



*Summer Issue*  
*2001*

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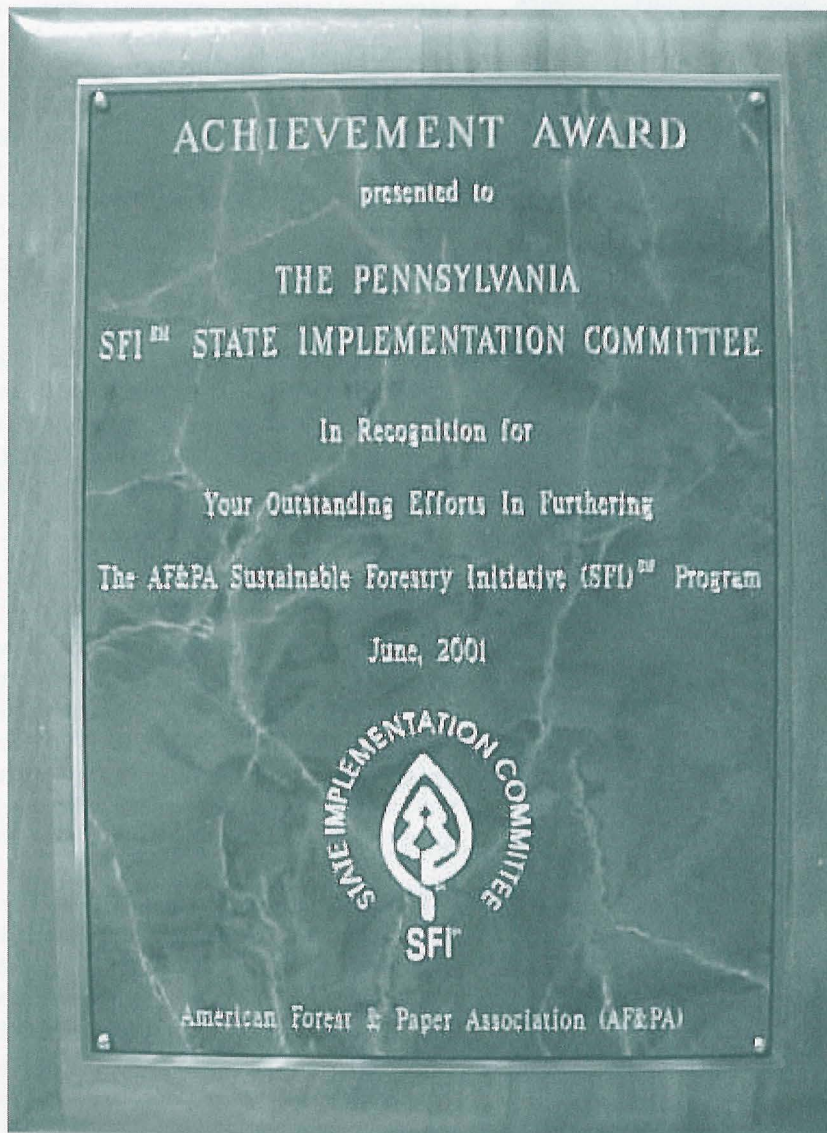
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The Sustainable Forestry Initiative<sup>SM</sup>  
Program is a service  
of the American Forest  
& Paper Association

# The Sustainable Forestry Initiative<sup>SM</sup> of Pennsylvania



*A Message from State Implementation Committee Chairman, Kevin Stout:*

## REACHING FOR THE TOP

In case you haven't heard, the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) has bestowed their Sustainable Forestry Initiative<sup>SM</sup> State Implementation Committee Achievement Award on the SFI<sup>SM</sup> of PA program. This award is presented annually by AF&PA to the state SFI program that has demonstrated the most in terms of progress and accomplishments. There are currently 32 states where SFI programs are in effect.

For those of you who are all familiar with our program, you know that there are literally hundreds of people, companies, organizations, and entities that are responsible for our receiving this recognition. From the thirty-plus individuals who sit on our State Implementation Committee and several others who were there before them, to the large number

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## Summer 2001

(Issue #8)

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program is a voluntary, industry driven effort developed to ensure that future generations will have the same abundant, healthy, and productive forests we enjoy today. Created in 1995 by the American Forest & Paper Association (the national trade organization representing the United States forest products industry), SFI is a program of comprehensive forestry and conservation practices.

In order to broaden the practice of sustainable forestry in our state, an Implementation Committee was formed to develop the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania. Today, the SFI of PA program works to ensure the progress of the national initiative, here in Pennsylvania.

### State Implementation Committee Members

Kevin Stout, Chairman  
Georgia-Pacific Corp.\*

Matt Andrews, Deer Park Lumber  
John Bouch, Pro. Timber Harvesting Inc.  
Charlie Brown,

Glatfelter Pulp Wood Co.\*

Tom Buzby, Weaver, Inc.\*

Blair Carbaugh, Private Landowner

Peter Coutu, International PaperCo.\*

Dan Evans, Willamette Industries, Inc.\*

Jim Finley, Penn State University

James Grace, Bureau of Forestry

Bob Hobbes, Hobbes Forestry

Dave & Mark Krumenacker,

Krumenacker Lumber Co.

Rich LaBrozzi, RAM Forest Products\*

Paul Lyskava, PA HDC

Ken Manno, SFI of PA

Martin Melville, SFI of PA

Scott Morgan, Georgia-Pacific Corp.\*

Ray Noll, SFI of PA

Gene Odatu, Bureau of Forestry

Ken Roberts, Westvaco\*

William Robie, HLMA

Dave Sienko, Sienko Forest Products

Sue Swanson, AHUG

Todd Waldron, Masonite

Mark Webb, Webb Forestry Consulting

Mary Wirth, Penn State University

Jay Farrell, AF&PA Liaison

\*DENOTES AF&PA MEMBER COMPANY

*If you have any questions or comments regarding this newsletter -- or if you have an idea for future editions, please contact Ray Noll at 814-867-9299, 888-734-9366, or via e-mail at [sfi@penn.com](mailto:sfi@penn.com).*

## REACHING FOR THE TOP continued

of people and organizations who help us in one way or another with our mass of training programs. From the companies that participate in our program and support our efforts financially and otherwise, to the landowners that at times forsake more money on their timber sales and look to the future with both eyes on sustaining the forest resource for future generations. From the professional loggers in Pennsylvania who have not only taken our training programs but continue to do so and who have put into practice the new things that they learn, to the professional foresters who are making sustainable forestry decisions day in and day out because it's the right thing to do. From our state legislators who recognize that harvesting trees is an integral part of effectively managing the timber resource, to the local authorities that do likewise. From the many government agencies that enforce current laws and regulations, to the general public and the conservationists that realize we are constantly striving as an industry to improve our practices and every day we get a little better. And from the Hardwood Lumber Manufacturers Association (HLMA) that serves as the primary sponsor for our program, to the PA Hardwoods Development Council that is part of our state's Department of Agriculture and over the past few years has provided significant financial support for our programs efforts. Without the help of each of these, we could not do what we do nearly so well.

While we are humbled by this recognition, we are saddened by the fact that Bill England, who has served as chairman of our state committee for the past eighteen months, has had to resign from that position at this time. Bill did a superb job of keeping us largely on course and moving our various efforts in the right directions. While he would be the first to insist that he did nothing, I can tell you that having his professional and capable leadership was instrumental in all of this. We wish him well as he assumes new responsibilities within the Appleton Papers facility in Roaring Spring.

We also regret to announce that Martin Melville has tendered his letter of resignation as training program manager for the SFI of PA. Martin has been with us for just over three years, during which he helped us to develop what has to be one of the finest array of training programs found anywhere. He also was instrumental in developing our Master Logger program, which many states have inquired about. Prior to that, Martin had spent more than 20 years in logging and tree trimming activities. He has found that for him, a constant diet of desk duties just doesn't work very well for very long. He is looking at other professional opportunities that will provide a daily routine that allows for more time to be spent in the out of doors. If things go according to plan, he will continue to be involved with us, albeit in a more limited fashion, by facilitating training programs for us on occasion. We thank Martin for his efforts and we wish him all the best as he pursues new ambitions.

We are reminded every day that one of the few constants in life is change. I, as well as several others, have been involved with the state committee of the Pennsylvania SFI Program since its inception over six years ago. I don't know that any of us could have accurately predicted then where the SFI program would be today, either nationally or here in Pennsylvania. We have had to overcome some pretty tough obstacles along the way, and while I don't have a crystal ball my sense is that both the worst and the best are yet to come. The past 12 to 15 months have been very difficult for most of the forest products industry companies across our state. While we all are hopeful that conditions will improve soon, I don't know anyone who is betting on it. And yet in spite of those conditions, over 98% of the companies that were on board our program when the decline started are still with us. In fact, even more companies have joined our program in the face of some pretty severe circumstances. I see that as speaking volumes about the commitment of our industry to sustaining the forest resource for the long-term.

To our SFI of PA program staff, to the past and present members of our state program committee, to all who have played a role in bringing our program to the significance it has attained, thank you. While we all should take the time to enjoy the pleasure associated with our accomplishments, we must not view them from the perspective of what we have done. Rather, let's focus on the fact that this points out what we are capable of. For in spite of all that we have realized, the future holds many more opportunities for us to embrace. If anything, we have merely demonstrated that by working together we are up to the test.

Kevin Stout, Georgia-Pacific Corporation  
Chairman, SFI of PA State Committee

### Introduction

Pennsylvania's forest resources provide numerous benefits and values for citizens and landowners including clean water, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty. Additionally, Pennsylvania is blessed with a hardwood timber resource that supports the Commonwealth's \$5 billion forest products industry. Forming the foundation of the forest products industry, the logging sector is charged with supplying sawmills and pulp mills with logs and chips in an efficient and environmentally conscientious fashion. The logging sector is critical to the current and future vitality of the forest products industry in Pennsylvania.

Recognizing its responsibility to improve forest practices, in the late 1980s the forest products industry initiated professional logger training programs both nationwide and in Pennsylvania. These programs have three primary goals: 1) to enhance the professionalism, safety, and economic stability of the logging industry, 2) to prevent forest regulations through voluntary efforts, and 3) to improve forest practices by introducing loggers to the basics of forest management. Critical to the success of these programs is the ability of educators to understand the attitudes and characteristics of their audience—in this case, the logging community.

