

BETWEEN THE BRANCHES

ISSUE 62 APRIL 2025

TRIBUTE TO
Johnny Boyd

Rocky Mountain
LOGGING

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO
Love a Forest?

INNOVATION
in AUSTRALIA

Carbonizing
IN CALIFORNIA



BETWEEN THE BRANCHES

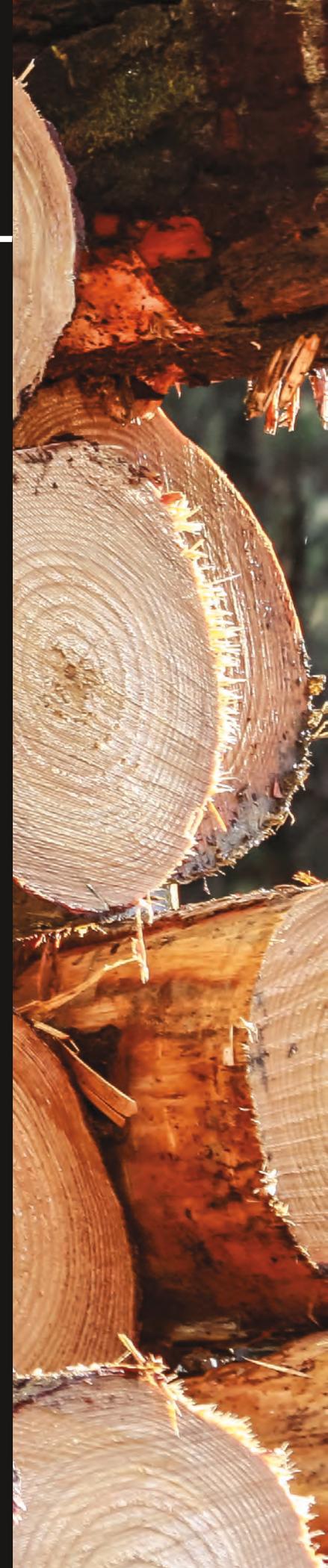
ISSUE 62 APRIL 2025

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FROM THE *Editor*

If there is a theme for this issue, it is resiliency – an increasingly important trait as the world seemingly gets stranger, less predictable, and more chaotic by the day.

This issue explores and celebrates logging professionals and trailblazers who have overcome extreme obstacles and succeeded. Ken Padgett survived a local industry meltdown in Tasmania decades after his father blazed a trail into the industry. Starting in Tasmania as a young sheep shearer looking for work, Andy Padgett went on to be awarded Australia's most prestigious civilian honour for his contributions to the forest industry.

Our late friend and colleague, Johnny Boyd survived a car crash and was never supposed to walk again. Instead, he spent over three decades contributing to the southern US logging industry, revamped and ran a sawmill, and developed a large, diversified farm operation, helping and mentoring countless people along the way.

A professional forester in Vermont bought a suffering forest property and brought it back to life through a combination of perseverance, hard work and good science, while working every day to educate the public on the topic of forest management. A young Michigan logger has been building his business and reputation since he was a teenager, while making his local woodlots resilient for future generations.

On the other side of the continent, Dan Falk and his partners, Dede and Roger Smullen are working on multiple fronts to build fire resiliency into California's forests and communities. A BC operator moved his life and family to Alberta and built a company that works the slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

In fact, every Tigercat customer featured in the pages of this publication takes multiple calculated risks to operate in the harsh, capital intensive and cyclical nature of the forest industry. It's not for the faint of heart, whether the operation is in Louisiana or Quebec. Grit and resiliency go a long way.

– Paul Iarocci

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Nick Edwards

US District Manager Update

Tigercat announces changes to its district manager team and territories in the southern United States.

Following the recent passing of Johnny Boyd, who served as a Tigercat district manager since 1996, Tigercat is pleased to announce the promotion of Nicholas Edwards to District Manager.

With a strong technical background and extensive experience as a technician and operations manager for various heavy equipment brands, Nick has excelled as a product support representative for Tigercat since 2021. His skills make him well suited to manage dealer support and development in his new role. “Nick has been an invaluable member of Tigercat’s product support field team, and this promotion is a well-deserved opportunity,” states US Sales Manager Kevin Selby.

Nick will continue to provide technical support to Tigercat dealers and customers until a new product support representative is brought onboard for the regions of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

The southern US district manager territories have been redefined as follows:

Nick Edwards will oversee Texas, the portion of Louisiana that falls south of I-20, three B & G Equipment territories in Mississippi served by store locations in Philadelphia, Magnolia and Hattiesburg, as well as the territory covered by B & G’s Moundville, Alabama location.

Don Snively’s territory will expand to include Tidewater’s Alabama territory as well as the territory of Alabama dealer Forestry 21. Don also covers Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Tidewater’s territory in North Carolina.

James Farquhar will focus on Arkansas, north Louisiana (above I-20) as well as the territory of B & G Equipment’s Iuka store, extending from north Mississippi into Tennessee. James also covers Oklahoma, New Mexico, Montana, Colorado and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. ■



James Farquhar

Support Appointment in Brazil

TIGERCAT EXPANDS PRODUCT SUPPORT TEAM IN BRAZIL.

In its ongoing efforts to provide first class after sale support and technical expertise, Tigercat has added its fourth member, Eberson Batista dos Santos, to the product support team in Brazil.

Based in Curitiba, Parana state, Eberson assumes the role of factory support representative for Brazil. He will work closely with Tigercat dealer Tracbel to provide after sale technical and operational support for Tigercat's growing line of forestry, silviculture, and material processing equipment.

Eberson has thirteen years' experience in the technical maintenance of forestry equipment. He is familiar with Tigercat equipment from his work with former Tigercat dealer in Brazil, Latin Equipment. Eberson is also certified as a mobile wood chipper and grinder technician.

Excited about the opportunity to work for Tigercat, Eberson states, "Working for one of the Tigercat dealerships in the past has allowed me to become familiar with Tigercat equipment, its capabilities, performance, and build quality. This experience has sparked a strong interest in supporting customer needs."

"We are thrilled to welcome Eberson to the team," says Frans Misdorp, District Manager for South America. "His extensive experience in the industry and with Tigercat equipment will undoubtedly benefit us, our dealers, and our valued customers." ■



Eberson Batista dos Santos

CABLE ASSIST *Solution*



Tigercat has long been recognized as the leader in conventional ground based steep slope harvesting. With the release of the 180 swing yarder in 2022, and now the 120 winch assist, Tigercat is leveraging its deep experience in steep slope harvesting to create cable systems that complement the ground-based harvesting equipment.

It is now possible to assemble a fully mechanized Tigercat steep slope harvesting system with the option for cable assisted feller bunchers, shovel loggers, track and wheel harvesters, skidders and forwarders, as well as the very capable 180 swing yarder.

The 120 winch assist is fully integrated with all the latest generation Tigercat steep slope capable carriers, providing seamless communications and optimal

hydraulic efficiency. The 120 is also designed to work without travel signal integration. The basic installation, requiring only the in-cab control unit and antennas, allows the 120 to be mated to any carrier.

The 120 sits on a full forest duty F8 undercarriage for excellent durability and mobility. The upper assembly has a sloped tail for added manoeuvrability on narrow mountain roads. The powerful, heavy duty boom system with choice of a bucket or other attachments firmly anchors the machine and can take on basic roadbuilding duties. With ample below grade capability, the boom can extend over the road bank to firmly anchor the machine. All machine functions are actuated with an ergonomic and intuitive remote control system.

Access to daily service points and major components is convenient with large swing-out doors for the engine and pump enclosures, and prop-up roof sections to access winch system components.

High capacity cooling combined with a secondary hydraulic braking circuit provides highly effective braking assistance and heat dissipation for higher-speed rubber tire machines such as skidders, forwarders and harvesters.

The relatively long distance between the boom-mounted sheave and the winch, and the powered cable tension system combine to provide neat and reliable rope spooling. With the boom anchor system planted firmly in the ground, the cable can be operated off to the side of the machine, thanks to the pivoting sheave. ■

610H CABLE SKIDDER

The new 610H cable skidder is aimed at end users requiring a simple, lower cost machine for high value hardwood timber extraction in tough terrain.

The Tigercat FPT N67 engine delivers 151 kW (202 hp) to the same hydrostatic driveline as the other H-series skidders. The machine is equipped with 620H sized axles for added durability.

Equipped with a simplified H-series operator's cabin, the 610H comes standard with a fixed position operator's seat that is angled at 30 degrees, providing easy entry and exit and a good view of both the front and rear of the machine. The cabin makes no compromise on industry standard features like electronic joystick steering, cruise control and climate control.

The heavy-duty winch provides maximum line pull at any engine speed. The winch can drop loads and drive away and reel in a load while driving using a wet-disk

dynamic clutch. It has very low free spool resistance, allowing for easier cable extraction using a mechanical jaw clutch. ■



UPGRADED KNUCKLEBOOM LOADER LINE

234C and 250E.

For decades, Tigercat 234 and 250 series loaders have been a staple on southern US landings, excelling at tasks such as delimiting, slashing, merchandising and loading trucks. Among other improvements, the latest knuckleboom loaders offer an improved operator experience, stronger boom systems and greater swing torque.

The new operator's station is roomier with 16% greater internal volume, enhancing legroom and adding width. The joysticks and switches are mounted on the armrests within comfortable reach. An improved climate control system allows the operator to set the desired temperature for a more comfortable and temperature-

consistent working environment. Climate controlled cupholders keep drinks hot or cold for longer. Dedicated in-cabin storage areas include a space for a full size Tigercat insulated lunchbox.

Operator visibility has been improved with larger front and side windows. The wiper motor, radio and touchscreen display control system have all been relocated for improved sightlines. A work light has been added to the right side of the engine enclosure for better visibility to the delimitter during early morning and low light operating conditions. The redesigned swing motor cover further improves the operator's line-of-sight to the work area. The cover has integrated storage for

tools and grease. Both models have been upgraded with an electric pump hydraulic oil fill system. These added conveniences enhance the operator experience and make daily maintenance routines more efficient.

Because of the increased swing torque, the boom system has in turn been strengthened to handle the increased lateral forces now available to the operator for tough pull-through delimiting applications. The boom cylinders are cushioned at the end of stroke for smoother boom operation. A through-tip yoke routes hydraulic hoses to the grapple from the end of the boom for increased hose protection. ■



Sloping Tail PLATFORM



New feller buncher, harvester and shovel logger models based on the new steep terrain platform.

Tigercat has released several track carrier products based on Tigercat's innovative steep terrain sloping tail platform. The 857 model designation includes a feller buncher, harvester and shovel logger. These models are Tigercat FPT N67 powered, with an open loop track drive system.

The larger Tigercat FPT C87 engine powers the LX877 feller buncher equipped with a high performance closed loop track drive system. The LX877 is best suited to high production, steep slopes and mature timber clear fell applications.

For both the L857 and the LX877, the redesigned ER feller buncher boom system provides a larger envelope with tighter tuck and increased below grade capability. Through-tip hose routing offers better protection of the boom hoses leading to the felling head. The boom has three operating modes – ER, semi-ER and conventional – and can be set based on operating conditions, tree size and operator preference.

The sloping tail platform takes ground based steep terrain logging to the next level. Optimized weight distribution and low centre of mass, along with Tigercat's patented super duty leveling undercarriage,

provide the operator with comfort, stability and confidence on sloped terrain. The sloped tail profile provides increased leveling capability to 26 degrees, and better cable clearance in winch assisted applications.

Other enhancements include further improvements to service access, and in-tank hydraulic filtration for extended service intervals. The side opening engine enclosure completely exposes the top and both sides of the engine and most hydraulic components. When open, the enclosure roof serves as a safe, spacious and convenient work platform. ■

A LEGACY CONTINUES

After 29 years as a Tigercat dealer in Louisiana, Patrick-Miller Tractor Company is acquired by MidSouth Forestry Equipment.

Since 1996, Patrick-Miller Tractor Company has been committed to serving customers across Louisiana with tough, durable equipment and outstanding customer service. “Tigercat has been a blessing for me and my family,” says Doug Patrick, former owner of Patrick-Miller. “It’s been a family operation. You know your customers by name. We talk about stuff, not necessarily about work, and if anyone needs to sit down with me, my office door has always been open.”

Doug takes pride in the company he built. “I never wanted to be the biggest dealer Tigercat had. I just wanted to be the best. I didn’t want the whole pie. I just wanted a slice to keep the business open and support my family.”

The roots of Patrick-Miller go all the way back to 1948. “My dad, E.M. Patrick, had a wholesale grocery business at the time and they serviced all these little stores around the parish. Back then they were skidding logs with mules. A

man by the name of Horace Sanders, he was an agriculture teacher down here. And Horace had the idea that you could skid logs with a tractor. So they hooked up with the Ford tractor distributor down near New Orleans, and they started selling Ford 8Ns and of course they sold them to farmers also. Sanders had a stroke and died in 1953 and W.R. Miller’s wife was my dad’s bookkeeper. My dad and Miller formed Patrick-Miller in 1953.”

For many years, Patrick-Miller was predominantly an ag equipment dealer. “We had Ford tractors and Log Hog. Log Hog took a Ford tractor and turned it into a skidder. They put a little protection and a canopy over it and put a dozer blade on it. They cut the front axle off and dropped it down to give more ground clearance. And they put little tongs on the back. They weren’t hydraulic but the boom was hydraulic. The tongs just opened up and slipped over the log. In those days, the sawman cut the tree down and topped it. Then he cut the tree right in the middle. The Log Hog would back up at the cut, drop the boom, and two grabs would pick up the logs.”

Patrick-Miller moved to its current location in 1966 and the company continued to sell the converted Ford tractor skidders for many years. “When Log Hog went under, Peerless came along and we started selling their loaders. We sold that for a few years, and then Timberjack bought



Jeff Rains, Doug Patrick and James Farquhar.



Jon Bierbaum in the Warren, Arkansas branch.

them out and we got booted out the door. That's when I started hustling for Tigercat," says Doug. "You know, Louisiana Machinery used to brag about Tigercat. They would sell it and didn't have to worry about it. Bulletproof. I called Bruce Hutchinson [then owner of Tigercat Evergreen, Alabama dealer, Cotten Hutcheson] and he gave me Johnny Boyd's phone number. I pestered Johnny for nearly a year. It was Johnny that put me in business and that's been a blessing. Tigercat put Patrick-Miller on the map and kept it on there ever since."

