OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF TIGERCAT INDUSTRIES INC.

# BETWEEN THE BRANCHES

ISSUE 63 OCTOBER 2025


## ASSISTED LOGGING IN CHILE

## FOREXPO 2025

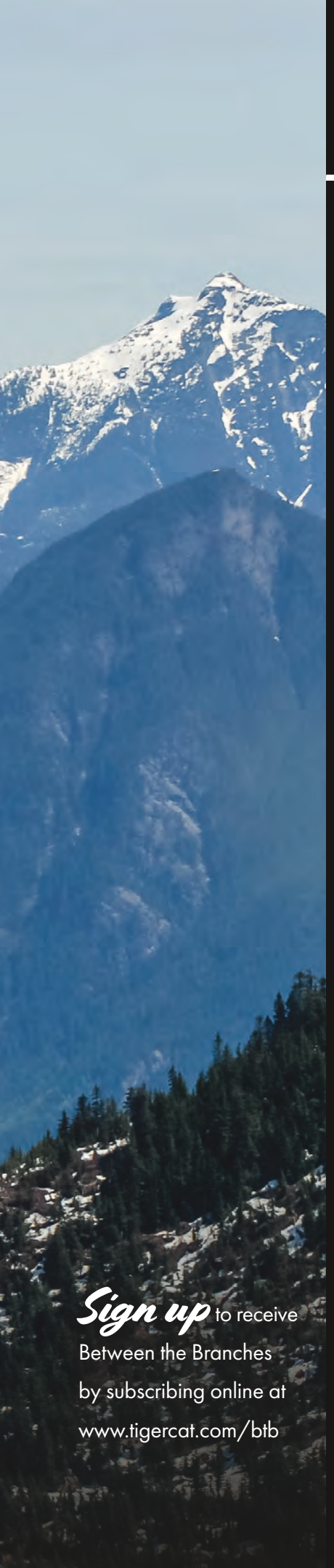
## COMPACT SKIDDERS

## Cleanup WITH THE LS857

## Fire Dozer IN LONG COUNTY

## Slash Management IN NEW ZEALAND

Tigercat® | TCi®



# BETWEEN THE BRANCHES

ISSUE 63 OCTOBER 2025

## IN THIS ISSUE


Dealer News ..... 4

Support News ..... 6

Product News ..... 7

Chainsaw Master ..... 9

Forexpo 2025 ..... 10

Compact Skidders ..... 12

Fire Dozer..... 16

Slash Management ..... 22

Confidence through Training ..... 28

Lime Creek Logging..... 32

Simulator at U of I ..... 38

Storm Chaser..... 42

Assisted logging in Chile..... 48

Cleanup with the LS857..... 54




*Sign up* to receive Between the Branches by subscribing online at www.tigercat.com/btb

# FROM THE *Editor*

Contractors are often called upon to do tough jobs. This issue of Between the Branches, in part, recognizes the various roles contractors take on to mitigate against, or recover from disaster scenarios like storms, floods, and wildfires. The machine applications are wide-ranging and valuable to society.

Dustin Cooper leads a crew that, for six months, literally worked around the clock in Georgia with three 6900 grinders to reduce masses of vegetation debris downed by Hurricane Helene. In North Carolina, Chase Fox purchased a new Tigercat LS857 shovel logger to clean up blowdown on steep slopes around an estate development in the Blue Ridge Mountains that was slammed by Helene.

Speirs Logging is using an L870D leveling track carrier equipped with a 4161-15 mulching head to break down hazardous post-harvest slash and reduce erosion risk on New Zealand's North Island. The fire department in Long County, Georgia purchased a TCi 920 dozer as an added line of defence against forest fire threats during the parched summer season.

In addition, read about hardwood loggers in Ohio, and steep slope harvesting in Chile with the 120 winch assist. Another steep-slope contractor, Lime Creek Logging, is co-owned by Jinny McIver, a strong advocate for trades education.

She is deeply involved in initiatives that introduce high school students to careers in heavy equipment operation, incorporating advanced simulator technology developed by Tigercat Industries. Meanwhile, in Idaho, Dr. Ryer Becker is taking a like-minded approach, using the simulators for college-level training and community outreach with similar goals.

***Along with the latest news, and the inside scoop on the Tigercat-TCi technical service training program, it's a packed issue.***

– Paul Iarocci

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AND
DEALER DEVELOPMENT

## *Do you have something to say?*

*Write us or email us:*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
comments@tigercat.com
www.tigercat.com
519.753.2000
P.O. Box 637, Brantford, ON
Canada, N3T 5P9

# DEALER TRANSITION IN NEW ZEALAND


Tigercat Industries has transitioned its authorized dealership for New Zealand from AB Equipment (ABE) to CablePrice (NZ) Ltd. (CPL).

This change is the result of a strategic realignment between Tigercat Industries and ABE. Since 2010, ABE has played a key role in supporting the growth of the Tigercat brand in New Zealand, particularly the adoption of Tigercat steep slope harvesting systems by the contractor customer base. Tigercat Industries values and appreciates this long-standing partnership and the contributions of ABE.

Looking ahead, Tigercat Industries is confident in the ability of CablePrice to provide excellent service and support to customers. With over 70 years of experience across the construction, forestry, transport, agriculture, and mining sectors, CablePrice brings a deep understanding of heavy equipment and a strong national support network.

Tigercat Industries looks forward to continued success in New Zealand with CablePrice as its new partner and remains committed to supporting the forestry industry across New Zealand with innovative, purpose-built equipment and exceptional service.

# NEW DEALER APPOINTED FOR UPPER MICHIGAN *and* WISCONSIN

**Pat's Heavy Equipment to represent Tigercat and TCi equipment brands.**

Tigercat Industries is pleased to announce the appointment of Pat's Heavy Equipment as the authorized Tigercat-TCi distributor for the Upper Michigan and Wisconsin region of the United States.

