

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

# TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

VOLUME 75

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Christmas!*





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# TIMBER BULLETIN

Volume 75  
November/December 2020  
Duluth, Minnesota

## IN THIS ISSUE

Ready to Work .....	<b>8</b>
Regional Logger of the Year.....	<b>12</b>
West Fraser Buys Norbord .....	<b>13</b>
On the Markets .....	<b>14</b>
Dobbs Again Featured on Bulletin Cover....	<b>16</b>
Stauber Visits Harvest Sites .....	<b>17</b>
Gray Wolves Delisted .....	<b>18</b>
Timber Talk.....	<b>20</b>
Northern Capital Becomes Choice Insurance ..	<b>21</b>
TPA's Annual Safety Contest.....	<b>22</b>
TPA Holds Annual Membership Meeting ...	<b>24</b>
Loggers of the Past .....	<b>26</b>
Classifieds and Advertisers Index.....	<b>30</b>



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Cover photo by Lori Dobbs of Dobbs Logging in Littlefork. To see more of Lori's work, visit [www.lori-dobbs.pixels.com](http://www.lori-dobbs.pixels.com).

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Minnesota Timber Producers Association



# President's Column



**F**irst and foremost, I'd like to give Kurt Benson a huge thank you for the work he has done for TPA. His term as President was not an easy one with the passing of Wayne Brandt. Kurt fully engaged in the task of hiring Wayne's successor, and I watched as Kurt spent countless hours throughout the process of eventually hiring Mike Birkeland, our new Executive Vice President. There were many applicants for this position and Kurt did not take this task lightly. In addition Kurt dealt with many other issues that arose. Thank you.

As a member of TPA for many years, I'm pleased to take this term as President. I believe each and every one in TPA has an equal share to be represented equally and that's what should give our organization the respect and influence we need. So, I'm asking you to stay involved.

Don't be afraid to contact Mike or Ray and voice your issue, whether large or small. They are there for us.

As for now, I have never had a crystal ball to see what tomorrow has in store for us, with COVID being the biggest unknown! Like we loggers always do, we adjust and take issues head on and figure it out. As for our winter ahead, its colder temperatures would be nice. Hopefully we will get some frozen ground.

So, keep safe in the woods, be profitable, and keep yourself and family healthy!

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## Executive Vice President's Column



It appears the dust has settled on the presidential election. Despite court challenges and battles in the court of public opinion, we have an outcome.

That's the thing about elections. You end up with winners and losers. It's great when your candidate wins. It's not nearly as satisfying when your candidates don't.

For many rural Americans – the latest Presidential election didn't end up as hoped. And how that factors into future federal policy remains to be seen—although we could guess and likely come close. That's because many cabinet positions will be filled with Washington, D.C. insiders.

And, unless President Trump, Rudy Giuliani, and Sidney Powell, et al. work an unlikely court miracle, Joe Biden will be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States in January.

If your candidate(s) didn't win – just remember, elections don't equate to forever. Elections come and go like the seasons. Maybe next season will be different.

\*\*\*

Speaking of seasons – the days are shorter, the nights are colder, and the frost is settling deeper into the ground. In our neck of the woods, and within our community, that means ... it's logging season. A long, cold, and mostly snowless season would be welcome after challenging operating conditions last winter.

\*\*\*

Shorter days and cold winter nights also mean the next legislative session is right around the corner. But the operating season at the State Capitol will be different when the session starts in January.

Most doors will be closed to the public because of COVID-19, so opportunities to access legislators will be limited. It's far from ideal,

but legislators will start the session legislating via Zoom, or YouTube.

Despite access limitations, TPA is already talking with elected officials and the DNR about legislative help on issues like state timber sale relief for loggers affected by last summer's Verso mill closure. But the state budget is projected to be more than \$1.2 billion in the red starting with the next two-year budget period in July 2021.

State agencies will be battling for every dollar they can hang onto within their department budgets. Playing Santa Claus, and doling out scarce resources, won't be at the top of their priority list. But it's on ours.

\*\*\*

For the 15th time in the last 16 elections, Minnesotans voted for divided government in November. We remain the only state in the nation with a divided legislature. The state House of Representatives is still controlled by the DFL, but with a smaller advantage than before the election. Republicans maintained a slim advantage in the state Senate.

Republicans' ranks in the Senate received a boost when longtime DFL Senators Tom Bakk (Cook), and Dave Tomassoni (Chisholm), formed a new independent caucus after the election. The two northern Minnesota Senators are expected to align with Republicans and will be chairing committees – important positions usually reserved for members of the majority party.

"We have worked across party lines our entire careers," Senator Bakk said after announcing the move. "David and I have always voted our districts. We have always represented our districts as bipartisan and moderate members of the legislature. Forming this new caucus is just a natural progression of aligning more with moderate than the far right or left.

"Additionally, we will not stray from the values of northern Minnesota and what our people are most passionate about -- our economy and jobs that support our families and our economic lifeline of mining and wood products. Our natural resource-based economy is critical to our region of the state."