The purpose of this study was to provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, characteristics, and motivations of loggers in Pennsylvania in hopes to improve communications among and between loggers and those who communicate with them, including educators, foresters, forest landowners, and the public.

### Research Design

The data for this study were collected during two distinct phases. First, to gain an understanding of the issues affecting the logging industry in Pennsylvania, I interviewed a select group of 25 loggers from across Pennsylvania. Eighteen interviews took place in the evening at the loggers' homes; the remainder occurred during the day on the loggers' jobsites. These loggers, also referred to as informants, willingly and openly discussed their attitudes, motivations, constraints, and concerns, thus providing valuable information about the people who work in the logging industry. Figure 1 shows the locations of the 25 interviews.

Based on the interviews, I then developed and distributed a mail survey in June 2000 to a random sample of 604 Pennsylvania loggers. The SFI Program of Pennsylvania cooperated by supplying their logger mailing list. This mail survey resulted in a 31 percent useable response rate from loggers. Statistical tests for non-response bias found no significant differences between respondent and non-respondent loggers regarding age, years in logging, training, and status (logging business owner, partner, or employee).

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# Exploring Loggers' Attitudes in Pennsylvania

By Matthew J. Keefer, School of Forest Resources, The Pennsylvania State University

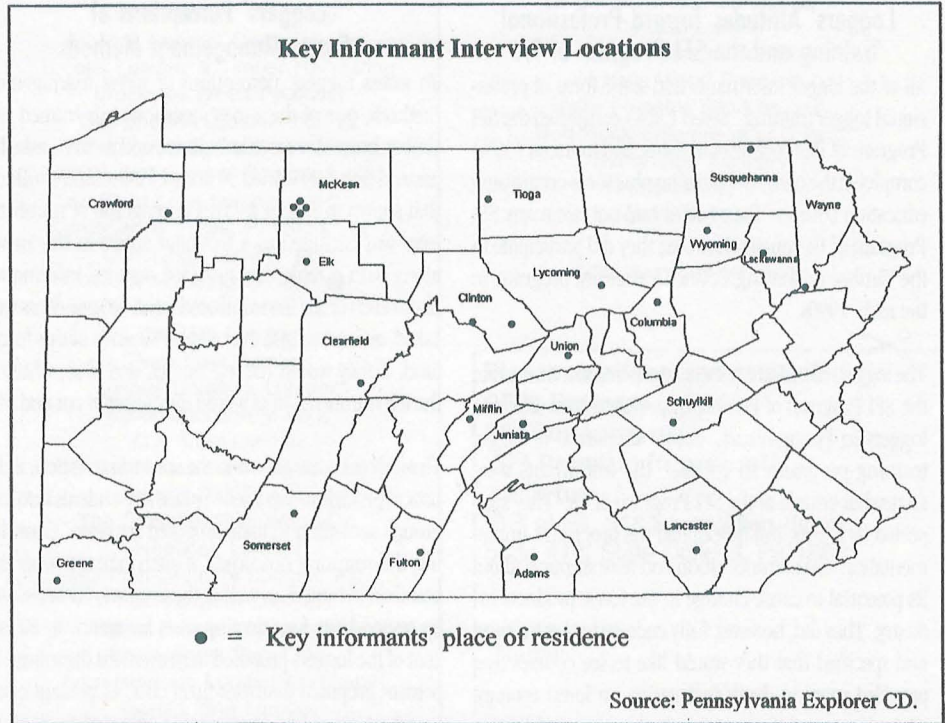


Figure 1. Key informant interview locations.

Table 1. Loggers' level of agreement with eight statements regarding the SFI Program of PA.

Statements	Response categories <sup>1</sup>			
	D	N	A	DK
	Percent			
A. SFI of PA has too much power over the logging industry in Pennsylvania.	31	37	18	14
B. SFI of PA should require member sawmills to abide by its timber harvesting standards.	30	24	39	7
C. I would like to see more in-depth coverage of the topics presented in the courses.	13	40	35	12
D. The logging industry in Pennsylvania benefits from SFI of PA's training programs.	10	20	63	7
E. SFI of PA should have more input from loggers.	6	12	75	7
F. Loggers in PA should be required to complete professional training programs.	20	24	55	1
G. SFI of PA's efforts will benefit Pennsylvania's forests in the long run.	9	18	55	18
H. SFI of PA is a conspiracy by large companies to control loggers.	42	27	17	14

<sup>1</sup> Response categories: D = Disagree, N = Neither disagree nor agree, A = Agree, DK = Don't know.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative<sup>SM</sup> of Pennsylvania

## Results

The following discussion highlights some of the findings from the interviews and mail survey, focusing mostly on loggers' attitudes toward the SFI Program of PA and their perceptions of forest management.

## Loggers' Attitudes Toward Professional Training and the SFI Program of PA

All of the logger informants had some form of professional logger training. Seven (28%) completed the SFI Program of PA's core level training and fourteen (56%) completed the core level training plus some continuing education courses. Four (16%) had not taken any SFI Program of PA courses; however, they did participate in the Timber Harvesting Council's training program in the early 1990s.

The logger informants felt that professional training and the SFI Program of PA were important issues affecting loggers in Pennsylvania. While supportive of logger training programs in general, the informants were somewhat critical of the SFI Program of PA. They supported its efforts, but questioned the program's implementation and administration and were skeptical about its potential to cause change in the forest products industry. They did, however, fully endorse logger training and specified that they would like to see courses that provided more in-depth instruction on forest ecology, silviculture, and timber harvest planning and layout. Additionally, they felt that professional training programs like the SFI Program of PA have helped to increase the professionalism and environmental awareness among loggers in Pennsylvania, but they expressed the need for continued improvement.

Nearly 80 percent of the survey respondents reported that they had attended at least one training course offered by the SFI Program of PA and 41 percent had attended four or more courses. Responding to the informants' attitudes toward logger training and the SFI Program of PA, the mail survey included a question that presented a list of eight statements regarding the SFI Program of PA. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. Table 1 displays the results of this question.

Survey respondents were generally supportive of the SFI Program of PA. Sixty-three percent agreed that the logging industry in PA benefits from SFI of PA's training programs and 55 percent agreed that SFI of PA's efforts will benefit PA's forests in the long run. Seventy-five percent of respondents agreed that the SFI Program of PA should have more input from loggers and 55 percent agreed that loggers in PA should be required to complete professional training programs.

Figure 2

## Loggers' Perceptions of Forest Management Methods

To assess loggers' perceptions of forest management methods, one of the survey questions was framed as a timber harvest "scenario." Respondents were asked to pretend that they owned 50 acres of forestland similar to that shown in Figure 2. This photograph of numbered trees was included as a full-page insert in the survey, along with a table that provided detailed information about each of the ten numbered trees. Respondents were asked, assuming that they owned 50 acres of this forestland, if they would harvest timber, and if so, which of the ten numbered trees would they select to cut and why.

To analyze the responses to the scenario question, a statistical procedure was used to place respondents into four groups according to their proposed harvests. Considering the resulting outcomes, if such harvests were imposed on the stand, as well as the presumed criteria used by respondents for selecting trees for removal, 60 percent of the loggers proposed improvement thinnings; 25 percent proposed diameter-limit cuts; 11 percent chose to cut no trees; and four percent proposed to clear-cut the stand. Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of respondents choose to cut tree number 2 compared to only 23 percent of those who proposed improvement thinnings.

To more fully understand loggers' perceptions of forest management methods, additional statistical analyses

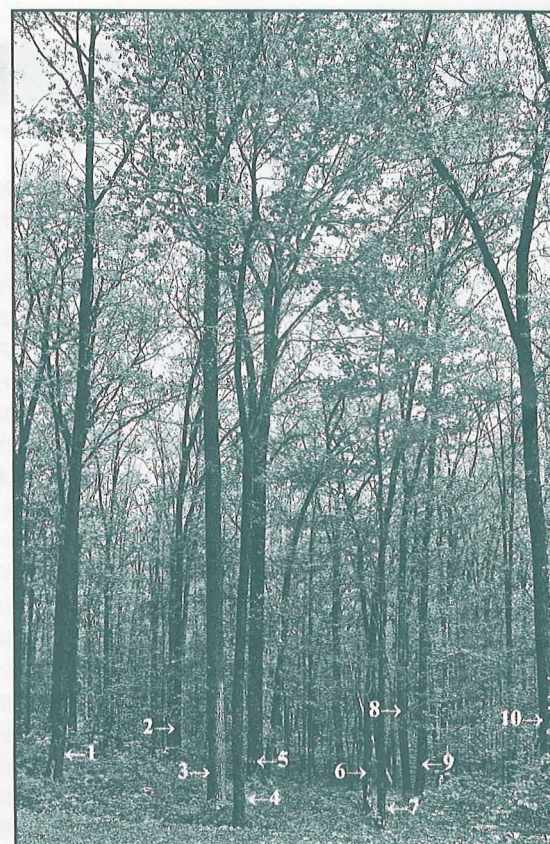


Photo taken by Howard Nuemberger, College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State University  
Central Pennsylvania, May 9, 2000

were performed to help explain why a respondent proposed an improvement thinning versus a diameter-limit cut. This analysis suggested that training, interacting with foresters, and attitudes affected loggers' responses to the timber harvest scenario. Particularly, respondents who had taken the SFI Program of PA's "Sustainable Forestry I" course, which introduces loggers to forest ecology and silviculture, were less likely to propose a diameter-limit cut than those who had not taken the course. This finding is very encouraging, suggesting that ecology and silviculture training might be positively affecting loggers' understanding of forest management methods.

**Table 3. Percentage distribution of respondents who selected each tree for removal.**

Trees	Improvement thinning		Diameter-limit	
	Percent <sup>1</sup>		Percent <sup>1</sup>	
1. Chestnut oak, 14 in. dbh, no defects, good crown	26		35	
2. Black oak, 20 in. dbh, no defects, excellent crown	23		88	
3. Tulip-poplar, 17 in. dbh, no defects, excellent crown	5		73	
4. Red maple, 9 in. dbh, butt scar/hollow, good crown	79		23	
5. Black oak, 24 in. dbh, no defects, excellent crown	55		100	
6. Chestnut oak, 13 in. dbh, butt scar/hollow, poor crown	95		44	
7. Red maple, 10 in. dbh, butt scar/hollow, rot showing, poor crown	96		38	
8. Chestnut oak, 17 in. dbh, no defects, good crown	7		71	
9. Chestnut oak, 15 in. dbh, no defects, excellent crown	2		23	
10. Black oak 17 in. dbh, butt scar/rot showing, poor crown	98		88	

<sup>1</sup> Percent of respondents who selected each tree for removal.

