

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

MAY/JUNE 2014

VOLUME 69

True to Their Roots Root River Hardwoods Highlights of TPA Annual Meeting




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Volume 69
May/June 2014
Duluth, Minnesota

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ON THE COVER

Elm logs are loaded onto the deck at the Root River Hardwoods sawmill in Preston, Minn. For more on the company, please turn to page 8.

The Timber Bulletin is published six times annually, in February, April, June, August, October and December by the Minnesota Timber Producers Association, located at 903 Medical Arts Bldg., 324 W. Superior St., Duluth, Minn. Minnesota Timber Producers Association members receive the Timber Bulletin at an annual subscription rate of \$25 which is included in their membership dues. Periodicals postage paid in Duluth, Minnesota. Advertising rates and data on request. The views expressed in the Timber Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Minnesota Timber Producers Association.

Postmaster: Please send address corrections to TIMBER BULLETIN, Minnesota Timber Producers Association, 903 Medical Arts Bldg., 324 W. Superior St., Duluth, Minnesota 55802, Phone 218-722-5013.

Issn: 10973532 - USPS: 016208



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Iwould like to thank all who attended our annual meeting. The weather didn't give us what we wanted, but it did give us a lot of time to socialize. TPA staff did a great job and deserves a "Thank You" from all of us.

We received some good news on 3-axle permits and several other issues from St. Paul.

Thanks to Wayne for the work he has done for us on these and other legislative issues.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as TPA

President's Column



president the last two years. I appreciate the

support I've had from the Timber Producers Association staff and the members of TPA. Scott Pittack will do

a great job for us in his term as president. It was been a great experience. Thank you.

"Prepare for the unknown by studying how others in the past have coped with the unforeseeable and the unpredictable."

George S. Patton

Kit Hasbargen

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News Conference Trumpets Expo's Return to Bemidji



At a news conference in Bemidji, (L-R) TPA President Kit Hasbargen, Ray Higgins of TPA, Ed Grandy of FleetPride, Mike Lunemann of Nortrax, TPA Expo Committee Chair Joan Pomp, and Tom Reugemer of RDO Vermeer, announce the 61st Annual North Star Expo will be held at the Sanford Center. It's the first time in six years the Expo will be held in Bemidji. The dates of this year's Expo are Friday and Saturday, Sept. 12 and 13. The announcement garnered front page coverage in the Bemidji Pioneer.

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One hundred years ago in the United States the average life expectancy was 47 years; only 14 percent of homes had a bathtub; there were 8,000 cars and 144 miles of paved roads; the average wage was 22 cents an hour and eggs were 14 cents a dozen; there were 45 states – Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union; World War I was starting.

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Executive Vice President's Column



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As a family, through the generations the Hedstrom family has been integral to the fabric of Grand Marais, Cook County, the state of Minnesota and the United States. Theirs is a truly remarkable story!

My personal thanks to all of the Hedstroms for their contributions! I wish them all the best for the future.



Congratulations to Dr. Brian Buhr who has been named Dean of the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota. We were very pleased to have Dr. Buhr at the TPA Board of Directors meeting. With a background in the economics of production agriculture, Dr. Buhr brings a wealth of experience and, as he noted in his remarks to the board, insights and lessons from

agriculture that can be applied to the challenges facing our industry.



We do not control most of the costs that affect our industry. One cost we can control is workers' compensation. The TPA workers' compensation program is underwritten by Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance and serviced by Northern-Capital Insurance. Injuries sustained by covered employees directly affect the employers "mod" and the rates for everyone in the program.

The impacts of any injury are the pain of knowing that nearly all accidents can be prevented and the guilt in knowing that more could have been done to work safely. But, the impacts are also on the bottom line of workers' compensation insurance costs.

So let's think safety, work safely and prevent injuries through constant vigilance!



Our state legislative session ended on May 16, three days before the Constitutional deadline for adjournment. With the session having started on February 25, it was a fast ride and one of the shorter sessions in recent history. A summary of the results of the session is printed in this edition of the *Timber Bulletin*.



A big thank you to Kit Hasbargen who completed his term as TPA president. Kit was a pleasure to work with. He was dedicated to our members and bettering conditions for all. Liked by everyone he meets, Kit gave his time and talents to all of

us and I'm grateful that he did.

Thank you also to Mike Warren who completed his service on the TPA Executive Committee. Mike served during some turbulent times and was always up to the tasks in front of us.

I'm looking forward to working with our new president Scott Pittack, with our newest member of the Executive Committee Rod Enberg and to our returning officers Dave Berthiaume and Kurt Benson.



We're stepping up our efforts on the northern long-eared bat which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to list as an endangered species. The bat is being impacted by White Nose Syndrome, which is caused by a fungus that has been found in their hibernacula.

As part of the proposed listing the Service is apparently concerned about summer harvesting impacting trees that the bats roost in. I think the Service should be more concerned about finding a way to kill the fungus that causes White Nose Syndrome and kills the bats.

This issue is a very significant threat to our industry. Loggers won't survive with no summer work and mills can't survive with no summer wood. Rest assured that TPA will be very aggressive on this issue.



Let's hope it stops raining sometime soon so that we can work and enjoy the summer. In the meantime, let's work safely!

Wayne E. Smith



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Member Feature...



The Root River Hardwoods showroom and production facility on the north end of Preston.

True to Their Roots

The folks at Root River Hardwoods have made a name for themselves, offering quality building materials from locally harvest hardwoods.

by Ray Higgins

It was 1980, and the U.S. economy was in a tailspin. The “misery index,” (found by adding the inflation rate to the unemployment rate) was at an all-time high – and still hasn’t been eclipsed. The Webster Lumber Company, with several mills around the country, was feeling the effects and looked to sell off some of its smaller mills to generate some cash. That included Root River Hardwoods, Webster’s facility in Preston, Minn., 15 miles from the Iowa border.