We appreciate the support of

northern Minnesota's legislative delegation – Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. But the divide – urban versus rural, right versus left, economy versus environment – is real – and continues to grow. The move by Senators Bakk and Tomassoni reflect that reality.

\*\*\*

Throughout its 83-year history, TPA has been blessed with many friends and allies who have joined us in working hard to make the working lives of our members better. Maybe no one has done that more effectively than Bill DuPont, who has helped our members with their workers compensation insurance needs since 1986. Along with Jay Eystad, Bill has been a partner with TPA in working for our members, and also a trusted friend.

At the end of December, Bill is calling it a career, retiring from Northern Capital Insurance. It's a well-earned transition to his next stage in life, but we'll miss his wise counsel in matters pertaining to insurance and other aspects of our business. We hope he stays in touch.

\*\*\*

Whether you're working in the woods or spending socially distanced time with family over the Christmas season and New Year's holiday, stay safe, and enjoy a great harvest season and prosperous new year!

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# Member Feature...



Guy Hildebrandt, Trent Erickson, Roger Krueth, Rob Kelm, and Steve Lyseng of Lyseng Logging.

## Ready to Work

*Through more than 25 years in the logging business, Steve Lyseng has seen a lot, and learned a lot about logging, life, and being an entrepreneur.*

**A**fter an abnormally cold October, and then a warmer than expected November, December in northern Minnesota began with temperatures heading in the right direction, as far as the logging community was concerned. Readings in the single-digits weren't difficult to find in the forested parts of the state, prompting loggers to begin mobilizing.

Bemidji's Steve Lyseng has been in the woods for a couple of weeks. His crew has already completed harvests on a couple of sites in Hubbard County to the south, and is just starting on a 4000-cord state permit just west of Kelliher in Beltrami County.

"We had 3 degrees yesterday morning," Lyseng says, "This ground here is pretty firm now. We

put the roads in probably in late October when we had that little cold snap. The mills want wood, and we want to work."

The story of Lyseng Logging starts with a small-town grocery store and a ton of entrepreneurial spirit.

Steve's father Sam grew up in Bemidji, working at the Red Owl grocery store as a teenager. When he heard a small grocery store in Littlefork was for sale, he and his wife bought it and moved their young family there. The year was 1974. Sam was 20.

"I guess, I realized," Sam says, "I'd much rather work for myself than make a big paycheck for somebody else."

In 1981, Sam also purchased an Ontario fishing resort, northeast of Fort Frances on Rainy Lake's Red

Gut Bay. Summers were spent there, while also running Sam's Hartz grocery store year-round.

By 1990, Steve was graduating from Littlefork High School without a plan for the future.

"I had no idea what I wanted to do, other than fish," Steve says. "I loved being a kid. But you have to grow up and be responsible one day. I moved to Bemidji to go to carpentry school."

Fortunately, his mom had two brothers, Tim and Rich Kelm, who were loggers, giving Steve a place to work during breaks and in the summer. It was also a chance to learn the logging business.

"I started limbing wood," he says, "and pretty quick I was skidding. And by the time I got out of school, I went to work logging."





**Sam Lyseng**

In the meantime, Sam was back in Littlefork, running the grocery store. Over the years he had befriended several of the loggers around town.

"All my friends were loggers," Sam says. "Neil DeLack, Dobbs, Kenny Little. All those guys were friends and we'd sit around and talk logging, and I'd think, 'I want to be one of you guys.'"

"He's got probably more adventure than I do," Steve says of his father, "because he thought we should start a logging company."

By 1993, Sam had closed the grocery store, moved back to Bemidji, and the two did just that.

"My dad and I bought a John Deere 540 cable skidder, a couple chainsaws, and a half-ton two-wheel drive pickup," Steve says. "That was Lyseng logging."

Sam was still running the resort on Rainy in the summer months—in fact he's still running it to this day—so it was a one-man operation for a good part of the year.

"Every summer, he would go up to his resort for like six months, you know, first of May 'til first of October," Steve says. "Then we'd log in the winter, hard. And I'd just pick away at whatever I could find in the summer by myself basically."

Growth was slow and finding markets for their wood was difficult.

"When we started out, we didn't really have any place to go with our wood," Steve says. "We just sold it through the brokers, like Kurt Benson and some others. Most of the wood went to Potlatch and Norbord in Bemidji. We didn't make a lot of money, but we kept our bills within our means."

Still, times were tough, getting a logging business off the ground with only a couple of chainsaws and not much else.

"It was a horrible business plan," he says. "It shouldn't have worked. We didn't have any wood bought, didn't have

anywhere to go with it. But my dad was confident it would work. So, if it wasn't for him, I probably would have never tried it.

"I can laugh now, but it was horrible," Steve chuckles. "But we didn't know any better. I think it was 1995 or '96. One of the first years we worked, the snow was terrible. We should've starved to death. We had that little skidder. You couldn't do anything with it. You had to wade out there with the chainsaw, cut the trees down, snow coming in your pockets. I don't know why we stuck with it. It makes no sense. We didn't really think to quit, I guess. It wasn't even a thought."