However, loggers who reported working on a timber sale in the past 12 months that was marked by a forester were more likely to propose a diameter-limit cut than those who had not reported working on a timber harvest in the past 12 months that was marked by a forester. This finding is discouraging and may not make sense initially, but there is a plausible explanation. The logger informants felt that the majority of foresters they work with in Pennsylvania use tree diameter as their main criterion for selecting trees for removal. Therefore, it seems reasonable that loggers who worked on these timber sales might follow suit and also use tree diameter as their selection criterion for cutting trees. This finding suggests that interacting with foresters could be sending mixed messages to some loggers regarding the effects of diameter-limit cutting on even-aged hardwood forests and foresters need to either change their practices or more clearly explain their prescriptions.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to provide an increased understanding of Pennsylvania's logging community. This article presents the results of the study pertaining to loggers' perceptions of forest management and their attitudes toward the SFI Program of PA. While some loggers were critical of the SFI Program of PA, most supported logger training programs and felt that the SFI Program of PA's efforts are positively affecting the industry and the forest resource in Pennsylvania.

This study found that training might be helping loggers' develop a fundamental understanding of forest ecology and silviculture—loggers who attended the "Sustainable Forestry I" course tended to treat harvest decisions differently, leaving options for future management. However, the study also found evidence supporting anecdotal speculations that a communication "problem" exists between loggers and foresters in Pennsylvania.

While these results are based on a relatively small number of participants, the study provides insight into loggers' attitudes and perceptions and raises a number of questions about how we are currently managing Pennsylvania forests. Diameter-limit cutting has the potential to severely degrade the future value and productivity of even-aged hardwood forests. Acknowledging and understanding that people develop their attitudes mostly by interacting with other people and their surroundings is crucial for developing and maintaining positive relationships. Loggers, foresters, landowners, educators, and the public must commit to improve their communications—which will ultimately affect the use and management of Pennsylvania's forests. ■

## SFI of PA Program Partners

Partners Program Participants are committed to the SFI Standards and pay a set fee annually based on sawmill production from Pennsylvania sawlogs.

- Appleton Papers
- Baker's Lumber Company, Inc.
- Blue Ox Timber Resources
- Bonham Log & Lumber, Inc.
- Brode Lumber Company
- BroJack Lumber Company, Inc.
- Brooks Lumber & Timber Harvesting
- Brookville Wood Products
- C.J. Charles Lumber, Inc. ☒
- Carl Hunsberger's Sawmill ☒
- Champion Lumber Company, Inc.
- Clear Lake Lumber ☒☜
- Cornerstone Forest Products ☒☜
- Cummings Lumber ☒☜
- Custead's Sawmill, Inc. ☒
- D & D Wood Sales ☒
- DA-JAC Lumber
- Deer Park Lumber
- James Doliveira Lumber
- Edwin Johnson & Sons
- C.A. Elliot Lumber
- Forest Investment Associates
- Georgia-Pacific Corp.
- The Glatfelter Pulp Wood Co.
- Heacock Lumber
- Hoffman Brothers Lumber, Inc.
- R.J. Hoffman Lumber
- Hyma Devore Lumber ☒
- International Paper Co.
- Kern Brothers Lumber Company
- Gerald King Lumber
- Krumenacker Lumber Company
- Kuhns Brothers Lumber ☒☜
- L & H Lumber Company, Inc.
- L & S Lumber Company
- Lapp Lumber Company
- Lauchle Lumber ☒
- \*Lee Brothers Lumber Company
- \*Matson Lumber Company
- Mountain Hardwoods ☒☜
- Mt. Valley Farms & Lumber Products, Inc. ☒☜
- Ongley Hardwoods
- Ordie Price's Sawmill
- P & S Lumber Company
- \*Patterson Lumber Co. Inc.
- Pine Creek Lumber
- RAM Forest Products
- Solt's Sawmill
- St. Marys Lumber Co., Inc. ☒
- Sterling Forest Products
- Timber Inc. ☒☜
- The Timber Company
- Tuscarora Hardwoods, Inc.
- W. B. Shaffer Lumber
- Weaber Inc. ☒☜
- Westvaco ☒☜
- Wheeland Lumber ☒☜
- Willamette Industries, Inc. ☒☜

\*denotes new company

Visit our web site for e-mail addresses (☒) and web site links (☜) for these Partners and Supporters!

## SFI of PA Program Supporters

Supporter Companies help to promote sustainable forestry practices and pledge meaningful financial contributions.

- Antietam Forestry Consultants
- Babcock Lumber
- Bailey Wood Products, Inc.
- Bingaman & Son Lumber ☒☜
- Coastal Lumber
- Hobbes Forestry Services
- Horizon Wood Products
- Noll's Forestry Services, Inc.
- Red Rock Enterprises LLC ☒☜
- Sylvandale Forestry
- TimberLeads, Inc.
- Weyerhaeuser

\*denotes new company

Please send me information on  
**SFI's Partners**   
**SFI Supporters**   
**SFI Program in general**   
**send to:**

SFI of PA, 315 South Allen Street,  
 Suite 418, State College, PA 16801

Name:

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Company:

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Street Address:

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City, State, & Zip Code:

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Telephone Number:

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Sawmill \_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturer \_\_\_\_\_

Forester \_\_\_\_\_ Logger \_\_\_\_\_



## In Brief



### New SFI Product Logo/Label

The American Forest and Paper Association has issued the new logo for its State Implementation Committees which will replace the circular logo with the bear and trees. The new, simplified logo is designed with an eye towards certification labeling and could be applied to Sustainable Forestry Initiative certified wood as a stamp or brand.

### End of an Era ?

The weekly *Hardwood Review* recently published a sobering article on Chinese furniture imports and the devastating impact on American hardwood market—adding to the current recession. It is estimated that 50 to 75 U.S. furniture plants have closed in the last six months, with a loss of 10,205 jobs. The furniture industry consumed 3.4 billion BF or nearly one quarter of all annual U.S. hardwood production. As the domestic hardwood usage in the furniture industry is cut in half, sellers will need to find new markets for over 1.5 billion feet of lumber. Lumber that China is not interested in buying with cheaper, (though unsustainable) sources available in Africa, South America, and Eastern Europe. The article draws a direct parallel between the rise of the Japanese automobile industry and China's growing furniture manufacturers who are operating with technology and machinery more advanced than the average U.S. furniture factory. With an abundance of cheap labor—workers “willingly” work 12 to 14 hours a day for less than \$50 a month, there is genuine concern over other American manufacturing segments following suit. The hardwood industry is faced with a complex economic challenge. One that will be met with the same ingenuity, perseverance, and adaptability that characterizes the industry as a whole.



State Senator Roger Madigan congratulates Ron Andrus on his achievement as Master Logger.

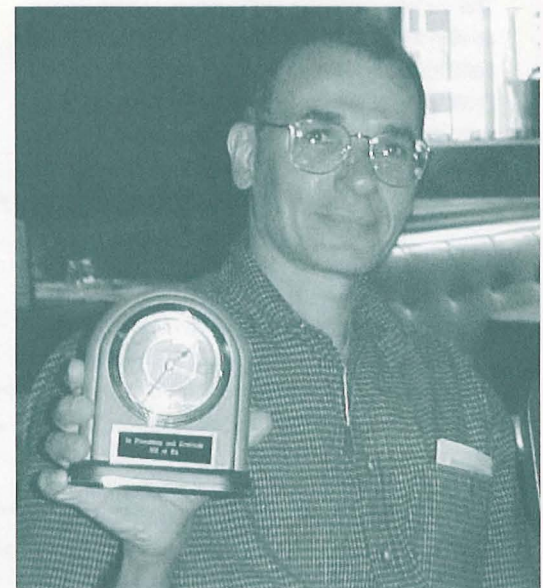
### Ron Andrus Honored As Master Logger

Thirty-five friends, family, peers and forest industry representatives gathered at Jack's Steak and Seafood in Gaines PA on May 14 to see Ron Andrus honored as an SFI of PA Master Logger. Long time proponent of the forest products industry, Senator Roger Madigan presented Ron a proclamation from the Pennsylvania Senate. Ken Manno, program manager for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania, also presented Ron with a proclamation from the State House of Representatives which was provided by State Representative Matthew Baker.

Ron spoke briefly about his logging career, his concern for the timber resource, and about the “on-the-ground” benefits of SFI training saying, “I think it would be good for the industry if we would all do that.” Of his achievement as a Master Logger, Andrus said, “It is something I've looked forward to and worked for all my life.”

### SIC Chairman, Bill England, Steps Down

Several SFI of PA State Implementation Committee (SIC) members and friends gathered for a farewell luncheon in Roaring Spring for SIC Chairman Bill England of Appleton Papers. Bill was presented with a clock, set in cherry hardwood by SFI program manager, Ken Manno as a token of the SIC's appreciation. DCNR's Gene Odato presented Bill a hardwood walking stick in thanks for his work with the Pennsylvania Tree Farm Program and the Stewardship program. Bill's leadership over the past eighteen months has kept the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania constantly moving forward both in training and public outreach. It was during England's term that the SFI<sup>SM</sup> program in Pennsylvania was recognized by the American Forest & Paper Association for its unparalleled growth and effectiveness. England's ability to “think out of the box” and see situations from multiple perspectives was a great asset to the SIC and he will certainly be missed.



Bill England with the cherry wood clock presented to him.

## Partners Program Spotlight:

# W.B. Shaffer Lumber Co.

W.B. Shaffer Lumber Co. was a family dairy farm that evolved into a family sawmill in 1975. It is located in the rolling mountains of Sullivan County near Dushore. Bill Shaffer Jr., his brother Jesse, and his father, Bill Sr. (now retired) traded equipment and bought used equipment to avoid going into debt. The mill has four employees, including a full time two-man logging crew (SFI trained) that has been with them for 15 years. W.B. Shaffer Lumber Co. produces a million and a half board feet of mixed hardwood and softwood lumber annually. Most of their lumber is sold to wholesalers and a small amount of hemlock sold in the yard to “cabin people” who maintain summer cabins near the popular state parks of World’s End and Rickett’s Glen.

