods. There's no minimum acreage, and stewardship plans are not required.

Among the eligible activities are reforestation and tree planting, forest improvement projects like thinnings or pruning lower branches, removing invasive species like buckthorn and garlic mustard, or wildlife habitat enhancement activities such as planting trees to increase the food supply for wildlife.

All told, more than \$500,000 is available through June 30, 2017, or until funds run out. An anticipated \$400,000 will be available from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018.

Funds can also be used for creating or updating woodland stewardship plans. A \$300 payment will be made to the landowner if the following is met:

- The plan is prepared by a DNR- approved plan writer.
- The plan is approved by the DNR and registered.
- The landowner applies for financial assistance before the plan is started or while the plan is in progress. Plans already completed before applying for financial assistance are not eligible.

Landowners who want to take advantage of the program should contact a DNR CFM forester where their property is located to start an application.

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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.

USFS to Implement New Stewardship Contracting Tool on Superior NF

The Superior National Forest is currently working toward developing a contract that will serve as a forest-wide tool for integrated vegetation management. The contract will be an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ), which is a type of contract that provides for an unlimited quantity of services during a fixed period of time, up to ten years.

The IDIQ will support the Forest Service's authority to utilize stewardship contracting, which is intended to accomplish land management goals while meeting community needs. Under stewardship contracts, commercial goods like timber and biomass can be exchanged for services that restore the health of the forest landscape. These services include, but are not limited to, activities such as site preparation for planting and mechanical fuels reduction. Other activities included under this contract are over-story removal, pre-commercial thinning, fire line construction, road maintenance, gravel pit establishment/reclamation, landing reclamation, and temporary road building.

The IDIQ stewardship contract will increase the number or acres restored on the Superior and implement decisions resulting from the environmental planning process. This approach will increase contracting efficiency by combining similar activities and reducing repeated mobilization of equipment to treat the same forest stands. The IDIQ contract will supplement other tools used to meet land management goals, it will not

replace other forest-wide service contracts or standard timber sale contracts.

The Superior National Forest plans to hold several informational sessions regarding the new IDIQ contract for prospective contractors this spring. Presentations are also planned at the MLEP meeting on April 11 in Tower. Complete information on the bidding process for the IDIQ contract will be provided at these sessions. Additional information will be posted on the Superior National Forest website. Bids will be solicited for the contract during the summer of 2017. If you have questions, or need additional information, please contact Mark Akeson, Superior National Forest timber program manager, at 218-626-4330 or email makeson@fs.fed.us.

Recent Timber Sales Average prices, as reported by each agency

Agency	Regular	Intermediate
Lake County		
<i>October 27—Oral Auction</i>		
Aspen P&B	\$28.76	\$34.92
Birch P&B	\$14.95	\$19.27
Spruce P&B	\$29.99	\$14.11
Maple P&B	\$ 5.86	\$ 6.62

10 of the 16 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Carlton County

December 15—Oral Auction

Aspen	\$39.38	NA
Nrthrn Hdwds	\$17.86	NA
Norway Pine P/B	\$51.23	NA

All 7 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Cass County

December 15—Sealed Bid

Aspen	\$17.55	\$33.95
Basswood	NA	\$16.42
Maple	NA	\$16.37

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

DNR—Central Region

December 19—Sealed Bid

Aspen Species (PW)	\$14.53	\$15.34
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$18.34	\$16.15

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

DNR—Bemidji Area Salvage

November 22—Oral Auction

Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$30.79	NA
Pine Species (WMP)	\$35.25	NA
Aspen Species (WC)	\$17.51	NA
White Spruce (WMP)	\$28.75	NA

Both tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Hubbard County

January 9—Oral Auction

Aspen Mixed	\$48.26	NA
Aspen Pulp	\$40.28	NA
Birch Pulp	\$16.85	NA
Oak Mixed	\$19.15	NA

All 11 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Northwest Region

January 11—Sealed Bid

Aspen Species (WC)	\$35.77	\$29.89
Trembling Aspen (WMP)	\$29.95	\$41.01
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$57.52	\$60.37
Pine Species (WMP)	\$35.73	\$34.21

42 of the 47 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Two Harbors Area

January 11—Oral Auction

Trembling Aspen (WC)	NA	\$ 7.72
Black Spruce (WMP)	NA	\$18.25
Sugar Maple (WC)	\$18.46	NA
Paper Birch (WC)	\$15.95	\$ 4.07

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

DNR—Aitkin/Backus Area Salvage

January 11—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (WC)	\$ 4.06	NA
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5 of the 16 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Cass County