That’s when Dick Bahl and Mike

Merritt, a couple of mill employees, stepped in. The pair purchased the mill, and 34 years later – and with the help of Jeff Wand who became a partner a short time later – Root River Hardwoods, has become one of the community’s top employers.

The company’s holdings are impressive: The sawmill sits southeast of town, a retail showroom is on the hill as folks enter Preston from the north, and a logging crew moves about the region harvesting timber for the mill. Across the highway from the retail store sits a steak house owned by the partners in Root River Hardwoods, and right downtown

there’s a truck shop where the company’s vehicles and logging equipment are maintained. To top it off, a retail location has been added 70 miles to the west in Albert Lea.

Root River Hardwoods mills and sells a wide variety of products – flooring, paneling, millwork, doors, etc. – in an equally wide variety of species, including oak, maple, elm, ash, alder, cherry, hickory, and more. It’s a great business for Preston, because most folks in the area either work in a farm-related business – including the local creamery and ethanol plant – or they commute the roughly 40 miles to work in Rochester’s bustling health care



Mike Merritt



Jeff Wand



Brett Merritt

industry.

In fact, the way the business has become part of the fabric of Preston, you'd almost think Bahl, Merritt, and Wand were from here. Not the case.

Dick was born and raised in Galesburg, Ill., just south of the Quad Cities. When he finished high school he went to the woods to start logging the hardwood forests of western Illinois.

"I had my own team of mules and the whole bit back in 1953," Bahl recalls. The trees were harvested by hand, the mules skidded the timber to the landing, and hauled to the local sawmill to be made into lumber.

Bahl had an uncle 100 miles away in Oxford Junction, Iowa, who called and wanted him to log there and work in the local sawmill. So

in 1965, he moved north. After three years, the Webster Lumber Company called offering a job managing its mill – including a logging crew – in Preston, a town of 1300, 15 miles from the Minnesota/Iowa border.

The opportunity appealed to Bahl because, "it was a step up," he says. "I could manage a whole sawmill where before I was working by the hour."

Meantime, Merritt and Wand – who both grew up in Iowa – had graduated with forestry degrees from Iowa State University in Ames. After each worked for a time out west, they'd come to Preston to work for a consulting forester named Maynard Underbakke, a fellow Iowa State alum from years back.

"We planted trees, did some

surveying, some logging," Wand says. "Anything connected to forestry, we did it working for Maynard."

Merritt and Wand both eventually found jobs at Root River Hardwoods. By 1980 with the economy looking grim, Webster was looking to sell, and Bahl and Merritt were willing buyers. A couple of months later, Wand joined the partnership.

"We basically started out from scratch," Merritt says, "because we didn't have any markets or anything."

"We had a small mill," Bahl says, "and we had like one truck and one skidder. We were making (railroad) ties, pallet stock, and grade lumber that got shipped green."

Bahl handled the mill operations, with Merritt running the logging operations and Wand in charge of timber buying.

Of course it all starts in the woods, finding either standing timber or harvested logs to bring to the mill to be sawed. Root River has four wood buyers on staff who travel the region looking for the right wood either from private landowners who want the timber harvested, or from independent loggers who have logs to sell.

"We're pretty diversified," Wand says of the company's species mix. "We can use all the cherry we can get, maple, we deal in hickory; we're diversified like the timber is, so it works well. Consequently we're diversified, and we'll use every species that grows in the area."

Root River has even found a use for burr oak. It isn't suitable for



Dick and Andy Bahl



Sawyer Greg Wolff operates the band saw at Root River's mill southeast of Preston.



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grade lumber, but they've found it can be used for industrial products.

When the trees are still on the stump, Root River either sends its own two-man crew – one to hand fall with a chain saw, the other to run a skidder to drag the trees to the landing – or Merritt hires an independent to get the job done. The timber is hand-felled because the terrain in this region is too hilly for conventional or cut-to-length logging operations. The company's procurement area stretches out up to 100 miles, including parts of Wisconsin and Iowa, but most of the wood comes from Minnesota.

"We can get half of what we need cutting ourselves," Merritt says, "and for the other half we buy logs from independents."

No matter how the wood is procured, Merritt grades and scales every log himself before it lands in the mill.

Those first few years were tough. Often times, Bahl and Merritt didn't take paychecks – to make sure they could make payroll for their employees.

"We weren't going to give up," Merritt says. "We did what we had



Lower grades of lumber are converted to stringers and head boards for pallets and shipped to pallet manufacturers around the country for assembly.

to do to keep things going and turn it around."

By 1983, things started looking up and the business started to expand. Wand became a partner in the business, handling all of the wood procurement, including oversight of the company's three timber buyers. In 1988, Dick's son, Andy, who'd been repairing cash registers in the Twin Cities – joined the company and created the value-added business of making flooring, paneling, and other products out of the mill's lumber, opening the retail store that sits on the hill on the edge of town.

"It was just me," Andy Bahl says. "I found the accounts, I planed the lumber, I delivered the lumber, I did paperwork on the lumber. It was just lumber to start out with.

"We'd kiln-dry it over in Chatfield. So then as it progressed, we started hiring people, and we bought a molder, a 1955 Yates American molder – which was so loud you had to have both the ear plugs and the muffs – the only thing that we ran at that time was paneling because it would take you five hours to set it up for anything else.

"That was kind of our first step," Andy says. "Then we started making paneling. And as we got to know more people and got more accounts, we started doing trim, but we did it through another guy that had molders. So we'd make the blanks here, bring them over to him to mill. Eventually, we ended up buying Weining molders to make the trim ourselves. From there we developed our flooring line. Now we kind of do everything: flooring, paneling, doors, trim, and other millwork."





