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Professional Logger Programs: Distinguishing Contractors through Certification

BY REX STORM, CF

Across the Northwest region, timber harvest contractors—loggers, road builders, and others—participate in professional logger programs to keep their business competitive in today's forest industry. Logging operators understand that the strength of the logging sector relies on maintaining high professional standards, which are recognized throughout the industry.

In the late-1990s logger certification



programs first arrived in the Northwest, established by state logging associations. While the catalyst for initiating these programs was the implied requirement for “logger training programs”—mandated by the newly-formed landowner forest certification Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)®—state logging associations launched their logger certification on a broader platform. The associations sought a “professional” credential as the purpose for creating their own certification programs. The logging association in every Northwest state, except Alaska, seized the opportunity to fill a market need, fostered by the new SFI

logger training requirement. Although the SFI was the catalyst, the loggers successfully shaped their own future by defining logger professionalism on their own terms, as each state association launched its own logger-governed professional credential program.

The region's first professional logger credentials were established in 1995, shortly after SFI originated. The Oregon Professional Logger program (OPL) was created by Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc., and the Master Logger Program (MLP) was created by Washington Contract Loggers Association, Inc. Idaho contractors followed suit within three years, as the Idaho Pro-Logger Program (IPL) was formed by Associated Logging Contractors, Inc. Each program is necessarily tailored to the respective state's unique forests, local industry customs, and that state's particular forest regulations. Alaska to-date has not initiated a pro-logger program, presumably because the state lacks any SFI-certified forestlands or forest product mills that would demand such a program, and its logging sector is relatively small.

The Northwest's three pro-logger programs share common ideals—voluntary participation to complete continuing education standards that accredit the contract forest harvest firm with a recognized professional credential. Each program is designed to promote continuous improvement among contract loggers and other harvest-related businesses, especially tar-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED OREGON LOGGERS

A log truck waits to be loaded on a busy ridge top log landing. Cable yarder, delimber, and loader yard whole trees and process them into logs.

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Professional Logger Programs

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

getting expertise in sustainable forestry, safety, forest practices, and business management. The certified logger maintains a base level of contemporary knowledge through a continuing education regimen, which is prescribed by the pro-logger program in each state. The value-added for the pro-logger participant is boosting their commitment and pride toward advancing professionalism for the contractor segment.

Pro-logger certification distinguishes the logger in the forest marketplace where landowners and timber mills contract their services. In the years

since the pro-logger program origins, the SFI logger education standard has been strengthened, and SFI forest landowners/mills now require that logging contractors doing business with them become certified loggers. The certified pro-logger is also recognized as a qualified logging contractor worthy to hire by many forest landowners and Tree Farmers (American Tree Farm System). The pro-logger credential has become a resume requirement of sorts by SFI participants and some Tree Farmers—not unlike a landowner's contract requirement that a contractor provide specific liability insurance coverage, workers compensation certificate, or extra fire equipment. The pro-logger today is distinguished among the for-

est sector at large.

These pro-logger programs have successfully become a vehicle for improving the performance of the Northwest contract harvest sector. While most would agree that continuing education on its own merit would justify these programs, these pro-logger programs have another important advantage for the forest sector. Pro-logger programs improve the common-ground between foresters and loggers—the programs elevate the mutual understanding of forest management goals, operational regulation, safety, and the fiscal realities of forestry production.

To be successful in forest management, loggers and foresters need to understand each other's business. Because of the ever-increasing complexities of today's harvest prescriptions and regulations—and the razor-thin margins of high-production logging—mutual understanding of sometimes conflicting goals and operational challenges is critical between loggers and foresters. This mutual understanding of the challenges on a forestry project is more important than ever before. And the forest sector cannot thrive in today's recession, nor surpass tomorrow's challenges that lie ahead, without a focused program of continuous improvement in contractor-forester relations. Pro-logger programs, and their future curricula, must stay focused on those subjects that keep contractors and foresters working productively together to understand and support each other's business.

Here is a snapshot comparison of the Northwest's three pro-logger programs.

Idaho's Pro-Logger Program (IPL)

Administered through the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho (ALC), the Idaho Pro-Logger



Program was developed in 1998 and is governed by the Idaho Statewide Logger Education Implementation Committee—loggers and representatives from forest industry, University of

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Next Issue: What Green Building Means to Forestry

Idaho, Idaho Department of Lands, and Idaho logging safety advisors. The Pro-Logger program certifies individuals: company owners or employees. IPL-certified loggers are recognized by SFI in Idaho. The Pro-Logger program utilizes a curriculum offered by LEAP (Logger Education to Advance Professionalism), a nationally-acclaimed extension program. Over 1,000 loggers have participated in Idaho LEAP sessions since 1993, many with scholarships from Idaho forest product companies. In 2010, 348 logging owners/employees completed the program or were certified IPL Pro-Loggers.

For more information, contact Associated Logging Contractors, Inc., 208-667-6473, 800-632-8743, www.idahologgers.com.

Oregon Professional Logger Program (OPL)

Since 1995, the OPL program is a service provided to logging operators statewide by Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc. (AOL). The OPL is governed by a committee of AOL members and AOL's board of directors. The OPL program certifies logging companies for their continuing education in sustainable forestry, forest practices, safety, and business. OPL-certified loggers are recognized by SFI in Oregon as a "Certified Logging Professional," as well as a Master Logger Certification (MLC) by the American Logger Council. Annually over 1,600 loggers attend forest practices education seminars. In 2010, 546 logging companies completed the program and were certified OPL Loggers.

