

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

# TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

JULY/AUGUST 2006

VOLUME 62



Fire Strikes BWCAW Blowdown  
Annual Meeting and  
Golf/Fishing Outing  
Brad Gilmer

# TIMBER BULLETIN

Volume 61  
July/August 2006  
Duluth, Minnesota

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Burned area from the Cavity Lake Fire in the blowdown portion of the BWCA. Photo courtesy US Forest Service. Taken by Barry Shullanberger.

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Thanks to those who attended the Annual Meeting at Breezy Point. It was a success because of the dedication of the Public Relations Committee, the hard work of the TPA staff and all of

## President's Column



you who came for the golfing, fishing, banquet and meeting. Ron Schara was the keynote speaker at the banquet and had quite a few good fishing and

hunting stories. It was good to see a younger crowd at the banquet.

This summer's markets have been hard on everyone. High stumpage prices coupled with falling delivered prices and small quotas have hurt. This emphasizes the need for a strong organization. Membership in MTPA allows you to stay informed on the issues, gives you a voice where it is needed and keeps you in contact with other loggers.

Involvement in committees is important; this is where ideas become realities. The Transportation, Insurance, Public Relations, Membership and Expo Committees always need new faces and ideas. If you are interested, please contact Wayne or myself.

Make sure Sept. 15 and 16 are marked on your calendar for the North Star Expo at the Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids!

Let's all look forward to a productive and safe fall season.

*Thomas C. Meeker*

## 53rd Annual North Star Expo Right Around the Corner!

Final preparations are underway for the 2006 Expo, to be held again this year at the Itasca County Fairgrounds, Sept. 15 and 16.

Along with the annual favorites everyone enjoys at the Expo (draft horse demo, mini-loader for the kids, master loader contest, the latest in machinery, and lots more!), this year's event features:

### Workshops on the new fuel emissions standards

The 2007 emission regulations and corresponding changes with Ultra Low Sulfur diesel fuel and CJ-4 engine oil will bring new changes for your logging and trucking operations. Attend this workshop to learn more about how these regulations will impact the cost of maintenance, new equipment purchases and performance. A representative from Cummins NPower will discuss these issues, provide a general manufacturer's perspective and answer your questions.

### Health Insurance Workshop

Dan Zobel, of TPA's health Insurance partner Otis Magie, will give an overview of the TPA program for logging companies and their employees and highlight how TPA members can offer this important benefit.

### Loggin' and Hoggin'

To celebrate the 25th anniversary

of TPA's association with Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance, LUA is sponsoring a Friday night barbecue, complete with ribs and all the fixins'. Doing the cooking is former logger Big Ed Hamilton of McGregor. Big Ed tours the country making barbecue for fairs and competitions – he even was the most popular rib vendor at the Talladega Superspeedway for the Aaron's 499 NASCAR race earlier this year! In addition, music will be provided by "Phat Chance" out of Superior, Wis., specializing in rock and country hits from the 70s and 80s.

TPA members have received invitations in the mail. Additional tickets will also be available at the door for purchase. If you have any questions, call the TPA office. **Don't forget to RSVP to either the TPA or LUA office ASAP!**



This is the view from Big Ed Hamilton's rib stand at Talladega as thousands of NASCAR fans wait to enjoy Ed's smokin' ribs at the Aaron's 499 race earlier this year. A former logger, Hamilton will be making his ribs at the Loggin' and Hoggin' LUA 25th Anniversary Barbecue at this year's North Star Expo.



Fire finally came to the blowdown in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). As of early August the Cavity Lake fire had burned nearly 32,000 acres inside of the wilderness and cost over \$10 million to fight. The costs will continue to escalate as mop up operations proceed this summer and fall.

Executive Vice President's Column



I had the opportunity to tour a portion of the fire area on Sea Gull Lake on the Gunflint Trail. I also spent some time with the firefighting brass in and around their command posts and camps.

The firefighting force and resources that can be marshaled by the US Forest Service and other public agencies is impressive. Cook trucks from Alaska, shower trucks from Idaho, equipment vans from Montana, aircraft and firefighting crews from around the country were all present.

The portion of the fire that I saw appeared to have burned very hot. While some in the environmental community are extolling the virtues of this fire, I take no pleasure and see little positive about ash over bedrock.

The fire was inevitable inside of the wilderness but there is nothing pretty about it or the resources that had to be spent to protect lives and property along the Gunflint Trail.



The fire has been stopped so far inside of the wilderness where prescribed burns had been done. Credit is due to Superior National Forest Supervisor Jim Sanders and his staff for devising and implementing the plans that gave the Gunflint Trail a fighting chance. Their approach worked and they deserve credit for it.



Questions have been raised by the public as to why some of these areas were not logged instead of being allowed to burn. Logging is

prohibited in federal wilderness areas. In order for the blowdown inside of the BWCAW to be logged Congress would have had to change the law. We can all imagine the outcry from the anti-harvesting crowd if that bill had been introduced. As it was it took extraordinary action by the federal Council on Environmental Quality which granted "Special Arrangements" for only the second time in history for blowdown clean up to proceed on federal lands outside of the BWCAW. Loggers in our state responded immediately and continued to respond by cleaning up blowdown for the next several years. If people from outside of our group wanted us to do more they should have asked.