With only a few employees it is important that everybody wear several hats around the mill. Bill runs the band saw during the day and sharpens the blade at night. He is also in charge of all the wood procurement for the mill. Jesse runs the de-barker, grades lumber and sells the wood to different buyers. He uses independent foresters who he knows and trusts, to provide him with prospectuses on tracts of timber. He visits these tracts to inspect the trees on evenings and weekends. Awarded bids are harvested by the sawmill’s crew. He feels that using independent foresters saves him time and hassle. Even if a landowner approaches Bill directly about having their timber cut, he will hire an independent forester to mark the trees and write the E&S plan. Of this relationship Bill says, “I buy most of my timber from one particular forester, and he is really good. He checks the job site over and sends progress reports to both me and the landowner letting us know what is going on. If he sees something he doesn’t like, he tells me about it. My guys are good in the woods and if he wants something done a little different they’ll do it. They get paid by the hour not by the thousand, so they aren’t in a big rush to knock it down and get out of there.”



Bill Shaffer with a truckload of sawlogs for his family’s mill near Dushore PA.

*SFI does get people thinking about the right thing to do in the woods. It can only make things better. Their training programs are excellent.*

—Bill Shaffer

Bill’s logging crew has gained such a reputation for excellence and sustainability that they are requested for certain jobs. He speaks highly of them, “I’ve got a really good crew in the woods. I don’t have to check up on them, they know what to do. I know it will be done right. I continue to send them to SFI training whenever a course is offered in our area.”

In the present economic climate Bill is keeping his log supply way down and has enough timber purchased to have his crew working in the woods for nine months to a year. He avoids carrying any debt with his business and has a long relationship with the wood buyers who continue purchasing his lumber in times of economic slowness. Bill is hopeful the market will start to pick up in August and notes that the only wood that isn’t selling right now is ash. He keeps the current situation in perspective, “Prices aren’t up like they were, but they were up for a long time and things have been good. It is not as bad as the recession of the early 80s.”

W.B. Shaffer Lumber Company’s initial involvement with SFI program came through selling to American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA) member company, Procter & Gamble at Mehoopany. Bill liked the idea of self-regulating practices in terms of conservation and soil erosion. Practices that would keep the government

from mandating how business was conducted in the woods. Of selling to AF&PA companies Bill comments, “We still deal with International Paper down in Lock Haven and they require it (SFI training). We sell chips to Glatfelter and they encourage it. SFI does get people thinking about the right thing to do in the woods. It can only make things better. Their training programs are excellent.”

Bill sees the competition for logs as an ongoing issue as mills expand and become more efficient, requiring a greater number of trees to feed them. New York companies frequently cut in the county as they range further and further south to find available wood. By relying on his network of independent foresters, Bill rarely has his crew travel more than 50 miles to secure wood. Bill says, “There is plenty of timber out there if you are willing to pay for it. It is not cheap anymore, it is harder to make a buck—you just have to be more careful. Try and get all you can out of it.”

As to the future direction of the SFI program, Bill would like to see more public education directed toward landowners. He feels they are sometimes taken advantage of due to lack of knowledge regarding timber values, logging practices, and legal issues. He clarifies this thought, “There are guys out there who will take advantage of the elderly landowner because they know that often they are not able to go out into the woods to check up on what is being done. These unscrupulous people tend to cast a negative view on the logging industry and that is why the SFI program and education is so vitally important to our industry.” ■



## What are Interfering Plants, and When are They a Problem?

by

Susan Stout, Project Leader, USDA Forest Service, Forestry Sciences Laboratory and Jim Finley, Associate Professor, School of Forest Resources, Pennsylvania State University

### Third in a Series

#### Preface

In the last issue of the SFI<sup>SM</sup> of PA Newsletter, we described the dependence of most Pennsylvania forests on advance regeneration - seedlings established on the forest floor prior to a regeneration harvest. We talked about recognizing advance regeneration, making inventories to measure whether or not there's enough to ensure a well-stocked stand after harvest, and about some of the problems that might cause even abundant advance regeneration to fail. One such problem is caused by what we call "interfering" plants—plants that cause dense shade on the forest floor. Interfering plants can limit the success, species diversity, or future timber value of regeneration after a harvest, even where there is advance regeneration present. In this issue, we'll identify several of the more common interfering plants in Penn's Woods, describe in a bit more detail the problems interfering plants can cause, suggest some inventory procedures for recognizing interfering plant problems and some of the forestry practices that have been used to correct them.

#### What Are the Interfering Plants of Penn's Woods?

The best research concerning interfering plants in Pennsylvania focuses on two fern species and two woody species—hay-scented and New York fern, American beech, and striped maple. But scientists have also studied interference caused by grasses and sedges and a host of other woody plants, such as sourwood, dogwood, sassafras, blackgum, elm, hophornbeam, and blue beech.

Why do we call these species "interfering plants?" They have all been shown to grow well in partial to nearly complete shade under a forest canopy, and to form a dense subcanopy that interferes with the establishment and growth of many other woody species. The oaks, the maples, and black cherry are among the species



Figure 1. The ferns that strongly interfere with establishment and growth of desirable seedling spread quickly in partial shade as a result of having a perennial underground stem or rhizome. Thus, one way to recognize them is to look beneath the foliage and be sure they're growing in a linear, as distinct from a clumped, pattern.

that just can't seem to make it when they develop under this dense low shade.

Striped maple and beech are well-known species, but not everyone can recognize the different species of fern that grow in our forests. Getting a good plant identification book is one way to learn to recognize hay-scented and New York fern, as is working with someone who is familiar with them. Both of these ferns spread rapidly because they have a perennial underground stem that grows more rapidly and forms more new buds after a partial cut in the overstory. Many other fern species grow in obvious clumps, so one way to recognize hay-scented and New York fern is to look below the foliage and see that the fronds are growing separately, with no obvious circular patterns.

#### Some Examples of the Effects of Interfering Plants

Here are just a few examples of just how devastating these plants can be, taken from the results of research studies.

Steve Horsley and Dave Marquis conducted an intensive survey of the progress seedlings made in stand that had received a partial cut to stimulate seedling establishment and growth. At the beginning, the average number of desirable seedlings per acre (black cherry, sugar maple and red maple) was about 88,000. Inside fences to exclude white-tailed deer, some of the plots were weeded to remove the cover of hay-scented fern, and on that half, the number of desirable seedlings increased over five years to 106,000. Where the fern was left in place, however, the number of desirable seedlings decreased sharply, to just 19,000. In a related study of seedling growth after a final harvest but inside a fence,

black cherry seedlings under fern cover grew only 19 inches in height over a five year period. Black cherry seedlings growing on plots from which the fern had been removed grew 20 feet in height over the same period. Talk about a faster return on a regeneration investment!

Susan Stout studied the development of seedlings in forests with significant proportions of American beech root suckers in the advance regeneration before a variety of different partial harvests in black cherry dominated forests. Before the treatments, beech root suckers dominated 77 percent of the sample pots. Harvesting treatments that included only cutting in the overstory reduced this dominance to 64 percent of the sample plots after 5 years and 72 percent after 10 years, but where herbicide was used to reduce beech dominance in conjunction with the partial cutting, beech dominance was reduced to 30 percent after 5 years and 17 percent after 10 years. Instead of beech, the herbicide-treated stands contained dominant cherry, red maple, and birch that were much taller than the desirable seedlings in the beech-dominated understories.

In another study, Steve Horsley compared development over a ten-year period between stands that were about 73 percent dominated by striped maple at the beginning of the period with development in stands that had only trace amounts of striped maple. Both groups of stands received partial cuts at the beginning of the decade. By the end of the decade, the stands dominated by striped maple had changed little in species composition. They were still about 70 percent dominated by striped maple, which was the tallest species in these stands. The stands with little striped maple were dominated by a variety of other species, including black cherry, birch, and red maple.



## How To Assess the Importance of Interfering Plants

Sustaining the diversity and timber value of Pennsylvania's hardwood forests requires recognizing when interfering plants are going to dominate the understory response to a timber harvest, and taking action to prevent that dominance. The first step is recognizing the problem, and that requires an understory inventory prior to the harvest.

Dave Marquis and others have developed inventory techniques for interfering plants. These are used in conjunction with the assessments of advanced regeneration that we described in the last issue of this newsletter. At about twenty different points in the understory of a stand scheduled for a timber harvest, estimate the percent of the ground in a twenty-six foot radius circle that is completely covered with fern. If more than 30 percent of the plots sampled have at least 30 percent coverage of fern, fern is very likely to dominate the entire understory after the partial cut. Similarly, if more than 30 percent of the 6-foot radius seedling plots are dominated by an interfering woody species such as beech, striped maple, sourwood, dogwood, sassafras, blackgum, elm, hophornbeam, and blue beech, these species are likely to dominate the understory response after partial cutting.

Like the assessment of advance regeneration that we described in the last issue, details about this assessment procedure can be gained by reading publications available from the US Forest Service Research Lab in Irvine, PA (P.O. Box 267, Irvine, PA 16329-0267), by using the SILVAH computer program and its associated inventory (available from the same address and by downloading from the Forest Service Research web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/ne/warren>). The SFI of PA program's "Sustainable Forestry 2" course developed by Jim Finley, Tim Pierson, and Susan Stout, is based on these guidelines, and participating in it is another way to familiarize yourself with the appropriate inventory techniques.

Finally, the Allegheny Hardwood Silviculture Training Sessions, offered jointly by Penn State Cooperative Extension and US Forest Service, for foresters and other natural resource professionals, provide detailed explanations of the guidelines for all three forest types and hands-on experience in applying them. For more information about these training sessions, contact Dr. Tim Pierson at (814) 887-5613.



Figure 2. A dense beech understory like this will also prevent the establishment and growth of many other woody species. After a partial cut, these saplings will grow rapidly and take advantage of many of the resources freed up by the partial cut.

## Interfering Plants and Deer

To some people, the problem with interfering plants in Penn's Woods is puzzling. Why are these native plants such a problem today when they weren't during the harvesting at the turn of the last century? All of them were present in the forests one hundred years ago and more.

The answer has a great deal to do with white-tailed deer. Around 1900, white-tailed deer populations were at an all-time low, and they had very little impact on the species composition and development after the harvests of the railroad logging era. But since at least the 1940s, deer have had a major impact on the response that forests make to partial cutting, as the density of deer, protected by a variety of hunting regulations, reached all-time highs in the 1960s and 70s and has still not returned to the levels that are compatible with easy regeneration of diverse and valuable forests.