For more information, contact Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc., 503-364-1330; 800-452-6023, www.oregonloggers.org.

Washington's Master Logger Program (MLP)

The Master Logger Program since 1995 has been administered by Washington Contract



Loggers Association Inc. (WCLA). An MLP steering committee governs the program guidelines. The MLP was developed by WCLA in cooperation with the timber industry, Washington Department of Natural Resources, WSU Extension, Washington Farm Forestry Association and the Washington Department of Labor and Industries. The MLP is targeted to reach business owners, foremen, and supervisors; however, anyone is welcome to attend. MPL-certified loggers are recognized by SFI in Washington. In 2010, 845 individuals representing 628 companies had met the MLP requirements. In 2010, 95

logging owners/employees had newly completed the program or were certified MLP Loggers.

For information, contact Washington Contract Loggers Association, Inc., 360-352-5033, 800-422-0074, www.loggers.com. ♦

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Forest Certification Systems: How They Affect Purchaser-contractor Relations

BY REX STORM, CF

The advent of forest certification systems has indirectly created an additional mechanism for foresters and loggers to expand their interaction surrounding forest management. It is through these certification systems that there is the explicit expectation

that management be conducted by professional foresters and “qualified” logging contractors working on the certified forestlands. Those logging contractors and foresters that work on certified forests—or supply logs or fiber to certified mills—have common goals mandated by the certification system standards.

Voluntary third-party forest certification has been in America’s forests for a century, as the American Tree Farm System

(ATFS)[®] has long recognized non-industrial private forestlands for their sound management and multiple use values. Then during the mid-1990s additional certification systems sprang up in response to consumer market concerns about forest management and foreign illegal logging, primarily in developing countries.

U.S. consumers of housing, paper, packaging, and solid wood products since 1990 have increasingly sought forest products grown and manufactured from sustainably grown forests. Through the “green” brand labeling of forest products, the new forest certification systems have provided the consumer their wanted assurance about good forestry. This assurance tells the consumer that the forest product and its production are environmentally friendly.

Forest certification systems are typically independent organizations, governed by boards of directors that administer a program of standards and principles that define “sustain-

able” forest management for those forest landowner and manufacturing participants paying a subscription fee. Third-party audits of compliance with the certification standards are a common requirement of these systems.

Forestry contracts under the certified schemes not only address the state’s legal forest practices rules and landowner/purchaser management objectives, but they also operate under the sustainable forestry principles pre-



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A stroke delimber processes whole trees into logs at the roadside. The machine removes limbs and bucks log lengths to specification.

scribed under the certification system. The sustainable forestry objectives therefore have become additive to the already-required state and federal forest practices and other environmental regulations. The contractor of course complies with the various sustainable forestry measures through the harvest contract agreed with the landowner/purchaser.

Because forest certification systems intend to reinforce sustainable forest practices, they include objectives for harvesting and wood supply to be conducted by qualified forest professionals and logging contractors. The expansion of these certification systems has therefore fostered greater forest sector efforts nationwide to assure all segments of the timber supply chain are

“qualified” in particular logging.

The leading certification system to encourage and promote logging contractor qualifications is the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). The SFI system has the most rigorous standard concerning use of professional forester and qualified loggers. SFI explicitly requires logging contractors to be trained through SFI-approved pro-logger training programs—such as the Idaho Pro-Logger, Oregon Professional Logger, and Washington’s Master Logger.

The ATFS Tree Farm certification standard directs that a “forest owner should use qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors when contracting for services.” ATFS defines this “use” as seeking resource professionals and qualified contractors that are pro-loggers, insured, follow regulations, and work on a contract basis.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification standard directs that “all personnel, including contractors, shall demonstrate a working knowledge of relevant codes of practice, operational guidelines and other accepted norms or agreements relevant to their responsibilities.” The FSC standard is interpreted to mean that foresters and loggers should follow applicable regulations and other FSC-defined sustainable practices—but logger qualification or pro-logger training is not an expectation.

In the Northwest region, there are three prevailing forest certification systems, as follows.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) program was launched in



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1994 by America’s forest sector for the purpose of establishing a green label for forests managed sustainably. SFI has continued to expand, increasing to nearly 200 million SFI-certified acres across North America.

SFI Inc. is an independent, non-profit organization responsible for administering the SFI certification program, which is internationally recognized and is the largest single forest standard in the world. The SFI 2010-

2014 Standard is based on principles and measures that promote sustainable forest management and consider all forest values. It includes unique fiber sourcing requirements to promote responsible forest management on all forestlands in North America.

In the Northwest region, SFI is the most prevalent forest certification system, encompassing over seven million acres. SFI certifies 58.1 million acres in U.S., and 131.5 million acres Canada. The SFI program is recognized by the international certifying organization Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

The SFI standard is popular across North America and in the global marketplace for its assurance of certified wood products from well-managed forests. This is especially important to meet a growing demand for green building and responsible paper purchasing—at a time when less than 10 percent of the world’s forests are certified. For more online information, visit www.sfiprogram.org.

American Tree Farm System

Since 1941, the ATFS has certified non-industrial forests and educated small private forest landowners. Its forest certification standard applies to landowners owning less than 5,000 acres. It requires that landowners develop a forest management plan based on strict environmental standards and pass an inspection by an ATFS inspecting forester. There is no direct cost or obligation to become a certified Tree Farm and ATFS member. Third-party certification audits are conducted by accounting firms on the statewide ATFS certification programs. These family forest owners share a unique commitment to protect wildlife habitat and water-



sheds, to conserve soil, and provide recreation for their communities while producing wood. The ATFS program is recognized by PEFC.