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Soft maple (foreground), elm, and red oak logs (background) wait in the yard outside the Root River sawmill before being sawed into a variety of the company's products.

For its doors, Root River brings them in from elsewhere. They then hang them here in Preston.

When the kiln-dried lumber stores started out, 90% of the sales were lumber, with the other products

making up the balance. Andy says over the years sales have transitioned to 40% lumber sales, with the trim, flooring, paneling, and other products making up the remaining 60%.

Root River Hardwoods sells directly to homeowners and contractors building homes in the area, including Rochester, some in the Twin Cities, and even in the Brainerd area. The Albert Lea store – managed by Mike Merritt's son,

Brett – expands Root River's reach further into Iowa, including Mason City, and into western Minnesota.

"We're fortunate in that we get a lot of repeat customers," Andy says. "The big guys run millions of board feet. That's not us. We'll get into specialized products like matching old style trim by grinding custom knives, distressed flooring and paneling, curved millwork, that sort of thing."

Most every product is cut to order, with the contractor and/or homeowner coming in to select their own product, species, length, and width.

"We don't really



After the lumber is dried at a kiln in Prairie du Chien, Wis., it's trucked the 80 miles back to Preston, where it waits to be converted to value-added products like flooring, trim, or millwork.



Trevor Lang operates the machine that makes crown molding. Each piece is cut to order at Root River's facility adjacent to the showroom on the northern edge of Preston.

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Dick Bahl (L) and Andy Bahl in Root River's showroom, where several varieties of flooring, paneling, doors, and millwork are on display in a wide range of species.

stock anything," Andy says, "except crown moldings. Otherwise all the other moldings we run to order every time. Same with flooring, because everybody wants a different width. We do a lot of distressing, too. You can't really carry it. Everyone wants their own unique thing."

As a result, Root River prides itself on a fast turnaround. Over one million board feet of kiln dried lumber and hundreds of sheets of plywood are inventoried at all times. Once a contractor comes in and tells them what they need, it's up to Andy to get the product scheduled and out the door.

"We have to carry a large kiln-dried lumber inventory," he says, "as we try to keep our lead times to two to three weeks for a complete trim package. We have to keep a lot of lumber on hand to be able to do that."

The Albert Lea store is a little different, in they don't produce anything there, but it does feature a bigger showroom, as well as more lumber bins so people can pick out the boards they want.

The trend toward rustic grades is fairly recent, so that now it's a major part of the business at Root River.

"What used to be pallet, now can go to other products," Andy says. "But we need to be selective. You have to have sound knots and you can't have holes, or rot, or anything like that. But still, a sound knot board back in the old days would just go to pallet stock. Now, we probably do 50 percent of our jobs in houses any more are rustic grade."

Root River also tries to keep a solid inventory of logs on hand over at the sawmill – a total of about a dozen different species, including various kinds of maple, oak, elm, and more, all in different lengths – ready to be sawed as orders come in.

Nothing goes to waste. Slabs sawed from the logs will go to firewood, the sawdust, bark, and chips end up as animal bedding or for landscaping, lower-grade lumber is made into deck boards and stringers for pallets, and the higher grades are earmarked for the value-added products.

In addition, some of the logs are

so valuable to overseas wood buyers that they end up getting trucked to the West Coast and are shipped to countries like Japan, China, Turkey, or elsewhere.

Finding loggers to work in the hardwood forests of southeastern Minnesota is one of the challenges Root River faces. The company needs more wood than its in-house crew can produce.

"Let's face it," Wand says, "it's hard work and it's dangerous work. I don't see a lot of young guys coming into the logging business."

Company-wide, overhead costs are also a challenge, as they are for many businesses. But with folks more willing to build and remodel than they were a few years ago, business is good.

These days, Mike's son, Brett, has become a partner, and Dick's share of the business has passed to Andy over the past few years. So at age 78, Dick continues to run the sawmill end of the operation, but is now his son's employee.

"I have to chew him out once in a while," Andy jokes about his dad. "He takes too much vacation."

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IRRRB Approves Funding for Segetis Commercial Plant

The Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) approved \$21.2 million in funding for a commercial-scale plant that would use wood to manufacture a substance called levulinic acid, used to make a variety of products.

Segetis, Inc., which received the grant earlier this spring, is headquartered in Golden Valley, Minn. The company plans to build the plant at the Laskin Energy Park in Hoyt Lakes.

"We are delighted with the support from the state of Minnesota and particularly the IRRRB," said Atul Thakrar, Segetis president and CEO. "This is the foundational

funding for our project which will catalyze a biochemical industry cluster in the Iron Range."

The company has also received a \$325,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's NextGen Energy grant funding process, through the Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation (AGRI) program.

The current plan is to begin construction in the fall, and have the plant operational sometime in 2015. Initially, the raw material used in manufacturing comes from corn sugars, but by 2018 the company plans to begin using wood.

In a news release, the company says, "With our flexible production technology, we have the ability to leverage a wide array of biomass feedstocks to meet the increasing

demand for these high performance, healthier, biobased materials."

Among the uses for levulinic acid are flexible PVC such as garden hose, plasticizers such as carpet backing, food packaging film, and footwear. The substance is also used in sunscreen, hand lotion, fabric care products, and laundry detergent.

Minnesota Roads Could See Higher Speeds

Thanks to an amendment tacked on to a budget bill late in the legislative session, state highways may see higher speed limits.

The measure directs MnDOT to examine roughly 6700 miles of roadways around the state currently







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posted at 55 MPH to determine which can be increased to 60 MPH.