At the time, several Caterpillar dealers were selling the Tigercat 726 and 720 feller bunchers in the southern US, including Louisiana Tractor and Riggs in Arkansas. In 1996 when Patrick-Miller got the Tigercat line, the company was primarily selling the 720 in parallel with Louisiana Machinery. "We doubled the market share on wheel cutters from July 1996 until the end of the year," says Doug. In 1997 Doug got access to the 630 skidder and by 1998, he had a full Tigercat product line with the addition of the 230 loader.

Still early days for Tigercat and its product development efforts,

Doug and his team experienced the growing pains right along with the factory team. For James Farquhar, Tigercat District Manager based in Arkansas – who at that time worked in the service department – it has all come full circle. "I spent a hundred plus days working in Doug's shop here in the late nineties rebuilding skidder transmissions. I went to church with Doug for Easter and had dinner at his house after. It was the only holiday I ever missed with my kids," he recalls.

Doug had several offers to purchase the dealership and felt like MidSouth was the best fit. He liked the way MidSouth conducted business, and he saw similarities in culture and customer base. Ultimately Doug felt the match-up would be a great fit for his employees.

With neighbouring territories, the two dealers have always cooperated and worked well together. MidSouth owner and dealer principal Jon Bierbaum agrees that the two companies share a similar culture. "I thought everything about it was a good fit and when we got down here and met the team, we saw they shared our commitment to putting the customer first."

Jon knows firsthand the quality of Tigercat equipment, having run it on his own logging jobs before becoming involved with MidSouth fifteen years ago. Many members of the team at MidSouth have been with Tigercat in Arkansas for over twenty years, and Jon credits them with contributing significantly to the success of MidSouth Forestry.

General Manager Jeff Rains came on board with MidSouth Forestry six years ago. "I grew up in Robeline, Louisiana so I am familiar with the area. We are excited to get out and meet with our customers and let them know that their production is our top priority."

Patrick-Miller's existing team will continue to service the customer base. The merger allows the entire area of responsibility to see better coverage from more locations. The Many, Louisiana dealership will be MidSouth's fourth location, adding to its existing stores in Warren, Caddo Valley, and Springfield that already service customers in Arkansas and north Louisiana.

"We are grateful for all the hard work that Doug put into growing Patrick-Miller," says Jon. "We will do our best to preserve that legacy and build on it." ■

GRUPO TIMBO *in Paraguay*

Tigercat expands its dealership network in South America with the addition of Grupo Timbo in Paraguay.

Frans Misdorp, Tigercat South American District Manager, began traveling to Paraguay in early 2024 to evaluate commercial opportunities, focusing on some of the plantation projects being developed east of the Rio Paraguay from Asunción northward towards Concepción. Frans was introduced to the company Grupo Timbo. After meeting Chairman, Rolando Zuccolillo and his son, Director Renato Zuccolillo, Frans extended an invitation to visit Tigercat in Canada.

Rolando and Renato made the journey last June. The connection between the Tigercat team and the Grupo Timbo team was seamless, as both companies stem from similar family-run backgrounds. After a two-day visit, the parties reached consensus on how to move forward

together. Grupo Timbo officially became Tigercat's exclusive Paraguay dealer during a January 2025 dealer agreement signing ceremony in Asunción.

Grupo Timbo originated in Paraguay's transport industry, specializing in bus and road freight, and later expanding into the construction sector. The 36-year-old company has eight sales and service outlets. A ninth location is currently under construction in Concepción.

The Concepción location will be strategically positioned near a new pulp mill being constructed by forestry company Paracel. Initial plantation efforts primarily involved private growers cultivating *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. However, with improved silvicultural practices and site preparation, *Eucalyptus urophylla* clones

have been introduced, leading to improved per hectare yields. Although the region receives adequate rainfall, Paracel has implemented a state-of-the-art early fire detection system that utilizes infrared camera technology to protect its forest assets during dry periods. The mill will begin operating in the first quarter of 2027. Once at full capacity, it plans to intake 6,3 million tonnes annually.

Rolando gained insight into the forest industry from his father, who shared interesting stories from his early days procuring round logs to feed his sawmill on the outskirts of Asunción. Rolando has developed a deep understanding of the forest harvesting process and future equipment needs in Paraguay. ■



(L-R) Martin Cambas (Manager Offroad Equipment, Grupo Timbo), Luis Reguera (Salesperson Offroad Equipment, Grupo Timbo), Fernando Moreno (General Manager, Grupo Timbo), Gary Olsen (International Sales Manager Southern Hemisphere, Tigercat), Rolando Zuccolillo (Chairman, Grupo Timbo), Renato Zuccolillo (Director, Grupo Timbo), Gustavo Gavilan (former Marketing Assistant, Grupo Timbo)

COMPOST 2025



Tigercat demonstrates 6900 grinder in Phoenix.

– Aaron Murray, Product Specialist, Material Processing

The City of Phoenix, Arizona once again partnered with the US Composting Council to put together this year's COMPOST 2025 which ran from January 27-30. The static portion of the show was hosted at the Phoenix Convention Center, with the live demo day taking place at the City of Phoenix Composting Facility on January 30.

This was Tigercat's first year as an exhibitor, demonstrating the 6900 grinder for around 900 industry experts. Tigercat brought along sales and product support team members as well as key engineering staff to interact with potential customers and support dealer representatives from Bejac and Triad. The team stayed busy throughout the event fielding a

steady stream of questions and showing off the benefits and capabilities of the 6900.

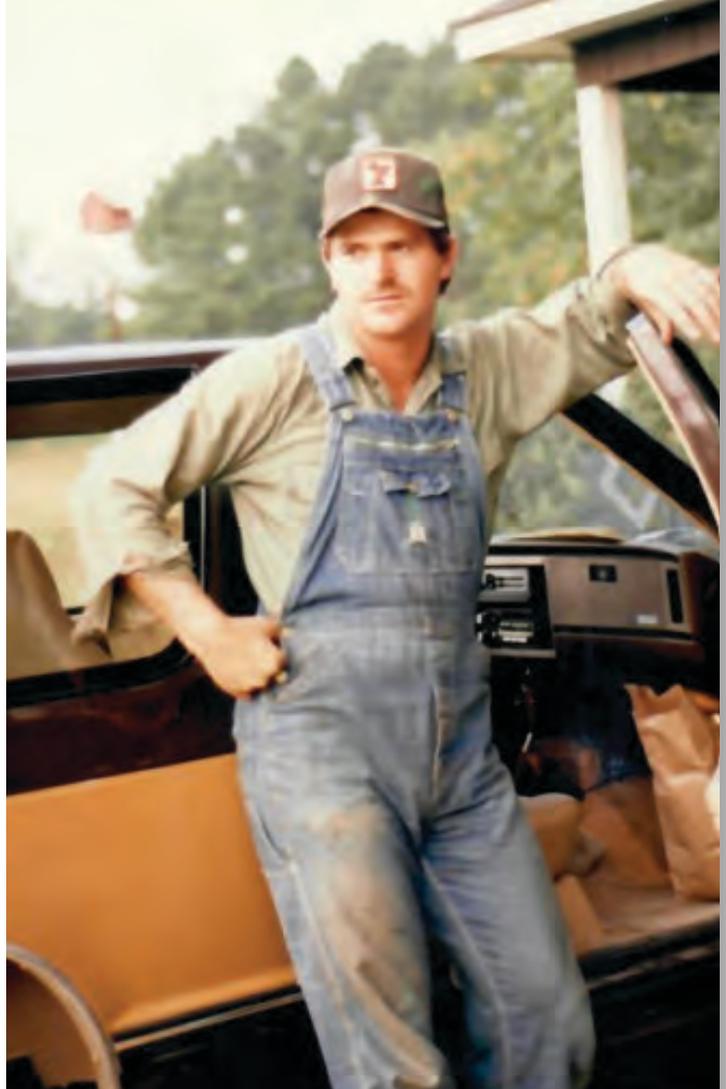
The demonstration day was well organized and started with two groups of screeners each running for fifteen minutes, followed by grinders, shredders and finally windrow turners. After lunch each vendor had another opportunity to screen, grind, shred or turn for the attendees. The 6900 breezed through a continuous mix of grasses, palm fronds, brush, and mixed hardwood pieces without issue. Following USCC guidelines, the 6900 was equipped with a grate package that produced a 4-5 in (100-150 mm) minus end product with very few oversized pieces.

After each demonstration the ropes were lowered allowing potential customers to get up close to the machines and ask questions. The attendees were impressed by the durability, accessibility, and innovations the 6900 brings to the grinding world. The upper hog box and top feed roll assembly opens over centre to provide safe, unobstructed overhead access to the grate liners. A centre pivot allows the operator to use the remote control to tilt the machine to adjust both the infeed angle and discharge height. Many in attendance commented positively on the fit and finish and ease of maintenance. ■

LARGER THAN LIFE

John Walter Boyd, of Wetumpka, Alabama passed away on November 25, 2024. He was 62 years old. Johnny had a big influence and impact on the lives of many. He was a true one-of-a-kind.

– Paul Iarocci



Johnny standing in front of the home of his grandparents, Bud and Granny. Sprague, Alabama in November 1985.

Johnny Boyd worked as a district manager with Tigercat for nearly 30 years before tragically passing at age 62. Johnny was more than a work colleague. He was a loyal friend and mentor to many at Tigercat. He had a similarly positive impact in all other spheres of his life. With his unique gait and booming southern drawl, Johnny was the life of the party. He was also a hard worker, a great thinker, and a talented problem solver.

Johnny studied at Auburn University, and his first employer out of school in 1984 was Koehring's Canadian Division, a producer of pulp and paper machinery, excavators, and forestry equipment located in Brantford, Ontario. It was at Koehring that Johnny made first

connections with a bunch of Canadians, many of whom ended up at Tigercat. As a 22-year-old factory representative, Johnny went

“HE WAS ALWAYS ABLE TO JUST MOVE ON, AND MAKE SURE THAT THE NEXT DECISION WAS IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION.”

– Justin Barrett, Johnny's nephew

on to make an outsize contribution to the southern US logging industry. He travelled extensively,

meeting industry professionals and painstakingly shepherding Koehring's new high speed disc saws into one logging operation after another. The effect of Johnny's tireless efforts to introduce this concept represents one of the more significant step changes in harvesting productivity in modern times in the southern United States.

Early in his career, Johnny was involved in a car accident that resulted in a serious and significant back injury. The chronic pain he experienced was exhausting, agonizing and life altering. As Jennie Barrett, Johnny's sister recalls, “The accident happened in Louisiana in 1986. When we were at that hospital, they told him he would never walk again. And he

told them he would, 'Just watch me,' he said. And he did take a few steps when he left the hospital, just to prove he could. He spent a good bit of time in rehab and then he lived with us for six months. It's amazing that he was able to do the things that he did so soon after the accident. He would climb up on that tractor or get up under something to work on it. Nobody could really tell, but it was quite a feat for him to accomplish these things."

Jennie says that her father's is a family of tinkers. "My grandfather was known in his community as the person that you take something to, and he could fix it. We called him Bud. Johnny grew up right there under him. Every move he made, Johnny was with him. And my dad and my uncles were equally capable. They were good mechanics and they could weld. I think that's where Johnny got the skills that he had."

Work smarter, not harder was a truism for Johnny and he was always looking for a way to build a gadget or tweak something to make it easier for him, particularly after the accident. He held patents for some of the devices he had created over the years to make work easier. "He had this dog named Rusty," Jennie recalls. "He loved Rusty and Rusty loved him and protected him. In fact, he had bitten several people. Johnny could not stoop over quickly and grab a hold of Rusty to keep him from attacking somebody. So he attached a short rope to his collar and Rusty would drag it around. If somebody came up, Johnny could step on that rope. That's not a mechanical thing, but it was a way to function and to be able to do things without a struggle."

Sawmilling

Wayne Cale served as a Tigercat district manager from 1998 to 2004 and is currently a dealer principal at CTW, a Tigercat dealer in North Carolina. "Johnny had worked with Koehring and he wanted to get off the road because of his back," Wayne remembers. "He had met Albert Tarkenton over here. Tarkenton Brothers were big loggers. Back in the eighties when Johnny would go around and see customers, he would stay at their house and then went to the logging jobs with them in the morning. Albert was one of the first loggers

in eastern North Carolina to buy a Koehring 618 track feller buncher. Johnny sold three of them to three different loggers over here at one time."

Wayne explains that Albert was getting out of logging and had purchased a former MacMillan Bloedel sawmill. "They cut cedar and actually the cedar was running out down here, so they were going to convert it to a pine mill." Craving a change in his life, Johnny became a partner in Albemarle Forest Products and moved from Alabama to Edenton, North Carolina.

Johnny's spent a great deal of time working with and learning from his grandfather Bud about farming, mechanics and sawing timber among other life skills.





Back to work and out on a logging job in Coushatta, Louisiana in August 1987, just eight months after the accident.

“I first met Johnny through some friends,” says Wayne. “We got to talking and I told him that I was getting ready to graduate college. They were putting in a band saw to cut grade pine lumber and they were looking for a sawyer. Johnny ended up hiring me. I helped build the sawmill and I learned a lot from Johnny about hydraulics and welding. He was working, hands-on, all day. He would go and go until he couldn’t go anymore. And I think that took a big toll on his body. We hung out on the weekends together. I’d go to his house and he’d be in there just lying on the floor because his back was killing him. But then he would get up and we would go out on the boat. When the mill was finished, he trained me to be the sawyer.”

Johnny had reasons for doing everything and often the logic was a mix of objective practicality and a subjective reverence for the

aspects of his life and the people he valued most. His grandfather Bud was one of those people. Bud operated a small sawmill in a pasture on his farm. During evenings, weekends and summers through middle school, highschool and into college, Johnny worked with his grandfather and learned how to work with wood and saw lumber. “Johnny was interested in that sawmill because he had grown up with my grandfather... being his shadow,” says Jennie.

Farming

In 1992, Johnny made the decision to sell his interest in the sawmill and move back to Alabama. He purchased a 600-acre farm, fulfilling a lifelong dream. Before his passing, he had developed the farm into a diversified multi-faceted operation employing six people and covering 1,200 acres of owned and rented land. He had five chicken houses and 400 acres

of cropland for corn and soybeans – 120 of that irrigated. Johnny developed a cow/calf operation with 250 cows. He produced dry hay during the summer and rye grass hay in the spring. He supplied feed to all his own cows as well as other farmers.