Markets continue to be very tight this summer. Everyone seems to be on some type of allocation or quota for deliveries which affects cash flows in the woods in a big way. A wet fall would change the market overnight and the bell would be

rung for flat out production. A more stable market would benefit everyone. We can only hope that it will come.



Make your plans now to attend the North Star Expo at the Itasca County Fairgrounds on Sept. 15 and 16. The committee has been working hard to make this year's show a great one. We will also be celebrating 25 years of TPA's workers compensation program with LUA. It's a remarkable milestone that should help make this year's Expo even better than ever.

Be Safe.

*Walter A. Smith*

## Early Loggers in Minnesota

by J. C. Ryan



First hand recollections, by storyteller "Buzz" Ryer of the loggers, loaders, sawyers, wood bulchers and bulchers who lived the woods in the hey-day of the pioneer lumberjacks—with dozens of historical photographs.

Finished at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

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# 2006 North Star Expo

September 15th and 16th

Itasca Co. Fairgrounds, Grand Rapids, MN

Friday 8-4 Saturday 8-2

**Free Admission!**

More than 250 exhibitors and vendors!

Industry Workshops!

Draft Horse Demonstration!

Mini-loader for the kids!

Master Loader Contest!

Win a Chainsaw Carving!

Friday Night BBQ!

Saturday: Nortrax Breakfast—Free!!

For more information: MN Timber Producers Association

218-722-5013



# New Legislation Affects Timber Sales

**A** bill passed by the legislature and signed by Gov. Pawlenty went into effect on Aug. 1 that changes the way the state administers timber sales. The basics of the legislation were covered in the last Timber Bulletin. The DNR has provided details of how the law affects loggers:

## Down Payments

- *MS 90.14 (e)* All auction permits sold after Aug 1, 2006, will require a bid guarantee payment in addition to the normal 15% advance payment.
- Advance Payment equals 15% of the total appraised value.
- Bid Guarantee equals 15% of bid-up total minus the advance payment
  - Example: A sale appraised at \$10,000 is sold for \$12,000 (bid total). The advance payment (\$1,500) is due at the auction. The bid guarantee equals 15% x \$12,000 minus the advance payment. In this example, the bid guarantee is \$300.00.
- The bid guarantee must be submitted with the signed Permit to Cut Timber within sixty days.
- The advance payment is still due the day of the sale.
- If the signed permit and bid guarantee is not returned within the allowed period, the permit is cancelled and the down payment forfeits to the State.
- Over-the-counter sales of unsold auction tracts will require a bid guarantee.

## New Requirements For Purchasers of Auction or Informal Permits

- *MS 90.145 Subd. 1 (b)* The permit holder and the permit holder's agents, employees, subcontractors, and assigns must provide proof of compliance with general industry safety standards for logging in Minnesota, such as a Logsafe certificate.
- For more information, go to the Dept. of Labor and Industry website: [www.doli.state.mn.us/logging](http://www.doli.state.mn.us/logging)
- This requirement applies to all timber permits, regardless of when they were first purchased.

## New Requirements Prior to Beginning Logging Operations

1. WORKER COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS
  - The permit holder and the permit holder's agents, employees, subcontractors, and assigns must provide proof of compliance with Minnesota mandatory worker's compensation insurance laws (*MS 176*). *MS 90.145 Subd. 1 (c)*
2. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS
  - The permit holder's foreperson or other on-site employee supervising active logging operations must be current with MLEP, FISTA training requirements. For more information, visit their websites at [www.mlep.org](http://www.mlep.org) and [www.fistausa.org](http://www.fistausa.org) *MS 90.145 Subd.1 (d)*
  - This requirement applies to all informal and auction permits, regardless of when they were first purchased.
  - Holders of permits sold prior to August 1, 2006,
    - Who have already begun logging operations will be allowed until January 1, 2007 to come into compliance.
    - Who have not begun logging operations will need to be in compliance before harvest operations begin.

*Please note: The DNR has said they will allow a "grace period" for existing permit holders who are not currently trained. However, training must be completed by May 31, 2007.*

- Permits sold after August 1, 2006, will include this training requirement.
- The permit holder will provide the state timber sale administer or Area Forestry office with the name of the trained supervisor at, or before, the on-site meeting.

## Pre-Registration

- Purchasers of state informal or auction permits must pre-register by January 1, 2007. *MS 90.145 Subd. 2*
  - Federal employee tax ID numbers or state tax ID numbers are required of any purchaser buying in the name of a business.
  - Registration may be as an individual or a business.
  - Permits will only be issued in the name as listed on the registration.
  - Registration forms may be obtained from your local Forestry office or the DNR website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/timbersales>.
  - This is a one-time registration
  - There is no fee for registration
- Questions may be directed to your local DNR Forestry office.



What's left of a wilderness campsite on Seagull Lake.

# Fire Strikes BWCAW Blowdown

It started with a lightning strike. What followed was a fire in the blowdown area of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness that burned through much of July and the early part of August. Known as the "Cavity Lake Fire" it spanned 50 square miles of the BWCAW and brought fire crews from all over the US to fight it at a cost in excess of \$10 million. TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt toured the fire and took the following pictures.



DNR Deputy Commissioner Mark Holsten, center, and Division of Forestry Director Dave Epperly, right, in front of supplies for crews fighting the fire.