Deer eat very little fern, but they do eat the seedlings and blackberry plants that would otherwise limit the spread of fern through forest understories. Deer do eat striped maple and beech, but both of these species are very resilient to deer browsing. Beech and striped maple seem to almost always recover and continue growing after they've been browsed, but other species can be simply eliminated from the forest. Especially after a partial harvest, the ability of these species to bounce back from deer browsing and grow rapidly in partial sunlight gives them a strong competitive advantage.

## What to Do About Interfering Plants

In addition to the research already described above, there are literally thousands of stories that careful observers of Penn's Woods can tell about converting stands of diverse and valuable hardwoods to fern fields or forests dominated by non-commercial or low-value species

such as beech and striped maple when interfering problems were not recognized and not treated in association with partial or complete harvests. What can you do to avoid these kinds of conversions when your inventory shows that the stand in which you're about to work has a serious interfering plant problem?

For fern understories, herbicide treatment is an effective solution. Fire seems to stimulate the spread of fern, and mechanical weeding is nearly impossible. Both glyphosate, the active ingredient in Accord<sup>1</sup>, and sulfometuron methyl, the active ingredient in Oust<sup>1</sup>, are effective in controlling fern when applied late in the growing season with effective ground-based airblast spray equipment. Glyphosate is also effective against beech and striped maple trees that are shorter than 15 to 20 feet in height. Many public and private forestry organizations in Pennsylvania have extensive experience with herbicide treatment of interfering plant problems, so there is likely to be someone nearby, such as a state service forester, with whom you could speak about this treatment. Details about the prescriptions to use and the techniques for applying them are available from the sources listed above.

Not all landowners will be willing to pay the cost of treating interfering plants with herbicide. When that is the case, leaving ample seed source in the residual stand for a later treatment is critically important. If fern is the interfering plant, it is quite likely that a partial cutting will result in increased coverage of the forest floor by fern. But if woody plants are the problem, even an unwilling landowner can be helped when the harvesting operator purposely breaks off the seedlings and sapling of the interfering woody plants. Many of these species will sprout from the broken stump, but at least their height advantage over more valuable competitors will be temporarily reduced, although this technique has not

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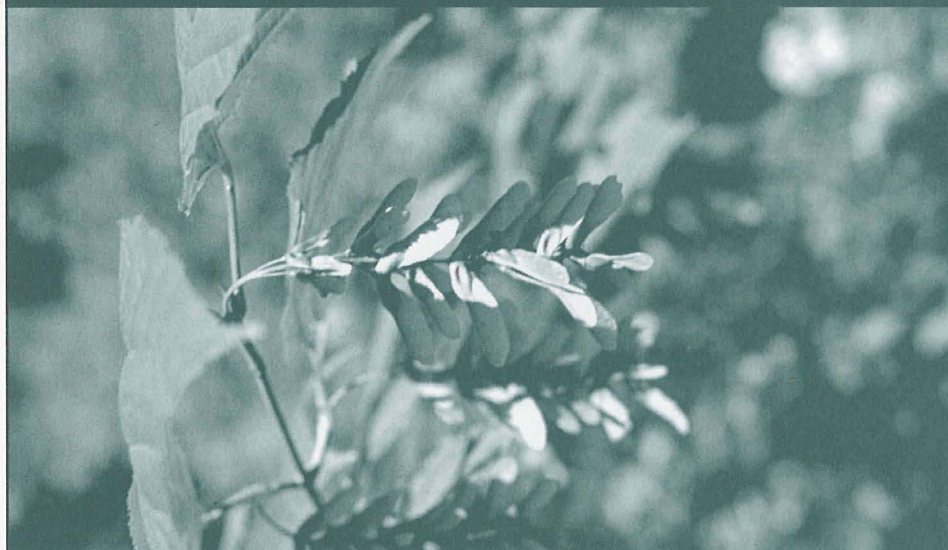


Figure 3. Striped maple is another interfering understory plant. It grows very well in partial shade, begins to produce seed at a very early age, and can maintain dominance over an understory for many decades, even though individual trees usually only live about 40 years.

been tested by research. Be sure to check with the forester and/or landowner to confirm that this is consistent with landowner objectives, and share with them the information about the potential consequences of non-treatment. Similarly, depending on landowner objectives, deer density, and forest composition, there are a few species that appear to grow through ferns and eventually shade out the ferns. This can delay the establishment of a new forest stand by as much as a decade, and hasn't been tested through research. Blackberries, birch, hemlock and white pine all appear to grow through fern, but neither black cherry nor red maple will.

### How Understanding Interfering Plants Can Improve Sustainability

In our last article, we proposed a mental checklist for sustainability, based on research results about the natural regeneration process in Pennsylvania's forests. The checklist looks like this:

1. Is there abundant advance regeneration already established in this stand?
2. If advance regeneration is already abundant and well-established, is it well distributed, or is it patchy? If it's patchy, concentrate the openings that you make through timber harvesting above the well-established seedling patches.
3. If advance regeneration is not abundant and well distributed, plan to leave seed source for the species you want to sustain in the places where advance regeneration doesn't already exist.
4. Are there plants like fern, grasses, or small beech and striped maple that make the

ground layer so dark that seedlings can neither become established nor grow? If so, plan to remove some of these plants as part of the harvest operation.

5. How significant is the deer browsing problem in this stand? Should the landowner consider a fence to keep deer out for long enough to let regeneration become established and grow out of the reach of deer?

Research results and thousands of personal experiences across the commonwealth confirm that plants like fern, grasses, beech, and striped maple can prevent us from sustaining the diversity and timber value of forest stands. If these plants are present throughout a stand we propose to harvest and we ignore them, they may become the future forest—or fern field. Recognizing and treating these problems is a critical part of sustaining our forests. ■

<sup>1</sup>The use of trade, firm, or corporation names in this publication is for the information and convenience of the reader and does not constitute endorsement.

2001 Tree Farm  
National Convention  
Hershey Convention Center  
Hershey, PA  
November 6 - 11

Register by October 8 for daily sessions and tours. For registration forms call, 202 463-2733  
Stephanie Brown, Deputy Director  
American Forest Foundation  
1111 19th St. NW, Suite 780  
Washington, DC 20036

## Meeting the Challenges of Sustainable Forestry in Pennsylvania

September 19, 2001

Heritage Hall  
Hetzel Union Building  
Penn State



Approved for 6 CFE credits for day session by the Society of American Foresters as well as 1/2 SFI/CE credits for day session and 1/2 credit for the evening session

SPONSORED BY:  
Penn State School of Forest Resources  
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The Sustainable Forestry Initiative of PA

Day Program 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM  
\$35. per person, \$15. for students

7 PM Distinguished Lecturer for 2001  
(free and open to the public)  
*Environmentalism in the 21st Century*  
Dr. Patrick Moore

Find out why sustainable forestry is important and how industry can benefit. Morning topics will address sustaining a healthy forest resource. The afternoon sessions will focus on sustaining a healthy forest products industry. Specific topics will include diameter-limit cutting, silviculture practices, cutting, skidding, bucking, trucking, utilization, and marketing. The speakers represent the spectrum of academia, industry, and public agencies. If you are interested in attending this program and have not received a registration form, please contact the Penn State School of Forest Resources at (814) 863-0401. Or SFI of PA at (814) 867-9299. ■

## Partners Program Spotlight:

# Clear Lake Lumber Inc.

As the name implies, Clear Lake Lumber Inc. really is situated beside a clear lake stocked with pike, in Spartansburg in northwest PA. Purchased by Carl Brown in 1973, Clear Lake Lumber has always focused on producing the highest quality lumber. After a fire in 1997 destroyed the production facility, the mill was reconstructed with cement and steel to lessen fire risks and renovated with state of the art computerized equipment. To meet their weekly production of 300,000 board feet, Clear Lake will range up to 200 miles to secure timber for the mill. Their corner of Pennsylvania is a highly competitive area with several large sawmills looking for wood. The closed off resource of the Allegheny National Forest puts additional pressure on the procurement situation. One of the unique aspects of Clear Lake is the concentration on private timber, buying directly from the landowners.

Vice President Steve Billman has been buying timber for 27 years during which he has purchased timber off some woodlots twice and even three times. Forester Jeff Patten and his crews are careful not to damage the residual stand and to clean-up the property, applying Best Management Practices to their harvests. Jeff and two other foresters manage up to eight subcontracted logging crews, most of which have had some SFI training. The logging crews are handpicked for high production and resource sensitivity, often working long hours, 6 days a week. Another unusual feature of Clear Lake is their two year inventory of purchased timber which keeps the crews continually busy. As a result they are never desperate for timber to keep the mill in operation and can be selective in harvesting certain species depending on market demand. Commenting on this process, Executive Vice President Mark Brown says, "We cannot predict the fluctuations of high demand. Four years ago cherry went through the roof, before that it was hard maple, and hopefully next year it will be red oak—but we don't know that. If it does turn out that red oak lumber is in high demand, Steve will make a conscious effort to focus on the tracts that have a high percentage of red oak in them."



Jeff Patten, Steve Billman and Mark Brown of Clear Lake Lumber.

Clear Lake's customers buy different species of wood on a monthly basis. The different grades of lumber are used in a variety of manufacturing processes: flooring, paneling, molding, stair parts and furniture. Currently, the furniture industry is going through a huge transition. The furniture belt is shutting down dozens of plants, costing those communities thousands of jobs. This transition is driving down the demand as well as prices for lumber produced in the United States. Some mills are cutting production or shutting down altogether. But, Mark thinks that once the chaos in the furniture industry settles down hardwood sales will find a new equilibrium. Clear Lake's reputation for producing the highest quality hardwood lumber sustains the company during times when the market is soft. They also sell primarily to smaller furniture manufacturers who are weathering the deluge of Chinese imports better than their larger counterparts.

Mark sees one of the many benefits of the SFI program is that it makes industry look better in the eyes of the landowner. This dovetails with Clear Lake's landowner outreach for possible timber sales. Mark views wood certification as an issue that has little current market demand, with just a few exceptions. He elaborates, "The problem is that people like the idea of having a certified product but hate the thought of compensating the mills for the added expense. Being able to counter inquiries for FSC certified lumber with promotional information about the SFI certification program to my customers is very valuable."

Steve Billman adds his view of the SFI program, "SFI keeps the industry professional with its Best Management Practices. What I've always been afraid of is too much government regulation. We as an industry can

manage ourselves properly without the government. Another challenge is to get the independent contractors involved with the program. I like the fact that International Paper won't accept wood chips from loggers without a current SFI card."