Johnny left the farm to his nephew Justin Barrett. “He had even started a retail beef shop and sold his own meat to the local community. It was a diversified operation,” says Justin. “His goal was to reduce risk across multiple ag types.” Johnny was a critical figure in Justin’s life. “I grew up on that farm. When I was a kid, I probably spent more time at his house than my own – helping and working and that kind of stuff. He basically took me in as his son.” Justin is proud to have the opportunity to carry on Johnny’s legacy.

He takes pains to point out Johnny’s fierce work ethic combined with his talent for invention. “I think work

for him was therapy to manage his pain and the stuff that was going on in his life,” says Justin. “At the same time, he was really good at fabricating and fixing things. There’s stuff on that farm that nobody else had because he made it. If there was a way to make something easier, he would make a gadget – even if that took longer than just finishing the job. He would rather be making the gadget.”

Justin explains that when Johnny first bought the farm, he upgraded the chicken houses and developed a feed mill with 50,000 bushels of storage and his own elevator for grain handling. He grew most of the corn and purchased the other inputs like cotton seed, soy pellets, additives and minerals. He had a feed mixer and produced a half dozen different rations for calves, cows, even deer feed. “The feed mill was really the heart of it,” says Justin. “He loved the feed customers coming in the gate. I think it was the highlight of his day. People would bring their kids to talk to him. That’s what he loved to do – talk to kids and encourage them. No matter what their interest was, he was always a positive influence.”

Jennie agrees with her son. The farm was part of his social life. “He did not like being by himself. Justin talks about people coming into the feed store. Sometimes they didn’t even buy anything. And you know people still come by there. They just drive in and want to look for somebody to talk to – because that’s what they did with Johnny.”

Logging industry

By 1996, Johnny had returned to the logging industry. He had too many contacts and was too well respected to stay out of it for long. This time around he would work for Tigercat, another Brantford-based company, as its second US district manager.

Meanwhile back in North Carolina, changes at the sawmill caused Wayne to question its ongoing viability. He asked if Johnny would

help him to find a new job. Johnny suggested the two of them attend some forestry industry shows together. “So Johnny carried me to some of those shows and introduced me to different people.” That effort resulted in Wayne becoming Tigercat’s third district manager. “He gave me that opportunity,” says Wayne. “If he knew somebody would put forth an effort, he’d help you all he could. He was just that type of person. And they don’t come by that often.”



Johnny in his element, his farm shop. He was very good at fixing, adapting and inventing ways to work smarter.



Johnny was a constant presence at southern forestry and logging expos and events for nearly 30 years as a Tigercat district manager.

Tigercat US Sales Manager, Kevin Selby first met Johnny in 1999. Over the years, the two developed a close relationship. “Johnny was not only a work colleague, he was also a mentor and a good friend,” says Kevin. “Travelling with him was always an adventure and always entertaining. I will certainly miss riding around in whatever filthy truck he decided to pick me up in at the airport with.” (Among all of Johnny’s talents, vehicle detailing was apparently absent.)

Kevin had a clear perspective on how Johnny worked with people and why he was so successful in his role at Tigercat. “He was very passionate about his job and genuinely cared about Tigercat, his colleagues, dealers and customers,” Kevin explains. “He was bold and honest and that’s what people liked about him.”

Johnny had a unique ability to work through and defuse commercial

problems and situations. “Working through conflict is always challenging, but his friendly personality always seemed to make these situations less stressful. He always tried to do what was right and fair. This gained him the trust and respect of our dealers and customers,” says Kevin.

Johnny played to his strengths. He wasn’t a super technical guy when it came to computers and electronics. “It was the mechanics and hydraulics of machinery that made him tick,” says Kevin. “He was one of those backyard engineer types who was good at identifying a problem or opportunity and figuring out a solution.”

Vice President of Engineering, Jon Cooper met Johnny back in 1991 while doing field research for the 726 feller buncher design. “We were travelling in the area near the sawmill Johnny was co-owner of and stopped for a visit. Johnny

took us for a tour. I watched in awe as Wayne Cale ran the band saw making boards from logs. The next time I met Johnny was in December 1995 when he joined Tigercat and visited the factory.”

Jon and Johnny travelled a lot together throughout the southern US. “We became friends right away. We had a lot of common interests and values. When he found out I liked to hunt, he invited me to his place for a private dove hunt,” Jon recalls. “He had a special field that the doves loved to flock to. After a week of work on the road, we went to his place. He said we were going to be smoking ribs and doves. However, we first needed to build the smoker. No problem for us. Johnny had already cut the spherical ends out of a large propane tank. We welded them together to make a large sphere, added three legs to set it on and then a firebox and chimney. It

“IF HE KNEW SOMEBODY WOULD PUT FORTH AN EFFORT, HE’D HELP YOU ALL HE COULD. HE WAS JUST THAT TYPE OF PERSON.”

– Wayne Cale, longtime friend and co-worker

was one of the largest home-built smokers I had ever seen; we needed a tractor loader to move it. We fired it up and made some of the best ribs I have ever tasted. The next day we hunted birds and smoked them to perfection. For me, when visiting Johnny, it seemed there was always something special planned. But for him, it was his way of life.”

According to Jon, one of Johnny’s professional strengths was that he always looked for the good in people and situations. “When things were not going the way they should, you could count on Johnny to help bring them back in line. He could speak with people in a compassionate way and empathize with them sincerely. Others could easily see that more than anything, he wanted to help.”

Helping and mentoring

One of Justin Barrett’s best friends growing up was Daniel Jones. As a young teen Daniel went through a very difficult period at home. Growing up playing sports with Justin, he knew Johnny from the sidelines, forever the tireless cheerleader. One day he got a call out of the blue. “I was trying to get out of the house for the summer. And one day Johnny called and said, ‘Hey, you want to come help me on the farm?’ I jumped at the opportunity to learn from Johnny,” Daniel remembers.

“We would ride around at the farm and check on cows and talk about life for hours.” The pair bonded and Johnny mentored Daniel on the farm for years. “I started working out there and he eventually kind of picked me up under his wing, like his son. He taught me so much. Practical things like how to work; how to be efficient. He taught me how to think about debt on the farm, and how to think about cashflow. I learned a lot of things about business, but he also taught me a lot about personal relationships. He always joked I couldn’t hit a nail with a hammer when I showed up and that was true. Four or five years later, I was running the whole farm when he was gone away.”

Daniel describes Johnny as “a weird combination of the loudest alpha male in the room and the kindest person you could ever meet. He would push your buttons to see where you’re at and then he would back off and give you a big hug. He would test me all the time.” Daniel relates that he once put the front tire of a tractor into a creek and couldn’t get it out. “We had to go borrow another big tractor and drive it twenty miles on the road to tow it out.” Johnny had some choice words for Daniel and kept on him for the rest of the day. “Then the next day I show up to work with my head down, feeling like I

screwed up. He was fine, like it was over. He said, ‘You’re going to make mistakes. That’s how you learn.’ I made a lot of mistakes, and he kept putting up with me.”

Justin explains that Johnny was like a father, a brother, and a son all at the same time to both himself and Daniel. “He would take care of us like a father would and we’d have fun like we were brothers. But then sometimes we’d have to take care of him like he was our son. We were twenty years apart in age, but it just worked out that way.” Johnny had a challenging life and many setbacks that might drive other people to harden with cynicism. Instead, he did the opposite. “He didn’t mind telling you he loved you,” says Justin. “He didn’t mind hugging you. He supported people and had a very positive outlook on his whole life. He just loved to love people.”

For me, what stands out most was Johnny’s ability to maintain optimism and a smile in the face of great adversity. His philosophy was to acknowledge that whatever happened in the past was not nearly as important as the next decision. As Justin puts it, “He was always able to just move on, and make sure that the next decision was in a positive direction.” This is the quality that I and many others will forever admire in him. ■

Louisiana Venture

North Louisiana logger Beau Malone, owner of Beau Malone Trucking and 4M Logging, talks about how he got started, the importance of great after sale support and first impressions of the new 234C loader.

– Paul Iarocci





The 4M Logging crew. (L-R) Trey Malone, Beau Malone, Bobby Jackson, Chucky Demoss and David Young.

Based in Plain Dealing, Louisiana Beau Malone grew up in the logging industry. “From the time I hit the ground, my grandpa would come get me in diapers and bring me to the woods,” says Beau. “My daddy and my grandpa had a business for years and years.”

When Beau’s grandfather retired, his father went to work for Beau’s cousin, Hershel Malone. “And when I graduated high school, I went to work for him as well.” Beau left the logging industry for a time and worked in the oil field on a drilling rig. “But I didn’t enjoy it,” Beau explains. He returned to his cousin’s business, working another five years before finally venturing out on his own. “I bought a cutter and went to contract cutting for another cousin of mine. That would

be eight or nine years ago.” At the time Beau and his cousin, Greg Malone struggled with reliable log hauling, so Beau purchased a truck and started Beau Malone Trucking. He grew the fleet from a single truck to six, providing the pair self-sufficiency in hauling.

“WE’RE PROBABLY AT LEAST TWO-AND-A-HALF HOURS FROM THE MIDSOUTH LOCATION, BUT THE SERVICE HAS BEEN SPOT-ON.”

– Beau Malone, owner of 4M Logging

“About four years ago, we split on good terms. I already had trucks, so I bought logging equipment and went out on my own, founding 4M Logging.” Beau picked up a used Deere skidder and a low hour loader to get started. He slowly began converting his fleet to Tigercat, first seeking out used machines and then purchasing new iron from MidSouth Forestry Equipment in Caddo Valley, Arkansas. Beau credits his cousin Greg for helping him get the logging business established. “He helped me out tremendously. If it weren’t for him, I probably wouldn’t be where I’m at.”

Best support

What factors made Beau switch to Tigercat? “The number one thing is the resale. They hold value more than anything. Second is the



Beau appreciates Tigercat's through-tip routing, offering excellent protection for the hydraulic hoses supplying the grapple.

service. We're probably at least two-and-a-half hours from the MidSouth location, but the service has been spot-on." Beau relates that early into his venture, he purchased a second-hand 2014 model Tigercat loader. "Two days after I bought it, it started messing up. It was the only piece of Tigercat equipment I had on the job, and I didn't buy it from MidSouth. I called them and the next day they had a guy out there changing injectors, getting it going." Beau was impressed by the level of service and attention that he received from MidSouth, even though he wasn't yet a customer of the dealership.

On another occasion a planned repair on a Tigercat feller buncher was taking longer to complete than expected. His crew had put a lot of wood on the ground in anticipation of the downtime, but the skidders were catching up fast. Beau called his MidSouth salesman, Mathew Smith and explained the situation. The next morning a lowbed pulled

up with a loaner machine. "We were back down here cutting wood and we never missed a lick. That right there in my opinion, carries a lot of weight. That goes a long

way; somebody willing to do that to keep a customer rolling." From that day forward, Beau has worked with MidSouth on all his new machine purchases.

Beau's Tigercat 720G equipped with the 5702 felling saw working in second thinning in north Louisiana.





Two Tigercat skidders pull to two Tigercat loaders.

These days, Beau runs one crew with two skidders (Tigercat 630H and 620H models), one feller buncher (a 720G with a 5702 felling saw) and 234B and 234C loaders both equipped with pull through delimiters and ground saws for merchandising logs. The crew is optimized for clear falling. However, Beau finds himself on second thinning jobs from time to time – especially during rainy winter when there is less good ground to choose from. Beau says that his crew will travel up to a one-hundred-mile radius from home to find dry ground.

On big clear fell jobs, the skidders pull to both loaders which merchandise and load trucks. On tighter job sites or during wet winter conditions, he might set up one loader for delimiting and a second machine closer to roadside for truck loading. Beau finds the 5702 saw to be a very high performer in clear fell and well matched to most second thinning jobs.

Beau cuts on private land, contracting to two wood buyers, Trey Maxwell Logging and S & C Operating Inc. Beau's trucks haul ply logs to Emerson, Arkansas. Chip-n-saw goes to the Bienville Lumber Company in Taylor. Pulpwood goes the Weyerhaeuser OSB mill in Arcadia or the WestRock pulp mill in Hodge. Beau likes the reliability that comes with having control of trucking as opposed to the uncertainty of contract hauling. "All this pretty yellow equipment doesn't mean anything without a truck. If you can't get rid of what you've got in a pile, then it's doing you no good," he says.

First impressions 234C loader

Beau has some good things to say about his new 234C loader. He likes the through-tip hose routing to the grapple a lot. "On every other loader the hoses make a loop and they're exposed. It is not uncommon that they will get nicked and cut.

With the 234C, they are well protected and I really like that." Beau figures that over time, the improved hose routing will increase uptime and machine availability.

Beau likes the feel of the hydraulic system, especially the pilot-controlled boom functions. Beau and his 21-year-old son Trey both put in a lot of time on the loaders, offering up a true operator's perspective. "I don't know how much bigger you made the cab, but you can tell a big difference in it," says Beau. "It is noticeably bigger and more comfortable. My operators noticed it right away. The seat feels comfortable, and the visibility is good. It has a good bit more swing torque than the 234B model. I like that the oil fill is lower. I can reach it from the ground now. I've no complaints at all about it. I think it's a good machine." ■



LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT

Beginning with the conception of the prototype 726 feller buncher, Assembly Supervisor Tim Koniuch has seen it all during his long career at Tigercat.

– Chris McMillan

In June 1987 Tim Koniuch started working at MacDonald Steel in the maintenance department under maintenance supervisor Jim Wood. At that time, MacDonald Steel was supplying fabricated components to various mobile equipment manufacturers. During his years at MacDonald Steel, Tim completed his industrial millwright mechanic apprenticeship, receiving his license in 1992.

In late 1991, as work began on the prototype Tigercat 726 feller buncher, Jim Wood was brought in to work with the design team to assemble the machine. As the project progressed, Jim asked Tim to join the assembly team. The 726 shipped in April 1992 bound for a live, in-

woods show in southern Georgia. However, it was not quite complete. Tim made quite a few road trips to the south to help finish the machine, and ready it for future demos and its eventual sale. “I think it was close to three months I was gone,” recalls Tim. “I’d come back every third weekend.”