Fire management team meets for a briefing over lunch.



Gunflint Trail community members listen at daily briefing given by fire management personnel.





**Fire crews used motor boats for transport on Seagull Lake.**



**Equipment and supplies were brought in from all over the country to help crews fighting the fire. These shower trailers are from Idaho.**



**Cook trailers and sinks from Alaska.**



**The fire burned down to the rock in many places.**



# Timber Talk

## Moore Leaves DNR

Minnesota DNR assistant commissioner Brad Moore has been named acting commissioner of the



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency by Governor Tim Pawlenty.

At DNR, Moore helped develop and implement recommendations to improve the competitiveness of Minnesota's primary forest products industry, as well as worked on the commissioner's management team to establish strategic direction and develop policy. Moore also managed the department's \$300 million annual budget.

Moore worked at the DNR since 1988. Pawlenty said Moore's experience has prepared him to lead the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Laurie Martinson has been named acting assistant commissioner on a temporary basis until a replacement is found for Moore. That search is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

## FRC Guidelines Costs Study

The University of Minnesota's Department of Forest Resources is conducting a study to assess how Minnesota's Timber Harvesting and Forest Management Guidelines and other factors (e.g., terrain) impact logging costs. Eleven TPA members have agreed to participate in the study.

Data will be collected from study participants over the course of roughly one year beginning later this summer or early fall. The data from each logging site will be collected primarily through a small piece of equipment (about the size of a GPS receiver unit) that will be placed on each feller and skidder. This data will be retrieved from the

equipment about once a week. It generally takes less than a minute to retrieve the data, so it is anticipated that there will be minimal interference with the participants logging operation.

## Upswing in Ruffed Grouse Counts

Results from this spring's ruffed grouse drumming count survey indicated highest since 2001, with increases observed in all survey regions except the southeast, where counts were stable. Counts had been at the low end of the 10-year cycle for the past four years.

Sharp-tailed grouse counts in the northwestern survey region declined each of the last two years, but counts in the east-central region remained unchanged. Sharptail populations appear to have declined over the long term as a result of habitat deterioration. In recent years, the DNR has increased prescribed burning and shearing that keeps trees from overtaking the open brush lands that sharp-tailed grouse need to thrive.

Counts of prairie chickens at their leks, or booming grounds, in western Minnesota were lower in 2006 than 2004 and 2005, but still higher than average over the last 15 years. In survey blocks representing relatively good prairie chicken habitat, observers counted 11.8 males per booming ground and one booming ground per 3.7 square miles.

## DNR Names New Timber Sales Program Supervisor

Lillian Baker has been appointed the new timber sales program supervisor for the Division of Forestry. She assumes the job duties of Doug Ford, who retired on June 9.

Baker is a 26-year veteran of the Division of Forestry, including stints in southeastern Minnesota, the Backus area, and in Cambridge. In her new job as supervisor, Baker will be focusing on implementing changes made to the timber sale

statutes by the 2006 Legislature, getting the Timber Sale Module of the Forestry Information System up and running, and continuing to improve and expand the timber program's customer service.

## Replacement Timber Provision Published

The U.S. Forest Service has published the long-awaited replacement timber provision. When timber sales are cancelled due to reasons such as obstructionist litigation, the Forest Service will now be able to provide purchasers with equivalent timber from anywhere on the same Forest. This is a significant victory for the Federal Timber Purchasers Committee which met in Duluth in May.

## Minnesota Truck Weight Compliance Training

A one-day course on laws governing gross weights, axle weights, road-restriction weights and seasonal weights will be held in Duluth on Sept. 15 at the MNDOT headquarters. This is the same program profiled in the May/June issue of the Timber Bulletin. The seminar is sponsored by MNDOT free charge!

For more information or to register online, go to: <http://www.mnltap.umn.edu/workshops/customized/customized01.html>. Seminars are also scheduled in August and September for Albert Lea, East Grand Forks, and Shoreview.

# NORTH STAR EXPO

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Friday, September 15

8:00 am	Equipment Displays Open
10:30 - 11:30 am	Fuel and Engines Workshop on 2007 regulations
10:00 - 11:00 am	Loader Contest (sign up at site)
11:00 am - 3:00 pm	Kid's Mini-Loader (sign up at site)
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Celebrity/Media Loader Contest
12:30 - 3:00 pm	Loader Contest (sign up at site)
1:30 - 2:30 pm	Fuel and Engines Workshop on 2007 regulations
4:00 pm	Equipment displays close
4:00 pm	Cash Bar Social Hour begins
5:00 - 7:00 pm	BBQ and Door Prizes - on site
6:00 - 10:00pm	Live Music with Phat Chance

### Saturday, September 16

7:00-9:00 am	Free Pancake Breakfast (sponsored by Nortrax)
8:00 am	Equipment displays open
9:00-11:00 am	Loader Contest (sign up at site)
9:00 am - 1:00 pm	Kid's Mini-Loader (sign up at site)
10:00-11:00 am	Fuel and Engines Workshop on 2007 regulations
11:00 am - 12:00pm	TPA Health Insurance Workshop with Dan Zobel of Otis Magie
11:00 am	Coloring contest winners announced
1:00 pm	Winners announced for Loader, Master Loader, and Best Load contests
2:00 pm	Equipment displays close

### CONTESTS

**Vendor Drawing** – Visit the vendors identified on the back of your entry card and become eligible to win a chainsaw carving!