The process is beginning this summer and will continue for five years, but MnDOT says speed limits will be changed as decisions are made, so the higher postings may be in effect later this year.

Minnesota isn't the only state taking a closer look at speed limits and raising them. Over the past three years, roughly a dozen states in various regions have made similar upward adjustments in highway speeds.

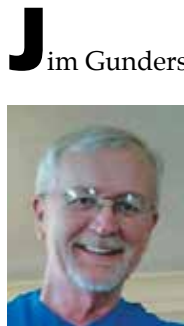
Certified Medical Examiners Now Required

As of May 21, the federal requirement mandating DOT medical exams for CDL holders be conducted by certified medical examiners is in effect.

Now, employers must obtain a copy of the medical examiner's certification, verifying the individual is qualified to conduct the physicals. The document must be placed in the driver's file before allowing him/her to drive truck.

As of mid-May, 633 medical examiners had been certified in Minnesota, with another 681 waiting to take the certification exam. For an up-to-date list of the state's certified medical examiners, visit: <https://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov/NRPublicUI/home.seam>.

Jim Gunderson, 1951-2014



Jim Gunderson, longtime sales representative at Road Machinery and Supply, died in June of pancreatic cancer. He was 63.

A native of Duluth, Jim was a longtime friend of TPA, serving on the association's Expo Committee, which plans TPA's annual North Star Expo. He also helped numerous TPA members over the years with their equipment needs through his work at RMS.

Jim is survived by his wife of 41 years, Pat, and three children.

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2014 Legislative Report

TPA Scores Tax Victory in St. Paul

Minnesota's loggers will save an estimated \$250,000 per year according to the state Department of Revenue, thanks to the repeal of a business-to-business sales tax during this year's legislative session.

The measure, supported by TPA and signed into law, repeals the sales tax on equipment repair labor for transactions made after March 31, 2014. Another business-to-business tax enacted during last year's legislative session was also repealed, this one the sales tax on warehousing.

Among other new laws passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Mark Dayton: the sales tax rebate on capital equipment purchases was converted to an up-front exemption, meaning purchasers will no longer have to apply for the rebate, the tax won't be paid in the first place; and holders of various permits connected to trucking will be able to request that they renew them at the same time as their truck registrations. This will enable truckers to renew their 6-axle, overweight, tree-length, and various other permits at the same time they renew their plates. This becomes effective Nov. 30, 2016, giving the state time to make changes to its computer system in order to accommodate the change.

In other actions affecting logging and the forest products industry during the 2014 legislative session:

The following provisions passed and were signed into law:

Biodiesel

The "sunset" on the exemption from biodiesel requirements for logging equipment was eliminated. #1 diesel is exempt from the biodiesel mandate year round. October is added to the months that are exempt from the biodiesel mandate for woods equipment. The effective date for the B20 mandate is delayed until May 1, 2018, from May 1, 2015.

DNR Reforestation

The DNR Division of forestry was provided \$2.963 million in bond proceeds for reforestation on state lands. There was also language



enacted that allows for the transfer of \$300,000 previously appropriated for reforestation but unused disaster funds from the Cass County blowdown area to the Sandstone/St Croix blowdown area.

DNR Forest Roads

The DNR was provided \$10 million in bond proceeds for asset preservation including forest roads. DNR will allocate a portion of these funds for forest roads and bridges.

Permanent School Trust Fund Administrator

\$185,000 in FY '15 was appropriated to fund the Permanent School Trust Fund Administrator position in the Department of Administration. This position was established by law in 2012 but had not previously been funded.

Permanent School Trust Fund Compensation

\$1 million was appropriated to compensate the Permanent School Trust Fund for DNR designations of Trust Fund lands that prohibit revenue generation. This appropriation is subject to subsequent DNR reporting.

Sustainable Forest Resources Act

The "sunset" on the Sustainable Forest Resources Act was extended until 2021 from 2017. Various other technical changes to this Chapter (89A) were made that eliminate

obsolete dates, requirements and language.

Forestland Valuation – Conservation Easements

The previously enacted prohibition on county assessors' ability to reduce valuations for certain lands with conservation easements is eliminated for easements entered into prior to May 23, 2013.

Mandatory EIS Exemption

Adds facilities producing less than 400,000 tons of chemicals annually to current list of exemptions for ethanol, biobutanol and cellulosic biofuels facilities that are located outside of the seven-county metropolitan area and produce less than 125,000,000 gallons annually. Adds language stating that "A facility or plant that only uses cellulosic feedstock to produce chemicals for use by another facility as a feedstock shall not be considered a fuel conversion facility..."

The following provisions did not pass:

Cost Based Electrical Rates

Legislation to phase in a requirement that the PUC base electrical rates on cost of service for certain investor owned utilities (Minnesota Power & Ottertail).

Biofuel Incentives

Legislation to establish incentives for the production of biofuels similar to incentives that helped create the ethanol industry in Minnesota.

MN Forests for the Future

A request from the DNR for \$3 million for land acquisition, primarily in Park Rapids and Anoka County was not funded.

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UofM Dean Visits TPA Board



New Dean of the U of M's College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences Dr. Brian Buhr (second from right) chats with several TPA board members at June's Board of Directors meeting, including (L-R): Kit Hasbargen, Scott Delack, Brad Rootkie, and Brady Hasbargen.

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Variety of Presentations Highlight TPA Annual Meeting

TPA has established a tradition of securing speakers and presentations for its annual meeting that provide members the opportunity to gather “insider information” about issues facing the logging industry, as well as the chance to discuss topics with key policy makers in either a group setting or on a one-on-one basis. The 2014 event was no different.