A few months later, Tim would start working on the second 726. Tim jokes, “I guess you could say, that’s when it was game on!” The small Tigercat team built around 30 or so machines at the MacDonald Steel plant in Cambridge, Ontario before owner Ken MacDonald purchased a dedicated plant in nearby Brantford. The building needed to be outfitted with cranes, assembly bays and

a paint booth, so Tim and others started preparing the building for production. “We moved to Brantford to set things up and start building machines. Unfortunately, Jim Wood didn’t come with us,” said Tim.

The new home for Tigercat would see a few firsts, such as the prototype 720 drive-to-tree feller buncher in 1993, Tigercat’s first track feller buncher, the 853E, in 1994 and the first Tigercat 630 skidder in 1996. Tim fondly recalls participating in all these projects. “With the 853 I was working with Larry Almond and Grant Somerville, and we also built the first skidder where I worked with Jon Cooper.”



The Tigercat employee team poses for a photo outside the first dedicated Tigercat assembly plant with the prototype 853E feller buncher in 1994. Tim is leaning against the front of the cab.

During this time, Tim also performed field service work. “I spent a lot of time on the road when I was younger and before I was married with kids. I spent a lot of time going down to do service work, a lot of warranty jobs and PR work with our dealers. It was a great experience for a young person.”

As production started to outgrow the current building, a second Tigercat facility was purchased in Paris, Ontario for the 853E and 845 track feller bunchers. Eventually drive-to-tree feller buncher production would move to 54 Morton Avenue in Brantford. Not long after, Tim moved over to Morton Avenue to take on the role of Shop Floor Supervisor.

The facility served as a sub-assembly plant for all products as well as drive-to-tree feller buncher assembly. The sub-assembly area produced instrument and electrical panels, saw heads, engines, and cabs. Tim initially supervised both machine assembly and sub-assembly. As production increased, he focused on machine assembly.

“It was quite a few years that I did the wheeled bunchers. Then I was asked if I wanted to go to 140 [Consolidated Drive, Paris] and get involved with the track

machines again.” Tim went to work at the track buncher assembly plant and when the building at 160 Consolidated Drive was completed in 2014, Tim and the track machine assembly group moved there. Currently, Tim is a final assembly supervisor for the 800 series track products.

Tim comments on change he has witnessed over the years. “One person used to build the whole machine right through to the set-up, final assembly and even loading the machine. Watching manufacturing evolve over the years and trying to be more efficient has been a big change.”

When asked to sum up his time at Tigercat, Tim replies, “I can remember when we started building the first few machines and we would sit there and chuckle. We couldn’t believe that Ken was getting into building tree cutting machines, and we couldn’t imagine how big it would get and how quickly. We saw the 100th machine, then the 200th machine, and next thing you know it’s the 500th machine and now we are over 30,000. It’s just mind blowing, hard to believe. And it’s good to know you’ve been a part of it pretty much from day one. You don’t find it in this day and age – somewhere that you can work for your whole life. And to be fortunate enough to work for a man like Ken MacDonald is just amazing.” ■

Tim Koniuch prepares the prototype Tigercat 630 skidder for shipping in 1996.



Moving Forward

IN THE LAURENTIDES



Quebec-based contractor Mathieu Lahaie chooses Tigercat for his select-cut CTL harvesting operation.

– Jorge Victoria

Services Forestiers Mathieu Lahaie operates in the Laurentides and Lanaudière regions of Quebec. Logging is woven into the history of the Laurentian Mountains and for the Lahaie family, logging has been a way of life for three generations. Established by 30-year-old Mathieu Lahaie in 2020, the company is based in Sainte-Sophie, Quebec and focuses on select-cut harvesting and land clearing for new development.

From January to March, the company works on harvesting contracts, and from April to December, land clearing. “Winter is our big logging season because we can access the terrain that is

not practical in the summer. And spring, that’s the mechanical season where we stop working in the woods because everything becomes wet and soft, and you cannot haul the wood on the road anyway,” says Mathieu.

Starting in the logging industry when he was sixteen years old, Mathieu learned the craft from his father, Alain Lahaie who has been working in the industry for 35 years and built a solid reputation in the Quebec forestry sector. Hand-falling trees and operating all kinds of machinery were Mathieu’s tasks at the time. After graduating high school, he enrolled in a forestry equipment operation program at the

Centre de Formation Professionnelle in Mont-Laurier. Today, as an independent contractor, apart from serving his growing client base, he also subcontracts for his father.

To tackle the different applications and terrain types, Mathieu relies on his Tigercat 822E equipped with the fixed wrist 570 harvesting head, and a Tigercat 1055C forwarder. With 1,600 hours, the fixed wrist 570 is the first of its kind in Quebec. “It’s very practical to the fact that you can control the tree. And it’s very strong and good with big wood. It’s a wonderful and solid product,” says Mathieu.

At the time of our visit, Mathieu was employing his Tigercat

Mathieu Lahaie stands proudly in front of his Tigercat fleet.





Benjamin Emond, forwarder operator, says he can accomplish more on the job with the new Tigercat 1055C.

machines in a select-cut harvesting application on private land, producing ten to twelve loads per day with as many as fifteen different sorts bound for several buyers. The prescription called for a 30% selective removal. The mixed stand included species such as pine, fir, maple, spruce, birch, aspen and cedar. The Tigercat 822E/570 package was producing logs ranging from eight to 26 feet, with lengths

varying in two-foot increments. Markets and final products include lumber, firewood, paper, veneer, and hardwood flooring. Mathieu relies on the D7 control system to monitor production volume, taking advantage of features such as mapping and production reporting.

In search of efficiency, Mathieu recently acquired the Tigercat 1055C to replace his old, downtime-

prone forwarder. Mathieu attributes his buying decision to the reputation of Tigercat machinery. "Why did I want the Tigercat? Because the mechanics are simple and easy and the service is good. It's more solid. The support is incredible."

In most of Mathieu's logging operations, the roadside landings are narrow with limited staging

In Mathieu's logging operations, being able to control the tree is a necessity. The 570 fixed head has proven effective when it comes to positive control. Wrist float allows the head to easily align with the tree during processing.





Its size makes the 1055C ideal for select cut harvesting and thinning applications.

areas. The narrow width of the 1055C makes it a perfect fit. The swing out stakes are also an important feature for Mathieu. As the machine often operates in tight trails, the stakes are swung inward to reduce the bunk width, thus improving manoeuvrability and avoiding damage to standing trees. The machine's ability to double bunk is equally important, as many of the processed logs are eight and ten foot lengths.

The forwarder is operated by Benjamin Emond, Mathieu's only employee. He comments that the 1055C works well and is fuel efficient. He adds that the hose routing allows for clean sightlines to the wheels and load area. He also notes that the 1055C is more stable than the previous forwarder. The frame oscillation bearing is

in the wagon frame, as opposed to the front frame, contributing to enhanced stability. "The mechanics are good. I like the vacuum pump for the hydraulic system to save oil when you bust a hose. You also have a separate pump for the hydraulic tank to put some more hydraulic oil in the tank. It's very well made," says Benjamin.

With so many products, Mathieu's logging operations are far from simple. Success requires precise and efficient forwarding. Benjamin needs to constantly sort and forward the right products in order to maximize bunk space and minimize travel. Mathieu and Benjamin agree that the 1055C is the right tool for the job.

Mathieu's Tigercat equipment is supported by Wajax sub-dealer,

Centre de Réparation Léon, located in Mont-Laurier. "When you need a part, you have it the day after. It's very quick, very efficient service. They know what they're doing. They know the machines," comments Benjamin.

Mathieu's main goal is to keep moving forward and grow the company. He wants to increase the number of Tigercat machines in his fleet, as well as the number of employees in his organization. Although he sees some contractors leaving the logging industry, he predicts that the demand for forest products will eventually return to higher levels. With reliable machinery, Mathieu will be one of the contractors positioned to fulfill future needs. ■

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO

Love a Forest?

Ethan Tapper is a forester and author from Vermont whose passion and dedication to forest management is worth showcasing. Through his management of Bear Island, his book *How to Love a Forest*, and his social media presence, Ethan has created an advocacy platform that emphasizes the importance of responsible forest stewardship. He believes that managing a forest is an act of compassion; cutting a tree, an act of responsibility.

– Samantha Paul



Ethan Tapper, nationally recognized forester, bestselling author, and content creator from Vermont.



Ethan came to forestry later in life. He didn't know when he was growing up that it was something he was destined to do. "I loved being in the woods and wanted to be in the woods all the time. I was looking at a paper list of all the majors at the University of Vermont, and I scrolled down, and I picked forestry. I didn't know what it was at the time. I just knew that it had the word forest in it."

Graduating with a forestry degree from the University of Vermont in Burlington, Ethan's first job was working as a consulting forester on industrial timberlands in the Adirondacks. Next, he transitioned to a smaller consulting forestry company in central Vermont. In 2016, he landed a position as Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. "The county foresters are service foresters. My job was primarily advising landowners, loggers and conservation organizations on how to care for forests. And through that experience I ended up really diving into how we communicate our work."

Ethan was eager to work with loggers to manage these community forests. "I managed about a dozen community forests totaling about 5,000 acres [2 000 ha] in size and I was just realizing that my work was commonly misunderstood. A lot of times people saw the cutting of trees and they assumed that it must be a bad thing. I was realizing that there's this pervasive idea in our culture that if you love forests, you leave them alone. And that only holds true if you don't really understand how forests work and where they're at in this moment in time."

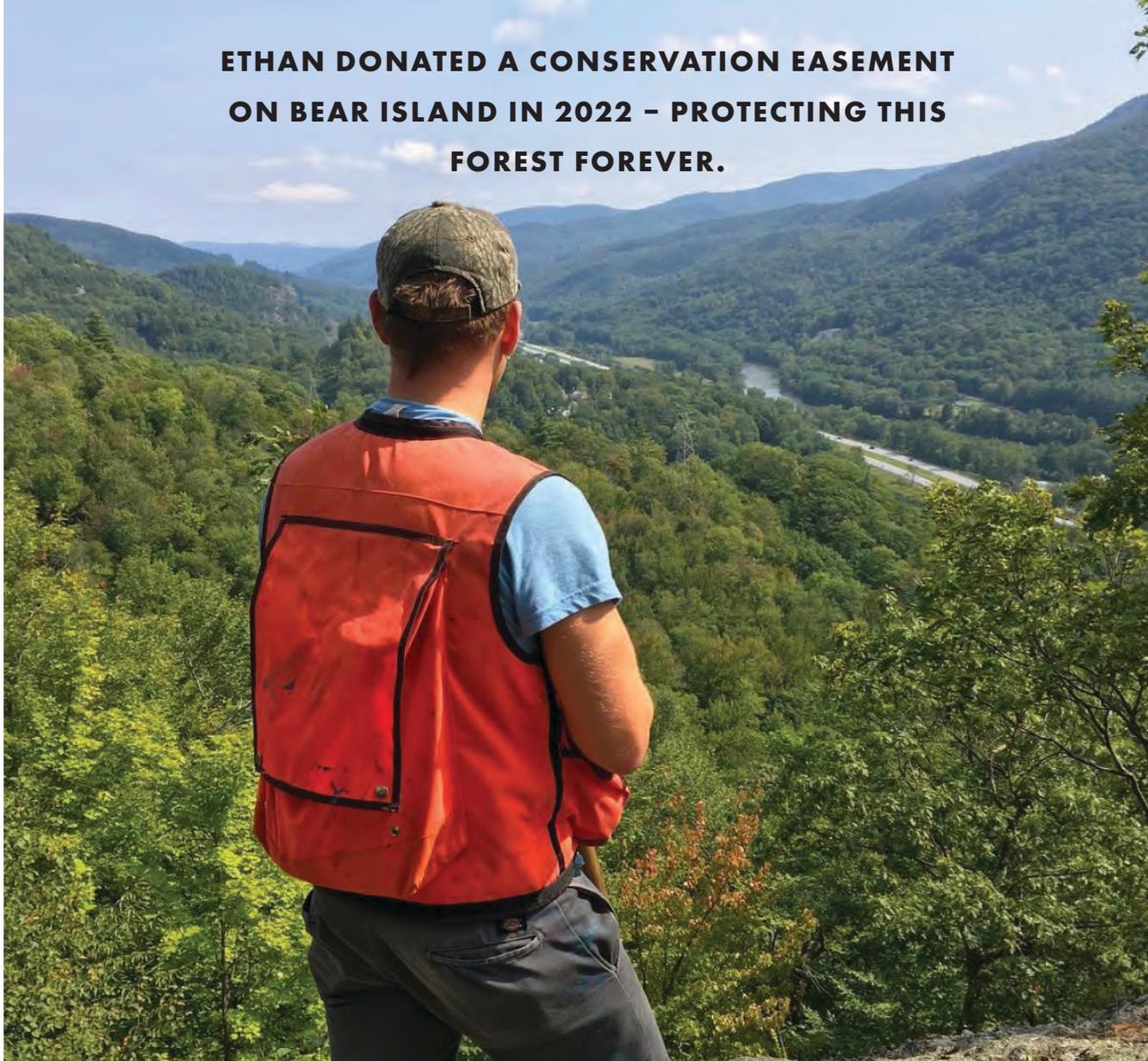
In his role of service forester, Ethan really wanted to do a better job communicating the value of his work, as well as the work of other loggers and foresters. "Most people are supporters of forest management. They just don't know it yet. And the reason they don't know it is because we as a forestry community haven't done a good job of sharing that story." Consequently, Ethan began to change the narrative. He started a YouTube channel, began writing monthly columns in community newspapers and magazines, and organized 300 events over about eight years. "I felt I was reaching people in a different way. I was figuring out how to talk about forest management in a way that resonated with folks."

In 2024, Ethan left his job as a service forester to start his own consulting business – Bear Island Forestry – and to publicize *How to Love a Forest*. Since then, he has held more than 100 walks, talks, and other events across the northeastern US. He has built social media channels on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok with more than 75,000 followers (using the handle @howtoloveaforest), and has seen *How to Love a Forest* sell tens of thousands of copies.