**Guess the Weight** – Guess the weight of a fully loaded truck

**Wood Identification** – See how many tree species you can identify

**Loader** – Test your skills against the clock

**Masters Division Loader** – Loader contest for those 50 and over – sign up at site

**Best Load** – Come and see the Best Loads of Wood on Display

**Big Cookie** – Enter to see if your wood cookie is the biggest of it's species.

*For additional information, contact:*  
Minnesota Timber Producers Association  
324 W Superior St #903, Duluth, MN 55802  
218-722-5013

# NORTH STAR EXPO



## **BIGGEST COOKIE CONTEST**

Submit your biggest wood cookie for each species at the North Star Expo this Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

Please include where the wood was cut, what source the sale is (federal, state, county, or private), name, and phone number.

# Annual Meeting and Golf/Fishing Outing Combine for Two Days of Fun and Business

*From hearing about TPA's legislative successes, to getting the chance to listen to a dynamic speech from outdoor writer and TV personality Ron Schara, to playing golf or catching fish with fellow TPA members, to the installation of new members of the board of directors and Executive Committee, to presentations from several key members of the forestry community in our state, this year's TPA Annual Meeting had something for everyone. Here's a rundown of what members enjoyed on two informative and fast-moving days at Breezy Point on June 8 and 9:*

by Ray Higgins

## Golf/Fishing Event

The annual meeting was combined with the golf and fishing outing for the first time, and 2006 saw more golfers and anglers than ever before. The weather cooperated, providing perfect conditions for everyone on the golf course at Breezy Point, and on the water of Pelican Lake.

In golf, the Caddyshacker Award – for the team that had the most fun and the highest score – went to the foursome of Andy Michalicek (Michalicek Logging), Eric Lunemann (Nortrax), Joe Meierhoff (Nortrax), and Keith Deal (UPM Blandin).

The Foot Wedge Award – for the team with the best score – went to the team of Mike Rieger (Rieger Logging), John Rolle (John Rolle Logging), Ryan Milette (Road Machinery & Supplies), and Dave Hensel (UPM Blandin).

In the fishing contest, awards were given for the longest fish and the shortest fish. Since it was a catch-and-release event, fish were



**Ryan Milette of RMS celebrates with teammate Jon Rolle after Milette drained a long putt on the 18th hole. Milette won the long putt award for that hole.**

measured in the boat and anglers reported their lengths at the end of the day.

The Conservation Award (smallest fish of the day) went to Lowell Pittack, who landed a 4-and-a-half inch largemouth bass.

The Big Walter Award (Largest fish) went to Rod Enberg (Enberg Logging) for a northern measuring 26 inches.

### Banquet Speaker—Ron Schara

Schara, longtime outdoors writer for the Minneapolis Star Tribune and host of the Minnesota Bound television program, shared stories from a lifetime in the outdoors, from growing up in northern Iowa and learning how to fish on a small trout stream near his home, to having the chance to hunt and fish throughout the region with celebrities like Bud Grant and Billy Martin. In fact, Schara stopped at Breezy Point to speak to TPA members while on his way back from shooting a segment for his TV show on Lake of the Woods in Minnesota's Northwest Angle.



**Bob Cook, left, and Dale Gessel of Nortrax drove the beer cart at the TPA Golf and Fishing event. Nortrax donated the beverages for the golfers.**



**Paul Bergstrom, left, and Bill Bergstrom get ready to hit Pelican Lake for the TPA fishing outing.**





**Outdoor writer and TV host Ron Schara got animated as he shared stories from his life in the outdoors with TPA members at the Annual Meeting banquet.**

Schara also told TPA members that keeping lines of communication between the logging industry and the State Capitol is more important than ever. He said because the population is moving toward the Twin Cities metro area that the legislative power is moving there as well, and many of those urban legislators never get to the woods. Schara said the industry has a compelling story to tell of why the forests should be managed in a way to support the state's economy and that loggers need to continue to tell it.



**Bob Behr and Jim Berkeland of Blandin didn't have much success during the fishing outing. At least Bob didn't lose his keys.**

## **Annual Membership Meeting**

### **Changes to the TPA Executive Committee and Board**

TPA saw a change at the top of its organizational structure, with Tom McCabe of McCabe Logging in Duluth officially becoming TPA president. He replaces Dale Erickson who served as TPA

president the past two years. Erickson will continue to serve on the TPA Executive Committee.

In addition, Mike Warren of M and R Chips in Grand Rapids was elevated to a seat on the TPA Executive Committee. Warren replaces Clarence Johnson of C.O. Johnson Logging who completed his term.

Finally, five new members joined



Rod Enberg, left, receives the Big Walter Award, for his 26-inch northern, from Dave Amundson. Outgoing TPA President Dale Erickson looks on.

TPA's board of directors meeting, after being elected at April's board meeting. Joining the TPA board are: Kurt Benson (Benson Timber Co., Blackduck), Dave Berthiaume (Berthiaume Logging, Cloquet), Dean Haley (Haley Logging Co., Bigfork), Scott Pittack (Pittack Logging, Inc., Bovey), Joan Pomp (Land O Lakes Wood Preserving Co., Tenstrike).