On the agenda for this year’s session at Sugar Lake Lodge near Grand Rapids were a presentation from TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt on the association’s accomplishments over the past 12 months; DNR Division of Forestry Director Forrest Boe on current issues pertaining to the state forests; Capt. Matt Sokol and Lt. Chip Lemon of the State Patrol discussing current commercial vehicle enforcement issues; State Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township) on the recently completed Minnesota legislative session; and International Falls attorney Steve Shermoen, along with TPA President Kit Hasbargen, discussing recent litigation they were involved with that would be of interest to all loggers.

Annual Report of Association Activities

Wayne Brandt provided members with an extensive briefing on the activities of TPA staff over the past year. Heavy snow and frigidly cold temperatures made the 2013-14 winter logging season for Minnesota’s men and women in the woods. TPA not only went to work for our state’s loggers at the legislature (a rundown of this year’s session is featured elsewhere in this issue of *The Timber Bulletin*), but also with state policy makers on topics like timber availability and diesel availability and quality.

The most recent 12 months saw a continuation of the previous year of big changes at Minnesota’s mills: Boise’s International Falls mill was sold to PCA – but retained the Boise



Minnesota State Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township) reviews the recently completed legislative session at the TPA Annual Membership Meeting. Looking on are TPA Executive Committee members (L-R): Kurt Benson, Dave Berthiaume, Scott Pittack, Mike Warren, and Kit Hasbargen, as well as TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt.

name, and Verso is in the process of buying Duluth’s NewPage mill, one year after leaving the state in the wake of the fire and ensuing closure

of the Sartell mill.

These developments meant significant attention in the statewide media, and TPA was frequently



Captain Matt Sokol (L) and Lt. Chip Lemon of the Minnesota State Patrol’s Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division talk to the TPA membership about current enforcement issues, as well as answer questions about a variety of enforcement topics.

asked by news outlets statewide to speak on behalf of the industry.

Lawmakers and policy makers paid significant attention to the forested regions of the state, making several formal visits to learn more about logging and forestry: the DNR hosted a tour of logging operations for state legislators, the Minnesota Forest Resources Council held its regular meeting in Baudette and toured the Erickson Timber sawmill there, and Minnesota Speaker of the House Paul Thissen spent two days in the north woods, including a visit to Scott Pittack's logging job near Hill City, and a meeting with several TPA members in Bemidji.

Looking ahead, several challenges loom: rising stumpage prices, the federal proposal to make the northern long-eared bat a threatened or endangered species, which could curtail summer harvesting operations, and the ongoing battle to increase legal truck weights on I-35, and more all need to be resolved, meaning TPA will have plenty to work on in the coming months and years.

Featured Speakers

DNR Division of Forestry Director **Forrest Boe** again joined TPA members at the annual meeting, updating attendees on developments at the state level over the past year. Boe reported that 29 new foresters have been hired, replacing 20 retirees over the past year. He said turnover is difficult, and that one way the division is dealing with the new hires is by teaming them up with veteran foresters that have been high producers in putting up timber.

"We're doing it to get them well-trained," Boe said.

Boe also discussed the recently completed legislative session, as well as priorities for next year, including funding for forest management, forest road maintenance, and improving forest health.

In terms of timber offerings, Boe said the division is committed to 800,000 cords per year. He also discussed a recent offering in the Warroad area that included clearing work on the sale that would compensate the successful bidder. In the end, "it didn't work," Boe said, "but we learned a lot, and we'll keep trying."



Kit Hasbargen (L) receives a plaque of appreciation for his years of service as TPA president from incoming president Scott Pittack. Hasbargen's term expired at the end of June.

Boe also addressed the northern long-eared bat and the potential for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to declare it a threatened or endangered species, a move that would restrict summer timber harvests. Boe said the DNR is in ongoing discussions with federal regulators on the issue.

"I'm optimistic we'll find a way to not hinder timber harvests," he said.

Finally, Boe talked about the future of the industry in Minnesota.

"We need growth in our industry,

innovative products, and we need to tell our forestry story," he said. "If we can continue to work together, we can keep industry healthy, keep our forests healthy, but not without some hard work."

During his presentation, **State Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township)** discussed this year's legislative activities at the Capitol, expressing how important it is to reach across the aisle and have members of both parties work together for the betterment of all



TPA Annual Banquet speaker Mike McKinley directs dinner attendees as they play kazoos. McKinley handed out the kazoos to demonstrate how important it is for all members of a team to be headed in the same direction. He also shared thoughts on dealing with change, as well as overcoming challenges in life and in business.

Minnesotans. Anzelc is optimistic that the climate in St. Paul is such that work can be done to keep the logging industry a viable one in our state.

Anzelc also talked about the 2015 legislative session, seeing transportation funding as the hot topic next year. However, Anzelc thinks it will be difficult to arrive at a source of revenue that everyone can agree upon, adding there's little support among legislators for an increase to the gasoline tax.

Continuing a tradition of cooperation between TPA and the Minnesota State Patrol, **Captain Matt Sokol** of the Patrol's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement session joined TPA members for the first time at the Annual Meeting. Sokol was named to the post earlier this year. He was joined by **Lt. Chip Lemon** of the Northeast District to discuss enforcement issues and answer questions. The two said the patrol has seen strong compliance with new regulations on tree-length loads of timber and the need for flags or lights on the back of them. He also discussed current staffing

levels in the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement division, saying new sergeants, all of whom are licensed peace officers, have been hired around the state and later this summer will begin assisting with roadside compliance checks.

Lemon also commented on the strong working relationship between TPA and the Patrol.

"I get asked by officers in other states why we don't have the enforcement issues with loggers in Minnesota they have in their state," Lemon said. "I say it's because of our working relationship with TPA."

Finally, International Falls attorney Steve Shermoen and TPA President Kit Hasbargen discussed recent litigation the two were involved in.