Forest fixer-upper

After advising people on how to manage their timberland for many years, Ethan wanted to own and manage his own forest. In 2017, he bought a 175-acre (70 hectare) forest in Bolton, Vermont that he calls Bear Island. The listing appeared on a realtor website one day, and it was cheap. "So, I kind of wondered what was wrong with it," he said. He found the answers quickly – terrible

ETHAN DONATED A CONSERVATION EASEMENT ON BEAR ISLAND IN 2022 – PROTECTING THIS FOREST FOREVER.



A picturesque view of Bear Island, located in Bolton, Vermont.

access, especially challenging topography, poorly logged in the past, brutally high graded, bad trail maintenance, deer overpopulation, and non-native invasive plant infestations. He was ready to take on the challenge with the goal to restore Bear Island to a healthy, thriving forest.

For seven years, Ethan worked tirelessly on the land. He worked with loggers to create patch cuts, clearing out acres of diseased beech trees, planted tens of thousands of acorns, managed non-native invasive plants, stabilized eroding skid trails, and reduced deer

browsing. Throughout this time, he remained hopeful, even when faced with difficult decisions. As a result, he has witnessed a remarkable transformation. “Without intervention, the forest would have just continued to be unhealthy,” says Ethan. “The skid trails would have continued to erode, the non-native invasive plant problem would have continued to get worse. None of the benefits that I’ve now created on this land would have existed.”

Thousands of trees on the mountain would not have had the opportunity to grow, spread their crowns, and thrive. Acres of

young forest habitat and a variety of canopy gaps have emerged that wouldn’t exist otherwise. “There is 30 acres [12 ha] of a regenerating forest filled with diverse plant understories that would not have developed because they would have been smothered by Japanese barberry and other non-native invasive plants.”

Ethan faces new challenges each year, but the work has paid off. “To see this dramatic transformation, to arrive at this moment where I just realize how much it has changed is incredibly powerful.”

The forester and the logger

Ethan says foresters and loggers must implement the vision together. “I think that in its best iteration, the relationship between the forester and the logger is this symbiotic, mutually beneficial partnership. And it really should benefit both parties.”

When asked what his biggest learning experience on Bear Island has been, Ethan cites his work with “Red” – his Timberjack 230E cable skidder. He says that “working with Red has helped me realize the logistical and economic realities of what it takes to work in the woods. It has completely changed the way that I mark trees and the way that I work with loggers.”

Ethan’s forest management plans focus on the timber resources but

are inclusive of the ecology of the land. He likes to take a deep dive into what’s going on with the forest. “There’s a misunderstanding sometimes that when we do these practices that are more ecologically responsible that they must be more difficult and more of a pain and more expensive. But it doesn’t have to be that way.”

One example is how Ethan deals with one of the big issues in Vermont: deer overpopulation. “Putting deadwood on the ground is something that we really want to do. So, an example of what I ask loggers to do is, if you’re working with a hand crew and cable skidder, when you cut the limbs or tops off the tree, just leave them there. Put deadwood on the ground in a way that creates an area where deer can’t browse. If we make a

big, jumbled mess in the forest, we can protect young seedlings and saplings that are going to regenerate, as well as providing all these benefits associated with deadwood, which is this really important habitat and helps build future soils and regulate forest hydrology.”

A symbol of hope

Ethan started writing *How to Love a Forest* in 2016, after realizing that there was no book that captured his understanding of what forests are, how they work, and what it means to take care of them. From 5:00 to 6:00 am each day he wrote for six years. The book takes the reader into the ecological depths of Bear Island, exploring the makeup of a forest community and how it’s both fragile and resilient. The book helps us realize what it means to

Ethan operates “Red,” his old Timberjack 230E cable skidder, to help manage Bear Island.

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TREES.”**

– Ethan Tapper





Ethan speaking at an event on his book tour in the US northeast.

care for forests. He explains that in the quest to protect our ecosystems, we will need to make hard, uncomfortable decisions – acts such as loving deer and hunting deer, loving trees and felling trees.

Ethan’s experience with Bear Island’s transformation inspires the book. It is a demonstration of what’s possible. “When I started with Bear Island, I just saw it as a symbol of everything that was wrong with the world. The land had every problem that a forest could have. And now I see it as a symbol of what’s possible and a symbol of hope.

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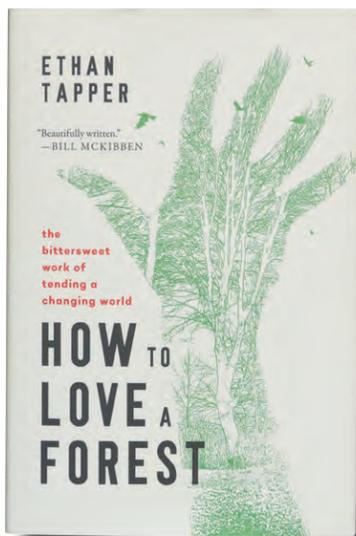
Ethan emphasizes that we already have all the tools we need. We don’t have to wait for someone in a lab to invent some miracle cure for our forests. “We have tools that we can use to solve many of these problems right now and we just need to be willing to use those tools and put in the work.”

Ethan wants the public to better appreciate the work of forestry and logging – that using a chainsaw or a skidder can be incredibly positive. “When people see loggers at work or when they see those machines running, I want them to appreciate the nuances in managing a forest.” The book is a celebration of nuance.

ETHAN EMPHASIZES THAT WE ALREADY HAVE ALL THE TOOLS WE NEED. WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR SOMEONE IN A LAB TO INVENT SOME MIRACLE CURE FOR OUR FORESTS. "WE HAVE TOOLS THAT WE CAN USE TO SOLVE MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS RIGHT NOW AND WE JUST NEED TO BE WILLING TO USE THOSE TOOLS AND PUT IN THE WORK."

He wants the public to understand that to save the ecosystems of this planet and all the species that depend on them, including us, we must make complex choices. "I have learned that the steps on the path toward a better world are often counterintuitive, uncomfortable and strange. I have learned that what is simple is rarely true, and what is necessary is rarely easy."

Ethan comments on how people want to live in a world with clean air and water. But we also desire societies that provide access to economic opportunities, jobs, and local renewable resources to keep us warm and help us build our homes. Achieving all these goals



Ethan's book, *How to Love a Forest*, was started in 2016 after he realized that no book captured his understanding of forests, how they work, and what it means to take care of them.

requires compromises. People often wish to have everything without making difficult choices or facing the trade-offs involved.

"There is such a different way that we can think about the work that we do. It is like when we're cutting a tree. It's not about what we're destroying. It's not about what we're taking away. It's about what we're building. And within these forests, we know that the death of a tree can be this incredibly positive thing. It can help the forest heal from the wounds of the past. It can help navigate complex threats and stressors and help the forest to be more resilient in the future." ■

OUTREACH

Ethan operates two consulting businesses. The first, Bear Island Forestry, focuses on forestry consulting services, including the drafting of forest management plans and the implementation of forest management projects from start to finish. The second, Bear Island Consulting, specializes in assisting organizations in enhancing their communication strategies for ecosystem management projects. He focuses on building and improving outreach through in-person interactions, videos, written content, and social media. Additionally, he trains staff to communicate their work more clearly and effectively, while also integrating more environmentally responsible practices into their operations.

In 2024, Ethan launched social media channels on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, under the handle @howtoloveaforest. He has since gained over 75,000 followers and produces hundreds of videos focused on ecology and forest stewardship. "My goal is to talk about forestry and logging in various ways. I hope this will excite a diverse audience, including young people."

Follow Ethan on social media @howtoloveaforest



Colton's JOURNEY



BTB visits Grass Lake, Michigan, to chat with third-generation logger Colton Fodor. Colton shares his experiences becoming a teenage logging business owner and navigating the Michigan industry to remain successful.

– Mike Soluk

Three generations of Fodor men have worked the forests of Michigan. Over the years, Christmas trees, firewood, saw logs, and most recently, high-value select-cut hardwood timber have all proven to be viable revenue streams for the Fodor family. As the next generation continues in the family's footsteps, Pull-Hard Logging owner Colton Fodor has targeted the niche market of walnut and white oak as his new focus. The high-value hardwood timber is primarily destined for the offshore market.

Woodlot management for repeat harvests, buying standing timber, land clearing, and right-of-way projects for municipal development are also a part of Colton's service offering. The company has attentively diversified its portfolio of services to ensure it can meet the needs of a wide customer base while future-proofing the business in an ever-changing landscape.

Starting early, Colton learned what it takes to become successful and grow a business. When there wasn't school, a 4:00 am wake-up to head with his father Todd to the family

sawmill was what he chose to do. "I give Dad 100% credit for taking me every day when I was probably the age of three and up. Tough to take a kid with you every day to work, but he did," Colton reminisces. "That's where I fell in love with going to the sawmill, going to the woods." By age ten, he was actively involved with the mill, unloading trucks, loading the debarker, and stocking the log deck to prep for the incoming shift.

In his teen years, Colton grew his firewood business. At the age of fifteen, he purchased his first

Colton Fodor, owner of Pull-Hard logging, front and centre on a hardwood job in Grass Lake, Michigan.

second-hand skidder and began working for local hand-falling contractors, paid on volume extracted to roadside. He built a reputation as a reliable contractor, planting the seeds for future growth. Colton had started making a name for himself.

In 2012, the same year he graduated from high school, his small business became official and Pull-Hard Logging became the new brand. At nineteen, Colton may be the youngest person ever to purchase a new Tigercat machine, a 610C skidder sourced from Ricer Equipment in Lucasville, Ohio. Colton fondly recalls seeing Bobby Goodson on TV inspecting a brand new Tigercat 635D and its Turnaround seat. “When they put that in a small skidder like a 610,

I’ll own one,” Colton remembers saying. “At eighteen, I finally called a dealer. Dad and I drove down. We checked it out. We couldn’t drive it a whole lot, but I fell in love. A year later I decided to pull the trigger and drove down and got my brand-new machine.”

The 610C purchase was the starting point in his longstanding relationship with Tigercat and Ricer Equipment. After twelve years, his fleet includes a 234B loader, an 822D feller buncher with a 5185 fixed felling saw, a 625H skidder, an M726E mulcher, a new 865 logger, and the original 610C.

Using large logging equipment for small woodlot harvests often concerns landowners. Colton addresses this by treating the

land like it’s his own. “Fix the trails when I’m done. Grade the landing off. Clean the blocks up. Do a nice job, just like it was my own property,” says Colton. Good relationship management and low-impact logging techniques have led to repeat customers. Although most of Colton’s work is acquired through word of mouth, he admits that he often evaluates timber stands as he drives between jobs. He isn’t shy about contacting landowners should he see an opportunity.

An appetite for hardwood

Rural Michigan is characterized by privately owned woodlots and farms. When walking the stands and evaluating their potential, Colton focuses on trying to determine the best market for

(L-R) Mike Soluk, Tigercat Marketing Representative; Larry Nelson, Tigercat Product Support Representative; Jerry Smeak, Tigercat District Manager; Colton Fodor, Owner of Pull-Hard Logging; Heath Yoder, Ricer Service Manager; Danny Gatrell, Ricer Sales Representative; Loren Ricer, Ricer Dealer Manager.



the species. Most of the timber is destined for local pallet mills or the US west coast for export to Asia.

Mature walnut and white oak are felled with a Tigercat 5185 fixed felling saw mounted on an 822D carrier. With diameters as large as 130 cm (51 in) and lengths ranging from two to seven metres (7-21 ft), processed logs are transported to Colton's yard to be unloaded and sorted. Using the Doyle scale, the logs are graded and loaded into containers using the company's newly purchased Tigercat 865 logger. The containers are shipped to Detroit for fumigation and then onto a train headed west to ports in Oregon and Washington state for export. "Right now, the white oak and the walnut are just the two species that everyone's paying good money for. So that's what we're focusing on," says Colton. "We're still

trying to cut some cherries and some red oak. We're still trying to manage the woodlots so we can log them in ten or fifteen more years. That's the ideal wood right now. It's what the world is calling for."

Colton's production ramps up in winter. That's when all the high-grade walnut and white oak trees are harvested. Prices are higher in winter, and the low temperatures favor storage. "If a log is sitting in a container for two months in 100-degree Fahrenheit [38 Celsius] weather, it's going to pop, split, crack, and stain. In the winter, it's a big push to cut and ship as much hardwood as possible. Plus, the frozen ground helps. Of course, there is less cleanup. If you don't have to take a dozer, you're not spending extra money cleaning trails." Due to these challenges, Colton staggers his large hardwood

jobs to coincide with the cooler weather, making for long days and an intense winter. "I mean, my wife, we've been together a long time, highschool sweethearts, and she understands the busy time of the year. But she still doesn't like it because she knows I'm never home."

Softwood and soft hardwood, primarily cottonwood, white poplar, and spruce, are merchandised to lengths between five and seven metres (18-24 feet) and hauled to local pallet mills on the company-owned truck. With this lower-value timber, Colton ensures the tracts are within 130 kilometers (80 miles) of the mills to keep transport costs on budget.

Tigercat, all the way

Colton recently added a new Tigercat 865 logger to his fleet, the first of its

**"LOGGING IS ALL ABOUT CARE. WE'RE TRYING TO
MANAGE THE WOODLOTS SO WE CAN LOG THEM TEN OR
FIFTEEN YEARS FROM NOW."**



kind in Michigan. With the comfort and visibility required for loading trucks and containers, the cab was the main reason Colton wanted the 865 in his operation. It is deployed to the log yard, sorting, loading, and unloading logs. Colton says he can load a container in about fifteen minutes, a job that would take an experienced operator 40 minutes to complete with a wheel loader.

“With the timber industry not as good as it used to be, you’ve got to think outside the box a little bit, and you can’t put all your eggs in one basket and count on logging every day. So I’ve been doing more land clearing. And I think that 865 for land clearing is going to be the

awesome tool in the shed because we’ll be able to load dump trucks with it, clear land, load mulch, move mulch, and fill a grinder. I mean, I’m filling containers with it, and I didn’t even think I was going to do that. It’s just a handy tool so far.”

Even with extensive exposure to various equipment manufacturers over the years, Tigercat is Colton’s preferred brand of choice for several reasons. Notably, he first mentions the strength and durability of the machines. “The equipment, of course, is built to go to a different planet. I mean, nothing is built like a Tigercat. They’re overbuilt, heavy-duty, and I love that.” He adds that it’s a combination of build quality and ownership maintenance programs that further the life of the equipment. Pull-Hard Logging has implemented 300-hour complete

machine inspections to ensure any concerns can be addressed immediately.

