

THE MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF TIMBERMEN

Timbermen's Quarterly
June 2024 Edition

TIMBER TALK

Dedicated to Representing the Needs of Small Businesses in the Forest Product Industry

INSIDE

- **Michigan Timber Industry Unites to Honor Logger Jeff Zellar**
- **2024 Convention Photos and Annual Awards**

TIMBERMEN.ORG

Photo Credit:
Logger Mack Social Media,
Bark River, MI.
www.beacons.ai/loggermack



*MAT Board of Directors -
Brock VanOss not pictured*

OUR MISSION

The Michigan Association of Timbermen is dedicated to the practice of sustainable forestry which provides the goods and services we demand without compromising the opportunity to provide the same goods and services for future generations.

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PRESIDENT Vaughn West

Michigan Association of Timbermen

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vaughn West Takes Over as New President of MAT Board of Directors

Greetings! This is my first article I've written in the Timber Talk. I joined the MAT board three years ago, wanting to give back to the Forest Industry that I have worked with for the last 30 years. Now here I am the President and writing to you; it's truly an honor and a privilege.

A little history on my involvement with MAT: I have been going to the Timbermen's Conventions

for the last 25-plus years and only missed a couple. I have learned a lot and met some of the greatest people I have ever known. Timbermen's members make up the humblest crowd there is. They all work hard and keep their heads low, and only ask for a little: a fair price for a premium product.

Just a word about myself and how I view things: I am the type that likes to work together with the group because you can accomplish so much more working as a team than trying to conquer a mountain

by yourself. I am not a spotlight person - I'm more about the team effort. I am always available for calls, or emails with questions. If I do not know the answer, I will find it out for you, or our team will contact you.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you and helping promote the Forest Industry

Thanks,
Vaughn West
vwest@aisequip.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Justin Knepper

Michigan Association of Timbermen

It's a busy spring around the MAT office! I've been on the road all across the State for the last two months, meeting many of you at SFI trainings or in person at various other meetings. If you are on Facebook, or decide to join Facebook, you can see reports about our daily travels and meetings. Visit the page here: www.facebook.com/MITimbermen.

Michelle Sears and I just wrapped up our annual convention in Frankenmuth at the end of April. It's

great to have the support of the staff at Forest/Loggers/Mauck Insurance Agencies, they do a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes to make Convention successful. It was also terrific to experience the 50th anniversary of MATSIF; they held a huge banquet with nearly 300 in attendance, and celebrated many of the people who founded and led that organization over the years.

We are now "full steam ahead" on planning for our first Michigan

Forest Products Show, slated for August 9-10 at Ellison Place in Gaylord. If you are willing to be an exhibitor, we need you to sign up soon. Spaces are filling up! Visit www.michigantimbermen.com/show. Otherwise, please plan to attend, and bring all your friends, family, and everyone in between!

We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Justin Knepper



LINKS WITH LOGGERS GOLF SCRAMBLES

JULY 12, 2024

AT GRAYLING COUNTRY CLUB, 2122 I-75BL, GRAYLING, MI

9 AM CHECK-IN

AUGUST 23, 2024 10 AM CHECK-IN

AT NAHMA GOLF COURSE, 8588 LI RD, RAPID RIVER, MI

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Tuscola Logging

Norm Miller
Grand Rapids, MI
www.healthyforests.info

MAT was established in 1972 for the purpose of reducing costs and increasing profits of small forest industry businesses while ensuring a continued supply of timber. As a member you should enjoy all the benefits we have to offer. To join or renew, simply fill out the membership form at www.timbermen.org/join and return to the MAT office. If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 906.293.3236

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Michigan Timber Industry Unites to Honor Logger Jeff Zellar by Raising ALS Awareness

In a display of solidarity and support, the Michigan Association of Timbermen (MAT) has coordinated an initiative with financial support from the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association and the Michigan Master Logger Certification Program, to raise awareness and funds for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). The project honors Michigan Master Logger Jeff Zellar of Gulliver, Michigan, who has been diagnosed with ALS. This collaborative effort involved all three organizations jointly financing the installation of a billboard along Highway 2, just east of Gulliver in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

ALS, often referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, leading to the deterioration of muscle control and movement. It's a cause that hits close to home for the timber industry. When Jeff Zellar, owner of Bear Creek Logging and a respected figure within the forest products community, was diagnosed with ALS, it prompted his colleagues and peers to rally together in support.

The billboard stands not only as a symbol of solidarity

amongst loggers across Michigan, but also as a beacon of hope and awareness for ALS, a disease that affects thousands of individuals across Michigan and worldwide. Its strategic location along Highway 2 ensures maximum visibility, serving as a reminder of the ongoing battle against ALS and the strength found in unity.