### Annual Report of Association Activities

TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt delivered his annual report to the members and highlighted the successes TPA has enjoyed at the legislature over the past two years. The 2005 session was included in the briefing because the last membership

meeting was held before the end of the 2005 session.

- Bonding funds for tree planting and silviculture. This was the first time the legislature had dedicated bonding funds for these purposes.
- \$21 million dedicated to the Forest Management Investment Account
- DNR Forestry budget increased
- Forest Resources Council avoided budget cut
- More favorable language on responsible bidders on timber sales
- Bonding funds for re-forestation
- Section of the law that defines standard measurements of wood was modified in favorable manner
- Counties can accept irrevocable



TPA Executive Committee members Mike Rieger, left, Tom McCabe, Clarence Johnson and Dale Erickson listen to TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt's Annual Report of Association Activities to the members.

bank letters of credit for timber sales

- Funding provided to certify state and private forest lands
  - \$400,000 dedicated to forest productivity research at NRRI
  - The definition of biomass was modified in a favorable manner
  - \$100,000 dedicated for beaver control
- The 2006 session was dominated by talk of stadiums and didn't feature as many measures affecting our industry. Nonetheless, TPA was successful in securing:
- More bonding funds, including \$4 million for re-forestation, \$7 million for Forest Legacy, and \$1 million for state forest roads and bridges
  - Timber sale extensions for sales affected by adverse weather and surface conditions
  - Changes in DNR Forestry Policy



Dave Epperly, director of Division of Forestry of the DNR, updates TPA members on current issues in the division and his vision for the future.

that are favorable to TPA members, including timber sale down payment policy and allows DNR to establish a purchaser pre-registration system

- Omnibus Tax bill itemized the types of logging equipment exempt from state sales tax.

### Annual Meeting Speakers

#### Dave Epperly – DNR Director of Forestry

DNR Director of Forestry Dave Epperly thanked TPA members for their work in securing bonding money at the Legislature. Epperly said those funds are critical to the future of the health of the forest.

Epperly said his top priority is to  
*(continued on page 22)*

(continued from page 19)

continue to harvest 800,000 to 850,000 cords each year from state forests. Epperly said current funding levels need to be maintained to accomplish that.

Epperly said one of his major goals is to improve the “customer service” of the division, including making changes to the timber sale system. Epperly will get input from TPA on what changes should be made and how to implement them.

He also said he’d welcome an invitation from any TPA member to visit their business to answer questions. Epperly said it’s important to get out into the field, because he’s learned over the years that “nothing can be run from behind the desk.”

**Terry Weber – Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership**

Weber is the executive coordinator of the partnership, an organization of landowners and managers, both public and private, and loggers. Among the activities of the past year were tracking the development of biomass harvesting guidelines, and tracking potential



Mill Managers Pete Aube, left, of Potlatch, Joe Maher of UPM Blandin, and Kent Jacobson from Ainsworth, greet each other before leading a panel discussion on forest product industry trends.

changes to the silvicultural exemption of the wetlands conservation act. The partnership also conducted a public meeting in Bemidji to discuss with community leaders and business owners the importance of the forest products industry on community and business vitality.

Weber said the partnership plans to organize a statewide symposium on forest health and productivity that will prioritize needs and lead to specific actions to address those needs.

**Dave Zumeta – Forest Resources Council  
Minnesota Forest Resources**

Council Executive Director Dave Zumeta highlighted the activities of the council over the past year. They included weighing in at the request of the governor on federal roadless areas, developing site-level guidelines for the sustainable removal of woody biomass, and publishing the new “gold book,” the new voluntary site-level forest management guidelines. The MFRC also toured TPA member Dick Walsh’s logging operation and developed landscape plans across six regions in Minnesota.

Zumeta stressed that it is a priority of the MFRC to help in maintaining the wood products

(continued on page 24)



Golfers had to contend with this tree, right in the middle of the fairway. Obviously, it should have been clear cut. From left: Brian Bergstrom, Bruce Bergstrom, Jim Parma, Joan Pomp and Rod Bergstrom.



**Outgoing TPA President Dale Erickson, left, receives a gavel in appreciation of his service from new TPA President Tom McCabe.**

*(continued from page 22)*

and logging businesses in Minnesota and keeping them viable. He also said the council faces a challenge in 2007 because the legislature will need to reauthorize the council if it is to continue its work. Zumeta asked TPA members to support efforts for reauthorization by using their voices with state legislators in the coming year.

#### **Douglas Weiszhaar – Vote Yes Campaign**

The Vote Yes campaign is encouraging Minnesotans to vote “yes” in November on the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) constitutional amendment. The amendment would dedicate 100 percent of the state sales tax paid on motor vehicles to transportation. Currently, only 54 percent of MVST is earmarked for transportation projects. If the constitutional amendment passes, it will put \$300 million per year into transportation projects until 2011.

Over 700 businesses in Minnesota have signed on to support the amendment on November’s ballot. Weiszhaar encouraged TPA members to vote “Yes” on the measure, increasing funding for roads in our state.