There was so much to learn, but Steve was lucky to have good mentors. Sam taught him how to be a business owner and to never give up. And from his uncles Rich and Tim Kelm, he learned the ins and outs of the business: buying wood, marketing wood, the finances of buying equipment, forestry, harvesting, and maybe most importantly, building credibility in the logging community.

"It all takes time," Steve says.

Eventually, the Lysengs bought their first buncher, and by 2005,

their first slasher. Even up until a few years ago, they still delimbed by hand before finally purchasing a delimeter. Growth was closely managed so as not to over-extend.

It's a far cry from Lyseng's operation today. The company has three feller bunchers and five skidders in its equipment mix to go along with two slasher/loaders and a stroke delimeter. This allows the company to operate on more than one sale at times, although there's always one main harvest site.

"We're all in the same place maybe half the time," he says. "For example, we can start getting one site frozen down while we're finishing another so that when we get done, that site's ready to produce. Or if we have more sites going in the summer, I don't usually run my buncher with tracks. I'll put a rubber tire buncher in a couple of spots instead. A lot of times one is higher, sandier, to where if it gets wet, you can work there. But if it's dry, we can work on this other spot. So, we'll have equipment on both, which gives us a chance to be flexible."

With five skidders, it also allows him to be flexible and work different sites. For example, wood is still being hauled from the harvests in Hubbard County, so he still has a couple of skidders there, two on this site west of Kelliher, and the fifth skidder is already at the next job site.

"I like having skidders on the sites that we're hauling from, so that in case they have trouble, they can push themselves out," he says. "As soon as we get done down there, I'll



**Roger Krueth piles harvested aspen with a Barko 496 ML Magnum+ slasher/loader.**

move another skidder here.”

Lyseng’s view of delimiting is unique in that he’ll still often use a chainsaw rather than his stroke delimeter.

“We still limb a lot of wood by hand,” he says. “It may not seem as efficient, but it goes pretty good. Big sales like this one are different, and we need a delimeter here. But on a 300-400 cord sale, we can limb that in a couple of days, and that’s me, the old guy that’s out of shape. I can still do that in a couple of days. It’s more profitable. It depends on the job. If you have to haul the delimeter down, that’s an expense. It’s more efficient to limb it by hand if it’s decent aspen. Now if it’s all balsam, in the summer, you bring the delimeter.”

On sales where he utilizes the delimeter, Lyseng does it differently than most. Rather than having the skidders drag the harvested timber back to the landing for delimiting, Lyseng sends the machine out onto the harvest site, moving about the sale to operate there. This means the skidders are making fewer trips,

saving on fuel. Plus, it helps with slash dispersal.

“It scatters the slash around the whole sale instead of having to run it back out from the landing,” he says.

Lyseng says he’d never have as much equipment as he does without a strong crew to operate it.

“If it wasn’t for having all this good help, I just would have very little equipment and do it by myself,” Steve says. “These guys are all good. They take care of these machine as if it were their own. If I struggled to find help, I would have fewer machines. I just don’t think I could put up with it. I have good guys that know what to do and do a good job.”

Today, Guy Hildebrandt and Rob Kelm are driving the skidders, Trent Erickson is operating the delimeter, Roger Krueth is slashing, and Lyseng is handling the feller buncher. Mark Olson is elsewhere today, but is usually here, too. Rob, Trent, and Mark are seasonal employees, while Guy and Roger work with Lyseng year-round. All



Operator Guy Hildebrandt drives the John Deere 648G skidder for Lyseng Logging.

are versatile and can run different machines, depending on the situation. For example, when Lyseng is off at a future sale building roads and landings, someone else will operate the buncher.

As for the trucking, Ben Klisch is still hauling wood from one of the Hubbard County sales to the Norbord mill in Solway. And then there’s Steve’s dad Sam, now 67, who’s still part of it. He actually has a separate company that just hauls timber when he’s not running the resort on Red Gut Bay, but Steve is the only one he’ll haul for. It’s the



Harvest timber on the landing waits to be hauled to Norbord’s mill in Solway.



Trent Erickson operates a Link-Belt 210X stroke delimeter with a Pro Pac boom on Lyseng Logging's harvest west of Kelliher.

way Sam's always been, whether owning his own grocery store, his own fishing camp, his own logging company with Steve, and now his own trucking company. He loves the independence.

"That way we can work as long as we want to on Saturdays and Sundays, and if we want Tuesday off to do business, we can," Sam says. "And 15-hour days haven't been a big deal either. I've just done that my whole life, I guess."

Steve's wife Angela is also integral

to the operation, handling the books and payroll when she's not working in marketing at Beltrami Electric Cooperative.

It'll take Lyseng and his crew a couple more weeks to finish work on this site. By the time they're done, they'll have cut 3,000 cords of aspen here, as well as 550 cords of balsam, 250 cords of ash, and smaller amounts of birch and maple. Most all of the aspen, birch, and maple will be hauled to Norbord. With the closure of Verso's Duluth mill, the balsam is a bit more problematic. The bolts will go to Potlatch in Bemidji, and like a lot of loggers, he has work to figure out where to send the balsam pulp.

"We'll work through it," Lyseng says.