Based in Greenland, Michigan, Pat's Heavy Equipment has been family-owned and operated for over 30 years. The company is widely recognized for its commitment to exceptional customer satisfaction, and for building long-lasting relationships with clients who value quality, service, and integrity.

Owner Kip McIntyre comments, "We are excited to announce our new partnership with Tigercat. We look forward to working alongside a great partner that provides top-of-the-line forestry equipment. With this partnership, we remain committed to delivering the same top-notch service for Tigercat customers that our family has proudly provided for decades with other trusted brands."

Pat's Heavy Equipment has earned a reputation for repeat business and customer referrals — a reflection of the trust it has cultivated over the years. Living up to its motto, 'Where His Customers Send Their Best Friends,' the company delivers beyond forestry and construction equipment by offering a wide range of products backed by personalized service and a deep commitment to excellence.

After-sale support has always been the top priority at Pat's. The parts and service team provides fast, accurate, and reliable support.

"Tigercat makes a product that its customers can rely on," says Kip. "The growth of Tigercat cut-to-length equipment in the U.P. is something we're excited to expand — not only in the U.P., but also across a large portion of Wisconsin. The product speaks for itself with its durability, and that feedback comes from every Tigercat customer who has purchased equipment in our market area. I have yet to speak to one Tigercat customer who isn't happy, and that's not easy to do in this industry."

Kevin Selby, Vice President of Sales USA, welcomes the new dealer. "I am pleased to welcome Kip McIntyre and the entire Pat's Heavy Equipment team to the Tigercat dealer family. Their expertise and commitment to customer service will be key as we continue to grow and strengthen our presence in Upper Michigan and Wisconsin. I look forward to working alongside Kip and his team in the years ahead."

# H-SERIES *Drive-to-Tree* FELLER BUNCHERS


**Next generation Tigercat feller bunchers come with major upgrades for the operator.**

The Tigercat H-series feller bunchers are set to enter regular production beginning October 2025. The three-model line-up includes the 720H, 724H and 726H. The wheelbase of all three machines has been increased by 4.5 in (115 mm) and the physical size of the 720H and 724H remains identical. The increased wheelbase, along with a built-in 900 lb (410 kg) rear bumper, improves handling and stability while decreasing the turn radius for increased agility in tight stands.

The primary differentiator between the three models is engine horsepower. When equipped with the Tigercat FPT N67 Tier 4f engine, the 720H is rated at 203 hp (151 kW), the 724H is rated at 246 hp (183 kW), and the 726H is rated at 285 hp (212 kW).

The common operator's cabin has been completely redesigned with increased interior volume, resulting in more legroom, additional storage and a roomier feel. Operator sightlines have been improved with a front windshield that is 27% larger and rear quarter windows that are 40% larger. Visibility is further augmented by the dual camera rearVIEW system. For upward visibility, the skylight is 40% larger and installed directly on a ¾ in (20 mm) forward sloping roof plate to easily shed debris. The operator can easily access the outside of the front window area for cleaning.

Simplified joysticks with programmable buttons allow the operator to customize controls for the clamp and accumulator arms, saw, differential locks, and drive functions. The roof-mounted A/C system, common with the 600H series skidders, improves cooling performance and comfort.

Another major change for the H-series feller bunchers is a new hydraulic system option. Loggers will now have the choice of the tried-and-true gear pump system, or the new piston pump load sense system for improved multifunctioning. Both system choices maintain the use of pilot operated joysticks for boom and steer control. New in-tank hydraulic filtration extends service intervals up to 2,000 hours.

Maintenance and service improvements include a larger engine air filter, a more conveniently located manual fuel fill port, an optional ground level fueling system and improved access to the hydraulic pumps and electrical systems.

# **1055D FORWARDER** LANDS IN EUROPE

## 1055D design improvements focus on the operator and machine configurability for a variety of CTL applications.

Tigercat Industries launched the new TCi 1055D forwarder at 2025 FOREXPO in France. The machine attracted a great deal of attention during the two-day event.

The heavy duty 15-tonne forwarder was designed out of the gate to be highly configurable to meet many differing local requirements that make up the global forwarder market. The machine can be specified with two transmission choices to optimize the machine based on typical terrain conditions. Three bunk systems, and three available wagon frame lengths further customize the forwarder for thinning or final harvesting as well as varying log length requirements. Several crane choices are available.

The operator's cabin has undergone a complete redesign. With increased legroom, the spacious interior is designed for optimal ergonomics and effective climate control. Both the seat and seat base are configurable according to preference and operating conditions. Multiple storage locations are available to the operator, including mesh net secured overhead storage for light weight items, various slots and cubbies, and a dedicated floor level area suitable for work boots or lunch storage.

Clear operator sightlines reduce fatigue and increase productivity. The curved rear window gives the operator an unobstructed upward view of the crane and clear sightlines to the entire work area. The placement and shape of the front and rear control panels, as well as the fuel and hydraulic tank structures, allow for clear sightlines to the blade and tires. Additionally, the vertical gate slats are progressively angled to enhance through-visibility to the load area.

The operator controls are new with an intuitive and comfortable layout. The drive control system has separate engine rpm and drive speed controls, along with preprogrammed speed settings for fine speed control and convenient operation.

The hydraulically operated front hood enclosure opens to provide a safe and roomy work platform. From the elevated platform, the operator can walk around both sides of the engine. A pull-down ladder behind the cab gives access to standing areas beside the hydraulic and fuel tanks, and the power-tilting cab provides access to major hydraulic components.

The 1055D forwarder will be branded TCi in Europe and Tigercat in North America. Both brands are built and supported by Tigercat Industries.

# Product Support in Uruguay and Argentina

## Tigercat Industries is excited to announce that Pablo Renato de los Santos Ramos has joined the product support team in South America.

Based in Rivera, Uruguay, Pablo will serve as the factory support representative for both Uruguay and Argentina. In this role, he will collaborate closely with Tigercat dealer Latin Equipment in Uruguay and Argentina to provide after-sale technical and operational support for the growing number of Tigercat machines in the region.