The decision to fund the billboard came after Jeff Zellar spoke with a Michigan Association of Timbermen board member earlier this spring. He offered his Bear Creek Logging business billboard frame up for use, since he was forced to sell his business due to the debilitating effects of ALS. Jeff's wish is to simply use the billboard that he owns to raise awareness and donations to find a cure someday.

Jeff Zellar and his team at Bear Creek Logging always focused on excellence. Whether Jeff was developing a plan for land management or harvesting timber, he always remained dedicated to the needs and requests of the landowner. Professionalism and excellence were the cornerstones of his business, which is one of the reasons he was a passionate supporter of the Michigan Master Logger



Certification program (www.mimlc.com).

Jeff and his wife Linda Zellar both grew up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where they raised their two daughters. Jeff and Linda always loved nature and being outside, which lent itself to the passion they had for helping landowners maximize the benefits of their property through timber harvesting and effective management planning.

The Michigan Association of Timbermen and its Master Logger Certification program, as well as the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association know that this billboard project is the least our respective organizations can do to honor Jeff and his family as he continues

to suffer from ALS. We understand the importance of honoring Jeff Zellar's legacy while also shedding light on a cause that desperately needs attention and support.

Our organizations hope that his billboard will continue to serve as a fundraising tool for years to come, with proceeds going towards ALS research and support services. By leveraging our collective resources and influence, the timber industry in Michigan is making a tangible difference in the fight against ALS, offering hope to those affected by the disease and their families.

Please consider donating today by visiting www.als.org/jeffzellar.



National Fiber Sourcing Standards Review SFI Trainings Continue through December

The Michigan Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Implementation Committee has made it their goal to offer a National Fiber Sourcing Standards Review in 2024. This training is mandatory for all those wishing to remain certified as a Qualified Logger (if you already took core training in 2023, you are not required to attend in 2024. Instead, you may consider a four-hour continuing education class instead).

Remaining Mandatory Trainings:

June 5, 2024

MSU Extension Office, Marquette

June 6, 2024

Lakeside Motor Inn, Baraga

October 8, 2024

Bay College, Iron Mountain

October 9, 2024

Lakeside Motor Inn, Baraga

November 6, 2024

Iron River Public Library, Iron River

November 7, 2024

Forestry Innovation Center, Escanaba

December 12, 2024

Lutke Rental Hall, Manton

December 13, 2024

MSU Extension Office, Gaylord

Continuing Education Courses to-date:

June 12, 2024

Maple Rapids Lumber Mill, St. John's



Loggers hear presentation from MAT Director on best business practices in Gladstone, Michigan



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2024 Timbermen's Convention Photos



Forest/Loggers/Mauck Insurance Agencies staff receive recognition



MATSIF Administration Jackie Schummer recognizes MATSIF charter members at 50th Anniversary Banquet.

2024 Timbermen's Convention Photos



Barb Bennett speaks about Jim Carey's years of service at MATSIF 50th Anniversary Banquet



Convention attendees network with exhibitors



Convention attendees receive legislative update



Convention outdoor exhibit area a success



Attendees Network with Exhibitors



Convention attendees view equipment

2024 Timbermen's Convention Photos



MATIS Administrator Jackie Schummer waves to attendees



Members receive update from MI DNR

Shamco, Inc. Honored As Michigan Association Of Timbermen's "Logger of the Year"



Shamco, Inc., a full-service logging, timber harvesting, and trucking company, located in Iron River, Michigan, has been named the recipient of the "Logger of the Year" award by the Michigan Association of Timbermen. Established in 1997 by Jerry Shamion and his sons Todd, Scott, Eric, and Ryan, Shamco, Inc. has become a cornerstone of the timber industry in Michigan's western Upper Peninsula and

northern Wisconsin.

With over 80 collective years of experience in the timber harvesting industry, spanning three generations of the Shamion family, Shamco, Inc. is known for its commitment to efficiency, safety, and environmental stewardship. The company's dedication to sustainable forestry practices is evident in every aspect of its operations, from the meticulous timber harvesting process to

the comprehensive site cleanup and reforestation efforts.

Shamco, Inc. distinguishes itself through its commitment to employee welfare and professional development. The company's approximately 35 employees receive comprehensive training in sustainable forestry practices and benefit from a supportive work environment that prioritizes safety, productivity, and mutual respect. Shamco's team mem-

bers, many of whom have been with the company for 15 plus years, are the foundation of the company's success. Many of the tenured employees perform multiple functions in the business and are an integral part of the operation.