By 2009, ATFS had certified more than 25 million acres of forests across the U.S., managed by over 90,000 family forest landowners that are committed to excellence in forest stewardship. For more online information, see www.treefarmssystem.org.

Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international network of landowners, manufacturers, and distributors having a set of regional standards intended to promote responsible management of the world’s forests. FSC accredits independent third-party organizations that certify forests and forest product producers according to FSC standards. In Oregon, Smartwood is one such certifier organization. The FSC trademark provides international recognition to buyers seeking green-grown forest products. FSC undertakes global marketing programs that promote responsible forestry—especially in nations where forestry regulations are absent. Today, thousands of products are produced using FSC-certified wood. Established in 1993 as a response to concerns over global deforestation, FSC certifies 125 million acres in more than 50 countries around the world. Less than one million acres of FSC-certified forests are in the Northwest states. For more information, visit www.fsc.org. ♦



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Education is the Key to our Future Workforce

BY JOHN ISON

We're a long way from the days of the logging camp. In fact, the last live-in logging camp in the contiguous United States closed in 1985. Known as Camp



Grisdale, it was operated by Green Diamond Resource Company (then Simpson Timber Company) and was located about 35 miles north of Montesano, Wash. The camp was unique in that it was in the same location for 40 years, a far cry from earlier days when entire camps would be dismantled and moved to the next location, usually farther out in the forest. These days, of course, everyone commutes from their homes to meet at a marshaling point or job site to go to work in the woods.

Historically in the Pacific Northwest, harvesting on large blocks of private land was done mainly by loggers that were employed directly by those companies. Over time, nearly every timber company gradually downsized their company logging operations with most eliminating them altogether in favor of contractors. Only a handful of companies of any significant size still

do some or all of their own logging. After all, it's natural for specialization to take place in maturing industries and economies.

But moving forward, who's going to do the work? The workforce is aging rapidly and it seems that few young people are interested in entering the logging industry. The lack of people willing to work under yarders pulling rigging, setting chokers, or limbing logs is especially noticeable. Many companies that own high-elevation, difficult-to-log lands are starting to move back into them or already have. It takes many years to accumulate the expertise necessary to harvest these types of lands, and concern is growing about where this capacity will come from. Availability of trucks is a concern as well. Some timberland owners and mills are looking at the possibility of buying their own small fleets of trucks so they can guarantee their deliveries. There's even speculation that the recovery in the domestic housing market (whenever it happens) could be further stalled by several months to a year because there will likely be a shortage of flatbed trucks, or drivers, or both.

We see the same issue in forestry. There are a few reasons for this, namely the fact that there are fewer oppor-

tunities for young people to learn about forestry. In the last few years, many university-level forestry programs in our region have been diluted, or in the case of one, eliminated entirely. The current budget situation with most states and their respective public universities isn't likely to help. On the bright side, community college forestry programs are going strong.

Adding to this workforce situation is that forestry is not considered the most glamorous field of study to pursue. This is probably not a surprise to anyone reading this publication. Forestry and logging will probably never have the same appeal to today's kids as designing apps for smartphones. Plus, the ever-increasing urbanization of our society leaves a rising number of kids further removed from the activities of a working forest. If they catch any glimpse of it at all, it is usually from a car speeding by a logging site on their way to a national park where the view is certain to be very different and "better," and very likely to be portrayed in just those black and white terms.

For years we allowed our profession to be defined by others, and the outcome was seldom positive. No truer words were spoken than whoever coined the phrase, "If we don't tell our story, someone else will." Fortunately, we have done a lot of good work in recent years as a group to improve the perception of our industry. We have made great strides in educating people about the positive benefits of forestry and sustainable timber management. Many polls show that a majority of the public in our region approves of the actions of industrial landowners and think they do a good job of protecting fish and wildlife habitat. But, as always, there is still work to be done.

It appears that global demand for wood will continue to increase dramatically. Obviously that's good news, but it also means that we need to be ready for it. According to Random Lengths International, from 2008-2010, China's annual rate of log imports from the U.S. increased seven-fold. In the first five months of 2011, 500 million board feet have already been



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An aerial view of Camp Grisdale, the last live-in logging camp in the contiguous United States that was in operation from 1946-1985.

shipped—and that's not counting volume shipped to traditional Asian markets such as Japan. The vast majority of this volume comes from Washington and Oregon. One must also take into account that, when adjusted for population, U.S. housing starts are significantly lower than the levels during the Great Depression. Additionally, demand is increasing sharply in many other parts of the world.

Ultimately, one of the most valuable things to any business is certainty in the marketplace, and organizations that can obtain it will go to great lengths to keep it. Long-term agreements for log supply between landowners and mills, which have been around for a long time, are a good example of this. I believe these arrangements will continue to make sense in many cases. Does this mean we'll continue to have company logging in the future? I would say yes, although I don't see it going back to the way it was. The long-term trend has consistently been a downward one, but I believe company logging will always exist in some form.

A more likely scenario may be an increase in long-term logging and trucking contracts between landowners and contractors, which could give companies the stability in operations they are looking for without having to incur the capital costs of having to start a company logging operation

from scratch.

One thing I tell people is that nobody gets into forestry for the communication and public speaking. I am as guilty of that as anyone. I used to minimize talking as much as possible. But over time we all learn that these skills are essential for success in all areas of life, even forestry. So it is up to us to find ways to get through to the younger generations and give them a reason to take a second (or first) look at our business, because they will be the key to the future of our profession. We need to continue to find ways to educate them and take the mystery out of what we do.