Pablo brings extensive experience in technology implementation and product support, backed by a wide range of training and certifications in various fields, including aviation, automotive, and forestry equipment. His advanced technical expertise, coupled with prior experience as a forest harvesting machine operator, maintenance technician, and maintenance supervisor, makes him a valuable addition to the product support team. With 25 years of experience, Pablo most recently held a maintenance management position at a major Uruguayan harvesting company, where he oversaw a significant fleet of Tigercat machines.

“Pablo is a well-rounded and respected professional with experience in machinery operation, maintenance, and fleet management. I have no doubt that he will greatly benefit our expanding customer base in Uruguay and Argentina with the wealth of knowledge and skills he brings,” says Frans Misdorp, Tigercat Industries District Manager for South America.


Pablo Renato de los Santos Ramos


# GEORGIA *Chainsaw* MASTER

Over the years we have seen all kinds of creative expressions depicting Tigercat machines – but nothing quite like what Tim Davis does. Tim is a chainsaw carving enthusiast from Evans County, Georgia and his Tigercat carvings are impressively detailed.

Tim operates agricultural equipment as a full-time job. During evenings and weekends he likes to "crank the chainsaw and make some sawdust," as he puts it. He has been chainsaw carving for about ten years. Tim learned hand carving and woodworking from his grandfather, who taught him how to use chisels, knives, and rotary tools. Tim tells us that his favourite wood species for carving are cypress, cedar, and poplar. He also enjoys working with white pine, though he only has access to it when travelling up north for carving competitions.

Tim has been commissioned to carve a variety of projects including bears, owls, eagles and trucks. "I strive to make over-the-top detailed carvings to give my clients exactly what they want," he says. Last year, Tigercat-TCi dealer Tidewater Equipment commissioned Tim to demonstrate live chainsaw carving during the 2024 Tidewater Demo Day.

"Tidewater Equipment reached out to me about carving for the Tidewater Demo Day. They wanted two carvings to give away as door prizes, so I made an owl while at the event and brought a Tigercat 822E feller buncher I had made. The Tigercat was my first detailed equipment carving, and I put a lot into it," Tim explains.

Tim recently completed his third Tigercat carving and is very proud of how it turned out. The time it takes to carve a Tigercat machine varies depending on the size and level of detail. "As an artist building a sculpture, I would say finding reference photos or even a breakdown to understand how the machine works or moves; it really helps," he says.

Tim also raises funds for several organizations in the region. "Over the years I have used my talent to help donate and raise money for several organizations and local charities. For example, I participated in a chainsaw carving event that raised over a million dollars to help find a cure for cystic fibrosis."

*If you want to see more of Tim's work, find him on Facebook as* **Tim Saw Carver Davis** *and on Instagram* **@tim_saw_carver_davis**


# CUOQ FOREST DIFFUSION AT **FOREXPO 2025**

**TCi dealer for France, Cuoq Forest Diffusion, puts on first-class display of premium quality harvesting equipment at France forestry event.**

The 2025 FOREXPO show took place just outside Mimizan, France June 18-20, 2025. Cuoq Forest Diffusion (CFD) with the support of several team members from Tigercat Industries, showcased a strong and professional presence at the event, which featured the display of several TCi forestry machines along with the worldwide debut of the prototype TCi 1055D forwarder.

The 1055D earned praise from French forwarder operators looking for improvements in durability, performance, and visibility. Replacing the 1055C, it is the first model in the Tigercat forwarder lineup to feature a completely redesigned operator's cabin, new bunk and gate configurations, expanded crane options, and numerous other enhancements. The new machine is expected to make a strong impact in the European market and other forestry regions around the world.

Other products on display included the TCi 1165 harvester, along with two TCi 612 skidders. One of the skidders was configured with the dual winch system and a telescopic crane, while the other was equipped with the prototype swing boom system engineered, manufactured and installed by CFD. This system offers customers working in sloped or soft ground conditions a productivity advantage over traditional grapple skidders, allowing the operator to gather scattered timber to build a large bunch with less machine travel and manoeuvring before extracting to roadside.


Fair attendees checking out the new TCi 1055D forwarder.

In addition, the forestry machine simulator was a major highlight. Fair attendees got the chance to virtually operate a TCi forwarder, wheel harvester, track feller buncher, or track processor, to get a feel for the capabilities of this innovative training tool firsthand.

Tigercat Industries sent a dedicated team of sales and engineering professionals to support CFD at this well-attended three-day event. It attracted nearly 30,000 visitors from France and neighboring European countries, generating significant interest in TCi products.

Special thanks go to Cuoq Forest Diffusion for an outstanding level of hospitality, keeping guests well fed and hydrated during the extremely hot days. The event was a great opportunity to interact with forestry professionals from France, as well as other countries including Spain, Italy, Germany, and Portugal, to learn more about industry needs in the dynamic European forestry sectors.

The Cuoq Forest Diffusion team.


**Tigercat builds skidders to handle all types of logging applications. Between the Branches recently visited two smaller-class models, the 612 skidder and the 610H cable skidder, working in two different hardwood applications.**

– Chris McMillan

## Fryburg Logging

Paul Stutzman is the owner of Fryburg Logging, based in Fredericksburg, Ohio. Paul started helping his dad cut wood when he was fourteen years old. By age 21, equipped with a chainsaw, a small dozer, and an old loader, he was logging full-time during winters to help feed the family mill. We caught up with him as he was working on a blowdown cleanup job in the Wooster-Shreve area.

In June 2022, a line of severe thunderstorms moved through Ohio and a large macroburst tracked across Wooster township. Wind speeds were estimated to be 80-90 mph (130-145 km/h) along this path. Thousands of trees were downed, falling on homes, vehicles and powerlines, causing widespread power outages. "Last week was the three-year anniversary of the storm. With this storm damage, a lot of the stuff is covered. You can't even see the logs. You have to push the briars to the side. There are cherry logs between 24 and 35 inch [60 and 90 cm] diameter. There's a lot of maple and white oak. It's a shame that this cleanup wasn't done sooner," says Paul.