Once done here, they'll move to a site near Lake Bronson in Kittson County in the far northwestern corner of the state for a harvest on some state and private ground there.

"We have 600 acres pretty much in one spot," he says. "It's partly DNR land, but also about 300 cords of private wood I picked up that's



Rob Kelm skids using Lyseng's John Deere 648H.

right next to it."

Beyond that, Lyseng doesn't see himself slowing down. He's 49, so he has a lot of years left to work. His son doesn't show any interest in the business, but Steve has three grandkids, girls aged 5 and 9 and a 2-year-old grandson. It might be a while before he finds out whether logging is in their blood, but Steve might still be around to find out.

"The older I get," he says, "the more enjoyable this is to me. There's better equipment compared to when I started, and as long as I have good guys to help, I will keep going. I like working out here."



Steve Lyseng completes a clearcut with a John Deere 843H feller buncher.

# Fjeran Forest Products Named Regional Logger of the Year

**T**he Forest Resources Association (FRA) and STIHL Incorporated honored Fjeran Forest Products, LLC of Two Harbors as the FRA Lakes States Regional Outstanding Logger for 2020.

Chad Morgan, FRA LSR Policy Committee Chair, recognized Blake Fjeran and his family as the winner, presented them a plaque from FRA and a gift certificate for a chainsaw and a cash award of \$250 compliments of STIHL. Fjeran Forest Products will now compete for the FRA National Logger of the Year recognition.

Earlier in the year, Fjeran Forest Products was recognized as the Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative Logger of the year.

"It's an honor to be recognized as Logger of the Year," Fjeran said. "2020 has been a difficult year for everybody. This award is a testament to the hard work my family and crew has put in this year."

Tim O'Hara, FRA's Vice President, Government Affairs and Manger, Lake States Region, said "This recognition is well-earned. Blake Fjeran, his family, and crew all have a passion for logging, properly managing our forest resource. They are a great example of the great work done by Minnesota's logging community."

FRA's Outstanding Logger Award program is designed to raise the visibility of professional logging



Blake Fjeran, his wife Sue, daughters Sasha and Sarah, and son Brock. Fjeran Forest Products is 2020 Lakes States Regional Outstanding Logger.

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.



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# West Fraser to Acquire Norbord, Creating a Diversified Global Wood Products Leader

**W**est Fraser Timber Co. Ltd., a leading North American diversified wood products company, announced in November it will acquire all of the outstanding common shares of Norbord, the world's largest OSB producer.



The all-stock transaction is valued at approximately US \$3.1 billion (US). Following closing, the combined company will operate as West Fraser, including at Norbord's mill in Solway, MN and Barwick, Ontario.

At the close of this Transaction, West Fraser will be a top global producer of both lumber and OSB. The company will have 10,000 employees worldwide at 33 lumber mills, 5 pulp and paper mills, 14 OSB manufacturing sites, and a dozen or so other plants making

plywood, veneer, particle board and other products. Most of these locations are in Canada and the southeastern United States.



"Norbord's OSB production is a perfect complement to the West Fraser portfolio, enabling us to deliver a wider range of wood products, and making us a more complete, efficient and valuable partner for our customers," said Raymond Ferris, President and Chief Executive Officer of West Fraser. "Norbord is the largest global OSB producer with a well-earned reputation for cost and margin performance, and for expanding the use of OSB in new applications and industries. The Norbord business will also bring additional geographic diversity, and an expanded opportunity set, from its well-established positions

in the United Kingdom and Western Europe. Our companies have complementary operating cultures, with a common priority on safety, sustainability and cost management, and we are thrilled to welcome Norbord's talented employees to West Fraser. We look forward to drawing from best practices across the operations as we pursue the significant strategic opportunities this Transaction will unlock."

"This Transaction recognizes Norbord's global OSB position and is a very exciting opportunity for our customers, and our employees," said Peter Wijnbergen, President and Chief Executive Officer of Norbord. "Joining West Fraser will allow us to expand our profile with our core new home construction customers, and provides a stronger platform to pursue our industrial OSB products strategy. For our team, this will provide expanded opportunities as part of a larger company with common values and a shared priority on safety. Our Board and executive team have great respect for West Fraser, and we look forward to being a part of a much broader business with the West Fraser team."

West Fraser will continue to be led by Ferris as Chief Executive Officer and Chris Virostek as Chief Financial Officer. Following closing, Wijnbergen will be appointed President, Engineered Wood, responsible for the company's OSB, plywood, particleboard, MDF and veneer operations. Sean McLaren, currently West Fraser's Vice-President, U.S. Lumber, will be appointed President, Solid Wood, responsible for all of the company's lumber operations.

The transaction is expected to close in first quarter, 2021.



Norbord's OSB mill at Solway is becoming West Fraser.