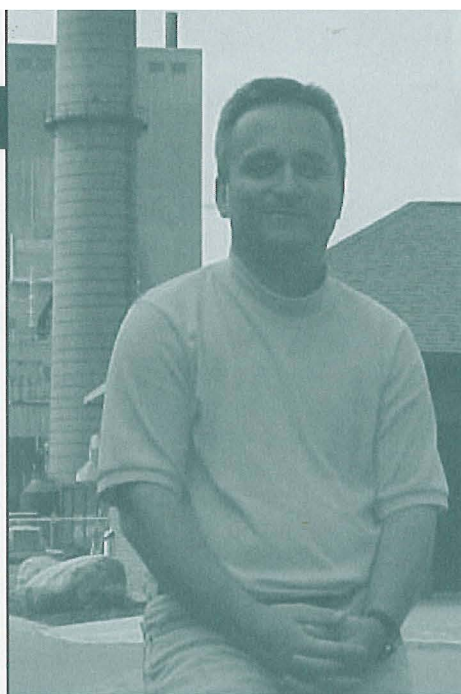
In discussing Clear Lake's management strategies Steve says, "We've had our own Pre-planning Timber Harvest Checklist for years. We set up the whole job before the logger ever shows up. We mark the site perimeters and where the landings and stream crossings are going to be. We secure the permits. We clean up after ourselves and often during the spring breakup time in March and April we shut down our logging operation just to avoid the mud problems. We have a big enough inventory we can do that. We also remove all the marginal material to improve the stand." Mark in turn finds markets for the low-grade wood removed from the stand.

Competition for timber in the northwestern corner of the state is very intense, with an average of 14 companies bidding on a single sale. One local forested landowner collected 86 business cards from different companies interested in buying his timber over the span of 10 months. Forested landowners in the area are well aware of the economic value of their resource. It is Clear Lake's hope that the landowners will decide wisely on how it is managed. Steve comments on how a solid reputation helps, "One of the ways we get our timber is by repeat business. We take care of the land and treat the landowner fairly—most of the time they want us to come back. When my foresters and I buy timber we are often the high bidder, but several times a year we are not the high bidder and we are still awarded the contract because people know how we will treat the land. That is very rewarding to us." ■



## SFI of PA SIC Member Pete Coutu of *International Paper*

Pete Coutu grew up in the backwoods of Rhode Island—thirty minutes from downtown Providence. His family's camping trips provided an early interest in forestry. Pete was also an avid ice hockey player (he currently plays in a local league in Erie). He went to the University of Maine graduating with a degree in Forestry in 1987. Pete immediately went on to pursue a Masters degree in Forest Management at Michigan State. After graduating he became a service forester for the state of Kentucky for nine months. He had sent a job application to International Paper (IP) who offered him for a job in Glens Falls, New York. Pete accepted the job and worked in wood procurement/land management there for the next seven years. From Glens Falls, he took a staff position in Purchasing for IP in Maine for two years. He came to the IP plant in Erie, as Coordinator of Wood Procurement, in the fall of 1999. Pete provides support for IP's field foresters and works closely with the mill to improve the processes from stump to digester. These include timber harvesting, transportation, scaling of the wood, inventory, processing, and chipping—all the steps until it gets to the digester—then it becomes part of another process for making pulp. Pete and the Erie Procurement Team are responsible for procuring 800,000 tons of fiber a year to keep the mill producing pulp and paper. Since a significant proportion of the wood purchased by IP Erie is gateway, their focus as an American Forest and Paper Association member company has been on logger training in the three states that supply their mill, New York, Ohio, and PA. As a result, Pete is a SFI regional training coordinator in the northwest corner of the state. International Paper requires all of its wood suppliers to have a current SFI training card and to keep up with their continuing education courses. Pete stresses the importance of training, "SFI will ultimately impact everything we do because we are using those guidelines for how we procure fiber. The guidelines were developed to ensure good forest management practices. We (IP) want to be a leader in the industry by putting forth Best Management Practices and following the eleven (SFI program) standards. The bulk of those standards specifically state how we will conduct ourselves to be responsible stewards of the land. One of them is 'communicate to the public'—tell your message. I wish every Pennsylvanian received this newsletter and it was available on newsstands."



Pete Coutu outside the International Paper plant in Erie Pennsylvania.

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*The SFI program is not a marketing campaign. It is doing the right thing. And the public needs to know we are doing the right thing.*

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—Pete Coutu

Seeing untrained loggers as a moving target, Pete says, "Loggers are very independent. A big issue for me is trying to get them to buy into our concept of what the SFI program means and stands for. Part of what the SFI program does, is it reaches out to the independent loggers, thereby bringing the whole program forward. The public is a stakeholder in all of this. We want to make sure everyone in the process of harvesting timber to making paper understands that the public is an important stakeholder and we are attuned to their interests. We want to make sure everyone sees the value of what we are trying to accomplish here with the SFI program."

Pete feels the on-the-ground practices that happen everyday are good, sound forestry practices, with the majority of people who work in the woods doing the right thing. As Pete says, "The SFI program is not a marketing campaign. It is doing the right thing. And the public needs to know we are doing the right thing. We have got to get our message out there better about what we are and what we do, not as International Paper but as an industry—showing what we provide. We need to communicate that the industry does act in a responsible way. We have a good story to tell, we are not just trying to spin something. We also need to make sure the story is sound—that we will be doing what we said we would be doing. IP is third party audited by the International Standards Organization (ISO). That is how we show the public our practices."

Pete feels part of the challenge before the SFI program is to get loggers and landowners to recognize the value in being environmentally sensitive. That value is how the industry is viewed by the general public. Pete points out, "A reason I went into forestry was to leave the forests better than the way I found them—a lot of landowners, timber harvesters and foresters feel this way. The SFI program helps us get there a little faster through greater awareness and numbers of people who understand its principles. It is not the end-all be-all of everything, it is just part of the equation to help us improve our environment here in the United States."

Pete sees wood certification as part of the natural evolution of what the SFI program is doing. Just because a product is labeled or stamped with a logo the process is not finished. The labeling is only a small part of the process. Pete says, "We have to be careful not to become cynics about the process we have created. We are doing the right thing. Everything is not going to change tomorrow. The process will not end because we, as an industry, will constantly be improving it. There are hard questions surrounding certification—if it was easy it would have been already done. There will be false starts and trial and error—it all helps to move the process forward."

Pete realizes timber products businesses have many entities to give money to, SFI of PA being one of those. He stresses that SFI of PA must show a value to its partners and supporters. Pete elaborates, "If we can show the outcome of what our courses teach, our greater purpose will be recognized. It certainly would improve the forests."

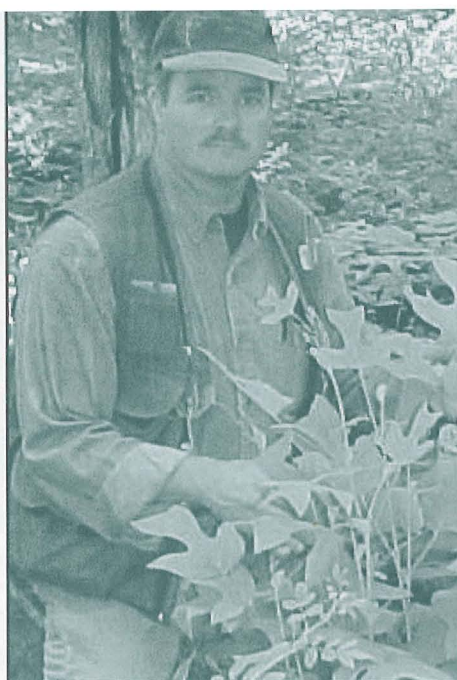
Looking at the SFI program in the immediate future Pete says, "At a state level I think the SIC should concentrate on logger training. I would expand that to include landowner training. The Training Committee realizes we have large number of loggers who have completed Core Training so we are focusing more on Continuing Education. We have been fortunate that grants have kept the prices of training courses low. We are trying to produce a valuable product that people can learn from, apply to their work and ultimately make money from." ■

## SFI of PA SIC Member Bob Hobbes *of Hobbes Forestry Services*

Former Air Force captains that hold a degree in Forest Science as well as a Masters in Business Administration are fairly uncommon—anywhere. But uncommon aptly describes consulting forester and SIC member Bob Hobbes. Bob runs Hobbes Forestry Services, his business of 7 years, from an office in his home near Mehoopany. Growing up in Tunkhannock, PA Bob credits his local 4-H club with developing his interest in forestry through a series of yearly projects in the woods. He received a degree in Forest Science from Penn State in 1975, and his interest in flying led him to a commission in the Air Force ROTC on campus. With a glut of post-Vietnam pilots available, flight school programs were cut and Bob went into logistics. While stationed near Cheyenne, Wyoming for his four and a half years of active duty, Bob earned his MBA at the University of Wyoming. After he resigned his officer's commission in 1981, Bob worked as a forester in the Black Hills of South Dakota for Pope & Talbot, Inc., managing 68,000 acres of timberland. In 1984 he was hired by Procter & Gamble (P&G) Paper Products Co. in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Wanting to return home to Pennsylvania, Bob was pleased when he was able to transfer to the P&G plant in Mehoopany, PA as an Area Forester. It was then he became involved in the very early stages of the SFI program and worked with logger training initiated by P&G. By 1994, Bob could surmise the direction P&G was going in regards to obtaining wood pulp from distant sources and decided to start his own business as a consulting forester. Six years later, his solid reputation in timber sales and management has kept his business thriving by word of mouth. Bob's work with different landowner groups and his public education efforts contribute to marketing his own business. Bob says, "Ultimately I always wanted to work for myself. I am a field forester, I enjoy being out in the woods and making it happen. I've gotten to where I want to be, I don't ever see myself retiring. I'd really like to own some timberland of my own and have more say in long term holdings." Bob currently has clients who ask him to treat their land as if it was his own, trusting his prescription for managing their timber.

Bob recently constructed a small deer fence demonstration site on the property of one of his clients. He stresses the importance of the site, "Put a fence up in an area where people feel there isn't much of a deer problem and let it grow for a couple of years—the contrast between the two sides of the fence becomes like night and day. Even people who are relatively knowledgeable about the resource don't realize the problem the deer can be."