The other major differentiating factor Colton points to is the continuous product development and free flow of communication between end users and the Tigercat engineering team. “It’s the engineering that big corporate companies don’t think of. And the other thing I really love is Tigercat listens to what we say as operators and owners. They listen to what we want, and then they adjust and make positive changes.”



Pull-Hard Loggings’ most recent purchase, a Tigercat 865, is unloading walnut and white oak to be sorted and loaded into containers for shipment.

Growing with Ricer

Additionally, Colton highlights that parts and service turnaround time, and the handpicked dealer network, is unrivaled in other brands. To Colton, this reinforces Tigercat's focus on after-sale customer support. He describes that he can place an order through Ricer Equipment, and if the parts are not in stock, Ricer will orchestrate a next day dropship from one of Tigercat's three parts distribution centres to ensure he is up and running as quickly as possible. Colton also notes the reliability and responsiveness of Ricer service manager Heath Yoder, parts representative Curtis King and technician Chad Lawson. Colton stresses that "with Tigercat and Ricer, it doesn't matter if you are the largest or the smallest customer, they always do their best to have you back up and running."

Colton recalls the first time he and Lyle Ricer, VP and co-owner of

Ricer Equipment, met to discuss the purchase of his 610C skidder. "The biggest thing about Lyle is that he took me seriously. I was nineteen, calling and talking about a \$250,000 skidder. And he took the time to meet me at a job, show me the machine. Not many people do that." It was the beginning of a committed business relationship that would foster growth for both parties.

As Lyle has focused more on dealership management and development, Pull-Hard's recent 865 purchase was handled by salesman Danny Gatrell. He has stepped in, maintaining the same level of support Lyle provided Colton over the years. "This last big purchase of the 865, we just wanted to make sure we were making the right choice. And so Danny said, 'Let's get in the truck and drive.'" They travelled to RNS Logging in Virginia so Colton could see the 865 in action.

A way of life

Logging is a way of life for the Fodor family. Colton's primary goal is to be a role model and set an example for his family of what hard work and dedication can build. Reflecting on his early beginnings in the industry and the outlook for Pull-Hard Logging, Colton talks about the importance of stewardship for the next generation of loggers. "These Michigan woods are the ones that my grandpa cut, my dad cut, and I've cut now maybe twice already. I want to see my son cut them, and maybe I want to see his son cut them. Logging is all about care. We're trying to manage the woodlots so we can log them ten or fifteen years from now." Striving to be a good land steward, Colton is doing his best to ensure the forests of Michigan can be harvested by the Fodor family and others for generations to come. ■

Colton Fodor, his wife Alexandra, and their two children, who may be the fourth generation of Fodor loggers.





Colton runs his 822D/5185 selectively cutting high-value walnut.

“IT’S THE ENGINEERING THAT BIG CORPORATE COMPANIES DON’T THINK OF. AND THE OTHER THING I REALLY LOVE IS TIGERCAT LISTENS TO WHAT WE SAY AS OPERATORS AND OWNERS. THEY LISTEN TO WHAT WE WANT, AND THEN THEY ADJUST AND MAKE POSITIVE CHANGES.”

Colton’s Tigercat 625H bogie skidder drags a large load of white oak.





Dan Falk, owner of Falk Forestry.

Carbonizing IN CALIFORNIA

An innovative California-based rancher and forestry professional employs Tigercat's mobile carbonization technology to improve forest and soil health, mitigate wildfire risk and sequester carbon.

– Paul Iarocci

Daniel Falk grew up in northwest Sonoma County, California. He is part of the fifth generation of a California family that has been long involved in timber harvesting and cattle ranching. “I grew up on Richardson Ranch, owned by my great uncle, Harold Richardson. He was my logging and ranching mentor, and he pushed me to get a forestry degree,” says Dan.

Before graduating from Humboldt State University with a degree in Forest Production, Dan and some fellow classmates wrote a timber harvest plan with a registered professional forester as a class project. “When I graduated, we implemented the plan on the Richardson Ranch and from there

I got into logging.” Dan leased a sawmill that his great uncle and father owned and founded Falk Forestry. Today the company is active in logging, environmental studies, fire restoration, and fire mitigation services such as forest mastication, fuel load reduction, and establishment and maintenance of fire breaks.

Dan explains that there has always been a wood waste problem on the ranch, and also in the local community. “It was too costly to chip and haul it. I saw an issue that needed to be dealt with. We harvest timber, but we’re environmentalists as well.” As a solution, Dan envisioned a forest-to-range program where his company could take care of the waste wood and fuel

load issues while at the same time improving forests and rangeland.

He researched and subsequently purchased the first ROI 500 carbonizer in late 2018, nearly a year prior to Tigercat acquiring the company and its carbonizer technology. (The ROI prototype was subsequently updated in 2019 and rebranded as a Tigercat 6050). “The 6050 had the ability to process all sizes of material with varying moisture content. That’s when I first met Matt O’Connor, who was with ROI at the time.”

Matt joined Tigercat when the acquisition was completed in September 2019, taking on a number of duties related to the carbonizer program. As a product specialist,



The prototype 6040 carbonizer was purchased by Falk Forestry in 2024. The machine has a number of improvements over the 6050 design.

he worked closely with engineering on the extensive redesign that resulted in the release of the new 6040 carbonizer. Matt is highly involved and very knowledgeable in permitting processes. He leads government outreach, testing and data collection and manages technical and operational support, collaborating with dealers and end users.

Dan initially put the 6050 to work on the ranch, distributing the carbon-based output back into rangeland. “We test the soil type for deficiencies. Then we can either discharge or uncharged biochar into the soil, and replant with different types of nitrogen fixing cover crops. We like to use native species.”

Biochar acts like a sponge. It absorbs and stores moisture and nutrients and slowly releases both into the soil. “You can charge the biochar

by mixing it with compost,” Dan explains. “We mixed it with our mill residuals, some of our small grind, cow manure, mushroom compost, chicken manure and organic overburden – from either our forestry roads or gravel pits. Then we applied about ten tons of the mixture per acre.”

Dan has seen improvements. “I like to say the grass stays greener for longer. We’ve seen an increase in water retention in the soil to help with the grasses that we feed our cattle.” Dan’s grass fed, grass finished cattle produce high quality beef that is marketed in the local area. For Dan, the biochar production is part of the whole process – earth to table.

Early on, Dan also held many 6050 demonstrations on projects from Sonoma County all the way up to Fort Jones in northern California.

Dan credits the time spent on the tours and demonstrations as an important investment that stimulated interest from the right parties and subsequently helped him to secure contracts. “I got the jobs that I have today because of the 6050. For example, East Bay Regional Park District recognized the need for an alternative method to deal with biomass and reduce the cost and environmental footprint of transporting large volumes of material through communities.”

At the turn of the twentieth century, eucalyptus plantations were established throughout California. “It is a dominating species and a challenge to manage,” Dan explains. “The park district wanted to thin these plantations, reduce fire risk and reestablish native species throughout the region such as oak, madrone, redwood and Douglas fir.”

Dan collaborated with Earth Foundries to create a formal proposal and bid to present to the East Bay Regional Park District. Founded by Dede and Roger Smullen, the overall mission of Earth Foundries is to put an end to California's catastrophic wildfires. The company works with public and private land managers to restore the health of California forests. Partnering with Falk Forestry is helping the company incentivize the removal of forest waste from the landscape by sequestering carbon and creating carbon-negative markets for woody biomass. In fact, the goal is to stop thinking about woody biomass as waste and start thinking about it as a base material with potential for multiple value-added product streams.

Dede was formerly Board President of the Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council. "They did a lot of really amazing forest thinning projects and shaded fuel breaks," says Dan. Dede and Roger are well connected and very well versed in creating

proposals and managing stakeholder engagement. "They collaborate very well with the different counties, the air pollution control board, Cal Fire and state archaeology officials. They are very familiar with Cal Fire processes," Dan emphasizes. All project collaborations between Earth Foundries and Falk Forestry work within the well-established Incident Command System (ICS) framework that Cal Fire uses in its own operations.

"The officials that run these programs like the structure and security that we can provide by utilizing the ICS and in the people that we have involved such as retired battalion chiefs that run our safety protocols."

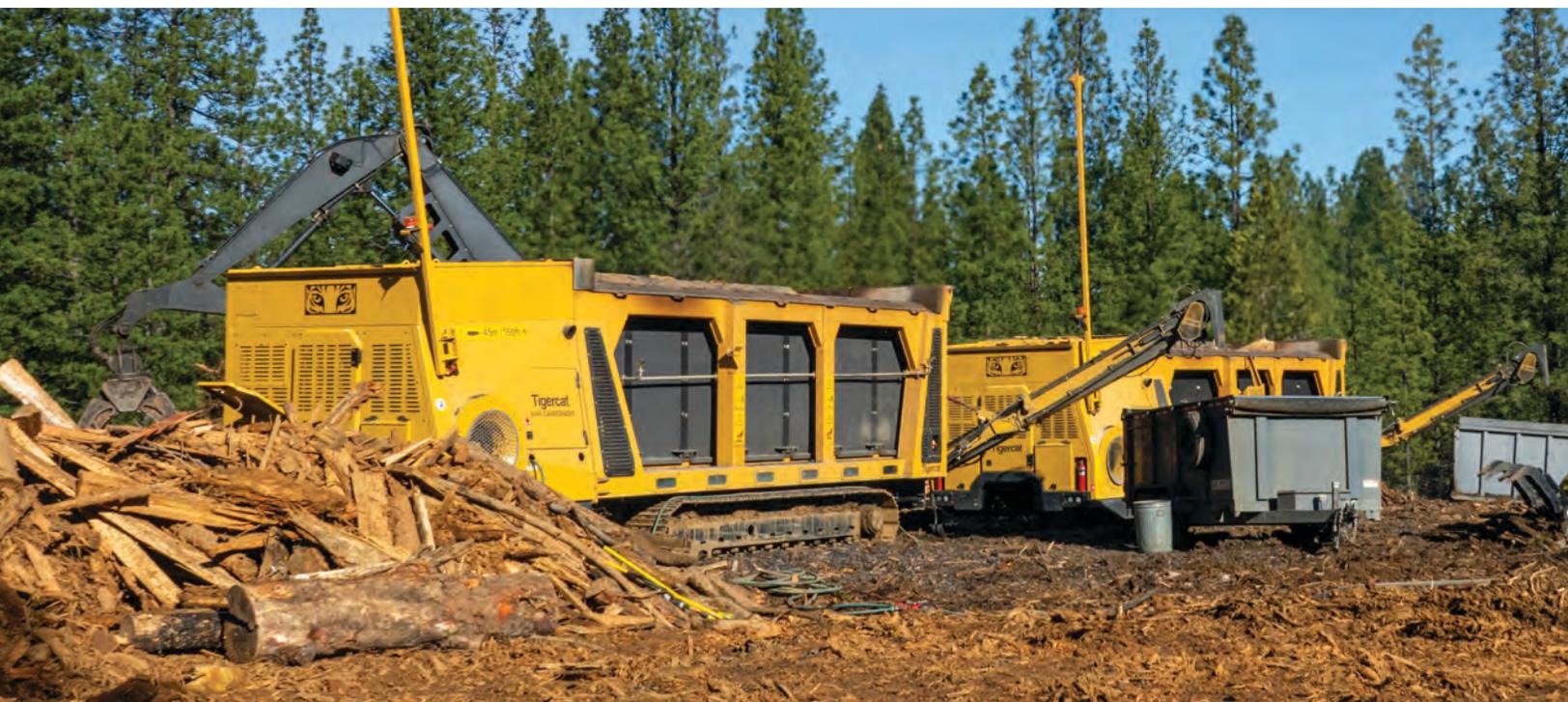
Strict adherence to protocol, planning, and frequent meetings help ensure every project is set up for success. "The companies and the state agencies that we work with tell us we cannot fail. We must have a plan for success." It is the deep operational knowledge of Falk Forestry combined with Earth

Foundries' project management and administrative expertise that allows the carbonizers to operate safely and efficiently.

Falk Forestry has treated nearly 700 acres of East Bay eucalyptus forest with thinning and mastication prescriptions. Logs from three-inch (75 mm) diameter and up are converted onsite to biochar. "They are using the biochar on parklands and putting it back into rangeland and agricultural fields," says Dan who describes it as a big circle encompassing harvesting, fire mitigation and fire resiliency, sequestering the carbon and then putting it back into the land.

So essentially Dan started off using the Richardson Ranch as a springboard and proof of concept for the entire carbonizing process. Today, armed with extensive operational experience, regulatory knowledge and a deep understanding of commercial scale sustainable carbon dioxide removal technology, the partnership of Earth Foundries and Falk Forestry is going

Earth Foundries' pair of 6040 carbonizers. Dan is managing this 5,000 ton contract in Grass Valley, California. The conveyer system, newly designed for the 6040, pivots side to side.





The 6040 converts 15-20 tons per hour of unprocessed woody material into a high-quality organic carbon product.

after contracts in the municipal and utilities sectors. “It’s growing into a very promising business,” says Dan who purchased the prototype 6040 carbonizer in 2024. Between the two companies, they own four carbonizers.

We visited a worksite in Grass Valley at a Nevada County municipal yard where Dan was managing a contract involving the two Earth Foundries owned 6040 carbonizers. The machines were tasked to convert approximately 5,000 tons of material primarily consisting of hazardous trees removed from powerline right-of-way, as well as additional material coming from small landowners around Grass Valley. “We are utilizing the dead material from the fire scarred landscapes and trees that need to be cleared around power lines. Material is also coming from local landowners who also have wood waste problems. The county is developing a community pick-up where they bring all the material to this site. We’re doing a test run of 1,000 tons to see how the community, the county, and the contractor can work collectively to

clean up dead and non-merchantable material and turn it into a product that stores carbon and reduces our carbon footprint.”

Getting rid of this material reduces fuel load and aids in fireproofing the community. I asked Dan about public perception. “They like to see that something is getting done for the forest. People are extremely worried about their houses burning down with all the fires in California. They like the fact that it’s carbon friendly. It makes people feel good about how the material is being processed.”