# 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>Cass County</b>		
<i>October 29th—Sealed Bid</i>		
Aspen	\$41.03	\$23.10
Red Oak	\$30.77	\$33.15
Birch	\$20.52	\$14.31
Maple	NA	\$13.87
6 of the 7 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.		
<b>Koochiching County</b>		
<i>November 4th—Oral Auction</i>		
Aspen P/B	\$33.07	\$32.43
Spruce P/B	\$17.90	\$23.22
Balsam P/B	\$ 7.07	\$ 7.20
Ash P/B	\$ 5.98	\$ 7.29

Birch P/B \$ 6.35 \$ 6.05  
29 of the 30 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### DNR—Baudette Area *November 26th—Sealed Bid*

Aspen		
Species (PW)	\$31.62	\$31.51
Aspen		
Species (PB)	\$26.72	\$36.17
Black		
Spruce (PB)	NA	\$14.65
Ash (PB)	\$13.73	\$ 9.80

11 of the 19 tracts offered during the sale were purchased

### Cass County *November 19th—Sealed Bid*

Aspen	\$38.26	\$37.58
Red Oak	\$45.93	\$36.07
Maple	\$18.95	\$15.87
Birch	\$19.51	\$18.00

All 6 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### Becker County Intermediate *November 20th*

Aspen Mixed	NA	\$32.87
Oak Mixed	NA	\$29.70
Birch Mixed	NA	\$14.44

All 9 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### Cass County *November 21st—Sealed Bid*

Aspen	\$29.82	\$42.37
Red Oak	\$20.87	\$51.05
Maple	\$14.91	\$23.40

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

### DNR—Hibbing Area *November 24th—Sealed Bid*

Aspen		
Species (PB)	\$40.06	\$36.80
Aspen		
Species (PW)	\$38.70	\$40.47
Norway		
Pine (WST)	\$50.60	\$65.12
Balsam		
Fir (PB)	\$15.80	\$11.76

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

### Beltrami County *December 1st—Sealed bid*

Aspen pulp	\$35.20	NA
Red Pine Pulp	\$19.88	NA
Basswood Pulp	\$ 8.96	NA
Sugar		
Maple Pulp	\$11.10	NA

All 5 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.



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**Beltrami County**

*December 3rd – Oral Auction*

Aspen pulp	\$42.46	NA
Red pine bolts	\$68.10	NA
Jack pine P/B	\$15.00	NA
Red Pine Pulp	\$12.41	NA

All 8 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

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# Dobbs Again Featured on Bulletin Cover

In 2013, the Timber Bulletin began a tradition of featuring the work of photographer Lori Dobbs on the cover of its November-December issue. That tradition continues for the 8th year in 2020.

Dobbs is a resident of Littlefork, and is the wife of TPA board member Gordy Dobbs. Her work captures the essence of northern Minnesota forests during the winter time.

To see more of Lori's work, and to purchase some of this beautiful art for your home, visit: [lori-dobbs.pixels.com](http://lori-dobbs.pixels.com).








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TPA Board Member Cliff Shermer (R) talks logging with Congressman Pete Stauber.



TPA Board Member Clint Krueger (L) shows Congressman Pete Stauber his harvest site north of Island Lake, near Duluth.

# Stauber Visits Harvest Sites

In the run-up to the November election, Congressman Pete Stauber (R-Minnesota 8th) visited TPA Board Members Clint Krueger and Cliff Shermer to learn more about our industry. Rep. Stauber also shared his desire to help loggers in any way he can, as well as his appreciation for the work

all loggers do in managing our region's forests.

Stauber paid visits to Shermer's harvest, north of Virginia, and Krueger's job site, north of Duluth. Stauber had actually seen Krueger's work before; Clint's company conducted the harvest on Stauber's family property several years ago.



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# Trump Administration Returns Management and Protection of Gray Wolves to States and Tribes Following Successful Recovery Efforts

**M**ore than 45 years after gray wolves were first listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Trump Administration and its many conservation partners announced the successful recovery of the gray wolf and its delisting from the ESA. State and tribal wildlife management agency professionals will resume responsibility for sustainable management and protection of delisted gray wolves in states with gray wolf populations, while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) monitors the species for five years to ensure the continued success of the species.

The Fish and Wildlife Service based its final determination solely on the best scientific and commercial data available, a thorough analysis of threats and how they have been alleviated and the ongoing commitment and proven track record of states and tribes to continue managing for healthy wolf populations once delisted. This analysis includes the latest information about the wolf's current and historical distribution in the contiguous United States.

"Today's action reflects the Trump Administration's continued commitment to species conservation based on the parameters of the law and the best scientific and commercial data available," said US Interior Secretary David Bernhardt. "After more than 45 years as a listed species, the gray wolf has exceeded all conservation goals for recovery. Today's announcement simply reflects the determination that this species is neither a threatened nor endangered species based on the specific factors Congress has laid out in the law."

In total, the gray wolf population

in the lower 48 states is more than 6,000 wolves, greatly exceeding the combined recovery goals for the Northern Rocky Mountains and Western Great Lakes populations.

By the early part of the 20th century, the gray wolf had become scarce across almost the entire landscape of the lower 48 states. But, the dedicated efforts of partners that included states, tribes, conservation organizations and private landowners working together under the auspices of the ESA, brought this great predator back to healthy, stable numbers. Gray wolves in the United States exist primarily as two large, genetically diverse, stable to growing populations broadly distributed across several contiguous U.S. States, with an additional large population in Alaska that was never listed.

Gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains, where a healthy and sustainable population roams across Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and eastern portions of Oregon and Washington, were previously delisted. These states have since managed this delisted population effectively and responsibly. Wolves have even expanded into western Oregon, western Washington, northern California and most recently in northwest Colorado.

The Western Great Lakes wolf population in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, the largest outside Alaska, is also strong and stable. These states have been key partners in wolf recovery efforts and have made a commitment to continue their activities.

In response to the delisting, the Wisconsin DNR announced a wolf hunting and trapping season for November, 2021 as mandated by

state law. The Minnesota DNR is currently in the midst of a revision of its wolf plan and released a statement that touched on a potential hunting and trapping season that reads in part, "Our commitment to a healthy and sustainable wolf population in Minnesota is unwavering. We will continue to use the best available science, coordination with our federal and tribal partners, robust public engagement, and careful consideration of all perspectives to inform all of our management decisions, including any future decisions regarding the potential for a wolf season in Minnesota following completion of our plan update."


Several wildlife groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club have signaled they will challenge the delisting decision in court.



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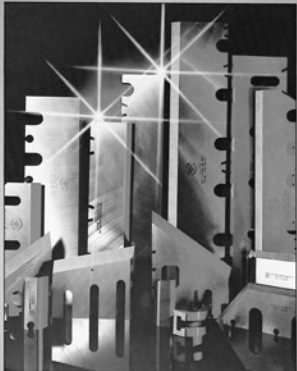
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# McCoy named top-performing John Deere dealership

**J**ohn Deere Construction and Forestry Division has named McCoy Construction & Forestry as a 2020 winner of its Onyx Circle award.

## Timber Talk

business, as determined by key performance metrics.

McCoy Construction & Forestry (MCF), which has seven locations in Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, joined the McCoy Group family of companies in 2018. The acquisition of McCoy Construction & Forestry broadened the McCoy Group's

portfolio of companies, which had previously focused on the transportation/trucking industry.

"Earning this achievement is remarkable, considering MCF is in just its second full year of operation," McCoy Group President Greg McCoy said. "This award is a culmination of a phenomenal effort by our team, ranging from sales, service, parts, I.T., marketing, finance and everyone in between."

"We are extremely proud of our employees and the dedication they give each day," MCF President Jeff Herkert added. "2020 has been challenging for everyone, but our teammates have risen to the occasion to serve our valued customers."

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# Northern Capital Becomes Choice Insurance

**B**eginning in 2021, Northern Capital Insurance, sponsor of TPA's Workers Compensation Insurance



Jay Eystad

Program, is becoming Choice Insurance.

Choice Insurance purchased Northern Capital Insurance in 2019, so the name change is

part of that transition.

Account executive Jay Eystad will continue to serve TPA members in the workers comp program, as he has done for more than 20 years. The only change in the program is the Choice Insurance name on the paperwork, which members have already begun to see.

"We're thrilled to be continuing our partnership with TPA," Eystad said. "Choice Insurance is a tremendous company with years of experience, handling a variety of coverages. We are looking forward to continuing our long-standing relationship with TPA's workers compensation program through the self-insurance group."

Choice Insurance is part of the Choice Bank family, offering comprehensive insurance products and services for customers' business, personal, and agricultural needs. Choice Insurance serves nearly 11,000 clients in 43 states. Its strength and size enables Choice to handle customers' needs, yet the company is small enough to be versatile and nimble.

Choice Bank was established in 2001, and today has 350 employees across 23 locations and \$2.15 billion in assets.

## Bill DuPont Retiring

Longtime workers compensation account executive Bill DuPont is retiring at the end of December, 2020.

Bill has worked with TPA's Workers Compensation Insurance program since 1986. Since that time, Bill has worked with loggers all over the state, helping them reduce costs while providing outstanding coverages and service.

"It's truly been a pleasure working with the TPA members over the past four decades," Bill said. "I forged a great working relationship with Wayne Brandt in that time, along with many friendships that I hope will continue during my retirement!"



Bill DuPont



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**For More information, contact Jay Eystad at (218) 255-0446 or at [jeystad@insurewithchoice.com](mailto:jeystad@insurewithchoice.com)**

# \$1000 in Cash Awarded in TPA's Annual Safety Contest



**E**ach year, TPA recognizes members with no lost-time accidents through its Annual Safety Contest.

Those with no lost-time accidents throughout the year receive certificates and are entered into a drawing for a \$500 cash prize. All who participate in the the Safety Contest will be in a drawing for two \$250 cash prizes. Only those members entered in the Safety Contest will be eligible for the drawing.

Your company must be engaged in logging, trucking, or sawmill operations to qualify for entry. A minimum of 350 hours is required for participation. The contest is open only to members in good standing (dues paid for the year ending December 31, 2021). As an employer, you may also include your own hours worked.

For the purpose of the Safety Contest, a lost-time accident is when the person injured is absent from

work the day FOLLOWING the accident, regardless of the amount of time lost during the day of the accident.