Shamco runs six logging crews, all of which operate Ponsse CTL equipment. The company has utilized Ponsse

Continued on page 12

Shamco, Inc. Honored Continued

equipment since its inception in 1997. The trucking fleet consists of eight self-loader log trucks and five tractors, which pull crib trailers or the company's two lowboy trailers. Shamco also maintains a roster of road building equipment and dump trucks to build and maintain woods roads. In addition to its own crews, Shamco works with four subcontractor companies that together operate an additional six logging crews.

At the heart of Shamco's success lies a deep-rooted commitment to community service and philanthropy. Inspired by their own experiences with cancer, the Shamion family has made it their mission to raise awareness and support cancer research initiatives. Shamco, Inc. has launched initiatives like the "Logging Strong" campaign, which features a pink Kenworth logging truck and pink Ponsse logging machines to promote cancer awareness. They regularly participate in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, as well as the "Granny Gearing Up - Pedaling for a Cure" event. Fund raising efforts currently top \$300,000 raised for cancer related organizations, including Shamco's local Iron

County Cancer Unit.

Their community involvement also includes support for veterans, local high school sports teams and business/trade clubs, and many community organizations such as, Booster Clubs, local American Legion Posts, Iron County Fair, and the UP Rodeo, just to name a few. The company and its employees sponsor and host forestry field trips for grade school students. They also support and regularly participate in many community events; and recently Shamco was named "Grand Marshal" for the 54th Annual UP Championship Rodeo Wild West Parade through downtown Iron River, Michigan.

In the past few years Shamco has expanded and diversified its business by forming Shamco Lumber entering partnership with businessman Jon Richter in 2018. The venture included retooling an existing lumber mill with all new state-of-the-art equipment, which was started up in January 2021. Additionally, the Shamion brothers partnered with businessman Brad Suheski in 2021 and started S&S Tree Workx. S&S is a full-service tree removal, forestry mulching, site prep, and excavation company. Between the three entities, employment is approaching 50 people.

The company's experience



and diversity has presented the opportunity for a unique partnership with the Purdue University Summer Forestry Class. For the past ten years, the Shamions have hosted what is known as "Shamco Day". The class of university forestry students start the day at the Shamco shop with an overview of logging and lumber mill operations. A site visit to an active Shamco timber sale follows, allowing the students firsthand experience of the

timber harvesting process and timber product merchandising. The Shamco Lumber facility offers students the chance to scale and grade several logs and follow those logs through the mill, examining the resulting volume and grade of lumber produced from those logs.

Todd Shamion, speaking on behalf of the Shamco family, expressed gratitude for the recognition bestowed upon the company. "We are deeply honored to receive this award from the Michigan Association of Timbermen," said Todd. "It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team, as well as our commitment to upholding the highest standards of excellence in the timber industry."

As Shamco, Inc. celebrates this well-deserved accolade, the company remains steadfast in its mission to champion the values of integrity, innovation, and community service that have guided its success for over two decades. With a focus on sustainability, collaboration, and continuous improvement, Shamco, Inc. looks forward to shaping the future of the timber industry for generations to come.

For more information about Shamco, Inc. and its commitment to excellence in logging and timber harvesting, visit www.shamcoinc.com.



Shamco, Inc. receives Logger of the Year Award

Stevens Logging Receives Excellence in Trucking Award



Pictured from left to right: Steve Brecheisen with Michigan Kenworth, Scott Dane with American Loggers Council, Joe Doyle, Jim Stevens, Warren Suchovsky

Jim Stevens of Stevens Logging, Inc. in Escanaba, is a third-generation forest producer, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, uncle, and now himself, working in the woods in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Jim Stevens is married to his wife Angie, with a son who is preparing to attend the police academy and a daughter attending Escanaba High School. Jim Stevens' business, Stevens Logging, operates four Kenworth Log Trucks, and has been operating successfully in the Escanaba area since 2012.

Jim's road to becoming a professional log trucker did not happen immediately, however. After Jim Stevens graduated from Escanaba High School, he attended Bay College for Criminal Justice. Instead of pursuing a career in police work like he originally envisioned, he instead landed at the Kohler factory in Kohler, Wisconsin.

Jim Stevens spent the next nine years polishing newly casted iron bathtubs with a hand grinder, preparing them to be enameled. The job paid well and allowed him to establish a family; but in the early 2000s Kohler opened a new plant in Shanghai, China. The company downsized and offered Jim a

continued position, but with a substantially lower salary. At the same time, Jim's uncle Ed Giguere (a long-time Timbermen's member), offered him an opportunity to move home and work for the family business, Giguere Logging. Jim took his Uncle Ed up on the offer, and moved with his wife, son, and daughter back to their hometown of Escanaba.

It took some time before Jim Stevens landed in a log truck, however. His uncle sent him to Midwest Truck Driving School, and he slowly transformed from a cast iron tub grinder into a jack-of-all trades. Jim started off driving a forwarder, dump truck, pay loader, and log truck. Jim said out of all those experiences, he enjoyed driving log truck the most.