The conversion process itself emits very little harmful emissions, reduces volume by 90% and creates an organic carbon-based material with many beneficial uses including soil enhancement, filtration and storm water mitigation. It sequesters approximately 25% of the total carbon, keeping it out of the atmosphere for hundreds and possibly thousands of years. And it creates the potential to participate in the carbon credit market.

Dan measures production by the conversion rate (the amount of infeed that is converted to biochar in an hour.) Many factors affect this including moisture content, piece size, the type of feedstock and the species. In Dan’s experience, dry material at about 30% moisture content sized from three to twelve inches in diameter provides optimal conversion rates. Dan’s machines average fifteen to twenty tons per hour. Dan feels that aging the material four to six months is optimal both for feed rate and biochar quality – long enough to dry out, not so long that the material starts to lose carbon content. Biochar output by weight is generally about ten percent of the input.

During the 6040 design process, Dan was a valuable resource for the Tigercat engineering team to help separate out which aspects of the 6050 worked and which aspects did not. Dan has 1,800 hours on the prototype 6040. He notes that the new internal ceramic system looks good and that the newly designed and beefier grates are wearing very well. He says that the ability to



The organic carbon product retains about 25% of the available carbon from the infeed material and sequesters it for hundreds, possibly thousands of years. Commonly known as biochar, it has many beneficial uses.

rotate the grates to balance wear, a feature that he pushed for, is going to further improve longevity.

“Working with Tigercat has been exceptional,” he says. “Matt O’Connor has been very helpful. He always answers his phone. He’s out to the jobsite working with me on how we can improve the operation and production of the machine. That has been a great experience.”

Dan is impressed with the new water bath and quenching system. The quenching water is contained internally on the 6040, eliminating spillage. Water use is controlled. Because the biochar is entirely quenched, when it falls off the conveyor, it is cool enough to touch.

Dan says that the conveyor, with its ability to swing 105 degrees is also a big deal. The conveyor is fixed to the rear of the machine, folding up into the machine envelope for transport. “It works out well because you could be dumping into a bin and when that bin fills up, you can swing off to another one. That’s been really efficient.” Dan notes that the exterior



sprinkler system off the sides of the machines is a great idea. “It’s a really good way to wet down the ember cast zone.” The 6040 is 7 700 kg (17,000 lb) lighter than the 6050 for easier and more cost-effective transport.

Dan is careful to mention the importance of this collaboration. “Working with Tigercat on product updates, anything that needed to be resolved with the machine has been

great. They have been right there to take care of it.” As he puts it, “We are at the tip of the spear. We need this kind of involvement to innovate and improve both the machine and the operations. So that’s been very helpful.” ■



Scan to watch video.

AUSTRALIAN INNOVATOR

Ken Padgett overcomes adversity and consistently reinvents with innovative thinking, hard work and a life-long passion for the industry.

– Paul Iarocci



Ken Padgett's logging operations are centred around the picturesque village of Myrtleford in northeastern Victoria. The landscape is characterized by broad valleys and steep slopes – textbook yarding and cable assist country. Ken is a second-generation industry veteran. He and his two sons, Oliver and Kenneth operate logging, site prep, cartage, and waste fibre processing businesses in Victoria and Tasmania under Padgett Group Pty Ltd.

Ken grew up in the industry and started out on his own 44 years ago in his mid-twenties. His father Andy, who passed in 2013, was an outsize figure in the Tasmanian timber industry. He was a strong advocate of Tasmania's hardwood industry and a champion for sustainable forest management. Andy was well respected inside

and outside of the industry, and on both sides of the debate and turmoil surrounding Tasmania's native hardwood logging in decades past. He has been formally recognized many times for his extensive contributions to logging and forest management. He received the Australia Day Tasmania Award in 1987. He was the first recipient of the World Forestry Day Award in 1995, for outstanding and innovative contributions to Tasmania's forest industry. Andy was also awarded the prestigious Australian Medal, the country's highest civilian honour in 1997, for service to the forestry industry, sustainable forest management, and the promotion of innovations in environmentally sound harvesting, transport and replanting techniques.

Andy moved to Tasmania in 1946. An enduring legacy and three generations of successful business operations hinged on happenstance and poor weather. "He was a sheep shearer," Ken explains. "He went down to Tassie when he was twenty years old and literally couldn't get a job because it was wet. They couldn't shear the sheep because they couldn't get them dry so he went into a sawmill and said, 'I want a job,' and the mill boss said, 'Look there's no jobs here but I got a job up on the mountain stoning roads to get the trucks in and out.' That literally started his life in the timber industry. Over the next few years he started doing some contracting work, building wooden railways for locomotives that were bringing logs out of the bush to the sawmill."

Cable assisted L822D equipped with a Tigercat 2000 series shear. "When you're falling on 30 to 40 degree slopes with a hot saw, the saw is living in the dirt," says Ken. The shear cuts at ground level without creating excessive wear from sand and rock. The result is greatly increased fibre recovery and lower maintenance compared with a disc saw.





A typical yarding site in northeastern Victoria. The high rotation wrist provides precisely angled tree placement for the yarder with much less track travel required.

The mountain was Mount Barrow, a place that Andy loved and where he developed his skills and knowledge as a timber industry professional. Decades later, he would help to develop an interpretive centre. “To this day there’s an area up on Mount Barrow that is dedicated to Dad. There’s a forest interpretation centre and it’s all around the industry and its history, and what Dad did in the industry,” Ken relates proudly.

Building businesses

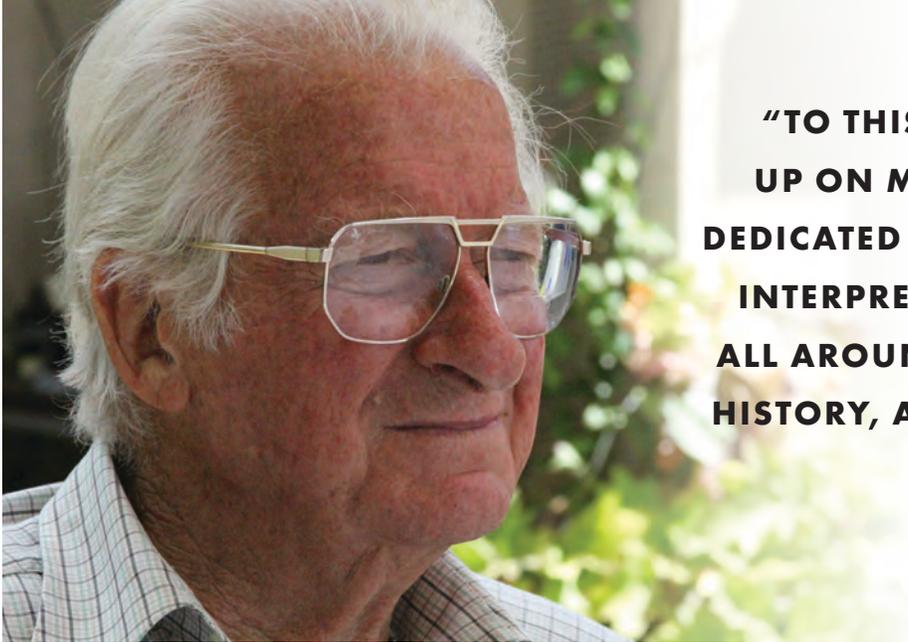
Ken’s first business was as an owner-hauler. “I had a truck and started in a small partnership with my brother-in-law,” he says. One year into the venture, Ken bought the business outright. “Very quickly I was working in Tasmania in the

hardwood industry, and Dad was a significant contractor down there in those times.”

Early into the venture, Andy was injured on the job, leaving his crew a man down. “That left me in a precarious position because I used to cart the logs off Dad’s job. I decided that I’d go and take his position and put someone else in the truck.” Ken carried on for six years, and in the process grew the business fourfold. With the hardwood logging running well, Ken’s next move was to refocus his efforts on the trucking business, expanding his fleet to eight trucks, and hauling Radiata pine in addition to hardwood.

As Ken gained more exposure to Radiata pine operations in Tasmania, an opportunity arose to run a cable logging job at Scottsdale in the northeast of the island. “I really had a passion for cable logging. I was trained by an American guy by the name of Dave Tyler who had been brought out to Australia. I spent twelve months running with him and he taught me a lot.”

Concurrent to this, Ken was developing designs for folding skel trailers with Graeme Elphinstone. “It was a pretty interesting time. I formed a business with two other guys called Tamarack Transport. We won a contract to cart 400 000 tonnes of logs a year to the newsprint mill in Boyer,



“TO THIS DAY THERE’S AN AREA UP ON MOUNT BARROW THAT IS DEDICATED TO DAD. THERE’S A FOREST INTERPRETATION CENTRE AND IT’S ALL AROUND THE INDUSTRY AND ITS HISTORY, AND WHAT DAD DID IN THE INDUSTRY.”

– Ken Padgett

Ken’s father Andy, who passed in 2013, was an outsize figure in the Tasmanian timber industry – a strong advocate of Tasmania’s hardwood industry and a champion of sustainable forest management.

Tasmania. One minute we had eight trucks and the next minute I think we had 23 trucks between the two operations. We expanded our business with folding skel trailers because we needed to get into some tricky situations and weather conditions and these trailers enabled us to do that.”

In 1996 Ken started his third venture in northeastern Victoria with Colin McCulloch, based around a Thunderbird TSY 155 swing yarder and TY 40 pole yarder. At the same time, he and his partner were running a large hardwood yarding operation in Tasmania plus a couple of conventional operations in the northeast of the state. From there the partners expanded into hardwood thinning. “It was a courageous thing to do,” says Ken. “And it was the right thing to do. We learned a lot.” Then came the Tasmania pulp market crash in 2009.

Resiliency

“I was going along really well until the pulp mill debacle in Tasmania. And that cost a lot of contractors their existence and their livelihood. We were committed heavily into this and

we went from heroes to zeroes pretty quickly. We tried valiantly to continue but there was no market for the wood. I knew that we had no way of continuing the hardwood business.”

Down but not out, Ken had a couple of things going for him. He still had a viable cartage business in Tasmania. And he still had the Victoria contract. “We had a lot of people here that I was pretty keen to keep going. I was able to call on every friend I had and every acquaintance I’d met to keep me going. We went through some pretty tough times. At one stage, I was probably within one pay of going under, I reckon.”

Ken negotiated with Hancock (HVP Plantations) for a new three-year contract. It went well and at the end of the three years he successfully negotiated a fixed ten-year contract which allowed him to upgrade some aging equipment, including replacing the old Thunderbird yarder with a new 124 Madill in 2016. Ken relocated to Wodonga and then Myrtleford, running the 78 000 cubic metre operation while his two sons, Oliver and Kenneth managed the cartage business in Tasmania. “Oliver and Kenneth are extremely capable

managers,” says Ken. Together, he and his sons own Padgett Group Pty Ltd as a family business.

Prior to 2016, Ken had never owned a Tigercat machine and it was at this time that he purchased his first, an L830 model equipped with a 2000 series shear and a 340 degree wrist. “It was brilliant. We did some really tough work with that machine because it was on the job well before winches,” Ken explains. The terrain continued to get steeper and steeper. Three years later, Ken made the decision to winch assist a buncher for the first time.

The benefits that came with the winch assist technology were primarily focused around safety and reduced environmental impact. “Ground disturbance is zero and there was an unbelievable leap in terms of safety,” Ken explains. “It means we’re going to more difficult areas. But you’re taking guys off the ground that used to hand fall. We used to hand fall probably 5% of what we did. Now everything is cut with the bunchers.”

By this time, Ken was running the clear fall yarding operation,

**“I’M VERY HAPPY THAT WE HAVE THE ASSOCIATION WITH
TIGERCAT AND GLAD WE CHOSE TO GO THAT WAY. I THINK IT’S
BEEN A VERY GOOD PRODUCT FOR US. WE LOOK AFTER IT, BUT IT
LOOKS AFTER US.”**

and a conventional steep slope thinning operation that utilized bunchers, skidders, and processors at roadside. He purchased another Tigercat buncher – this time an L822D – for the thinning operation, and soon followed that up with an LH822D mated to a Tigercat 575 to process logs on the yarding job. “That has just been an unbelievable machine. Four years in now and it’s still a front-line machine.”

Winch assist thinning

At the end of the thinning contract, HVP decided it wanted to leave the branches and tops in the stand. Ken explains that the contract extension turned into a tender process. He had some new ideas and figured he could process at the stump with winches. “So we did some trials because we already had a ten tonne winch machine. We put the harvester on a winch and we knew pretty quickly what that would do. Then we put the forwarder on a winch to see how that went. We did some trials up and down steep hills. We pretty quickly worked out a potential package. So, we put it to Hancock to change to a fully winched assisted harvesting and forwarding operation.”

Ken won the tender and then went about specifying the right harvester configuration for the job. “I just thought 822, it’s going to be an 822. We also spoke with Onetrak salesman, Shane Ricardo about the possibility of getting a narrow track frame. I thought an 822 with a narrow track frame

and an extension boom would be a very smart thing, running the 425 Waratah head. The machine arrangement has turned out to be very successful, and along with the 18-tonne forwarder and the T-Winches, it makes for a very well-balanced system.” The extra boom length allows the operator to reach deep into the stand on either side of the row, allowing up to 20 metre out row spacing.

Ken’s next move was to look at replacing some of the aging equipment on the clear fell operation. “With a cable operation, everything has to be reliable. Once you have one machine down, you’re affecting six or seven other machines. The downhill spiral is very quick.” Ken bought the L822D that is running currently on the yarder operation, equipped with a 2000 series shear and 340 degree wrist. Ken deploys his older Tigercat bunchers on silviculture and fire salvage jobs.

Although Ken prefers not to rely on high hour machines for his primary operations, he takes some comfort in the stories about 40,000-hour Tigercats. “It gives you a nice feeling to know that you’ve got something that’s going to last. Onetrak gives us great service down here. The machines are so reliable. It’s filters, and more filters, and more filters, and occasional updates. We’re not replacing massive componentry in them.”

Shearing saw timber

From a North American perspective, one of the unique aspects of Ken’s clear fall operation is the use of a shear head in mature radiata pine saw timber. He says the shear can handle up to a 50 cm (20 in) tree with a single cut without difficulty. “When you’re falling on 30 to 40 degree slopes with a hot saw, the saw is living in the dirt. So unless you’re cutting a stump that is a foot high at the back, and that makes it 18 inches at the front, you are continuously cutting dirt and rocks. By cutting the trees at ground level, not only is the fibre recovery higher, it makes the successive tasks easier. When you’re cabling them out, for instance, you’re not tangled up in stumps because they are cut reasonably low all the time.”