After assessing the scope of work, Paul realized that he would need to transition his selective harvesting operations from manual to mechanical felling. Paul recalls, "After the storm hit there was a lot of timber we wanted to cut, so we contacted Danny at Ricer Equipment, and decided to buy the LX830D." Later on, Paul decided to purchase a Tigercat 612 grapple skidder. "We knew the dependability and the service support we experienced with the cutter. That's what made us purchase the skidder."

The site we visited was beyond a treeline behind a farmer's field. Damaged timber was downed or partially standing. Paul used the LX830D to cut damaged trees, as well as thinning where necessary. The 612 skidded large trees, one or two at a time, to the roadside where a loader was bucking to length and loading trucks.

Paul explains the choice of the narrow skidder with a fixed front axle and oscillating centre joint.

# COMPACT SKIDDERS IN HARDWOOD COUNTRY

The 610H cable skidder pulls high-value hardwood for Fox Lumber Company near Mill Creek, West Virginia.

(L-R) Paul Stutzman, Owner of Fryburg Logging; Elvin Swarey, Fryburg Logging Skidder Operator; Dan Weaver, Fryburg Logging Loader Operator; Jerry Smeak, Tigercat District Manager; Danny Gatrell, Ricer Regional Sales Manager; Troy Sneddon, Ricer Regional Sales Manager; Loren Ricer, Ricer Dealer Manager.

"We deal with mainly select cut and all our competitors run small skidders, so all our trails in the woods are narrow. With the 612, we can fit in those same trails and with the cutter, we can wiggle our way through. If we had gone with a 625 skidder, we'd have to enlarge a lot of the trails, and that's a lot of dozer work."

As Paul continues to transition Fryburg Logging from partial hand falling to fully mechanical, he plans to take it slow and work with Danny Gatrell at Ricer Equipment. "It's awesome working with them. They take care of us."

## Fox Lumber Company

Next, we travelled about 420 km (260 miles) southeast to the town of Mill Creek, West Virginia to visit Steve Fox, owner of Fox Lumber Company, to watch Steve's recently purchased Tigercat 610H cable skidder in action.

Steve has worked in the woods since he was a kid helping his dad cut logs. Both his grandfathers and one great-grandfather were loggers, and he has kept it in the family. His son Doug, and daughters Stevie and Jessie help him run the business. Doug helps with all aspects of the business, runs the logging operations, and buys all the timber to supply the mill. Stevie manages the sawmill. Jessie Gum manages the office and looks after lumber sales.

Steve started Fox Lumber Company in 1986 with a dozer and a chainsaw. After ramping up the logging operation, he built his first sawmill about a year later. Today, the mill supplies five million board feet of green hardwood lumber annually. The product is sold to cabinet, moulding, and flooring manufacturers, as well as dry kiln companies for further distribution. The company logging crew supplies most of the logs for the mill, with subcontractors supplementing the log supply.

On the day we visited, the crew was hand falling for the Tigercat 610H skidder on Steve's own property, just up the hill from the mill. The 610H was pulling large skids uphill in the rain with ease and very little disturbance to the skid road. The

(L-R) Stevie Fox, Fox Lumber Mill Manager; Danny Gatrell, Ricer Regional Sales Manager; Steve Fox, Owner of Fox Lumber Co.; Doug Fox, Fox Lumber Forester; Jerry Smeak, Tigercat District Manager; Troy Sneddon, Ricer Regional Sales Manager; Joey Adkins, Ricer Service Manager.


The Tigercat 612 skids large hardwood in a blowdown cleanup job in Ohio.

loads were dropped at the landing where the loader would cut them to length with a slasher and load trucks.

Steve is not new to Tigercat skidders, having previously owned several different models. Steve adds, “We’ve had all different brands and types of skidders but here with all the rain, snow, steep ground, and broken up property ownership, it’s hard to effectively use anything but cable skidders without causing too much damage to the land.”

When asked about the performance of the 610H, Doug replies, “I’m very happy with it. I’ve been fortunate to operate all kinds of skidders in my life starting at a young age. This is the best-performing, and most user-friendly skidder we’ve ever had.” The company deals with Troy Sneddon, Ricer Regional Sales Manager, and Doug emphasizes the importance of after-sale support. “Parts and service have always been good with Ricer.”

# Fire Dozer
## IN LONG COUNTY

## Southeast Georgia fire department takes a big step to tackle the bigger problem of wildfire risk.

– Paul Iarocci

Long County falls within a densely forested region of eastern Georgia. With its proximity to the Fort Stewart military base and the coastal city of Savannah, the county is experiencing rapid population growth. New housing developments are springing up adjacent to working forests.

For the past eleven years, the county fire department, based in the town of Ludowici, has been headed by an experienced and forward-thinking fire chief, Chris Moss. The department employs fifteen full-time firefighters, 40 on a part-time basis, and twenty volunteer firefighters. A rural county fire department responds to the same types of emergencies as most other departments including medical calls, vehicle fires and accidents, and structure fires. With the county's extensive forest coverage, Chris has even more weighing on his mind — the seasonal threat of brush fires and full-blown forest fires. In the drier months, the department might respond to a dozen small brush fires in a month. Given the right set of conditions, any one of those could progress into an out-of-control wildfire.

In Georgia, forest firefighting is a shared responsibility between two levels of government — local departments and Georgia Forestry Commission. As Chris explains, "We respond to brush and forest fires, and generally, if we can't handle it and we need assistance, we call Georgia Forestry. We've got a very good working relationship with them." In addition, if a fire were to overwhelm the available resources of these two bodies, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may also step in. Other stakeholders with responsibility to prevent fires are timber management companies and federal land managers who oversee nationally owned forestlands. It's a patchwork of ownership and responsibility to deal with a phenomenon that doesn't care about boundaries or bureaucracy – just heat, fuel and oxygen.