Jim worked for five years learning the ropes from Ed Giguere, and as he described it, his uncle had to "push the bird from the nest" to get him to take the next steps. In 2012, Jim started his own business, Stevens Logging; he decided to focus on trucking, and purchased a 2004 Kenworth for himself. A few years later, he was able to purchase a second truck, and hired his first employee. Stevens Logging now

operates four Kenworth log trucks, with Jim Stevens and his three employees currently contracted to haul for five different crews, including for Giguere Logging.

Jim talked about some of the struggles that he faced over this past year with the extreme market downturn that impacted the Escanaba area. He lost two drivers over the past year because they had to find other work. Jim began driving truck himself much more to make up for the losses, and he also had to become his own mechanic for a lot of the day-to-day maintenance and repairs required to keep his fleet on the road. Jim remains positive, however, and

enjoys his time trucking alongside his crew.

Stevens Logging received praise from the various loggers who contract with Jim for their hauling needs; "His drivers always stop to check in on us in the woods;" "Stevens Logging is always on time and quick to respond." Stevens Logging's professionalism, courtesy and friendliness were some of the primary reasons why the company has been selected for this year's "Excellence in Trucking" award. Congratulations to Stevens Logging, Inc. of Escanaba, Michigan.



Woodhaven Log & Lumber Receives Excellence in Manufacturing Award



Woodhaven Log & Lumber in Mio, Michigan, has been selected to receive the “Excellence in Manufacturing” award from the Michigan Association of Timbermen. This accolade marks a positive achievement in Woodhaven’s history, recognizing their unwavering commitment to craftsmanship, innovation, and exceptional quality.

Woodhaven Log & Lumber was founded in 1987 and is owned and operated by Rick Bills and his son Ryan, along with 12 employees. Rick Bills and his wife Anita have been married for 48 years and have three children: Nycole, Lindsay, and Ryan. Ryan, who owns Woodhaven Log & Lumber with his father, is married to his wife Cassie and has two children: Payton and Harper.

Woodhaven Log & Lumber was originally incorporated in 1987 in Comins, Michigan, as Gilchrist Premium Lumber Products. This company was later registered as doing business as “Woodhaven Log & Lumber, to better signify product offerings. Originally, Woodhaven Log & Lumber focused on timbers milled for the pressure treating industry.

As the years passed, the company became focused on a specialty line of products that are

currently manufactured today: multiple varieties of exterior log siding, as well as various styles of interior tongue-and-groove paneling. Products are primarily purchased for new construction homes as well as remodeled home projects, with customers ordering massive quantities for full cabin build-outs or for as simple as a custom wall in a single room.

At the heart of Woodhaven’s success lies a dedication to quality that permeates every aspect of their operation. From the careful selection of premium northern Michigan timber to the meticulous kiln-drying process, Rick, Ryan, and their team ensure that only the finest materials make their way into Woodhaven’s custom wood products.

Woodhaven Log & Lumber has garnered numerous positive reviews, like this one from a customer in North Carolina:

“...From the superb customer service to the quality of the lumber every part of this transaction was first class. Not one board was crooked or scratched or less than perfect. There was zero waste as a result of this... thank you Woodhaven for giving me a beautiful product at a great price which was so protected during shipping that I believe you could have dropped it

out of an airplane, and it would not have gotten damaged. 10 stars not 5.”

Woodhaven’s commitment to excellence extends beyond manufacturing, as evidenced by their featured appearances on the television show “Tiny House Nation.” The Tiny House Nation team noted Woodhaven’s products for their unparalleled quality and aesthetic appeal, which have played a pivotal role in “transforming ordinary spaces into extraordinary homes.”

In addition to their national recognition, Woodhaven’s products have earned praise from contractors and homeowners alike for their ease of installation, durability, and timeless beauty. From exterior

siding crafted from premium cedar or white pine to custom interior paneling and ceilings, Woodhaven’s offerings exemplify craftsmanship at its finest.

The “2024 Excellence in Manufacturing” award is a well-deserved honor for Woodhaven Log & Lumber, underscoring their continued dedication to excellence, innovation, and customer satisfaction. The Michigan Association of Timbermen congratulates Rick and Ryan Bills, and the entire Woodhaven team for their ongoing commitment to providing top-tier products and exceptional service.



Distinguished Service Award Recipient Joe Doyle of Doyle Forest Products



We are thrilled to announce that Joe Doyle of Doyle Forest Products in Paris, Michigan, has been selected as the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award.