At Green Diamond Resource Company, we conduct many tours of our land and operations for various

groups, including kids, and I know a lot of you do on your lands as well. We also need to do a better job of using tools like social and professional networking sites—not only to get our message out, but to let prospective employees know that we have jobs available. I don't know about you, but I haven't subscribed to a daily newspaper in about 15 years, and I don't know anyone my age (36) or younger that does. Our company is also starting to look at different ways to attract potential candidates. Last year our organization had a turnover rate of about 10 percent. Fortunately, we don't anticipate having that type of turnover every year because a rate that high starts to put a strain on the operation because of all the training and assimilation into the organization's culture that must take place. But we know that it won't be long before we will have many more people to replace.

Getting people out on the ground is one of the most effective and rewarding ways to educate people and help them to see that we have a profession worth being a part of. We need to take advantage of that opportunity to engage people whenever possible, especially those of the younger generations. You never know when you may spark the interest of a future leader in our business. ♦

John Ison is the Logging manager for Green Diamond Resource Company in Shelton, Wash. He can be reached at 360-426-3381 or jison@greendiamond.com.

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Teamwork Helps Oregon Company Be More Effective

BY ED FALLON

JWTR, LLC of Klamath Falls, Ore., owns and manages approximately 640,000 acres, a pole mill and a juniper mill. The company also owns and operates three complete mechanical processing sides that harvest approximately 70 percent of the company's fee harvest. The balance of the annual harvest is done with several contractors that have operated on the ownership on a consistent basis. In addition to our natural stand harvest, the company is thinning 30-year-old and older densely stocked plantation for forest health and growth and future fiber opportunities—be it clean chips or biomass. The company operates two



feller bunchers with high speed shear heads that make up 40 percent of the thinning operation. The balance again is with contractor capacity that will fluctuate with the operating season and need.

We have been cutting in our plantations for a little over a year using two company shears and two contractors. Rather than having the trees marked, the operators are selecting all trees to be cut. They are using an 18-foot spacing and cutting everything down to one inch. The larger trees with the best crowns are left standing for leave trees. The operators are selecting these trees as well. In this manner, we are meeting the stand objective and not compromising production.

In the last three years the logging department and the forestry department of JWTR, LLC have formed a closer working relationship to be more

knowledgeable of company forestry objectives and goals, as well as the complex logging operations that affect production, costs, and profit. Unlike most westside logging, ground-based harvest allows the management of forest conditions through partial harvest. One of the most effective changes we have made is in pre-harvest lay out. We are trying to eliminate the high cost of marking timber by allowing the operator to select the trees to be cut. The key for success with this strategy, whether it is company logging or contractors, is to have a select set of operators that know which trees to harvest for revenue and which trees to leave for future beneficial growth. The forester writes the prescription for the setting (area to log), including diameter, species, and spacing between trees. The operator selects the trees to cut according to the cut prescription.

It will never be a perfect science, but we feel that with communication between the foresters and operators we can effectively meet the company's objective for the stand and still maintain a high level of production. As we begin thinning our plantations, this system appears to be working well. We plan to thin several thousand acres per year.

With the escalating cost of equipment and weakened work force in the past few years, our company is writing longer term contracts for our contractors. This will help facilitate the purchase and maintenance of equipment as well as maintain a higher level of operators.

In these difficult times we are facing, we feel it is important for our forestry staff and our logging crews to maintain a good working relationship, which helps to streamline record-high operating costs. We continue to search for new ways to lower costs and improve the efficiency of our operations. ♦

Ed Fallon is the logging manager for JWTR Logging Co. in Klamath Falls, Ore. He can be reached at 541-880-5463 or efallon@jw-tr.com.



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Loggers and Timber Purchasers: Contract Relations in the Northwest...Are They Sustainable?

BY REX STORM, CF

Can Northwest logging contractors and timber purchasers/mills/foresters continue producing sustainably into the future? Can the forest sector survive the Great Recession? Will logging and milling infrastructure capacity be available to manage the region's forests in the coming years?

These capacity questions surrounding the forest sector transcend the region's forests across Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. And most importantly, these questions transcend the essential relationships between forest contractors, forest product mills, and forest landowners. Under times of duress and especially tough economic conditions, it is these relationships that have become strained over the past couple decades.

Increasingly, contractors and timber purchasers alike today recognize that their supplier-consumer relationships need mending. Past and present economic upheaval has conspicuously damaged contract relations in the region's forest sector. The status quo is no longer sustainable. Landowners, manufacturers, and contractors have been thrust into divergent positions and goals. Preferably, over the long haul these parties should instead have common goals—and optimally their work to manage and produce sustainable forest products should be mutually dependent upon the success of one another.

Weakened forest sector

Given where we are today—financially weakened by a deep four-year recession on the heels of a two-decade-long period of purchaser consolidation and compression of federal forest management—the region's forest sector was halved in size and capacity. Then in just the last five years of this Great Recession, the sector has lost or idled another roughly 40 percent of its remaining capacity. Adding to these game-changing impacts is the recent emergence of Pacific Rim export markets, presenting altogether

new challenges.

Many forest businesses are exiting the sector and the remaining businesses are struggling to survive. It's openly acknowledged by industry managers that the production capacity to manage the region's forests into the future is severely damaged. Logging contractors, timber mills, and forest landowners alike question whether the infrastructure capacity—both contractors and manufacturing—will be economically available to manage the Northwest's productive forests.