January 26—Oral Auction

Aspen	\$30.51	\$38.82
Red Oak	\$32.29	\$39.14
Birch	\$22.13	\$22.13

All 6 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Northeast Region

January 18—Sealed Bid

Aspen		
Species (WC)	\$33.62	\$39.37
Trembling		
Aspen (WMP)	\$28.49	\$34.39
Black Spruce		
(WC)	\$27.91	\$30.96
Nrthrn		
Hdwds (WC)	\$ 7.42	\$10.04

37 of the 43 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Koochiching County

February 1—Oral Auction

Aspen P/B	\$28.44	\$37.66
Spruce P/B	\$38.44	\$21.50
Norway		
Pine P/B	\$39.00	\$40.50
Balsam P/B	\$ 8.08	\$10.26

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

St. Louis County

February 16—Sealed Bid

Aspen Pulp	\$35.53	NA
Balsam Pulp	\$15.83	NA
Birch Pulp	\$10.28	NA
Black Spruce		
Pulp	\$27.31	NA

White Pine
Pulp \$ 8.58 NA
16 of the 21 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Products:
PB= Pulp and Bolts

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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

Skidding by Horse and Ox

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*



After watching various rubber-tires skidders demonstrated at the annual TPA logging demonstration and having seen the many types of power skidders entering the north woods in recent years, one may wonder how the vast stands of virgin pine in northern Minnesota were ever logged, considering that loggers had to skid mostly with horses and oxen.

In the early days, when logs were skidded to the rivers and lakes, quite a few oxen were used. They were slow and powerful, moved well in the brush, ate less than horses, were less expensive and needed less care. The oxen were generally paired, but it was not uncommon to see four or six oxen skidding a large log.

In Minnesota, oxen were used mostly in the southern part of the pine range along the St. Croix River, the Rum River and up along the Mississippi River to Grand Rapids or to a short distance west. Very few were used in the northern part of the pine range.

Throughout the northern half of the pine range, horses were used for most of the log skidding. Two horses were used most often but with a small run of timber, sometimes a single horse was used.

When a large butt long log was too much for a single team, it was left until all the skidding nearby was done. Then four horses would go in and skid all the big butt logs that had been left on a certain tract. This was usually done late in the spring

clean-up.

I remember one spring at one of the Northern Lumber Co. camps run by Tom Henderson, an unusual number of pine butt logs were skidded. Early in April, they were left two and three on a skidway all along the railroad track in Section 30-53-12. Dan McCloud was scaling them as we happened along. We were estimating the number of board feet in each log. These ran from 900 to 1,200 board feet per log. They were all loaded at one time and made eight cars of the finest pine logs I ever saw.

Skidding tongs were used on most logs and they were skidded one at a time. However, when the logs ran small, a skidding chain was used and then two, three or even four logs were skidded at a time. Skidding usually was confined to about 40 rods from the skidway or about half way across a forty – logging roads usually went through the center of a forty if the terrain was level.

When skidding had to be done for any distance, a single-bunk dray with spikes along the tops of the bunk was used. The butt end of the log was then rolled onto the dray and the top end left dragging on the ground. Two or three logs could be hauled in this manner. With the front end of the log on the dray, pulling was much easier for the horses.

Ties, pulp, posts and other short products were skidded with a two-bunk dray – usually pulled with a team of horses – and about a cord was taken out each trip. Here

skidding was confined to less than one-fourth of a mile.

Some large logs were peeled or barked on one side and then rolled and skidded with the smooth side down to make the pulling easier for the horses.

Cedar poles, mining poles and long timbers were skidded similarly to logs, with the single-bunk dray used for longer distance skidding.

A team of horses and one man would skid up to 150 logs per day. There was usually one “swamper” cutting trails for each skidding team. Often, as many horses skidded as hauled logs in a camp. However, plans were to have most of the skidding done early in January before the snow got deep. Most sleigh-haul logs were decked in the woods so a whole load could be loaded in one spot and the sleigh not moved with half a load or several times while being loaded.

Only one company used the steam skidder with any success in Minnesota. That was the Crookston Lumber Co. of Bemidji, which did steam skidding in the Kelliher, Mizpah, Northome and Blackduck areas from 1910 to 1920. Several other companies tried this high-line cable skidding but had little success. The Cloquet Lumber Co. tried it in the Cloquet Valley Forest area.

The cost of log skidding was one of the factors a lumber camp foreman watched very closely. And he always tried to get a good straw-boss to handle the crews.



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Early Loggers in Minnesota

by J. C. Ryan

VOL. I



VOL. III



VOL. II



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