Joe Doyle has been working in the forest products industry his entire life. He grew up working in the woods with his dad, John Doyle, as well as in the family's shop. As he grew older, Joe settled into an equipment sales role working for Doyle Equipment, which he, his father, and their team grew into one of Michigan's largest Timberjack dealers. John, Joe's father, was very active in the industry and served on the Timbermen board for a number of years. Joe will tell you that he has been coming to the Timbermen's convention since he was very young.

When Timberjack got bought out, Joe's father John decided that he was ready to semi-retire, and Joe took the opportunity to buy out the logging side of the business. Doyle Forest Products, Inc. was created in 2010.

Joe is a proud husband and father. Joe's wife Christine

works closely with him in business. He has three sons and a daughter: Jack Doyle, Jesse Doyle, Dylan Lindblom, and Jessica Arceneaux.

Over the years, and with the support of his wife, children and staff, Joe has become involved in multiple leadership positions within Michigan's forest products industry. He is a certified Michigan Master Logger and he serves on the Great Northern Fuel Cooperative board of directors. Joe joined the Michigan Association of Timbermen board of directors in 2019 and was elected as Board President in 2022. He will be taking over the position of Michigan's representative to the American Loggers Council later this year.

Joe's dedication and service to the Michigan Association of Timbermen have left an indelible mark on our organization. Over the last four years on the Timbermen's board, Joe has brought about a number of positive changes.

Under Joe's leadership, the Michigan Association of Timbermen has experienced a period of growth and unity.

Through his leadership and collaborative spirit, Joe has fostered an environment of cooperation and progress within our association. His ability to bring people together, listen to diverse perspectives, while being willing to have hard conversations, has strengthened the organization.

Throughout his tenure, Joe has demonstrated a deep understanding of the challenges facing the timber industry and a determination to address them. He has an innate ability to make people feel heard and valued because he genuinely

cares about the industry and where it is headed. Whether advocating for legislative changes in Lansing, promoting industry innovation, or championing the interests of timbermen across Michigan, Joe has been a tireless advocate for our cause.

In recognition of his service and contributions to the Michigan Association of Timbermen, it is with gratitude that we present Joe Doyle with the Distinguished Service Award for 2024. Please join us in congratulating Joe Doyle on this well-deserved honor.



Joe Doyle speaks to crowd

Warren Suchovsky Scholarship Award: Nathan Malloch



The Michigan Association of Timbermen's Warren Suchovsky Scholarship fund offers \$1,000 each year to a deserving student. This year, the Michigan Forest Association and Greenstone Financial both pledged \$500 to bring the total to \$2,000.

Nathan Malloch, a dedicated student from Homer, Michigan, was selected for this year's Warren Suchovsky Scholarship Award. Nathan is entering his senior year at Michigan State University, where he is pursuing a double major in forestry and fisheries & wildlife.

Over the past year, Nathan has demonstrated his commitment to natural resource management through his role as a student assistant within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Forest Resources Division. Through this experience, he has gained valuable insights into Michigan's timber industry and has shown an interest in contributing to its sustainability and growth.

As Nathan prepares to embark on the next chapter of his academic journey, we trust this scholarship award will help further his success. The Michigan Association of Timbermen recognizes Nathan's exemplary academic achievements, his commitment to Michigan's forests, and his potential to make a positive impact on Michigan's timber industry.

Legislator of the Year Award: State Representative David Prestin



Rep. Dave Prestin was first elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in November of 2022. He represents the 108th District which includes the Upper Peninsula counties of Delta, Menominee, Schoolcraft as well as parts of Chippewa, and Mackinac.

Prestin serves as a member on the following committees: Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor recreation; Energy, Communications and Technology; Local Government and Municipal Finance.

He studied at the following schools: Bay De Noc Community College, Waukesha County Technical College, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Prestin is a first responder for his community and has continued to serve as a volunteer paramedic and firefighter for the last 13 years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he worked as a hospital-based paramedic and as a substitute teacher to help fill critical staffing shortages in both fields. He is also a small-business owner who specialized in rehabilitating neglected properties, most recently the Cedar River Plaza.

He has been married to his wife, Kathie, for nearly 24 years. They live in Cedar River with their daughter, Mattie.

On behalf of the Michigan Association of Timbermen, we thank Rep. Prestin for all of his hard work to protect the timber industry and the residents on the State of Michigan.



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TIMBER TALK LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SPRING 2024

As we move into the summer months, the Michigan Legislature has returned to full strength with the House Democrats winning two special elections in April. As was expected, the Democrats regained their 56-54 seat majority in the Michigan House of Representatives.

The lack of majority for nearly five months slowed the progress in the legislature to a halt. Now, with an election year looming, the legislature will be playing a lot of catch-up. The first big ticket item will be the passage of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 state budget which is again anticipated to be north of \$80 billion.