In this Koochiching County case, a snowmobiler was on a trail that intersected a logging road Hasbargen Logging was utilizing under a DNR permit. The DNR had posted the usual signage 200 feet in advance of the area to be logged. The snowmobiler sustained serious injuries attempting to avoid

a collision with the logging truck where the road and trail intersected. Seeking several million in damages, plaintiff argued Hasbargen was negligent for not removing cedar trees to allow better site lines near the intersection (even though cutting cedar was not permitted), not posting additional signage to warn the snowmobiler of the intersection, and not avoiding the collision because the snowmobiler claimed he had the right of way. At trial, the jury found no fault with the actions of Hasbargen Logging and plaintiff recovered no damages.

Shermoen suggested loggers take several steps to protect themselves from similar situations in the future: (1) warn their employees at an annual meeting to be extra vigilant whenever they may encounter a snowmobiler, (2) write a letter to the snowmobile club responsible for maintaining any trails that intersect logging roads being used and request they post extra signage if they deem any such intersections to be dangerous, and (3) maintain liability insurance of at least \$2,000,000.

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2014 Golf and Fishing



While rainy conditions weren't conducive to golf at the annual TPA outing, several folks did trek onto the Sugarbrooke Course, despite the weather, including (L-R): Mike Warren of M&R Chips, David Haley of Haley Logging, Quinton Legler of UPM Blandin, and Joe Ulwelling and Dan Holen from Border State Bank.

UPM Blandin's Darin Erickson, Adam Sutherland, and Greg Duwe went fishing with Matt Pierson and Dave Scheff of Scheff Logging on Sugar Lake as part of the TPA Annual Meeting events. Scheff won the day's Big Walter Award for catching the largest fish.



For those who weren't crazy about golfing or fishing in the rain, some took the option of staying in the Sugarbrooke Clubhouse and playing cribbage, including (L-R): Tom Ruegemer of RDO Vermeer, and Larry Dukek (obstructed) and Joe Dukek from Dukek Logging.

TPA Safety Awards

Safety was again highlighted at the Annual Banquet, as the winners of the 2014 TPA Safety contest were recognized.

Those members with no lost-time accidents from April 2013 through March of this year:

Logging Division

- C & M Walsh Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- C. O. Johnson Logging, Inc., Blackduck
- Dean & Bob Walsh Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- Dick Walsh Forest Products, LLP, Park Rapids
- Dukek Logging, Inc., Bemidji
- Erickson Timber Products, Inc., Baudette
- Great Northern Logging, Inc., Pierz
- Greg Cook Logging, Inc. Bigfork
- Johnson Logging, Inc., Cannon Falls
- Junker Logging, Inc. Littlefork
- Kimball's Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- Lundberg Forest Products, Inc., Solway
- M & R Chips, Inc., Grand Rapids
- Mike Gates Logging, LLC, Big Falls
- Northwoods Chipping, Inc., Int'l Falls
- Page & Hill Forest Products, Inc., Big Falls
- Palmer Logging, Barnum
- Pittack Logging, Inc., Bovey
- Root River Hardwoods, Inc., Preston
- Shuster Logging, Gheen
- Simco & Habisch

Trucking Division

- C & M Walsh Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- C. O. Johnson Logging, Inc., Blackduck
- Dean & Bob Walsh Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- DeMenge Trucking & Forest Products, LLC, McGregor
- Dick Walsh Forest Products, LLP, Park Rapids
- Dukek Trucking, Inc. Bemidji
- Erickson Timber Products, Inc., Baudette
- Great Northern Logging, Inc., Pierz
- Johnson Logging, Inc., Cannon Falls
- Junker Logging, Inc., Littlefork
- Kimball's Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- Lake Nebagamon Trucking Corp., Lake Nebagamon, Wis.
- M & R Chips, Inc., Grand Rapids
- Mannco Trucking, Inc., Int'l Falls
- Mike Gates Logging, LLC, Big Falls
- Northwoods Chipping, Inc., Int'l Falls
- Page & Hill Forest Products, Inc., Big Falls
- Palmer Logging, Barnum
- Pittack Logging, Inc., Bovey
- Root River Hardwoods, Inc., Preston
- Tim Kelm Logging, Bemidji
- Two Inlets Mill, Park Rapids

Sawmill Division

- Erickson Timber Products, Inc., Baudette
- Johnson Logging Inc., Cannon Falls
- Land O Lakes Wood Preserving, Tenstrike
- Root River Hardwoods, Inc. Preston
- Two Inlets Mill & Building Supply, Park Rapids

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Feds Propose Listing Northern Long-Eared Bat

Citing declining populations, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed declaring the northern long-eared bat as either a threatened or endangered species.

Initially setting a decision date for October, the USFWS has delayed a decision until April of 2015. The agency has also reopened a comment period on the issue, in response to strong feedback from a variety of groups, including forest industry associations nationwide.

Forest industry groups oppose the listing because the proposed rule includes timber harvesting among the threats to the bat. That's because the bats roost in trees during the summer months.

However, all sides agree that the major cause of reduction of northern long-eared bat populations is a fungus called "white-nose



syndrome," which infects the bats and spreads while they hibernate in caves during the winter time. It

has proven to be fatal up to 99% of the time in bats in other parts of the country. Still, because timber harvests effect the bat's summertime habitat, the USFWS says restricting timber harvest during summer months is among the steps it may take if the bat is listed as endangered.

According to the proposed rule, "although the effects on the northern long-eared bat (from timber harvest) do not have significant effects on the species, when combined with the significant population reductions due to white-nose syndrome, the resulting cumulative effect may further adversely impact the species."