It's not too late to enter for the 2020 calendar year. Join now! For more information on entering TPA's annual Safety Contest contact Ann Todd in the TPA office at 218-722-5013 or [anntodd@mfitpa.com](mailto:anntodd@mfitpa.com).

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# TPA Holds 83rd Annual Membership Meeting

It looked a little bit different this year, with most guest speakers participating virtually via Zoom, but with COVID mitigation procedures in place, TPA held its 83rd Annual Membership Meeting at Timber Lake Lodge in Grand Rapids in October.

Highlighting this year's meeting was the election of new TPA President Rod Enberg, replacing Kurt Benson, who served in the role for more than two years. In addition, Brady Hasbargen of Whitefish Creek Logging in Birchdale was elected to TPA's Executive Committee.

This year's session featured TPA Executive Vice President Mike Birkeland's annual Report on Association Activities, highlighting TPA's efforts over the past 12 months.

Also providing "insider information" to TPA members:

- DNR Forestry Director Forrest Boe and Timber Program Supervisor Jon Drimel talked about the state's timber program, particularly during the pandemic. Members shared challenges surrounding state

pandemic restrictions, and expressed a strong preference for in-person oral timber auctions if at all possible.

- Lieutenant Dana Miletich and Commercial Vehicle Inspector Greg Lind of the Minnesota State Patrol discussed enforcement issues and answered questions from members.
- Duane Hill, District Engineer for MnDOT's Duluth District and JT Anderson, District Engineer for the Bemidji District outlined road projects throughout northern Minnesota. They also answered questions from members pertaining to maintenance issues
- Rick Horton, of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's Minnesota Implementation Committee outlined a variety of topics surrounding certification, including the potential revision of the state's forest management guidelines in the coming years.

All TPA members in attendance received three hours of continuing education credit toward their yearly

requirement through the Minnesota Logger Education Program.

## Annual Report of Association Activities

In his first presentation since being named Executive Vice President late last year, Birkeland highlighted activities and accomplishments of TPA staff over the 12 months, including efforts at the Minnesota Legislature, interactions with state agencies like DNR and MnDOT, and meetings with various policy makers. Birkeland detailed TPA's efforts to help members in the wake of the closing of Verso's Duluth mill, including lobbying various county boards to provide relief to affected timber permit holders. Birkeland also described TPA's efforts to have Minnesota's forest products industry designated as "essential" in the wake of the COVID pandemic, allowing business to continue when others were shutdown.



Outgoing TPA President Kurt Benson (left) receives a plaque in appreciation of his years of service to the organization from new president Rod Enberg.



TPA Members gather for lunch as part of the 83rd Annual Membership Meeting.



TPA Members listened to the DNR's Forrest Boe and Jon Drimel who joined the 83rd Annual Membership Meeting via Zoom due to the COVID pandemic.





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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

## State Log Scalers

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 a presentation of slides on early loggers or during any conversation about logging history in Minnesota, “state scalers” are mentioned and I am asked, “What do you mean by state scaler?” I will try to cover this subject as it applies to the logging industry.

The scaling of logs was the process of determining the amount of lumber that could be sawed from a log. On straight and sound logs this was quite simple, but with logs having defects, crooks, rot, etc., it took considerable knowledge of logs and lumber to determine the amount of usable lumber in a log. A number of log rules were developed, including the Wisconsin Decimal C, the Doyle, the International and the Minnesota Standard – all somewhat different.

In Minnesota, the Minnesota Standard rule was the official one for scaling all state-owned timber. However, the other rules were used by private companies in buying and selling logs. The scale of each scaler would also differ some in the scal-

ing of faulty timber. Disagreement often occurred and lawsuits developed.

The Minnesota office of Surveyor General of Logs and Lumber was created by law as an official and neutral department for scaling. When a contract would be made to sell or buy logs it would require that the scaling be done by a state scaler and the amount of lumber in the logs as determined by him would be official.

Besides the scaling on private contracts, the Surveyor General had other duties such as the recording of all stamps and bark marks and the scaling of all timber cut from state land. The Surveyor General would try to obtain the best qualified scalers possible.

During the peak years of logging, the Surveyor General may have had as many as a hundred scalers working on private contracts alone. On private contracts, the parties involved paid for the scaling costs. Just which party – buyer or seller – was to pay the cost of scaling would be in the contract. Not all logs were sold on or sub-

ject to state scale, but many were.

In the early days, much of the scaling was done during the winter months or on the sorting works and booms on the rivers in the spring. Some scalers would be laid off during the summer, but many worked the year around and would be shifted from job to job.

It was during the days of the river drives, with the sorting works on the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers, that the demand for scaling on private contracts was at its peak. However, the scaling on private contracts did continue clear through the logging on the original pine stands. It was only during the final days of white pine logging that the request for state scaling of private contracts declined.

However, the scaling of state-owned timber increased as the cutting of smaller products such as ties, pulpwood and cedar, which was plentiful on state swamp lands, came into demand. This continued to be done by Surveyor General scalers until the office of State Surveyor General of Logs and Lumber was abolished by law in 1967 and the duties of that office were turned over to the Division of Forestry.