**"GOD FORBID, IF WE HAVE MULTIPLE WILDFIRES AROUND THE SURROUNDING COUNTIES AND EVERYONE IS TIED UP ON DIFFERENT FIRES, THEN WE'VE GOT A BACKUP PLAN. OUR TCI BULLDOZER IS READY TO GO."**

– Chris Moss, Fire Chief, Long County Fire Department

Back in 2011, the county experienced a severe wildfire. High temperatures, low humidity, an absence of rainfall, and high winds combined to create the perfect conditions for a difficult-to-control fire. "My goal since I became chief of this department has been to do everything I can to be proactive so as not to have that situation occur ever again," Chris explains. Through the Firefighter Property Program, Chris acquired surplus equipment from the military and repurposed it for firefighting. "We've been able to get two LMTVs [Light Medium Tactical Vehicles]. The military uses them as troop trucks, and we've modified them into brush trucks with water capacity. We can actually fight fires with them. They're also used for high water rescue."

Once the department had the ability to access off-road terrain and fight forest fires, Chris decided that he also wanted the in-house capability to create and maintain firebreaks. Somewhat unique to a county fire department, Chris decided that the department would purchase its own fire dozer. "I like to have a backup plan for everything we do. Georgia Forestry is a vital asset to us and the entire state of Georgia. Purchasing our own

Chris Moss, Fire Chief standing in front of the Long County Fire Department owned TCi 920 dozer.


Chris makes a first pass on a perimeter firebreak with the plow engaged.

dozer was just a contingency plan. If we need it, then we've got it." Chris explains that the Georgia Forestry Commission and the local fire departments complement and assist one another. The county-owned dozer provides an extra layer of protection. "We're here to assist if needed. God forbid, if we have multiple wildfires in the surrounding counties and everyone is tied up on different fires, then we've got a backup plan. Our TCi bulldozer is ready to go. So that is the whole reason we purchased it — to have a backup plan if Georgia Forestry was not available to assist if needed."

Natural disasters seem to have a way of building off one another. "We had two back-to-back hurricanes last year," says Chris. "There's an awful lot of fuel that is down in the timberlands." Not only does this further increase the risk of bigger fires, but it makes it more difficult and more dangerous to plow breaks through timber stands littered with deadwood and tangled blowdown.

Long County's TCi 920 is involved in two different types of firebreaks. The first is preventative. Aside from maintaining breaks on county land, Chris has initiated a new program offering firebreak services to citizens to protect private landholdings, which in turn helps fortify the entire county against fire risk. Chris says that preventative firebreaks usually follow boundaries, creating a firebreak perimeter around a property. For large forest blocks, firebreaks are plowed into the stand as well. "On


On the second pass, the V-blade clears any remaining debris, widens the break, and grades the surface to allow for vehicle access.

a 100-acre tract of land, you might have multiple firebreaks. There could be one around the perimeter and then some inside. The breaks help to isolate and contain a small fire before it grows in intensity, as well as providing access for firefighting equipment. “It also gives landowners access to the forest as they may use that firebreak as a road. It’s a very big hunting community here. A lot of people drive along firebreaks with their ATVs or UTVs, so there are multiple uses.”

When working an active wildfire, the firebreak is meant to be plowed at a safe distance ahead of or around the fire to contain and eventually stop it. “If you’re plowing a break on a wildfire, the closer you get to the fire, the sooner that fire’s going to die. You’re opening up the earth and getting rid of the fuel,” says Chris.

Whether creating a preventative firebreak or working on an active fire, the process is similar. The machine makes a first pass with the plow engaged to break through the organic surface material, or duff, and open up a track. The idea is not to plow into the soil itself, but just to remove the top layer of dry or decaying debris. Minimizing soil disruption maintains the surface integrity, allowing vehicles to subsequently travel over the break. “You want to remove all the debris but try to keep the firebreak as shallow as possible. Especially around here, it’s lowland. If you go very deep, then you’re going to hit the water table. Of course, when we get water in our firebreaks, the trucks are going to bog down. So we try to keep it as shallow as possible and try not to disturb the land more than we have to.”

During the first pass, the blade is positioned above ground to push larger material like brush, branches, and downed timber out of the way. Then the dozer makes a second pass with the blade engaged, opening up the break to a greater width while grading the surface. “It not only gives you a wider break to stop the fire, but it also gives access for us to be able to get other vehicles in there. We call it mopping up. Once the fire is contained, then we go back to mop up and put everything out.”

**"IT NOT ONLY PULLED THAT FOUR-DISC PLOW, BUT IT PUSHED AN ELEVEN-FOOT BLADE FULL OF DIRT AT THE SAME TIME. IT MADE A BELIEVER OUT OF ALL OF US THAT DAY."**

– Chris Moss

### A TCi solution

Living in rural Georgia, Chris had heard of Tigercat forestry equipment but he was surprised to learn the company also built a dozer under the new TCi brand. "I called up a friend of mine who is a local logger. I did not have a clue what equipment he runs. I asked if he knew anything about Tigercat and he started giggling, saying, 'What do you want to know? That's all I'll run.' I asked him if it was dependable." The logger proceeded to relate that he still owned the first piece he ever bought and that it had worked 30,000 hours. "He didn't have to tell me anything else. That was unheard of. I've run equipment all my life and I've never seen 30,000 hours on anything."

Chris contacted Van McLoon at Tidewater Equipment's nearby Brunswick branch, inquiring about a TCi 920 dozer. "I aggravated Van for about a year," Chris jokes. In fact, Van expertly guided Chris through the entire procurement process that eventually reached the all-important trial stage. "We lined up a demonstration and had a lot of folks from Georgia Forestry there and a few private contractors as well," says Chris. The designated operator, fittingly known as The Bull, said that if it wouldn't pull a four-disc plow, then they should just load it back up on the trailer. "So that's the first thing we did. It not only pulled that four-disc plow, but it pushed an eleven-foot blade full of dirt at the same time. It made a believer out of all of us that day."