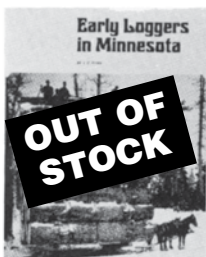
The northern long-eared bat is one of several bat species in Minnesota. Others also have been found to have white-nose syndrome, but only the northern long-eared bat is included in the listing proposal at this time.

"Restricting timber harvests in the summer months would have significant negative impact on our industry in Minnesota," says TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt. "We have already had several conversations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on this topic and will continue to engage them, as well as other groups who would also like to see proper forest management practices, not to mention a vibrant industry, continue in our state."

Early Loggers in Minnesota

by J. C. Ryan

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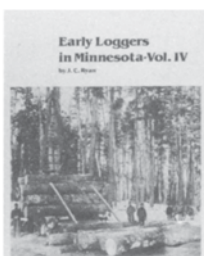
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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

"Logging in the Winter of '07"

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*



Snow removal still remains the worst problem that the logger has to contend with in his winter operations. Last year [1969], by February 1, the snow in the Cloquet Valley district was 52 inches deep at the Cloquet Valley station and 60 inches deep in the Brimson area.

The snow settled from the bottom as there was no frost in the ground. By March 1, the snow cover was down to about 42 inches over most of the district. Many small logging operators had to give up their operations entirely, and the production of pulpwood and other forest products was greatly curtailed.

However, there have been other years of deep snow; and while it always seems to slow production, it never entirely stops it. Man always has figured out a way to overcome the obstacles. The winter of 1936 was a bad one, but the deepest snow I recall came in the winter of 1907.

Back in those early days there never was such a thing as a blocked logging road. The reason for this was that when the first snowflake fell, the camp foreman ordered out the snowplows, which plowed all during the storm. When the storm was over, the roads were still open. If they had allowed the roads to become blocked, they probably would have remained closed. I have seen as many as 24 horses pulling a snowplow. The plows were all made of split pine logs shaped into a "V." When the snow was deep, two of the logs were fitted, stacked one on top

of the other.

While the logging roads were always kept open, there were times when log production stopped and the whole crew was sent to tramp roads. If a new road had to be opened along in the month of March to a new tract of timber and the snow was four feet deep, the crew would be out to tramp roads leading to the tract. After the tramping, the road bed would freeze so that horses could walk on it, and the road then was cut by a snowplow and "rutted." The worst problem caused by deep snow was that it covered all the logs that had been cut early, and many were never found by the "swampers" and "skidders." Also, any pine tree felled in deep snow would sink almost out of sight.

Nearly every year, some hunter stops at the station and tells about finding several big pine logs lying in the woods, mostly rotted away, and wonders why the industry could be so wasteful in leaving good timber. These are probably the results of the winters of deep snow when the logs could not be found.

In the winter of 1907, north of Bemidji and near Lake Beltrami, was one of the nicest stands of Norway pine I have ever seen. As a boy, I, along with my mother and other women of the once busy lumbering town of Turtle River, picked blueberries in the area. The pine was all cut clean; this resulted in large open areas of blueberries. Most of this area was cut by the Bemidji Lumber Co., but there was

one area—owned by another firm—of several forties which was cut during the winter of 1907. In wandering about, picking blueberries, we always could tell where we were because of the high stumps. Most of the area's stumps during 1907 were twice the height of stumps in the area cut during other years. Old-timers told me that snow reached 6-7 feet high that winter and that many logging companies had to send crews in the next summer to pick up logs missed by the skidders.

Because of the chance that the snow would become deep later in the winter, a good camp foreman never allowed sawyers to get more than a week ahead of the skidders. The foreman tried to keep the skidders as close on the heels of the sawyers as possible. Not only was there a chance of logs being covered by snow, but the longer the logs lay the harder they froze into the snow, making it difficult for teams to get them broken loose. Obviously, the ideal situation was to skid the logs the same day they were felled.

Early snows that came before the ground was frozen were always a problem to the loggers; all low spots had to be tramped first by men and frozen before horses could cross. Rivers and creeks would not freeze and often flowed across a logging road—if deep snow came early.

While deep snow caused much more work for the logger, the keeping of the main logging roads open seems to have been one of the least of problems.



Horses pull "V"-shaped plow of two stacked pine logs.



On the Markets

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

Recent Timber Sales

Average Prices, as reported by each agency

Agency Regular Intermediate

DNR – Backus Area

April 8 – Sealed Bid

Aspen Species (WC)	\$25.36	NA
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$29.13	NA
Oak Species (WMP)	\$26.41	NA
Mixed Hardwoods	\$ 9.00	NA

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

Beltrami County

April 15 – Sealed Bid

Aspen Pulp	\$33.71	NA
Spruce	\$17.78	NA
Tamarack Pulp	\$12.70	NA

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

Beltrami County

April 17 – Oral Auction

Aspen Pulp	\$35.05	NA
Red Pine P&B	\$65.14	NA
Balsam Pulp	\$16.55	NA

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

Cass County

April 24 – Oral Auction

Aspen	\$31.99	\$25.77
Birch	\$21.04	\$13.33
Red Oak	\$32.25	\$32.61
Jack Pine	\$37.66	\$15.45

All 10 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Clearwater County

April 24 – Oral Auction

Aspen	NA	\$30.69
Birch	NA	\$12.35
Maple	NA	\$10.98

All 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Koochiching County

May 7 – Oral Auction

Aspen P/B	\$25.52	\$30.81
Balsam P/B	\$ 7.67	\$ 7.92
Spruce P/B	\$27.05	\$19.53

Balm P/B \$23.34 \$23.41

34 of the 35 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

St. Louis County

May 15 – Oral Auction

Aspen Pulpwood	\$37.90	NA
Birch Pulpwood	\$11.75	NA
Balsam Fir Pulpwood	\$ 5.00	NA
Black Spruce Pulpwood	\$32.03	NA