The forest sector's ability to manage its way out of this damaged position will demand improved working relations between contractors and purchasers. Admittedly, the different segments of the forest sector are mutually dependent—the mills, contractors, and landowners.

While their outcomes may be dependent, their view of success can be contradictory—causing friction in relationships between mills, contractors, and landowners. Mills define success as a dependable wood supply with cost efficient log/fiber production (rising terms, least cost, least price) from landowners and contractors that conduct sustainable harvesting. Contractors define success as a consistent/predictable operating situation that allows a reasonable profit margin for their investment, expertise, and risks (least necessary cost, highest price). Forest landowners define success as an adequate economic gain from their long-term investments in land and management (least cost contract, highest price).

All of these segments are interde-

pendent and have to meet a minimum level of expectations to provide a stable and sustainable supply chain of timber produced from the forest, stump to dump, and milling. It goes without saying that these success factors are basic survival of each forest business segment. However, under the forest sector's financially weakened condition, and potential mounting capacity shortage, supplier-consumer relationships demand a new look, and repair, to assure an economically viable industry can sustain into a future that has common goals to manage forests.

Today is a product of the past

The industry in the Northwest has lost or idled roughly 40 percent of its capacity in just the last five years.

Here in Oregon, statewide harvest volume capacity prior to the current recession was on-par cutting of 4.5 billion board feet/year. Under recessionary pressures, contracting capacity has effectively been reduced to 3.2 billion board feet/year, a 30 percent drop now in its fifth year. This was the statewide harvest volume in 2010. Under a plausibly optimistic scenario, if Oregon harvest demand rose to 5.0 billion board feet/year (4.5 domestic + 0.5 export), the projected capacity increase would be 56 percent beyond the current capacity of only 3.2 billion board feet.

Although in the aftermath of past recessions forest contracting capacity has readily rebounded as timber mill log demand rebounded, the current economic situation cannot afford the

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



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financially weakened contract sector to rebound as easily as it has in the past. Extraordinary financial means will be necessary to triage and rebuild lost contractor harvest capacity.

This predicted capacity shortage position is rationalized by the fact that the contract segment has been severely wounded in recent years. Chronic industry compression, meaning surplus contract capacity, has caused undue downward pressure on contract rates—arguably moving into unsustainable or below-cost territory. There are fewer and more distant purchasers of contract services (mills and landowners). Contract profit margins, if any, today often fail to warrant the contractor's investment and risk.

Evidence of this unprofitable situation was illustrated when relatively minor increases in westside harvest volume occurred in 2010 and 2011. When presumably “unemployed” contractors should have been available to

go to work, purchasers and landowners instead were surprised to find local shortages of contractors for trucking, cable yarding, and woodlot loggers. The equipment was parked because the so-called current rates and short contract terms simply would not warrant today's higher start-up and operating costs for the risk of a short-term job. A wise man once said, “This is not rocket science.”

Ever-increasing contract operating costs have not been met by corresponding contract rate increases over the past 20 years. Contractors have been unable to pass along these increased costs. As a result, too many contractors have painfully consumed their capital assets and equity, or worse, defaulted and left the business. Contracts are still short term; they are more demanding and more exacting than ever before—all at higher cost and risk. The necessary capital investment in mechanization and skilled labor for a

competitive production outfit has escalated beyond the ability of many contractors to finance—especially under tightening credit markets. Forest contract segment labor compensation is no longer competitive with other trades, and contractors cannot attract and train enough skilled workers. Furthermore, contract workforce demographics have evolved into an unsustainable bubble that's about to burst. An aging workforce is higher cost, it has insufficient retention, and retirement exceeds recruitment even though folks are working longer. Our industry shares the pitfalls of America's generational avoidance by youth who disparages any career in trades, manufacturing, and forests.

The contract segment's predicted inability to rebound to meet future volume increases is rationalized by the fact that several key economic realities have changed since the last recession of 1980-82. As described earlier, the contract segment is severely weakened financially. The current toxic menu of low rates, contractors desperate for work, and escalating costs is simply a recipe for failure. Short-term contracts negotiated under the market duress of low-bid dysfunction rarely can rationalize the contractor's capital and risk necessary to complete the job with a sustainable profit margin. The rising costs of capital, labor, technology, mechanization, surety, regulation, certification, and so forth means that current forest contracting customs and rates are often not financially sustainable—for either the contractor or the purchaser mill/landowner. Low-bid contracts that become no-bid, defaulted, delayed, or poorly performed are costing purchasers more than it would appear.

What to expect tomorrow

Regarding forest contractor-purchaser relations, tomorrow will not be like today, and the future certainly cannot look like the past. It should be clear that the weakened financial situation of the forest sector has exacerbated the challenges that lie ahead as foresters and loggers work together to manage the region's forests. Will the forest sector in the future be able to see the forest through its traditional least-cost trees? Or, will tomorrow's



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contract relations be redefined by industry leaders and innovation ahead?

Contract production capacity expansion above the current par harvest volumes is possible, and will happen. However, any pending demand increase for contract capacity will predictably occur under extraordinary escalation or change in rates and terms. Supply shortages in contract capacity translate into corresponding price increases. Managers have begun to ponder options, such as contract length, workforce recruitment, work design, labor relations, and rate negotiation. New and improved contract terms and negotiation methods will emerge to address tomorrow's new world of forest contracting.

Timber supplier-consumer relationship study

For the purpose of identifying potential gains in timber supply chain relations, a nationwide study will be completed later this year. The Wood Supply Research Institute (WSRI), headquartered at Alabama's Auburn University, is doing a national study of supplier-consumer relationships and behaviors, titled the "Supplier-Consumer Relationship Study." A consultant, Sustainable Resource Systems LLC, will conduct the study. Northwest logging associations and the American Loggers Council are cooperating to assist with the study to assure the western situation is addressed.