#### **Dr. Alan Ek and Dr. Mike Kilgore from the University of Minnesota**

Dr. Ek and Dr. Kilgore of the university’s newly named College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences gave a presentation titled “GEIS-Ten Years Later,” a look back at how accurate Minnesota’s Generic Environmental Impact Statement (published in 1994) was, now that data from 10 years later is available. Key elements of their presentation were:

- Between 1990 and 2001, roughly 45 million cords were harvested in Minnesota. That’s less than the GEIS projection of 48.7 million cords. Ek and Kilgore cited various factors, including the economy, lower mill capacity due to closures, and timber imports as reasons the harvest wasn’t as high as anticipated.

- GEIS projections regarding populations of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians were largely correct
- The state has made great strides in implementing guidelines in forest management practices, so that now 100 percent of acres that are managed by public entities are managed with practices that are consistent with MFRC guidelines. That’s up from 71 percent in 1994.

The complete report is available at:  
<http://iic.gis.umn.edu/documents/Staffpaper182.pdf>

#### **Forest Products Industry Trends: Past, Present, & Future**

Mill executives Joe Maher of Blandin, Kent Jacobson of Ainsworth Engineered, and Pete Aube of Potlatch led a panel discussion on the state of the market in the three major sectors (paper, lumber, and engineered wood).

#### **Joe Maher-Bladin**

Maher said demand for paper dropped right after the 9/11 terrorist attacks because companies cut back on their advertising and catalogs. However, demand has rebounded since that time.

Maher said the paper industry in North America is adversely affected by over-capacity around the world. Mills in Western Europe are producing more paper than they can sell, so they’re exporting product to





**Former TPA President Tom McCabe Sr. enjoys the Annual Meeting banquet with new TPA President Tom McCabe Jr.**

the U.S. and Canada. So even though capacity and demand are roughly equal in North America, that over-capacity in Europe is affecting markets here. Fortunately, the strength of the dollar in overseas markets is helping out the industry.

#### **Kent Jacobson–Ainsworth**

Jacobson said the future is bright due to OSB gaining market share vs. plywood in the paneling sector and also in I-beams and trusses. And because interest rates have been low, there's been a robust increase in housing starts. However, housing starts are expected to level off as interest rates go back up.

#### **Pete Aube – Potlatch**

Lumber production in the U.S. is expected to be reduced due to falling prices and higher log costs (1-2 percent in most areas).

Also, imports continue to increase. Aube said the "Canadian Issue" is a difficult one for U.S. producers because Canada continues to subsidize its industry. U.S. and Canadian officials are currently negotiating fairer tariffs. In the meantime, lumber prices are expected to fall.

Aube said that because of the rising cost of materials and competition, investments in technology and automation will be required for lumber mills to

survive. Those investments will be geared to recovery of value and volume.

He also said sawmills closely watch the health of pulp mills in the U.S. because the health of pulp mills and sawmills go hand in hand; as pulp mills go away, so do markets for the chips that sawmills produce.

## 2006 Safety Contest Winners

### **Logging Division**

- B & B Logging LLP, Aitkin
- 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
- Doug Brenner Logging, Grand Marais
- Duke Foster Logging, Ely
- Dukek Logging Inc., Bagley
- Erickson Timber Products Inc., Baudette
- Gerald K. Smith, Bagley
- Gerbracht Logging, Inc., Bagley
- Great Northern Logging Inc., Pierz
- Hughes Timber, Kelliher
- Johnson Logging Inc., Cannon Falls
- Killmer Bros. Inc., Big Falls

- Kimball's Logging Inc., Park Rapids
- Knaeble Timber Inc., Northome
- Lundberg Forest Products Inc., Solway
- M & R Chips Inc., Grand Rapids
- McCabe Forest Products, Duluth
- Northwood Chipping Inc., Int'l Falls
- Page & Hill Forest Products Inc., Big Falls
- Pittack Logging Inc., Bovey
- Rajala Mill Co., Big Fork
- RBC Ent/Manners Logging, Park Rapids
- Ron Beckman Timber Harvesting, McGregor
- Shuster Logging, Gheen
- Todd Wass, Bigfork

### **Safety Contest Winners:**

#### **\$500 Prize:**

- Page & Hill Forest Products, Inc., Big Falls
- Rajala Mill Co., Bigfork
- Northwood Chipping, Inc., Int'l Falls

#### **\$250 Prize**

- Erickson Timber Products, Inc., Baudette
- Hughes Timber, Kelliher

### **Trucking Division**

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- Dukek Logging Inc., Bagley
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- Gerbracht Logging, Inc., Bagley
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- Johnson Logging Inc., Cannon Falls
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- Lake Nebagamon Trucking Inc., Lake Nebagamon, Wis.
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- Northwood Chipping Inc., Int'l Falls
- Page & Hill Forest Products Inc., Big Falls
- Pittack Logging Inc., Bovey
- RBC Ent/Manners Logging, Park Rapids
- Root River Hardwoods, Preston
- Thomas Long & Son Trucking, Orr

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- Cass Forest Products, Cass Lake
- DeMenge Sawmill, McGregor
- Johnson Logging Inc., Cannon Falls
- Page & Hill Forest Products Inc., Big Falls
- Rajala Mill Co., Bigfork

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- Minnesota Forest Industries

## In Memoriam

**W**endell Freeberg died in June at the age of 74. Wendell spent his entire life in the Bigfork area and was active in TPA, serving on the TPA Board of Directors. He owned and operated a logging business with his twin brother, Wayne, for many years. Wendell loved to fish, hunt, garden, travel, and was an active member of his church. Our condolences go to his wife, Bette, daughters Betina and Belinda, and the rest of Wendell's family.