MPSC Rejects Immediate Buyout of Lincoln and Cadillac Biomass Facilities

In February of this year, MAT's leadership and legislative team met with the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to discuss the pending closures of the Lincoln and Cadillac biomass facilities. We also wanted to share our concerns with the commission on the future of biomass in Michigan as a whole.

While the outlook for the future was still very unknown, we received some good news the following month from the Commission. In mid-March, the MPSC rejected applications by Consumers Energy for the early termination of those two power purchase agreements. The plants were set to close on May 31st.

The Commission's order raised concerns about the claimed potential savings given that testimony in both cases indicated that Consumers Energy would turn to volatile energy markets to replace some of the energy output and capacity lost with the shutdown of the plants. The Commission found that relying on unpredictable markets for replacement supply entailed an unacceptable level of risk.

Consumers Energy proposed replacing the two facilities with two new solar facilities. The Commission found that those two facilities would not be able to replace all of the electric capacity of the two biomass facilities.

While MAT viewed this decision as a big "win" for our industry, there is a lot of uncertainty moving forward. With the initial plan of early closures viewed as a done deal, it appears that many were caught flat footed on how to adjust with the decision being overturned. MAT will continue to be on the front lines in advocating for future opportunities for biomass markets in our state.

Michigan House of Representatives Returns to 110 Members

Following the early departures in November of 2023 of Representatives Lori Stone and Kevin Coleman to become the mayor in their respective hometowns, the Michigan House of Representatives was stuck at a 54-54 tie making it difficult to pass any legislation thus slowing down the business of the Michigan Legislature.

In April of this year special elections were held where Mia Xiong was elected to fill the 25th State House District and Peter Herzberg was elected to fill the vacant 13th House District.

With the Democrats retaking their 56-54 majority, the everyday business of the House of Representatives will get back to normal with the state budget being priority number one.

MAT Participates in Lansing Lobby Day

Earlier this month, MAT board member, Jim Maeder and MAT lobbyist, Jason Wadaga, participated in an industry wide "Lobby Day" at the state capitol.

We were joined by several other forest products trade associations in meeting with lawmakers and hosting a legislative luncheon in the Capitol for legislators, staff and department officials.



Jason Wadaga
MAT Lobbyist



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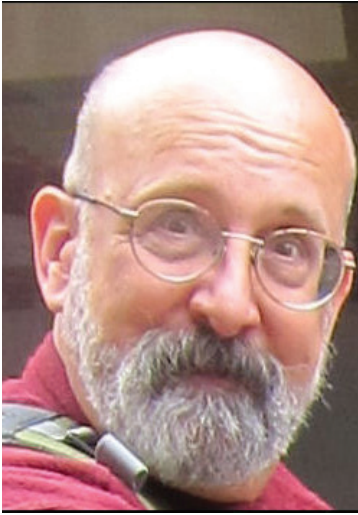
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Bill Cook

Article #358 May 2024

By Bill Cook

Wood is the most environmentally friendly raw material at our disposal. The legacy of human wood use is rich and the future is bright. But is it a panacea?

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that most people will agree that wood is a sustainable and renewable resource; and has a small footprint measured against carbon emissions, energy use, and produces a variety of environmental benefits. Okay.

To use wood, or any other resource, an inventory can start the process and add to decision-making. So, how much wood does Michigan have? A lot! However, let's also state at the outset that there isn't enough wood to solve all our problems, and just because it's there doesn't mean it might enter the market. Yet, it's a good material, better than anything else. We should use it when we can.

Trees and forests have been counted and measured for over 75 years. Michigan has thousands of inventory plots, not as many as we should (legislative decision), as in Wisconsin, but enough to make statewide conditions reasonably clear.

Total Michigan forest volume is called "standing timber". The changes in volume are due to growth, natural mortality, and harvesting. Volume has been accumulating for decades. As a side note, forest area remains on the increase, meaning there

is no "net" deforestation, an important tidbit to remember. Also note, that there are different definitions for related terms, so that database searches might be more meaningful for a variety of users. It can also sometimes be somewhat confusing.

One of the upshots of looking at statewide conditions is that we lose more wood volume to natural mortality than we harvest, although that is not uniform across the state. Natural mortality claims more than a half-million logging trucks worth of wood each year. That suggests that a portion of that mortality might be put to better use, for heating and cooling, for example. Anytime we can displace fossil fuel consumption, we win. Keeping forests younger and more vigorous helps with the carbon picture.

The volume of trees dying from natural causes has been creeping upward over the decades, so has volume lost in live trees from diseases, which is what an ecologist would expect from an aging forest, which is what we have. Simply looking at the inventory, and then utilizing just half the current mortality volume (before it dies), Michigan could sustainably float another three monster wood mills, or a wide host of smaller ones.