The study will survey forest contractors, mills, and landowners about their interactions with each other. Data will be collected from confidential one-on-one interviews with a researcher. The surveys of numerous businesses in each segment should identify the primary factors having operational impact on the relationship between contractors (suppliers) and mills (consumers). A second objective of this study will identify critical factors of success for businesses in both segments.

The findings and recommendations will be documented and quantified in a report that will summarize national factors, as well as factors within six regions. Idaho, Oregon, and Washington businesses should participate in the western region surveys. The

results of this study should illuminate strategies for both contractors and purchasers to seek contracting solutions of mutual benefit. Ultimately, this report promises to offer contractors and purchasers in the region some areas where forester-logger contract relationships can be improved.

Looking ahead to the future

Certainly, there is room for improved relations in the timber supply chain in the future. Better relationships between contractors and purchasers (mills/landowners) can be discovered, and if improved, could provide a more effective and profitable supply of timber. One of the most important elements of a successful timber and fiber supply is a trusting relationship between each segment where each party has confidence in the other's performance.

Improved relations—financial, terms, and trust—between contractors, mill representatives, and landowners should be a collective priority for forest businesses and agen-

cies. There is broad agreement across the Northwest forest sector that improved relationships, within the legal construct of independent contracting, would be worthwhile to improve the business atmosphere for the mutual benefit of all parties to be successful.

No doubt, foresters and loggers in the coming years will together innovate and manage to improve their working relationships. The forest sector will invent new ways to realign and rebuild their world-class logging and milling infrastructure to achieve at least 50 percent more production capacity across the Northwest. Because that's what foresters and loggers have always done here—innovate together as the nation's leading sustainable forest sector! ♦

Rex Storm, CF, is Forest Policy manager for Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc. based in Salem. He can be reached at 503-364-1330 or rexstorm@oregonloggers.org.

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Leaders in Forestry Recognized: Original Memorial Lives on at World Forestry Center

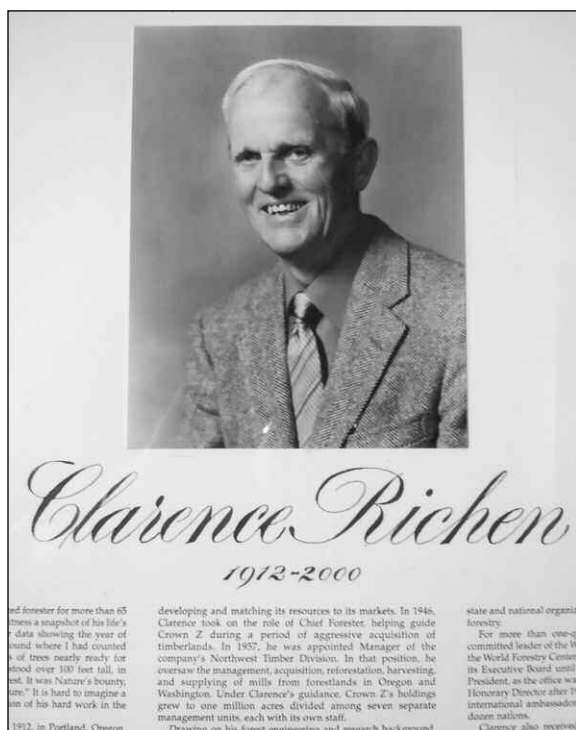
Forty years ago, on June 5, 1971, the new Western Forestry Center opened its doors to public in Portland's Washington Park.

Built next to the Portland Zoo and the fast-growing Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), the massive wooden buildings of the Western Forestry Center's new Exhibit Hall and adjacent Forest Hall—designed by architect John Storrs—were totally modern and accessible replacements for the 1905 vintage “Old Forestry Building” destroyed by fire in 1964.

Led by a larger-than-life group of leaders from business, government, and education, the new board of directors of the Western Forestry Center represented a cross section of the region's forest sector. The early membership lists—including students—today reads like a “who's who” of western forestry.

Now called the World Forestry Center, the Portland-based nonprofit organization has grown and changed over the years, but one original attraction from opening day in 1971 remains.

Dedicated to leaders of the forest and called “A Hall of History,” the center's beloved “Memorial Hall” can be found today on the beautifully restored balcony next to the popular



The life history of Clarence Richen is one of 200 included in Memorial Hall at the World Forestry Center.

Mount Hood Meeting Room. In this location at the heart of the World Forestry Center, a series of lovely and expertly-crafted walnut cabinets display individual brass plaques bearing the first and last names of acknowledged leaders in forestry.

What makes this traditional form of professional recognition unique is that every name is attached to an impressive, framed hardwood tray

containing the “life history” of each individual with biographical details, accomplishments, and photograph.

The biographical material is provided by family, friends, and colleagues. Often of significant historical value, these personal biographies describe not only the life and career of the individual honored, but also contribute to the collective history of leadership within the forest sector within the region, the United States, and increasingly the world.

Since 1971, 200 individuals have been recognized and honored. All individuals that have made significant and meaningful contributions to advancement of the forest sector in business, government, education, or a combination will be considered for inclusion in Memorial Hall. Nominations are accepted on an annual basis and reviewed by a

select committee of the present Board of Directors.