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

Aitkin County

May 19 – Oral Auction

Aspen P/B	\$41.91	NA
Maple P/B	\$16.19	NA
Paper Birch P/B	\$16.17	NA
Oak P/B	\$28.90	NA

18 of the 20 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR – Park Rapids Area

May 19 – Sealed Bid

Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$32.17	\$32.59
Pine Species (WMP)	\$20.80	\$38.45
Paper Birch (WC)	\$ 8.57	\$ 9.69
Spruce-Balsam (WMP)	\$32.71	\$32.57

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

DNR – Park Rapids

May 20 – Oral Auction

Trembling Aspen (WC)	NA	\$32.59
Pine Species (WMP)	NA	\$38.45
Paper Birch (WC)	NA	\$ 9.69
Jack Pine (WMP)	NA	\$29.17

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

DNR – Baudette Area

May 27 – Oral Auction

Aspen Species (WC)	\$21.16	\$23.84
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$31.27	\$20.88
Mixed Conifers (WMP)	\$ 9.61	\$ 9.60
Jack Pine (WMP)	\$30.02	\$27.93

26 of the 28 tracts offered during the sale were purchased. Some tracts from the Warroad Area were included on the Regular Auction.

Cass County

May 29 – Sealed Bid

Aspen	\$24.14	\$28.31
Birch	\$13.92	\$14.71
Red Oak	\$30.84	\$19.93

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

Itasca County

May 29 – Oral Auction

Aspen	\$29.87	NA
Red Pine	\$58.29	NA
Black Spruce	\$32.64	NA
Jack Pine	\$38.95	NA
Balsam	\$18.44	NA

All of the 34 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR – Tower Area

June 2 – Sealed Bid

Aspen Species (WC)	\$39.74	\$23.74
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$42.66	\$12.27
Black Spruce (WC)	\$12.75	\$27.94
Balsam Fir	\$11.90	\$ 8.96

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

DNR – Tower Area

June 3 – Oral Auction

Aspen Species (WC)	\$35.73	\$19.54
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$14.68	\$25.71
Pine Species (WMP)	\$20.40	\$39.08
Northern Hardwoods (WC)	\$14.99	\$ 9.20
Balsam Fir (WC)	\$12.15	\$11.31

25 of the 27 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR – Cloquet Area

June 5 – Oral Auction

Aspen Species (WC)	\$37.86	\$30.10
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$33.07	\$30.66
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$88.06	\$30.00
Paper Birch (WMP)	\$24.09	\$27.48

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

Carlton County

June 5 – Oral Auction

Aspen	\$35.27	NA
Northern Hardwoods	\$12.06	NA
Black Spruce	\$15.00	NA
Birch	\$10.00	NA

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

DNR – Aitkin Area*June 6 – Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$34.71	NA
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$36.72	NA
Northern Hdws (WMP)	\$35.01	NA
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$73.13	NA

*17 of the 20 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Aitkin Area***June 9 – Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$34.09	\$31.24
Northern Hdws (WMP)	\$15.00	\$15.43
Maple Species (WC)	\$ 8.50	NA

*12 of the 17 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Blackduck Area***June 9 – Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	NA	\$18.04
Tamarack (WC)	NA	\$ 2.61
Ash (WMP)	NA	\$ 8.00

*All 5 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Blackduck Area***June 10 – Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$31.79	\$31.08
Tamarack (WC)	\$ 4.61	\$5.10
Black Spruce (WC)	\$10.07	\$13.60

*All 17 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Littlefork Area***June 10 – Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$39.43	\$34.44
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$25.19	\$38.85
Black Spruce (WMP)	\$38.82	NA
Black Spruce (WC)	NA	\$31.86
Tamarack (WC)	\$ 5.37	\$ 8.94

*All 13 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Littlefork Area***June 11 – Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$17.66	\$39.66
Trembling Aspen (WC)	NA	\$34.16
Black Spruce (WC)	\$12.75	\$28.24
Tamarack (WC)	\$ 5.10	\$11.33

*14 of 19 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Deer River & Backus Areas***June 11 – Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$18.45	\$17.79
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$18.87	\$17.89
Tamarack (WC)	\$ 5.10	\$ 4.47
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$38.44	\$30.57

*All 22 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Deer River & Backus Areas***June 12 – Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$33.64	\$34.07
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$17.85	\$37.45
Tamarack (WC)	\$ 5.20	\$ 5.08
Black Spruce (WMP)	\$16.49	\$14.02

*15 of 18 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Hibbing Area***June 12 – Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$11.55	NA
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$17.78	NA
Northern Hdws	\$ 6.69	NA
Black Spruce (WC)	\$11.27	NA

*All 9 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Hibbing Area***June 13 – Oral Auction*

Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$31.97	\$29.26
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Norway Pine (WMP)	\$97.53	\$71.85
Mixed Spruce (WC)	\$18.56	\$21.45
Balsam Fir (WC)	\$11.90	\$11.69

*All 22 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Bemidji Area***June 17 – Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$41.94	\$30.61
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$39.41	\$29.76
Tamarack (WC)	\$ 6.60	\$ 6.90
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$92.12	\$45.68

*All 34 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.***DNR – Two Harbors Area***June 19 – Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$32.44	\$ 6.25
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$40.02	\$12.75
Mixed Spruce (WC)	\$27.70	\$20.86
Paper Birch (WMP)	\$21.64	NA
Black Spruce (WMP)	NA	\$27.87

10 of 15 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Products:

PB = Pulp and Bolts

WMP = Woodsrun mixed Products

WC = Woodsrun cordwood

ST = Sawtimber

WST = Woodsrun Sawtimber

PW = Pulpwood

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