Some might argue that a large

mill has certain efficiencies, an economy of scale, more eggs in one basket, perhaps easier to regulate. Wood must be delivered from a "woodshed" over a hundred miles across, and fewer raw wood products would likely meet mill requirements. Big mills are good things.

On the other hand, many smaller mills may be more economically stable and are more diverse in the blend of raw wood feedstocks. A balance of markets means a broader variety of raw wood products can be sold, which in turn, means a better prospect for improving forest management and maintaining forest health.

In terms of wood for advanced heating and cooling systems (biomass thermal energy), local facilities make far more sense, and keep dollars local. The demand is steady, as winter comes every year. So does summer cooling, prompting many applications. Additionally, wood prices tend to be more stable than fossil fuel prices and are not impacted by world events. And, wood is uniquely renewable.

Looking to the future, wood holds immense promise in what can be produced, especially capturing wood carbon and producing chemicals. One of the nice things about wood carbon is that it's part of the natural carbon

cycle, unlike fossil carbon. The list of useful products is currently amazing, over 5000 things. That number could jump dramatically if some of the potential uses could be commercialized.

Imagine if plastic bottles were made of wood rather than petroleum? Or, if comfy clothing from wood replaced that of cotton and petroleum? Engineered wood has become a reality and will likely replace much of the steel and concrete materials. The potential goes on.

When we think of renewable wood products and the future, it all starts in the forest, with an inventory, with good management, and good harvesting practices, both of which are world-class in the Lake States. Our Michigan inventory, which is similar across the region, shows that we have some wiggle-room for utilization expansion. But before we get too excited, having the inventory doesn't mean owners will sell it, or that it is otherwise available.

Nearly half of Michigan's forest, both volume and area, is owned by families and other non-corporate interests, over 180,000 parcels of at least ten acres. And then, there are certain public forests where harvest is prohibited or at least discouraged or, perhaps, under-harvested.

Inventory Numbers from the USDA Forest Inventory & Analysis Unit

	2015-2020	2016-2021	2015-2020	Lake
Forestland	Michigan	Wisconsin	Minnesota	States
Area	20,116,910	16,943,219	17,659,033	54,719,162
Area 2015 (million)	20.31	17.06	17.41	54.78
Area 2020 (million)	20.12	16.94	17.66	54.72
Private Pct.	61.74	69.79	45.00	58.83
State & Local Pct.	22.92	20.62	38.67	27.29
Federal Pct.	15.34	9.59	16.34	13.88
Private Acres	12,420,180	11,824,673	7,946,565	32,191,418
State & Local Acres	4,610,796	3,493,692	6,828,748	14,933,236
Federal Acres	3,085,934	1,624,855	2,885,486	7,596,275
#Trees 2015 (billions)	14.18	11.46	14.52	40.16
#Trees 2020 (billions)	14.00	11.75	14.98	40.73
Vol-Forestland 2015 (BCF)	34.97	25.55	16.69	77.21
Vol-Forestland 2020 (BCF)	35.51	26.96	20.89	83.36
Annual Gross Growth	1,142	1,004	855	3,001
Annual Net Growth	273	359	244	876
Annual Removals	414	315	244	973
Annual Mortality	454	330	368	1,152
Annual Reverted Acres	48,188	44,479	65,902	158,569
Annual Converted Acres	46,119	56,822	42,920	145,861
Annual Acres Treated	315,680	274,340	160,142	750,162
Annual Acres Burned	7,067	6,091	13,196	26,354
Annual Acres Weather	65,905	48,496	144,123	258,524

Notes:

"Forestland" is all forests. "Timberland" is forests open to harvesting, a lesser number.

#Trees are live and at least one inch in diameter.

The majority of "private" forest is owned by family forestowners.

"Reverted" are acres that were non-forest that grew into forest.

"Converted" are acres moved from forest to a non-forest land use (e.g. deforestation).

"Acres Treated" means trees were cut, either improvement (partial) or harvest.

"Acres Weather" means weather-damaged acres (e.g. windstorm).

History Across Michigan's Regions -

Region 2: Escanaba Area

The Michigan Association of Timbermen features a member from each of our four regions once per quarter in Timber Talk, and we also share the history of lumbering from that area as well. This issue will focus on the Escanaba area, and Stevens Logging serves as our Region 2 featured member (Excellence in Trucking Award Recipient previously mentioned on page x).

According to the Historical Marker Database (www.hmdb.org), "It was the abundant timber that first lured settlers to the [Escanaba] area to start sawmill communities along rivers flowing into the bay. Although Escanaba itself was not heavily wooded, as a port it became a commercial hub for these mills and their people.