The Surveyor General had several Deputy Surveyor General offices set up around the state so as to better serve the logging industry. One of these offices was in Duluth in the old Manhattan Building and continued operations up into the early 1920s.

As demand for state scalers on private contracts became less, these deputy offices were dissolved and the work was handled from the St. Paul office of the Surveyor General. State scalers then were assigned to State Timber Appraisers districts and from there the state timber permits. Here again some of these scalers worked for private companies when not employed by the state.

As a rule these scalers were older men who had scaled for private companies for many years before being hired by the state. In later years some younger men were hired for the scaling of smaller timber products such as ties, posts and poles. Smaller timber products did not require the experience as did log scaling.

For many years the law required that

A nice, sound log being scaled at a sawmill. Logs like this would be easy for a state scaler.



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all state timber be scaled on the grounds where cut. For logs, this meant scaled as they were skidded to the skidways or when they were loaded onto sleighs. Smaller timber would be scaled in the strips or on the side of the log road where it had been skidded.

In later years the law was changed so the timber could be moved to a central landing for scaling after a request for a landing had been approved by the division in charges of timber permit supervision.

Sometimes the buyer or seller on private contract scaling would be dissatisfied with the scaler and would request another. This was done in rare cases. On logging operations where only state-owned timber was being cut, a scaler would be assigned to one camp during the entire logging season. However, most camps cut some private timber as well as state-owned, and in this case a scaler of state timber might be assigned to scaling in several camps in the same general area. He would then keep in touch with the logging operation in these camps and scale as needed to keep the operation moving.

Where state timber permits were small or inactive he might scale for a number of operators. The state appraisers or rangers in charge of the state permits would work very closely with the scaler in having all permits scaled so as not to hold up the logging operation.

In some cases where the logger was selling his logs to a mill on scale, the mill operator accepted the state scaler's decisions, but in others insisted on scaling all logs purchased himself, and a difference in scale – which always existed – sometimes was cause of dissatisfaction.

Besides the regular scalers, the Surveyor General had check scalers or scaler supervisors who called on scalers to keep the scaling as uniform as possible. These check scalers were very well qualified and knew all the problems. In making a check scale, they would scale up to 200 logs and then compare with the scaler's scale and make adjustments if needed.

All logs were numbered and recorded by number. On small products such as pulp, the piles were numbered. Ties were counted and recorded as to small or standard. Posts, poles and mine timbers were counted and recorded as to length. Mine lagging was scaled by the cord. Piling, which was usually sold by the lineal foot, was recorded as to lengths.

Having been raised in the Bemidji area and having worked along the Minnesota and International Railroad as timber checker, camp clerk and camp foreman in this area where considerable state-owned timber was cut, I became very well acquainted with many state timber scalers. Many of these men were old when I was a young man and had acquired their experience in scaling on the St. Croix, Rum and Mississippi Rivers when pine

logging was at its peak. Most of these older men preferred the scaling of logs rather than small products and they took great pride in their log scaling ability.

These older scalers were very well qualified and I had great respect for their competence. Some of the ones I knew best were Jimmy Brennen of Stillwater, who would fight at a drop of a hat if anyone questioned his ability to scale; the Carroll brothers, John and Dan; Alex McNeil, John Fiarity, Jack Morrissey, John Dufall, Jim Hogan and others.

I also knew many of the latter-day scalers, including Clyde Johnson, William

Kenely, Wally Sutherland, Oscar Anderson, Carl Freeberg, Rusty Willis, Fred Letourneau, Art Miller and many others.

While the Division of Forestry is still carrying on the scaling of state-owned timber, the demand for different types of timber products has brought about many new scaling methods which no doubt will change further as different uses for wood fibers are developed.

But when we look back on our forest history, we must salute the early state log scalers – all great men who played a large part in bringing our vast virgin pine stands to market.



Above: Clyde Johnson, a state scaler in the Big Fork area, 1917. Below: Dan O'Connor looks over a defective log; logs like this called for experienced scalers.



Logs scaled in the water at the sorting works were scaled with a caliper.



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## ADVERTISERS INDEX

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Choice Insurance .....	21
Compeer .....	17
Don Dens Sales .....	5
Duluth Sign .....	27
Fryberger Law Firm.....	27
Great Lakes Trailers .....	14
Hancock Fabrication Inc.....	5
Hedstrom Lumber Co.....	27
Klinner Insurance.....	4
Lunemann Equipment Co.....	15
Maverick Wood Products LLC.....	29
McCoy Construction & Forestry.....	31
Mid-States Equipment.....	4
Nelson Wood Shims.....	15
North America Supply .....	17
Northern Timberline Equipment.....	7
Otis-Magie Insurance Agency .....	22
Pomp's Tire .....	20
Rice Blacksmith Saw & Machine.....	19
Schaefer Enterprises.....	6
Titan Machinery .....	2
Wallingford's.....	16, 32
Ziegler.....	25

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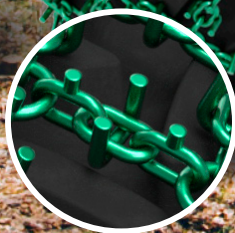
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