Tigercat dozer engineer Jason Schneider also attended the demo. "The Bull definitely didn't think our machine was up for the task compared to the dozer he normally ran," Jason recalls. "He did several long, hard passes on the firebreak that would typically cause their other dozer to overheat, but no matter how hard he tried, he could not get the temperatures to budge. By the end of the demo, he was selling the machine for us."

During the demo, Chris asked Jason about the possibility of specifying a V-blade for the machine. The engineering group started working on it, and Jason made a couple of subsequent trips to Georgia, augmenting the design and review process with online meetings. "He showed us the designs, tweaked it here and there. He allowed us to be part of the design team if you will. And lo and behold, it's sitting here on the dozer now and we are very pleased with it. I feel like we made a good decision." Chris stresses that the support from Tidewater Equipment and Tigercat Industries has been top-notch.

Chris opted for maximum flexibility, purchasing both the V-blade and the standard six-way blade to make the machine more versatile. "The V-blade makes it easier to manoeuvre around stumps, large trees, and other obstacles in the forest. It's easier to push through something with a V-shape as opposed to a wall," Chris explains. "However, if there is a declared fire and FEMA comes in, they may request a six-way blade, so we wanted to have that option. If we can send the machine to a larger fire somewhere, it helps to generate funds for the county." This was one of the ways that Chris helped to sell the idea of a dedicated fire dozer to the county commissioners.

Like insurance, everyone buys it and hopes they never need it. For Chris, it is the same with the 920 dozer, except that in this case, the machine is being utilized in the meantime to make Long County's forests more resilient to fire, with the added benefit of potentially helping other jurisdictions fight fires. There is real potential to contribute to saving timberlands, homes, and lives. I get the impression that the thought of this may help Fire Chief, Chris Moss sleep a little better at night.

# Protect Your Investment


Ensure your machine delivers a long, trouble-free service life. Safeguard your fuel injectors with synthetic fuel filters certified by Tigercat Industries.

**Don't take chances with filtration – always purchase Tigercat branded filters from your Tigercat - TCi dealer.**

**Tigercat® | TCi®**

**www.tigercat.com/filters**


# Slash Management IN NEW ZEALAND

**Tigercat Product Support Representative, Warren Nolan reports on the Tigercat 4161-15 mulching head, deployed to New Zealand's North Island to mitigate the potential impact of slash and erosion on steep and sensitive terrain.**

– Warren Nolan, Tigercat Product Support Representative

Blake and Caree Speirs are the owners of Speirs Logging Ltd., based in Gisborne, New Zealand. Blake's father, Murray Speirs founded the company in Waitārere Beach, on the lower North Island of New Zealand, around 1998. The business began as a small family operation focused on harvesting and processing trees from the family farm. In its early years, Speirs Logging Ltd. worked primarily on woodlots, servicing various sites across the lower North Island.

As demand grew, the company expanded its operations to include two hauler crews and one ground-based crew, servicing the Wellington and Wairarapa regions. In 2010, a significant transition occurred when one crew was relocated to Gisborne. At that point, Blake and his wife Caree, took ownership of the company, marking the beginning of a new chapter for Speirs Logging.

For the first five years in Gisborne, the company operated as a swing yarder crew before shifting to a road line configuration to better meet the needs of its clients and the terrain. Today, Speirs Logging operates as a road line clear-fell

operation, utilizing a combination of yarding and ground-based equipment. Speirs Logging also holds the road building contract for its operations, which is currently managed by an external subcontractor.

The company processes approximately 170 000 tonnes of wood annually and employs a dedicated team of twelve. The Tigercat fleet is comprised of two Tigercat LS855 series shovel loggers, two Tigercat 635 series skidders and a new Tigercat L870D track carrier fitted with a 4161-15 mulching head.

## Operations

Operating in the Gisborne region presents a unique set of challenges due to steep terrain, poor soil conditions and consistently high rainfall over the past few years. These factors demand robust, reliable equipment capable of performing in this environment. Around 90% of the company's operations require winch assisting, particularly in high-risk areas where the terrain is more unstable or challenging. "Our harvesting operation includes both cable extraction and steep-slope ground-based logging, with the support of winch assist technology to enhance safety and productivity on challenging terrain," says Blake. "This approach enables us to maintain consistent output while prioritizing environmental care and crew wellbeing."

The Speirs Logging team works a structured ten-hour day, typically achieving 85-90% machine availability after factoring in maintenance time and operator breaks. The crew runs a well-coordinated system, falling and extracting a 500-metre (1 640 ft) section of the road line, then relocating the crew and equipment to allow the road building subcontractor to come in. Minimal downtime helps to ease and simplify scheduling between the harvesting and road building crews.

## Impact of Cyclone Gabrielle

Back in 2023, the destructive Cyclone Gabrielle devastated parts of the North Island of New Zealand. Thousands were displaced and a national state of emergency was invoked. The cyclone had a significant impact on the region, leading to increased scrutiny and tighter compliance regulations across the forestry industry. Leftover harvesting residue suddenly became a matter of utmost urgency and significance. The event highlighted the need for higher standards in slash management and erosion control, pushing everyone in the sector to raise their game.

There is now a stronger collective focus on proactive risk management and environmental responsibility.

Blake Speirs (left) along with machine operator Cory Malcolm.


The L870D/4161-15 package is a forward-thinking solution to managing harvesting residue, allowing efficient and precise mulching in challenging environments.

The steep terrain mulching system is one of the ways Tigercat is responding — offering a practical, forward-thinking solution that helps reduce slash-related risks and supports more sustainable forestry practices in the wake of extreme weather events.