**Bob Hobbes inside his deer fence demonstration site, near Meshoppen, with a growing tulip poplar protected from deer browsing.**

Bob sees the deer problem as one of two major threats to the sustainability of the forest resource. The other is practices like high grading and diameter limit cutting. Of these Bob says, "There is some good forestry work going on but it is certainly in the minority. Sawmills buy timber from good forestry operations as well as diameter limit harvests. And they get accused of mixing the good in with the bad. We need to get people to acknowledge that diameter limit cutting is not sustainable." Bob would like to see a forester on every harvesting job, although he recognizes that not all foresters are committed to proper silviculture practices. He elaborates, "If a forester is not actively working to sustain the resource then he is just a wood broker. We really need to apply the science of forestry on the ground as to what kind of prescriptions we need to do in our stands."

In the four years Bob has been on the State Implementation Committee (SIC), he has seen a number of changes take place. One of them is the general acknowledgment of the industry that there is a problem with sustaining the resource through the overuse of diameter limit cutting. Bob feels the information about good silviculture is finally getting out there through SFI training courses. Still, he sees change happening at a snail's pace. Speaking of the SIC Bob says, "This is the first time there has been a valid organization to bring all the players in the forest products community to the table to work together. As an independent forester, I can't impact where we are headed statewide. When I was asked to participate, I answered yes, because I can make more of a difference from within and to help to keep the SFI program moving forward. The strength of the SIC is in the diversity of backgrounds of the people around the table. I give them my time, as all the independents do."

*If a forester is not actively working to sustain the resource then he is just a wood broker.* —Bob Hobbes

Bob feels the pendulum has swung as far left in the environmental movement as it is going to get and it is ready to swing back. This is evidenced by the energy crisis in California. Bob says, "People who drill for oil are labeled as 'bad people,' the same as loggers and quarrymen. But the reality is people still live in their wood houses with stone fireplaces and heat with oil. Sooner or later they have to face up to their consumption. My hope is that soon there will be an SFI certification program in place that will give validity and support to all we do. And we will gain approval and acceptance and continue to wake people up. Through the education side of the SFI program, people will realize how all these things are tied together. Right now we have a society who wants materials from the resources without resource removal or extraction—you can't have it both ways. I can see the SFI program becoming a solution to this as one of the accreditation systems people will line up with because we have the training component that no one else does."

Bob views Best Management Practices (BMPs) as a goal the industry should strive to attain. "I look at the BMPs book as the bible. You can't argue with those principles. Not that we always attain them, but they are what we are aiming for. Our changes are being recognized by others. I see people who are with the FSC talking to landowners and making contact asking, 'Who are the trained loggers in your area?' That represents acceptance and acknowledgment of the SFI program and what it has to offer. The SFI program is the best system out there for applying practices on the ground."

Bob's biggest concern is turning around current on-the-ground practices which he feels threaten long term forest use. He sees education through SFI training courses, as well as through different landowner associations, as the best way to institute change. However, he still gets calls from landowners whose minds are made up—wanting everything cut for the greatest economic gain. "Or," Bob says, "I get a call from a landowner who has just had everything cut—the property looks like a moonscape and now he is interested in management. Well, it is a little late. What we deal with in forestry is very complex because it concerns multiple factors—social, economic, environmental and biological issues all have to be considered. And no two situations are the same. In the woods you are juggling with different tree species, soil types, insects and disease, land use history, owner's priorities, and township regulations. All these issues fuel the complexity of the situation." ■

## Partners Program Spotlight—

# Baker's Lumber Company

Larry Baker is a third generation sawmiller. He grew up around his grandfather's portable sawmill in the early 1950s. When his grandfather passed away Larry's father and uncle, John and William Baker, took over in the mid-fifties building a mill on the present site in Cherry Tree in 1963. Larry began working in the mill full time after he graduated from high school in 1963. The mill burned down in 1970 and a new upgraded mill was built in 1971. That same year Larry's uncle was killed in a logging accident. Larry eventually purchased the business from his father in 1982. He changed the name from Elijah Baker and Sons Lumber Company simply to Baker's Lumber Company. A fourth generation of Bakers, Larry's two sons, Larry and Rich and son in-law Mike, have joined him in the business.

Baker's Lumber has been a member of the National Hardwood Lumber Association for 44 years. They have sent several of their employees to the grading school in Memphis, Tennessee—that knowledge has benefitted the company. Procurement for the mill is handled by Larry and his son Larry, who has a degree in Forestry from Penn State. Baker's has one full-time logging crew and a subcontracted crew—both these crews are SFI trained. They supply logs needed for the mill's annual production of two and a half million board feet. Timber is secured within a fifty mile radius of the mill. Ninety percent of the timber Baker's processes is procured from private forest lands. The longevity of their business, coupled with a good reputation in the area, has allowed Baker's to re-enter hundreds of stands they have harvested previously. Larry discusses this process, "Evidently we've been doing it right. We tell the landowner, 'You don't want to cut it too hard.' These people are after the money now, they don't care how small they cut. I tell them not to do that and why. We want to keep the sizes up so we can come back in ten years and cut it again. If you go into a stand and you don't take all the big trees and leave a few big trees—and you don't cut it down to fourteen inches, it is surprising how well it grows back. This technique has worked out great for us. It contributes to our success in dealing with people and having a good reputation."

Larry has seen most drastic changes in the last ten years of his 38 years in the lumber business. He sees the profit margin getting smaller and timber prices rising



Larry Baker of Baker's Lumber Company, in Cherry Tree, PA.

with a shortage of timber in certain areas. The competition for local timber by northern tier lumber companies ranging further for wood to supply their mills, has caused prices to skyrocket. Of the increased competition in the area Larry says, "There are so many people out there after the same piece of timber you have to be a good talker when you meet with a landowner. They have to trust you and you got to tell them what you are going to do different on their land. I won't lie to them or stretch the truth. I'll give them the best price I can and do the best job I can. We are here to stay. I tell them if there is a problem we are close by and we can discuss it. Somebody else comes along with an offer of \$1,000. more and he is gone—you never see him again. We are here to take care of things. But money talks. I'll give a guy a price, explain about leaving some trees, and the next time I go back it is all cut, just a mess. So what did he gain? A little more money but there is nothing left for the future."

Baker's tries to keep a nine month inventory of purchased timber in the woods, ready for harvest. But the escalating costs of stumpage ties up a lot of working capital. This problem is common with sawmills throughout the state. Larry clarifies the situation, "In the past we used to spend \$250,000. and have enough timber to supply the mill for a couple of years. Now we can spend \$500,000. and still not have enough to meet our annual production. It is unbelievable. My boys are the fourth generation to work here, but I don't know what the future holds for the industry."

Baker's Lumber recently purchased 45 acres to expand their facilities. Those plans are currently on hold until the market improves. They are concerned about seeing a return on their capital investment.

Baker's sell most of their green lumber to furniture and pallet industry markets. Their furniture market has remained firm despite the shift in manufacturing to China in recent months. Some of Baker's markets are asking if Baker's crews are SFI trained in anticipation of certification or as part of that company's policy—the answer is yes.

Baker's also sells a small percentage of pine out of their wood yard on Saturdays to local people.

Larry feels the SFI program has done a great job in a very short time. He initially thought SFI of PA was another "splash-in-the-bucket" organization looking for donations, but SFI of PA has proved its staying power.

Baker's is concerned that the size of the timber his mill purchases is getting smaller in diameter. Landowners seem to be in a hurry for money and are not waiting for the needed years of growth. Instead they are selling tracts of immature timber. Larry points out, "We are getting prospectuses where the average diameter at chest height is only 16 inches or 15 inches, which is too small. They are cutting too soon. They never used to do that before. Also I can't figure out how one company can afford to bid twice as much as we bid on a given sale. Is he making that much more money? Are we doing something wrong? It is crazy right now."

Profit shrinkage, competition, and timber size are the three major issues Larry sees as making it harder to do business. Sawing costs have gone up on average making some species, like cherry, profitable and others, like pine, an almost break even proposition. Baker's provides full health insurance coverage for their workers, but the yearly cost increase for insurance is erratic and jumping anywhere from 3% to 15% annually. Despite the expense, Larry views the insurance as a needed benefit to keep the 14 good workers they have. Baker's has had very little employee turnover during the past fifteen years. They also have a profit sharing plan.

This summer production at the mill has been doubly slow. They are constantly thinking of ways to improve their situation—how to save money, and make more timber contacts, though not hire more people to do so. Larry comments on the current nature of the lumber business, "For the future we have to tighten up our belt and look for ways to improve things. Everyone has to make some changes with the times, and they may be drastic changes." ■

## Core Training Completed

Since April 2001 the following individuals have completed Core Level training with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania. Core Level Courses are First Aid, CPR, Logging Safety, and Environmental Logging.

Ken Abrahamson, Brockway  
 Joe Anderson, Forest  
 David Andrus, Emporium  
 Edgar Augustine, Addison  
 Leon Baumgardner, Mifflin  
 William Bixby, Blossburg  
 Joseph Bizzak, Jr., Kane  
 Dale Blauser, Oil City  
 James Boyd, Brookville  
 Andy Carlson, Kane  
 Charles Dake, Blossburg  
 Wilmer Deyarmin, Burnside  
 Tommy Dicken, Clearville  
 Scott Ely, Kane  
 Mark Fabian, White  
 Bill Fenton, Greenville  
 John Fenton, Greenville  
 Dan Gregory, Kane  
 Mike Hale, Westfield  
 Ron Hocker, Bedford  
 John Holt, Kane  
 Dennis Hovermale, Berkeley Springs  
 Jody Howe, Troy  
 Jack Kelly, Blossburg  
 Randy Kerr, Hilliards  
 Jonathan Kio, Ulysses  
 Thomas Kio, Ulysses  
 Randy Leeper, Acme  
 Paul Lepley, Meyersdale  
 Dave Lytle, Morrisdale  
 David Manley, Erie  
 Richard Mortensen, Andover  
 Matthew Todd Pearce, Duke Center  
 Robert Pearce, New Castle  
 Robert Rankin, New Bethlehem  
 Harvey Reckner, Jr., Confluence  
 Tim Roberts, Titusville  
 Daniel Sarver, Confluence  
 Roger Shaffer, Lake Ariel  
 Terry Shaffer, Harrisville  
 Quinn Shreve, Pleasantville  
 Mark Sickler, Tunkhannock  
 David Siegel, Marble  
 Scott Snook, Westfield  
 Todd Sparks, Brookville  
 Todd Sweet, Troy  
 Jeff Tanner, Smethport  
 Jerry Tewel, Everett  
 Donald Thompson, Titusville  
 George Thompson, Breezewood  
 Gerald Timinski, Moscow  
 Kevin Timinski, Moscow  
 Malcolm Waskiewicz, Coudersport  
 Jo Ann Webber, Schuylkill Haven  
 Clifford Welch, Blossburg  
 Dave Williams, Kane  
 Michael Wolf, Nicktown  
 Kenneth Wolfe, Schuylkill Haven  
 Kevin Zimmerman, Pine Grove