Individuals may be deceased or recognized with a “living memorial.” Traditionally, nominations for Memorial Hall have been matched with financial pledges or donations from family members, trusts, and foundations, as well as employers and friends. Pledges and donations for memorials can also be included in estate planning or other planned giving activities. Contributions to memorials are tax-deductible.

A lot has changed in forestry in the past 40 years, but the inspirational life stories of important leaders in the field are on public display at the World Forestry Center every day. To make a nomination, request more information, or receive a complete list of Memorial Hall honorees, contact Rick Zenn at the World Forestry Center at 503-488-2103 or rzenn@worldforestry.org. ♦



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Calendar of Events

Density Management in the 21st Century, Oct. 4-6, Corvallis, OR. Contact: OSU Conference Services, 800-678-6311, conferences@oregonstate.edu.

Fall Forestry Seminar, Oct. 8, Chehalis, WA. Contact: Washington Tree Farm Program, 360-736-5750, info@watreefarm.org.

OFIC Annual Meeting, Oct. 9-11, Sunriver, OR. Contact: Oregon Forest Industries Council, 503-371-2942, ofic@ofic.com.

Western International Forest Disease Work Conference, Oct. 10-14, Leavenworth, WA. Contact: Greg Filip, gmfilip@fs.fed.us, www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/technology/wif/index.htm.

TimberValue Seminar, Oct. 11, Beaverton, OR. Contact: FEC Consulting, 503-626-5726, timbervalue@forest-mgmt.com.

Forest Restoration Beyond Fuels Reduction: What's the Vision? Co-sponsored by the Central Oregon SAF

Chapter and SAF Northwest Office, Oct. 12-14, Central Oregon Community College, Bend, OR. Contact: SAF Northwest Office, 503-224-8046, rasor@safnwo.org.

The Biggest Bang for Your Seedling Dollars, PNW Reforestation Council, Oct. 20, Vancouver, WA. Contact: WFCA.

Harvesting Clean Energy Conference, Oct. 23-25, Boise, ID. Contact: Climate Solutions, 360-352-1763, clark@climatesolutions.org.

National SAF Convention, Nov. 2-6, Honolulu, HI. Contact: SAF National Office, 866-897-8720, www.safnet.org/nat-con11/index.cfm.

Washington Forest Protection Association annual meeting, Nov. 16, Olympia, WA. Contact: WFPA, 360-705-9293, kweiss@wfpa.org, www.wfpa.org.

Oregon Land Use Law, Dec. 8-9, Portland, OR. Contact: The Seminar Group

2012 Oregon/Washington State SAF Leadership Conference, Jan. 20-21,

Longview, WA. Contact: Tom Hanson, 425-820-3420, tom@inforestry.com.

Forest Stand Dynamics Short Course, Jan. 30-Feb. 3, Pack Forest, Eatonville, WA. Contact: Barbara Ruth, 203-432-5117, barbara.ruth@yale.edu.

OSAF Annual Meeting, April 25-27, Seaside, OR. Contact: Jim Culbert, jhculbert@yahoo.com.

Contact Information

The Seminar Group: P.O. Box 523, Vashon, WA 98070; 800-574-4852; info@theseminar-group.net; www.theseminar-group.net/

WFCA: Western Forestry and Conservation Association, 4033 SW Canyon Rd., Portland, OR 97221, 503-226-4562, richard@westernforestry.org, www.westernforestry.org.

Send calendar items to the editor, *Western Forester*, 4033 SW Canyon Rd., Portland, OR 97221; rasor@safnwo.org.

UPDATED FOR 2011

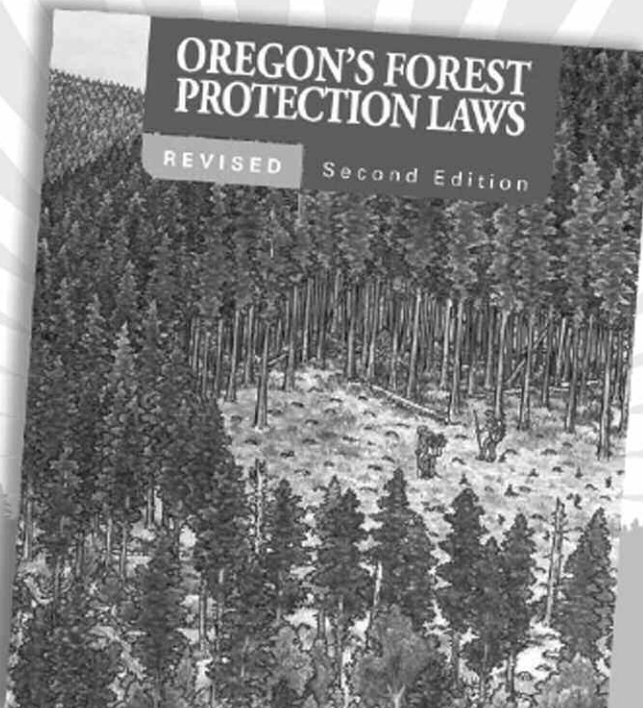
The Oregon Forest Resources Institute is proud to release the second edition of *Oregon's Forest Protection Laws: An Illustrated Manual*.

This richly illustrated manual has been updated to reflect current laws and regulations of the Oregon Forest Practices Act. It is a handy reference for harvest planners and forest operators.

View it online, or order your copy from OFRI's website.

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Policy Scoreboard

Editor's Note: To keep SAF members informed of state society policy activities, Policy Scoreboard is a regular feature in the Western Forester. The intent is to provide a brief explanation of the policy activity—you are encouraged to follow up with the listed contact person for detailed information.