A portion of the Radiata pine plantations in Gisborne, Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa, is managed by Forest Enterprises. The forest management and investment services company was founded in 1972 and currently has over 20 000 hectares (49 400 acres) valued at NZ$400 million under management on the North Island. The company offers investors ownership in both the land and timber holdings.

Blake explains that Speirs Logging has been contracted to Forest Enterprises with a specific focus on reducing risk in potentially hazardous cutblocks. "Our primary objective is to mitigate the potential impact of slash and erosion on steep or sensitive terrain. Using drone technology, we conduct aerial surveys of cutover sites [harvested compartments] to identify areas where slash volumes are particularly high. From there, we strategically deploy the Tigercat L870D equipped with the 4161-15 mulching head to reduce that material, aiming to minimize the volume left on the hill, especially in locations prone to landslips."

This proactive approach helps prevent debris movement during heavy rain events and improves site stability. Additionally, the mulched material supports better conditions for second-rotation growth and delivers environmental benefits such as reduced runoff and improved ground cover. "By laying down mulch mats over gullies and exposed soils, we help to minimize erosion and retain moisture. When it rains, the mulch absorbs the water, preventing it from washing away the soil and promoting better land stability," explains Blake.

Speirs Logging is currently supporting this risk reduction strategy across five separate logging operations, helping Forest Enterprises manage its forest assets with a strong focus on environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability.

Historically, the responsibility for slash management has fallen to either the forest owners or the contractors themselves. In many

**"THIS COMBINATION OF POWER, FLOW CAPACITY, AND SLOPE STABILITY MADE THIS MULCHER PACKAGE THE IDEAL CHOICE FOR OUR NEEDS."**

– Blake Speirs, Speirs Logging Ltd.

cases, this meant absorbing the cost through reduced productivity, where machinery and crews would need to divert time and resources to manually move slash to safer areas.

With the introduction of this dedicated mulching operation, Speirs Logging aims to significantly reduce both the operational burden and the associated risks. By proactively targeting high-risk zones, the goal is to provide a more efficient, cost-effective solution that not only improves safety but also supports positive environmental outcomes across the forest estate.

Machine productivity can vary depending on the terrain and conditions, but overall, Speirs Logging is achieving the results it budgeted for. "We find that wood in the 20-30 cm (8-12 in) diameter range is the most productive for our operations. Larger diameter wood takes longer to process, although we can still handle stumps effectively with the mulching teeth. Our focus isn't to mulch everything. Rather, we're targeting high-risk areas where the land is more likely to shift," explains Blake.

While the creation of windrows increases costs due to the additional work involved in forming them, it has led to an overall increase in production. By setting up windrows, the mulcher carrier can process more volume with fewer movements, allowing the operator to focus more on masticating with far less machine travel. However, it's crucial to get the direction of the windrows right. Properly positioned windrows help to avoid mulched material accumulation in sensitive areas such as waterways and roads, ensuring that the company maintains environmental compliance and prevents potential damage to the surrounding landscape.

### Steep slope mulching system

Blake chose the Tigercat L870D equipped with the 4161-15 mulching head primarily because it offered the highest hydraulic flow of any comparable machine on the market, an essential feature for efficient and effective mulching performance. "Having operated various Tigercat machines over the years, we've consistently experienced strong reliability and performance, particularly in challenging conditions," says Blake. "Tigercat machines are exceptionally well-suited to steep

terrain, offering excellent stability on the hill — something that's critical for our operations in the Gisborne region. This combination of power, flow capacity, and slope stability made this mulcher package the ideal choice for our needs."

When mulching material that is spread over a cutblock, medium-grade, impact-resistant tools are used on the mulching head. This setup allows the head to work through variable terrain, including areas with hard soil, without experiencing excessive wear or damage to the tooling. When the machine transitions to processing large slash piles, the tooling is switched to sharper, knife-style tools. These are better suited for high-volume mulching where there's less risk of hitting dirt or rocks, ensuring cleaner cuts and greater efficiency in breaking down the material. This dual-tool approach gives Speirs Logging the flexibility to adapt to different conditions and slash types while maximizing performance and longevity.

Blake has seen a significant increase in productivity since the Feed Control Rotor system (FCR) was added. The FCR system utilizes a drum with rakers installed that effectively limit the engagement of the tools, reducing the potential for stalling out the drum, while making the operator's job easier.

"Since adding the rakers and adjusting to the right set of teeth, we've noticed a substantial improvement, especially in handling larger material. I estimate that the rakers have boosted productivity by about 30%," says Blake. "The key benefit is that the rakers allow the machine to take smaller bites and prevent it from stalling out. For our operations, the rakers have proven to be the right solution."

In Blake's view, the Tigercat L870D simply isn't comparable to a standard excavator fitted with a mulching head. The key differences include the leveling system and the 370 hp (276 kW) engine output, which gives the Tigercat a significant advantage, especially on steep and uneven terrain. The added power, stability and control not only improve operator safety but also allow for more efficient and precise mulching in challenging environments.

The Speirs Logging operators are very positive about the Tigercat machines. One of the standout features for them is the high level of comfort in the cab, which makes a big difference over long shifts. "When you're working in demanding conditions for extended periods, operator comfort isn't just a bonus, it's essential. Tigercat delivers on that, contributing to both productivity and overall job satisfaction," adds Blake. "Tigercat machines are purpose-built for the demanding work we do. They stand out for their excellent fuel efficiency, robust construction, and superior stability, especially on steep terrain where leveling is essential. In our experience, Tigercat equipment handles tough conditions better than many other brands, and that performance translates directly into safer, more productive operation." ■

Speirs Logging Ltd. founder, Murray Speirs, had a long-term association with Tigercat. Photo taken in September 2007 at a Speirs Logging operation near Foxton, New Zealand. (L-R) Ken MacDonald (President, Tigercat Industries), Gary Olsen (Vice President Sales – Southern Hemisphere and Central America), Murray Speirs (former owner and founder of Speirs Logging Ltd.), Glen Marley (Tigercat District Manager, Australia and New Zealand).