## Continuing Education Courses Completed

### *Business Management*

James Avallone, Cogan Station  
 Rod Bedow, Titusville  
 James Boyd, Brookville  
 Cy Emer, James City  
 Dan Foley, Titusville  
 William Kirkpatrick, Rimersburg  
 Lee McCoy, Grove City  
 Buddy Paris, Youngsville  
 Robert Rankin, New Bethlehem  
 Todd Sparks, Brookville  
 Kevin Stout, Marble  
 Jack Strange, Mainesburg  
 Donald Thompson, Titusville  
 Norman Voorhees, Grove City  
 Todd Wait, Brockway  
 Larry White, Wellsboro  
 Kenneth Wolbert, Knox  
 John Zemanick, Millport

### *Game of Logging 1*

Dale Blauser, Oil City  
 Ronald Brown, Shinglehouse  
 Michael Dreese, Jr., Lewisburg  
 Clyde Eck, Jr., Coudersport  
 Chris Johnson, Smethport  
 Richard Kordes, Lewisburg  
 Sidney Mowery, Middleburg  
 Seth Shirey, Linden  
 Thomas Shirey, Linden  
 Richard Snyder, Coudersport  
 Tom Umstead, Linden  
 Keith Walter, Middleburg  
 Wesley Walter, Middleburg

### *Game of Logging 2*

David Sienko, Hallstead

### *Game of Logging 3*

Ryan Dunn, Honesdale  
 Todd Hall, Canadensis  
 Joseph Kellam, Honesdale  
 Keith Mock, Tunkhannock  
 Mike Powell, Spring Mills  
 Kevin Timinski, Moscow  
 Jim Watson, Jr., Honesdale

### *Game of Logging 4*

Ryan Dunn, Honesdale  
 Mike Powell, Spring Mills  
 Jim Watson, Jr., Honesdale

### *Log Grading & Bucking*

James Boyd, Brookville  
 Jerry Grimaud, Tunkhannock  
 Dave Trimpey, Pittsfield

### *Sustainable Forestry I*

Mark Boyer, Myerstown  
 John Carvell, New Holland  
 Richard Deppen, Quakertown  
 David Quarles, Strasburg  
 Randy Watters, Brandamere  
 Carl Wolfe, Pine Grove  
 Joe Zehr, Christiana

### *Sustainable Forestry II*

Stan Barnett, Johnsonburg  
 Lee McCoy, Grove City  
 Leo Nashadka, Mt. Jewett  
 Edward Walker, St. Marys

### *Estimating Timber Volume*

Joseph Blaise Alackness, Roulette  
 Ronald Andrus, Gaines  
 Randy Barber, Randolph  
 Robert Barber, Little Valley  
 Lisa Bearer, Elderton  
 James Boyd, Brookville  
 Jeff Cable, Harmony  
 Bob Cappone, Punxsutawney  
 Duane Gibson, Pittsfield

### *Truck Safety*

James Amspacher, Jr., Spring Grove  
 Edgar Augustine, Addison  
 Leon Baumgardner, Mifflin  
 John Carvell, New Holland  
 Dennis DeVore, Pittsfield  
 Robert Elick, Cherry Tree  
 Dean Geiman, Hanover  
 Dan Gregory, Kane  
 Darren Hoke, Spring Grove  
 Rick Hoover, Huntingdon  
 Mark Krumenacker, Carrolltown  
 Dale Laughman, Seven Valleys  
 Ralph Laughman, Hanover  
 Thomas Luchs, Ridgway  
 William Lyon, Emporium  
 Jeff Maynard, Kane  
 Joseph Miller, North Cambria  
 Lloyd Munsee, Lakewood  
 Ronald Myers, Guys Mills  
 David Quarles, Strasburg  
 William Shaffer, Jr., Dushore  
 Michael Smith, York  
 Samuel Yokum, Clearville  
 John Zaborowski, Wattsburg

## *Melville's Departure continued from page 16*

### *(Leavin' Town on the Next Train)*

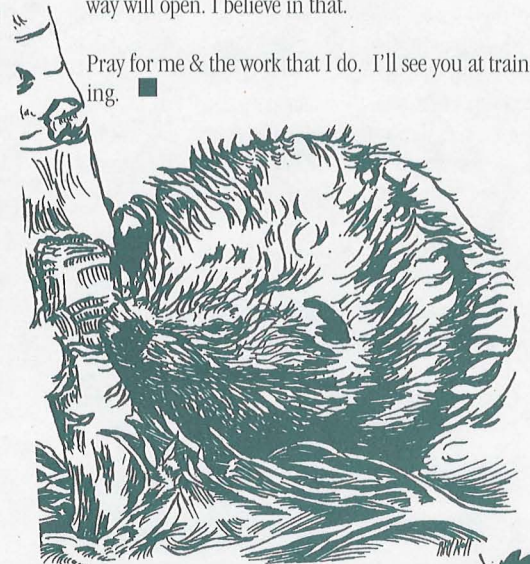
At the same time, more opportunities present themselves to me than I can easily fathom. My hopes are to continue to affect forest practices and the environmental debates which impact us all.

My resignation is born out of some key factors. My strengths lie in finding creative solutions to the problems we all face, and in presenting possible solutions to you, my friends. My needs are for light and action. As the program has matured, my job has become more and more inside, a condition that I have realized that my soul cannot endure. With the maturation of the program, the energy has become less creative and more administrative. Realizing these things led to my decision to pursue other stars.

I will continue to support the SFI Program in any way I am able. You need to also! When SFI came on the scene almost 6 years ago, I viewed it as the silver bullet against unfair environmental regulation, though it has many other benefits as well. We have come a long way in that time. We still have a long way to go. To keep on fighting misinformation, we all need to have the facts about the environmental effects of our activities and how to minimize the negative ones. We must continue to strive to redefine ourselves as a profession. I remain convinced that training is one of the most effective ways to accomplish that.

Many possible paths lie in front of me. Some will keep me in the forest products industry; some will not. In the immediate future, I plan to return to cutting down yard trees. That is how I paid my way through college. Perhaps my favorite kind of work is topping veneer and large sawtimber trees. If you have any of that kind of work, please contact me. I will continue to occasionally facilitate courses for the SFI of PA. I may seek a teaching/training position at a 2- or 4-year Forestry school. I may be able to continue my ministry of environmental education. The Quakers have a saying: The way will open. I believe in that.

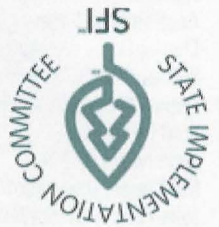
Pray for me & the work that I do. I'll see you at training. ■



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## TRAINING PROGRAM NEWS by Martin Melville

The Training Committee will meet on August 30. Matt Keefer's research shows loggers want to have more input about our training programs and policy. The following items will be discussed at the August 30 meeting. If you have opinions about the following items, or anything on this page, call the office and let us know what you think. Loggers matter.

### Possible SFI Policy Considerations

#### Policy for Sustainable Forestry & Business Management retro-credit.

The suggestion has been made that anyone who took the 2 half-day courses under the old system should receive 1 year of CE Credit when they earn their Core Level Card.

#### Policy for CE ahead.

There should be no cap on the number of years ahead that an individual can earn CE Credits. The original concern was that individuals would take numerous courses in 1 year, then take none after that. Experience has shown that those individuals take courses whether they need the CE Credit or not. Therefore, it does not make sense to penalize them.

#### SFI "Membership."

This will be the topic of a special meeting later this summer. The idea is that a company could pay for a known amount of training at the beginning of the year, and then send employees to courses as needed.

#### Change the CE requirement from 8 hours per year to 8 hours every other year.

#### Approval/accreditation of the PSU log & lumber grading short courses.

### Core Training is: Logging Safety, Environmental Logging, First Aid/CPR

Core courses will be on a sign-up basis. If you or your employees need a course, call the SFI Office to register. When an adequate number of people have registered, the course will be scheduled & held at a location that is as centrally located as possible.

### CE Training: 8 hours (one day) per year

During the next year, CE course offerings will be limited to Sustainable Forestry 1 & 2, Advanced Environmental Logging, and Business Management. Other courses such as Log Grading & bucking can be scheduled if a company can recruit enough people to hold it.

### Program Changes.

At least until the end of the year, the following changes will be in effect. The intent is to balance our budget so that we can continue to serve you.

- At some workshops, you will be expected to bring your own lunch. *Read the course announcement carefully.*
- CE Credit will no longer be granted for First Aid/CPR refresher courses.
- Courses will be held or canceled depending on the number of paid registrations in hand one week prior to the course. The importance of registering and paying early cannot be overstressed!
- CE Credit will be granted for conferences & industry events that promote or enhance the ability of those in attendance to practice sustainable forestry.
- Courses will remain at \$25. through 2001 with a cost increase after the new year.

### Special thanks.

Several companies responded quickly to a request for information about their employees. This information is being used to apply for a 1-year grant that covers 100% of the cost of "basic skills" training. The funding covers costs associated directly with training, such as instructor fees and handout materials. It does not cover administration, food and other non-training costs.

The companies who responded were:

Baumunk Lumber, Forksville  
Cummings Lumber, Troy  
Asel Enterprises, Kane  
Baker's Lumber, Cherry Tree  
Hyma Devore, Youngsville  
Cornerstone Forest Products, Kingsley  
Bradford Forest Products, Bradford  
John Allen Logging, Wysox  
Anthonic, Coalport  
Brookville Wood Products, Brookville  
Without your help, it would not be possible to apply for this grant. Thank you.

### Leavin' Town on the Next Train

It is with both sadness and aspiration that I have submitted my resignation to SFI of PA Program Manager, Ken Manno. Sadness because I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure here. This job has provided me with the opportunity to learn a tremendous amount, to help my fellow loggers, to keep their interests at the forefront as the training programs developed. I am thankful that the Lord has conferred these opportunities on me. I will miss the excitement of being at the head of the charge.

*continued on page 16*