Oregon SAF Weighs in on BLM Projects.

Earlier this year OSAF Chair Mike Cloughesy appointed a "Secretarial Pilot Projects Task Force" to assess and provide public input to the BLM on behalf of OSAF. The Pilot Projects are intended to follow the Secretary of the Interior's direction to apply "ecological restoration principles" on the Roseburg and Medford BLM Districts, with expectations of helping inform public dialogue on future management policy for BLM forestlands in western Oregon. In early summer the Task Force as well as the Coos SAF Chapter submitted comments on two of the local Pilot Projects. The proposed projects are notable in their attention to legally mandated timber production and their use of regeneration harvests. However, concerns include an unclear landscape-level context, questionable reforestation methods, and continued avoidance of other key issues, e.g., highly restricted harvest of old/large or riparian trees. Over time, as existing trees and stands grow, the cumulative effect of these restrictions would be expected to increasingly constrain the agency's ability to meet its mandates under the O&C Act. Contact: Paul Adams, OSAF Policy chair, 541-737-2946; paul.adams@oregonstate.edu.

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Oregon Legislature Passes Several Bills on Forestry Issues.

The 2011 Oregon legislature adjourned in late June having passed several bills related to forestry. Among these was a bill to promote woody biomass use from state forestlands (SB 862), which also includes provisions to promote woody biomass inventories and use on federal and private forestlands. Another successful bill (HB 2165) involves requirements for written plans for forest operations under Oregon's Forest Practices Act. Included is some streamlining in situations where operations do not directly affect riparian areas or with some scenarios with significant wetlands or inventoried resource sites (e.g., sensitive bird sites, habitat for listed T&E species). Cutbacks in Oregon Department of Forestry enforcement personnel likely added to the interest in such streamlining, although agency budgets fared better than initially expected. Another notable new law (HB 2840) formally recognizes many forestry jobs as "green." Although focused on the forest products and state investment in "green economy industries," the bill's definition of green jobs includes several criteria that match important benefits provided by the work of forestry professionals. All bills considered during the 2011 session can be found at www.leg.state.or.us/bills_laws/; those identified as "enrolled" are final, passed versions. Contact: Paul Adams, OSAF Policy chair, 541-737-2946; paul.adams@oregonstate.edu.

SAF Units Weigh in on Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

The Inland Empire and Intermountain SAFs prepared a joint position statement to consolidate their input to the development of the Western Region component of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The title "Restoring and Maintaining Resilient Landscapes via Active Vegetation Management at Large Scales Helps Create Fire-Adapted Communities and Improve Responses to Wildfires" is purposely lengthy so the three goals of the national strategy could be included in it. The two SAF units strongly believe that success in attaining the first of these three goals (landscape restoration) is particularly important because

it will then be easier to accomplish the other two goals: creating fire-adapted communities and responding to wild-fires. The statement emphasizes the need for large-scale restoration projects and the benefits of active vegetation management. It can be found at www.usu.edu/saf/position-11-0803.pdf. The National Cohesive Strategy (<http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesive-fire>) is a requirement of the FLAME Act of 2009. When completed in 2012 it will become the nation's wildland fire management policy. Contact: Jay O'Laughlin, IESAF Policy chair, 208-885-5776, jayo@uidaho.edu.

U.S. House Hearings on Secure Rural Schools.

Hearings were held in the nation's capitol on July 14, 2011, on the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. Designed to provide funds for timber-dependent communities following the diminishment of federal timber sales, the program is set to expire in 2012. Rep. Doc Hastings (WA) chairs the committee, and opened the hearing with a call for a review of current laws affecting National Forests in order "to allow harvesting of more timber to make forests healthier and more economically viable for state and local governments to use for schools and other local needs." In testimony, Rep. Greg Walden said HFRA-style pre-decisional objection and expedited judicial review processes would help, as would exempting some projects from appeals and litigation. He noted that "trusts work" and cited the State of Washington's trust land management program. See <http://naturalresources.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=251916>. Contact: Jay O'Laughlin, IESAF Policy chair, 208-885-5776, jayo@uidaho.edu.

Working Forests Position Statement Approved by WSSAF Executive Committee.

In a unanimous vote by the Washington State SAF executive committee, the group approved a new Working Forests position statement. The position statement will be presented for full membership consideration this fall. See www.forestry.org/washington/policy/position/. Contact: Harry Bell, WSSAF Policy chair, harry@green-crow.com. ♦

Ashtech Releases New MobileMapper 10 GPS Unit



Ashtech, LLC has released a new and very innovative GPS unit, the MobileMapper 10. This GPS unit allows foresters to collect GPS data under dense tree canopy. It features a 3.5 inch screen, Windows Mobile 6.5 operating system, and a 20-hour battery life. It weighs less than 14 ounces.

The GPS engine is the SiRFStarIII, with Ashtech's patented BLADE technology for better accuracy and performance under tree canopy. The MobileMapper 10 runs a new version of MobileMapper Field software, as well as ArcPad mobile GIS software and a variety of other mobile GIS programs.

The MobileMapper 10 accuracy is in the range of one to three meters with just the WAAS satellites providing a live differential correction. With the Post Processing option, the MobileMapper 10 is capable of sub-meter accuracy in open sky. Under tree canopy, the accuracy is still very good, although actual accuracy will vary depending on the amount of tree canopy, height and size of tree boles, and the current satellite geometry. ♦

Jon Aschenbach is the president of Resource Supply, LLC in Tigard, Ore. He can be reached at 503-521-0888 or jon@resourcesupplyllc.com.



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