Ken estimates that the processor cuts off somewhere between 50 and 75 mm (under 3 in maximum) from the butt of each stem. HVP is quite strict on the amount of butt trim and the logs are going to a veneer mill. “I’m not the only one using a shear in this forest. Everyone that has a buncher is using a shear. There’s plenty of damage that seems to go into the stump, but there’s not much damage passing up into the log. It might be particular to radiata, I don’t know.” Ken says that the shears have been reliable, with low maintenance and no structural issues.

The high rotation wrist provides a lot of flexibility on steep slopes in tree placement for the yarder with

much less track travel required. The operator can work more quickly and efficiently with the ability to precisely place the stems parallel to the tracks or at whatever angle is required for the yarder setup.

“I’m very happy that we have the association with Tigercat and glad we chose to go that way. I think it’s been a very good product for us. We look after it, but it looks after us. I met Ken [MacDonald] about seven years ago and was pretty impressed with him as a person. And, you know, he’s had these battles, just like all of us, so I guess I related to that a bit. I love his energy and his commitment to what he does. I think I have a similar commitment.”

During the past eight years, Padgett Group Pty Ltd has tripled in size. The company employs about 90 people across the two states. In Tasmania, the company has a long-term relationship with Timberlands Pacific, hauling 1,5 million tonnes of logs and chips annually, and in addition providing extensive site preparation services. “So that’s a big part of our business, but we also take all the wood waste from the sawmill that we cart to. We take the sawdust, the dry shavings, the pine bark, every piece of waste that we can get our hands on, and we convert that into garden mulches, cattle bedding and chicken bedding. It’s come a long way from an owner-driver at 24 years old.” ■

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An LH822D harvester working unassisted on a steep slope row thinning operation. Normally the machines are cable assisted.



Rocky Mountain

LOGGING

Mountain loggers, Jamie and Mel Jordan understand how to assess and mitigate risk. They talk about moving to a new province, starting a new business, and what goes into the decision to purchase a new-to-market processing head.

– Paul Iarocci



Jamie and Mel Jordan moved from the Kootenays in southern British Columbia to the eastern edge of the Rockies in 2010. The Pope & Talbot mill in Castlegar had closed in 2008 and the local industry was, to use Mel's term, unstable. As an experienced equipment operator, Jamie quickly found a job with a crew in Alberta. After two years, his family followed, and they established a new life in the community of Rocky Mountain House.

In 2015, representatives from the West Fraser mill in Sundre approached Jamie. "They wanted to get into steep ground," Jamie recalls. "With our background coming from BC, the yarding background and the steep slope experience, it seemed to be the right fit." Sunrock Contracting was born. For the first five years, the company worked 200 to 300 km from home. "We were going

around to all the old compartments cleaning up all the steep ground that the conventional loggers had left behind years and years ago," Jamie explains.

More recently, Sunrock is being assigned to compartments that haven't been previously harvested. Jamie explains that the mill tries to put the steep slope contractors on blended blocks. "So for what conventional area is there, they always try to put enough steep slope in it that you can do both; because of course with a steep slope the production isn't the greatest. If you can conventional log at the same time, you can make up your volume."

Jamie estimates that in recent years about 60% of the ground that he logs can be done conventionally and the remaining 40% is considered steep ground where some form of cable assistance is required. These worksites tend to be around half the

distance from town, taking several hours per week off the commuting time.

Although Sunrock's expertise is relatively common across the border in BC, Jamie's skillset is the exception in Alberta. He says there are seven West Fraser contractors in the FMA but only Sunrock and one other are steep slope specialists.

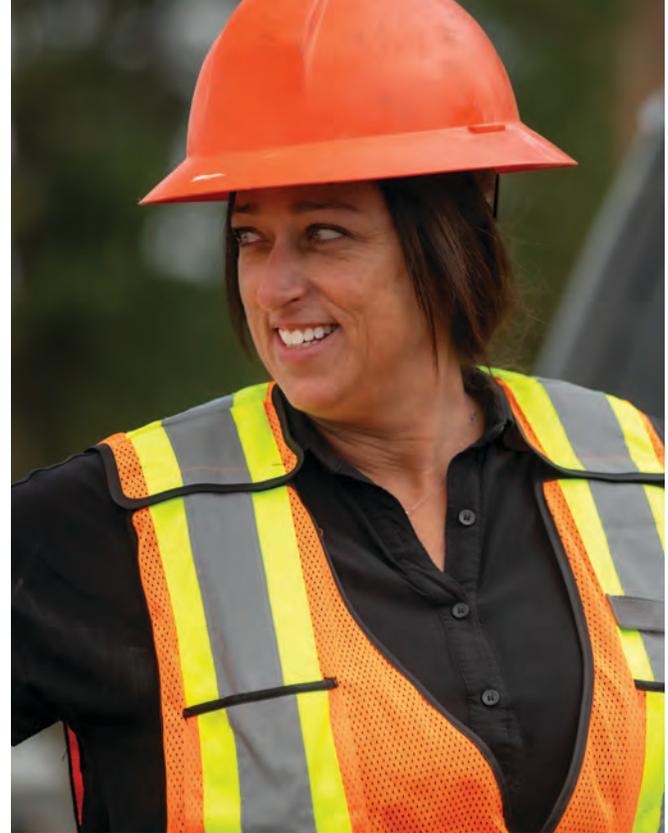
One of the main differences between logging in southern Alberta versus the higher volume regions in the north is seasonality. Jamie says that the Sundry mill is one of West Fraser's top producers. "We've just got the ground to work through. On average, I would say we work eleven months of the year. In Northern Alberta, they're in a lot of low-lying areas where they can't get started until October or November, and then they're done by March. We work right through to May and then we're maybe down for May and a little bit of June.

Sunrock purchased the very first 573 head, equipped on a Tigercat 850 processor.





Jamie says Sunrock is a team environment with first focus on safety. He emphasizes that productivity improvements come from each operator thinking about the next machine in the process.



Mel operated the yarder for two years before moving into an office administrative role for the company.

It depends on how wet it is, but as soon as it's dry enough, we go again."

Jamie tries to keep the crew on a single-shift, five-day work week during summer. "Winter of course is our go time, so we ramp up the processing to 24 hours a day. Sometimes the loading and the hoe chucking will be a shift-and-a-half. We try to single shift the skidding and we've never had to double shift the buncher. He's always ahead far enough, especially once we get into the steep stuff – that slows us down quite a bit."

Sunrock operates a Teleforest yarder, a simple single cable grapple yarder with a drop carriage. Ground based equipment includes a Tigercat LX830D feller buncher and an LS855D shovel logger. Both can be mated to a Timbermax winch assist fitted to a Hitachi 350. Although Jamie purchased his first Tigercat – a 632E skidder – in 2017, he has

been an admirer of the brand for many years. In 2000, back in his BC days, he ran one of the first 630B skidders in Canada. Sunrock currently runs two large four-wheel skidders, including the 632E, now with 11,000 hours on the meter. The yarder and skidders feed two processors, one of which is a new Tigercat 850 fitted with the first 573 harvesting head ever sold. Jamie runs a single loader. However, he can also load trucks with the shovel clam grapple equipped LS855D.

Sunrock also owns an excavator and a dozer for roadbuilding functions. "When we get moved into a compartment, I'll generally walk every block in front of our logging, just so we know where we're going to put our roads in. The mills will give suggestions of where a block road should go, but sometimes that's good for the truckers and not for the logging. Or when I'm doing winch assist, I need a road in a certain spot

because I've got to be able to pack the wood up somewhere for the skidder to get at it."

Jamie explains that the broken terrain in the mountains means that the slopes can break several different ways. The plan might look good on a map or the GPS, but Jamie puts boots on the ground before making the final decisions. The year after the block is harvested, the planters will come in to restock. Once the planting is complete, another contractor will come in and reclaim all the block roads. Finally, the reclaimed block roads are replanted, and the cycle starts over again.

On the most extreme slopes, the Tigercat feller buncher, along with the winch assist are the first machines on site. As the felling on the steepest sections is completed, the shovel logger moves onto the site, taking over the winch assist, and hoe chucking the logs to a

location accessible by the skidders or the yarder. Jamie says they commonly see extraction distances up to 1,000 ft (300 m). “I just pack everything to where a skidder can get to it. I try not to go out over 300 feet [90 m] before I either have a trail or a pickup point,” says Jamie. “At some point it’s just too hard on the undercarriage and I feel that hoe chucking is not productive after that.”

Jamie says that the Tigercat equipment is especially well suited to his mountain logging conditions. “I’m a Tigercat guy,” says Jamie. “I’ve run most equipment, and they’re just superior to anything else out there, especially for the specialized steep slope stuff that we do. They’ve got way more longevity and good resale. They’re engineered better and the

engineers actually listen to what we are asking for.”

While it is readily apparent that Jamie likes the Tigercat product, it doesn’t entirely explain why he decided to purchase the world’s first 573 harvesting head. Some might say it was a risky decision. “Yes, absolutely,” admits Jamie. “The processor is something I just can’t have go down. Every day matters with a processor.”

Jamie liked the 850 platform and appreciated the fuel efficiency of the carrier. “I thought if I was going with Tigercat, I might as well go Tigercat all the way around.” Wajax brought the 850 equipped with the 573 to the jobsite for a demo. After running it Jamie came to a conclusion. “There was a whole bunch of stuff we wanted changed.”

He explains that the grab arms didn’t collect well when reaching into the pile – the head tended to twist. Jamie and his operators found that the feed wheels seemed to have too much torque and not enough speed. The feedback list went back to the engineers. They redesigned the grab arms, changed out the feed wheel motors and made other improvements. “It wasn’t huge changes, but enough that when it came back, the operator that I had on it didn’t want to go back bunching. He wanted to be on a processor again.”

The revision work and software refinements were the difference between Jamie purchasing or declining the head. One operator had previously been on a Waratah 622B for the last 12,000 hours. “When it was first here, he probably

A family business. Jamie, Mel and Jayda.





The 850 processor equipped with the 573 head making logs on the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains.

would have quit if he had to run it. With the changes, he said it was the best machine he's ever run. So, like I said, being able to give feedback and actually seeing results, that's a pretty big deal for me."

Gordon Kyler, Tigercat factory representative and harvesting head specialist based in nearby Sundre, Alberta, spent a lot of time on the log deck at Sunrock's operations working out bugs, interfacing with the engineering team, and refining the prototype into a saleable, high production processing head. "There are growing pains for sure with a new head, but Gord is on that. And Wajax is here. They've got a good mechanic and a good service truck. They've both done a really good job, and I can't say enough good about either of them."

Jamie comments favourably on the large capacity and heavy duty build quality compared to his previous head. "Time will tell, but this is just built so much sturdier. It's like the machines – they're in a league of their own when it comes to longevity and toughness."

Family business

When Mel first arrived in Alberta she worked five years for a helicopter services company involved in pipeline surveillance and cut block surveys for West Fraser. This was before Sunrock started up. "So coincidentally, we ended up working for the mill quite a bit," says Mel. "We would scan the brush piles to make sure there were no hotspots. At one point we were flying through this untouched valley and one of the guys told me this was where they were going to get Jamie working – in all the steep ground. It's kind of funny how our lives intertwined there for a time."

Mel recalls that when Sunrock first acquired the yarder, a factory representative came out to do operator training. Although she was still employed by the helicopter company, Mel participated in the training so that she could in turn train new operators. "I decided I liked it, and so we were talking about hiring and training someone and I said, 'Well, I think we just did train the person, because it's going

to be me,' and then I was the yarder operator." Mel ran the yarder for two years before transitioning into an office management role at Sunrock.

A third family member has been working for Sunrock for the past five years as a skidder operator. Daughter Jayda started as soon as she graduated high school. "Since I've been little Dad has taken me out to work. I was really interested in it, so I learned how to skid and fell in love with it." Expecting her first child, Jayda is going through a transition of her own – from machine operating to a health and safety administrator role. I ask if she will ever go back to operating equipment. "I would love to," she answers. "But with the hours, I don't know. It's tough hours with raising babies." She laughs. "Maybe the babies can come out here."

Jayda says that working in the logging industry is amazing; a great career opportunity and a great lifestyle choice once she was used to the very early mornings. When she first started operating the skidder she was nervous. However, she says

that eventually it becomes second nature. “Like the machine is just an extension of you.”

Although she is quite humble about her abilities, her parents reinforce that Jayda is a top-level operator, and that mountain skidding is a very serious job. “Definitely more thought goes into every move you make,” says Mel.

Jamie agrees. “I would put her against most guys. And yeah, you’ve got to have your head on your shoulders at all times. Running back and forth on a road or flat ground with a skidder is a whole different ballgame than what we do. Like Jayda said, you’ve got to get to the point where it’s just an extension of yourself. Knowing where your drag needs to be, knowing where your blade needs to be.”

Each machine is part of a chain of events, and the previous machine in the chain makes or breaks the productivity of the next one. The buncher operator lays the bunches in a way that is optimized for Jamie, who takes a lot of time with the LS855D shovel logger to bring the wood to positions where it is easy for the skidders to extract. “There is a ton of thought put into how we lay the wood and where we take the wood so we can reduce risk for the skidder operators and anybody that is following us,” he says. “At the end of the day, everybody needs to go home to their families. There is no reason not to make it safe.”

The skidder operators in turn are focused on the requirements of the processor operators. “If you’ve been doing hot logging and steep slope

stuff, you know the most efficient way of doing it and how to work together without causing mayhem. We deck our wood from right to left so when the processor starts at the left-hand side, the wood just rolls off. It’s not tangled up. It’s a team atmosphere out here and anybody that doesn’t buy into the team atmosphere just won’t be here.”

Running with seven to ten employees, Sunrock enjoys a low worker turnover. Many of the operators originally came from BC. “I would like to believe we are pretty fair and treat everybody with respect,” says Jamie. “Nobody wants to go anywhere. They move their families over here. It’s like an extension of our family.” ■

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– Jamie Jordan

Jamie operates the LS855D shovel logger. Equipped with a shovel clam grapple, it can do double duty loading trucks as required.



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