## Conservation Easement Ensures Public Access to Forestland



**U.S. Senator Norm Coleman (R-Minnesota) spoke at the ceremony to celebrate the new Brainerd Lakes Forest Legacy conservation easement in Cass County. The easement is a partnership between The Trust for Public Land, Potlatch Corporation, and the Minnesota DNR. The celebration coincided with completion of the 1635-acre second and final phase of the 4776-acre project. The conservation easement over the Potlatch lands, which are immediately adjacent to Crow Wing and Pillsbury state forests, will prevent development, ensure public access and allow for sustainable forest management, thereby providing raw materials and jobs for the resource-based economy of northern Minnesota. At left is Tom Murn of Potlatch Corporation in Cloquet. Seated to the right of Sen. Coleman is Mark Rey, undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.**

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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

## "The Swampers"

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*



The swamper in a lumber camp did not have the task of cleaning up the bunkhouse, as the name might imply, but a very important job in getting the logs out of the woods.

Very few men starting out to spend a winter in camp ever hired out as a swamper. As Paddy McLoughlin, an old camp foreman, would say, "If a jack ever walked into camp and applied for a

swamper job I would drop dead." When a new man arrived in camp looking for work he always wanted to be a top loader, a cant hook man or a four-horse teamster. Paddy would size him up and reply, "Oh yes, we have a few openings for cant hook men or teamsters coming along in a few days, but better let me try you out as a swamper until these jobs open up." And this was the way most swampers were hired.

However, there were men who would do nothing else but swamper jobs, and, as I mentioned, a good swamper was a very important man in keeping the logs moving. Quite often swamping was done by older men who had slowed down some but knew how to handle and plan a good swamping job.

Now, swamping meant two things: the cutting off of the limbs from the sawed logs and the making of skidding trails in to the logs for the horses and oxen. The greatest distance logs would be skidded to a skidway was probably about 200 feet. As a rule, two skidding teams would be skidding onto one skidway at a time. However, more teams might be used



Here, large white pine like the one above would need little swamping. Open (below) could work skidding jobs in quite heavy brush.



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when working over longer distances—and sometimes when starting a new skidway just one team would move the logs close in, with other teams just in as the skidding distance increased.

The swampers started on the skidway with the skidders in most cases, but if there was heavy limbing to be done, they sometimes worked a day ahead of the skidders. As a rule, a good swamper could handle two skidding teams, but there were times when two swampers were needed.

The skidders hooked onto the butt log of the tree with a pair of skidding tongs and pulled it with a team to the skidway, where they unbitched the tongs and the decking crew took over. Then the skidding team returned for the next log of the tree. While the skidding team was moving the first log to the skidway, the swamper was clearing the way so the team could get to the next log. This continued on up the tree until they got to the top logs, which were too small to be held by the skidding tongs. Then the swamper fastened two or sometimes three small logs with a chain and they were pulled out together to the skidway. Sometimes all the tong logs were taken out first and all the chained logs later.

When the snow was deep, it took considerable traiping of snow in order to get the skidding teams in to the logs, and it was quite a job getting chains onto the top logs that would be pretty well buried in the snow. It was the policy of most loggers to have the skidders work as close behind the sawing crews as possible to avoid logs being covered with snow. However, during winters of deep snow and heavy snow falls, logs sometimes were missed. Some of these logs have been found by cruisers or foresters many years after the logging operation.

The swamper's main tool was a double-bit axe, which he used in limbing the log and clearing the trail. When chaining small logs, he sometimes used a cant hook to roll the log, but more often a handmade, hardwood "hand spike," about two inches thick and four feet long, was used to move the log so he could get the chain around it.

Sometimes a large log heavy enough to be a problem for one skidding team was rolled onto a one-hunk dory, with the back end of the log dragging on the ground so it could be skidded more easily. In this case, the swamper helped roll the log onto the dory.

The main job of the swampers, however, was to clear the skidding trails from the skidway to where the trees were felled. There were many tricks in making these trails so the logs would come out easily and without getting hung up on stumps, and a foreman walking in to look over a skidding job could tell in a minute if the swamper knew his stuff.

Swampers were at the bottom of the

Most logs were skidded to skidways and at a time by a single team using skidding tongs (top). Small logs were skidded by a single horse or team with two or more logs at a time fastened with a chain.





pay scale, but this was mostly because this is where the foreman started most new men to see if they would make lumberjacks. I knew one old lumberjack who had spent most of his life in the camps on the Minneapolis and International Railroad and who would not take any other job. When I asked him why he always took a job swamping, he would say, "It only takes me an hour to figure out my traps and I get a little more time to smoke my pipe—which you can't do if you're working on the skidway." Another old jack I knew to take a swamping job all the time said he liked swamping because you kept busy and kept warm and the time went very fast.

The average 150 man camp with 20 saw gangs and 10 skidding teams would have 20 to 25 swampers. Besides swamping out the skidding trails from the skidways to where the logs lay, sometimes a crew of swampers would be assigned the job of cutting out a new work trail from camp to the work area or from one work area to another—or any trail that men or horses might need in carrying out their work. And the swampers, being the common labor of the camps, might be assigned any special job that came up for a short period of time, such as tramping snow or helping set up a dinnering out grounds.