Merchants along Ludington Street [Downtown Escanaba] supplied the camps. In spring, after the great log drives down the rushing rivers, workers who had been in the woods all winter came to town with money to spend and an urgency to spend it, often in the town's numerous saloons.



timber and enhanced the new port of Escanaba. Through the waters of Little Bay de Noc passed countless schooners, their decks piled high with sawn lumber for the building of America, or huge log rafts towed to mills in other areas of the Great Lakes.

Later in the century, when fire claimed much of the City of Chicago, a large portion of the lumber needed to rebuild came from forests of this area through the I. Stephenson Co."

The following photos show the history of logging in the Escanaba area and are courtesy of the Escanaba Postcard Museum. You can view more photos at www.eskycards.com.

Escanaba and its waterfront have always been a magnet of activity, both commercial and recreational.

The canoes of Indians and the early voyageurs and missionaries stopped here on their Great Lakes travels. Later, sailing ships converged here to unload white settlers and supplies for northern frontier towns, taking on the lumber and iron ore of the vast forests and rich hills of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Fishing boats — their nets groaning with the weight of whitefish, sturgeon, pike and trout — stocked fish processing plants on shore with their bountiful catches which, in turn, were shipped out to cities to the south.

Rapid growth of the nation and its needs for lumber to build new cities and ties to extend railroad lines meant a ready market for the area's



“As We See It - Allied Angle”



Written for the National Hardwood Lumber Association, Allied Angle column, by Scott Dane

The title of this column, “Allied Angle”, is the very essence of this submission. Allied (def) - (adj) joined by or relating to members of an alliance; (v) combine or unite a resource or a commodity with another for mutual benefit; side with or support. Organizations must develop “allies” to effectively represent the membership and all sectors of the industry.

But we don’t. There is an endless list of national alphabet soup organizations (ALC, FRA, AF&PA, NAFO, SAF, NHLA, AWC, SFI, FLA, FFRC), not to mention state organizations, representing every sector of the timber and forest products industry. By that alone, it should be obvious that although there may be loose affiliations, most are still working independently of the others. We are not “allied”, at best we are loosely af-

filiated.

“There is power in unity and there is power in numbers.”
Rev. Martin Luther King

Within the logging sector, Independence is one of the most admirable characteristics and strengths. It is also the greatest weakness.

But the common opposition to our industry is extremely well organized, funded, focused, collaborative, and structured. While we are fragmented, underfunded, disjointed, and internally competitive.

If we pooled our resources, found common ground, supported one another, had a unified message, and collectively invested in advancing our mutual agenda, then we would be a formidable force equal to, or more influential, than those that oppose what we represent.

Why don’t we? It is simply a matter of ego, territorialism, and the concept of zero-sum game, meaning that if one orga-

nization does well, accomplishes something, gets credit, then another loses in some way. But that is a false narrative. When one does well, we all benefit.

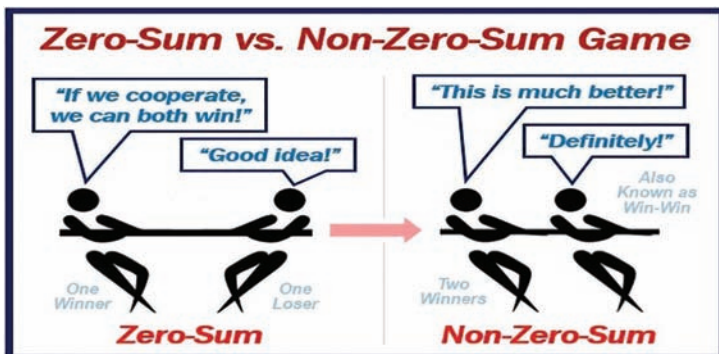
The opposition loves the infighting between the timber and forest products industry organizations. The lack of cooperation and collaboration ensures little is accomplished, and much is lost.

I can speak to that; I’ve been a part of it, I am guilty. But the challenges and threats are too severe to allow that to be the model. It has only resulted in failure and a real disservice to the members of the timber and forest products industry organizations, who have invested their lives, money, and time in forest management and forest products.

All timber and forest products industry organizations and associations need to truly become

“Allied” and work together if we are going to succeed. It’s time to recognize that the enemy is not us, it is not each of us against one another, and instead time to find common ground, pool our resources, coordinate our message, and convey a unified front. Only then will the timber and forest products industry organizations and associations be effective.

Better yet, timber and forest products industries need to partner with other natural resources sectors like farming, recreation, mining, ranching, fishing, etc. and form a Natural Resources Coalition. We all have common interests that are being threatened by common sources. Collectively we will be a formidable presence that will have the resources to influence to make a difference, divided we are failing.





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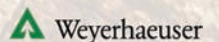
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