But the swampers, in their primary task of limbing and making trails from the woods to the skidways, surely did a very important job in logging off our vast virgin pine stands in Minnesota.



The white pine logs above have been swamped and await the skidders. The swamper below (at left with axe) probably had an easy job working in good timber like this.



# Brad Gilmer



**Brad Gilmer is a third generation logger, living in Crosby.**

by Ray Higgins

It takes creativity to be a logger. And Brad Gilmer is living proof.

Take the delimeter he's using on this job site in Wadena county, north of Staples. It's something he built himself, with a little help from the folks at Hahn.

"It's a poor-man's delimeter," Gilmer joked. "I built part of it and Hahn built the hydraulic part. We want to use our slasher a little bit more in the summer, and we didn't want guys out there with chainsaws. This is easier to move, and it's cheaper than buying an overhead delimeter."

That's typical for a logger. Outsiders don't think of logging as an industry in need of creativity to succeed. But loggers like Gilmer know otherwise.

But then, it comes naturally to Gilmer. He grew up in Crosby, the fourth generation of a family of loggers, getting his start in the business while still in school.

"I strip-cut jackpine for some local loggers after school and stuff like that for 10 cents a stick," says Gilmer, now 49. "Some friends and I would go out during Christmas vacation and help out for some extra money."

When he graduated from Crosby-Ironton High School, Gilmer took the plunge, "I bought a Pettibone skidder and a 4-wheel drive truck from my dad," Gilmer says.

Thus, he follows in the footsteps of three generations of Gilmers. "My dad logged, my grandpa logged, and my great-grandfather, he ran a 100-man crew between Brainerd and Kelliher," Gilmer says. "If you're going to last and you've been around a while, usually someone's been there before you."

Gilmer cuts mostly jackpine. As a contract logger for Potlatch, most of his wood ends up at the Bemidji mill, although he also cuts some aspen that ends up at Ainsworth and also buys his own stumpage on occasion.

Gilmer says it helps getting work from Potlatch and Ainsworth in the current economic climate.

"It was pretty decent until this spring," he says. "And then some mills went down to do repairs and

stuff. I think the first two or three quarters are going to be slow, but by the time January comes around, I think it's going to be wide open then."

It helps to have a solid crew. Gilmer's guys are all veterans of the logging business. "Everybody here has at one time owned their own operation," Gilmer says. "They got out of it because of pricing, or some were cable skidder guys and they've pretty much shoved them to the side. But they know that everything you're making isn't pure profit, either. And that's one of the nice things about them."

The crew includes David Starry, who drives the John Deere 648E skidder; Scott Morrison runs the Hood S182 slasher; and Rory Bodle

*(continued on page 35)*



**Rory Bodle runs Gilmer's John Deere 643D feller buncher. Bodle's brother Marlen also works for Gilmer, hauling his wood on a contract basis.**



**David Starry drives the John Deere 648E skidder at Gilmer's job site in Wadena County.**

(continued from page 33)



**The Hood S182 slasher is operated by Scott Morrison, who cuts and stacks the wood before it's hauled to the mill.**

operates the John Deere 643D feller buncher. Sam Stirwalt is the mechanic back at the shop, and Marlen Bodle is a contract hauler, who trucks all of Gilmer's wood.

"I don't know if I'd be out here if I didn't have a good crew," Gilmer says. "You can talk to anybody you want: crews will either make you money or they'll lose you money. We've got a really good crew here and we've been very lucky."

Like the generations before, Gilmer also has his family involved in the business. His wife,



**Gilmer operates his delimeter, which he and his crew collaborated with Hahn to design and build themselves.**

Teresa, used to help out on the job site, driving truck and skidder. These days, she handles the bookkeeping and takes care of the financial details on equipment purchases.

Then there's son Adam, now 24. He went to the Universal Technical Institute in Chicago to be a diesel mechanic, and may someday join the family business. But after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, he enlisted in the Marines. Now he's a vehicle commander and is set to go to Iraq for his second tour of duty there, in September.

"He's really learned a lot of responsibility being a vehicle commander," Gilmer says. "He's in charge of a lot of guys and has a lot of responsibility, and I think it's

going to work good when he gets back here."

That's a day Gilmer looks forward to. Until then, Gilmer plugs along, keeping the wood moving, just as those before him did. They saw ups and downs in the business, just as Brad has. It helps to have the perspective that 30 years in the business brings.

"The wood's always been that way," Gilmer says. "If you've been around a lot of years, there's up and down in the business. There always has been. Two years ago, you could get rid of as much wood as you wanted to shove into the mills. Then everybody went and bought equipment and did stuff, and then they slow down the next year. It'll pick up again."

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## TPA Hosts Bat Night in Duluth



Fans of the Duluth Huskies baseball team wave their free wooden mini-bats on TPA-MFI Night at Wade Stadium in Duluth. The TPA logo was on all of the bats given away at the game against the St. Cloud River Bats. The Huskies play in the Northwoods League, a summer league for college players where wood bats are used. The crowd was one of the Huskies' biggest of the year.



# Classifieds

To serve our readers better, the Timber Bulletin offers free classified ads of up to 85 words to all members and associate members of the Minnesota Timber Producers Association. All ads must be submitted in writing to the Association office.

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