Before and after. A treated area shows a remarkable difference.


# CONFIDENCE *through* TRAINING

**Tigercat Industries offers a series of service training programs to ensure dealer technicians are confident and skilled in machine troubleshooting and repair. Repair efficiency boosts customer satisfaction and machine uptime. Technical Trainer Dan Smith highlights his role and the value of this hands-on training.**

– Samantha Paul

Dan Smith has been a technical trainer in the Tigercat Industries service department for ten years. His father was a mechanical engineer, and initially, Dan intended to study electrical engineering. However, encouraged by his guidance counsellor to pursue his interest in hands-on work, Dan shifted his focus to automotive mechanics. "During the first ten to fifteen years of my career, I worked as an automotive mechanic," Dan explains. "I started at General Motors with brands such as Pontiac, Buick, Cadillac, and then Kia, where I became a master technician. I also served as a shop foreman and eventually started my own mobile mechanic business." After earning his automotive mechanics licence from Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario, Dan taught part-time at the college for nearly three years. His combination of dealership and training experience makes an excellent fit for his role at Tigercat; he understands the challenges service technicians face daily.

"When you first get hired into the Tigercat service department, you work on a few different assembly lines to learn how the machines are put together. You get a good bit of experience just doing that. Then you are trained on working on completed machines — doing setups, setting pressures and programming. Then you move into your final role, whether it's in the service department or, for me, building courses and providing training."

Dan Smith, Technical Trainer and Service Representative for Tigercat Industries.

Tigercat® Training

PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

Dan spends two to three weeks each month conducting hands-on training throughout the global Tigercat | TCi dealer network. He combines classroom theory with practical service work. Last year, his training sessions took him to France, Romania, Africa, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The remainder of his time is dedicated to gathering new information, creating instructional materials, tailoring content for technicians, and developing training modules.

### Dealer training and development

When a new dealer partnership begins, an initial training session is provided based on the key product groups sold in that market. Course content begins with an overview of each machine's purpose, followed by detailed lessons on electrical systems, hydraulics, and control logic. The training includes theoretical instruction, schematics review, and practical exercises such as setting pressures and configuring machines for field operation. "Sometimes they'll have specific requests like, 'Can you help us with programming the IQAN system?' And so, we'll go over that request when we get there," explains Dan.

"Our approach isn't just teaching how to turn screws or read gauges," Dan emphasizes. "We want technicians to understand what they're adjusting, why, and under what circumstances. This knowledge enables technicians to troubleshoot effectively in the field, diagnosing issues like incorrect pressures and interpreting schematics, so they can work independently, reducing service calls and downtime."

**"IF TECHNICIANS LACK PROPER TRAINING, DEALERS OFTEN MUST GAIN EXPERIENCE AT THE CUSTOMER'S EXPENSE, WHICH CUSTOMERS NOTICE."**

– Dan Smith, Technical Trainer and Service Representative for Tigercat Industries

Class sizes are limited to twelve participants, ensuring everyone receives ample hands-on time. Trainers assess each technician's initial knowledge level and tailor instruction accordingly. Participants have access to extensive reference materials.

Safety plays a critical role in all training sessions. Each trainee must complete an online safety course before participating in any technical training. During sessions, safety practices are reinforced, such as honking the horn before starting a machine and exercising caution around personnel to prevent accidents.

In addition to in-person training, Tigercat offers self-directed online courses, allowing technicians to learn at their own pace and on their own schedule. These courses combine detailed written and visual information — including schematics, component layouts, images, and videos — with recorded lessons and step-by-step demonstrations of software navigation, key component replacement, and testing. Students can stop, start, and revisit lessons as required.

Tigercat remains committed to developing and updating training courses to keep pace with evolving technology. "When Tier 4 engines were first introduced, it was a steep learning curve," Dan recalls. "But after creating and delivering the engine courses, we saw a significant improvement in troubleshooting skills. I had one technician approach me during a break, thanking me. When the tech was communicating with our service department, he was happy he was able to work through the issue with them and feel confident diagnosing

Dan demonstrates how the DEF tank level and temperature sensors function and how to test them using a digital multimeter for a group of service technicians from Québec.

the machine," says Dan. "I thought that was great. You don't always get feedback, but when you do, you remember it."

Another technician working for a large, multi-line dealer related to Dan that, having attended many OEM training courses over the past ten years, it was the best training he had ever participated in. "That's always encouraging to hear," says Dan. "It's important to continue evolving and adding content to keep it relevant for technicians."

### Customer perception

The importance of confident service technicians cannot be overstated. It significantly impacts the customer's perception of the dealer's capabilities. "If technicians lack proper training, dealers often must gain experience at the customer's expense, which customers notice. If an inexperienced technician replaces parts repeatedly until the issue is fixed, customers become less confident in the dealer," says Dan. "Once out of warranty or if problems persist, customers may try to fix machines themselves or seek alternative service providers. Ultimately, this can increase downtime and expense, while eroding loyalty and trust."

Forestry machines are often located in remote areas, requiring significant travel time. "Some technicians may drive a full day, stay in a motel, and then work on the machine the next day. This represents considerable downtime for the customer, who is losing money if the machine isn't operational." Understanding how the machines work helps technicians move beyond mere parts replacers. Instead, they become true technicians — learning, diagnosing, and fixing issues correctly the first time. This approach reduces guesswork and decreases expense and downtime for customers.

"A lot of the onus is put on the dealer to put their service technicians into these training programs," states Dan. Investing in comprehensive, ongoing training is crucial for developing a skilled and confident dealer network. As Tigercat and TCi machinery continue to evolve, technicians must follow suit with continuous education. Ongoing learning empowers service technicians, builds customer trust, and increases satisfaction. Ultimately, well-trained technicians are the backbone of reliable service support, reducing downtime and reinforcing the reputation of Tigercat Industries as a leader in the forestry equipment industry.

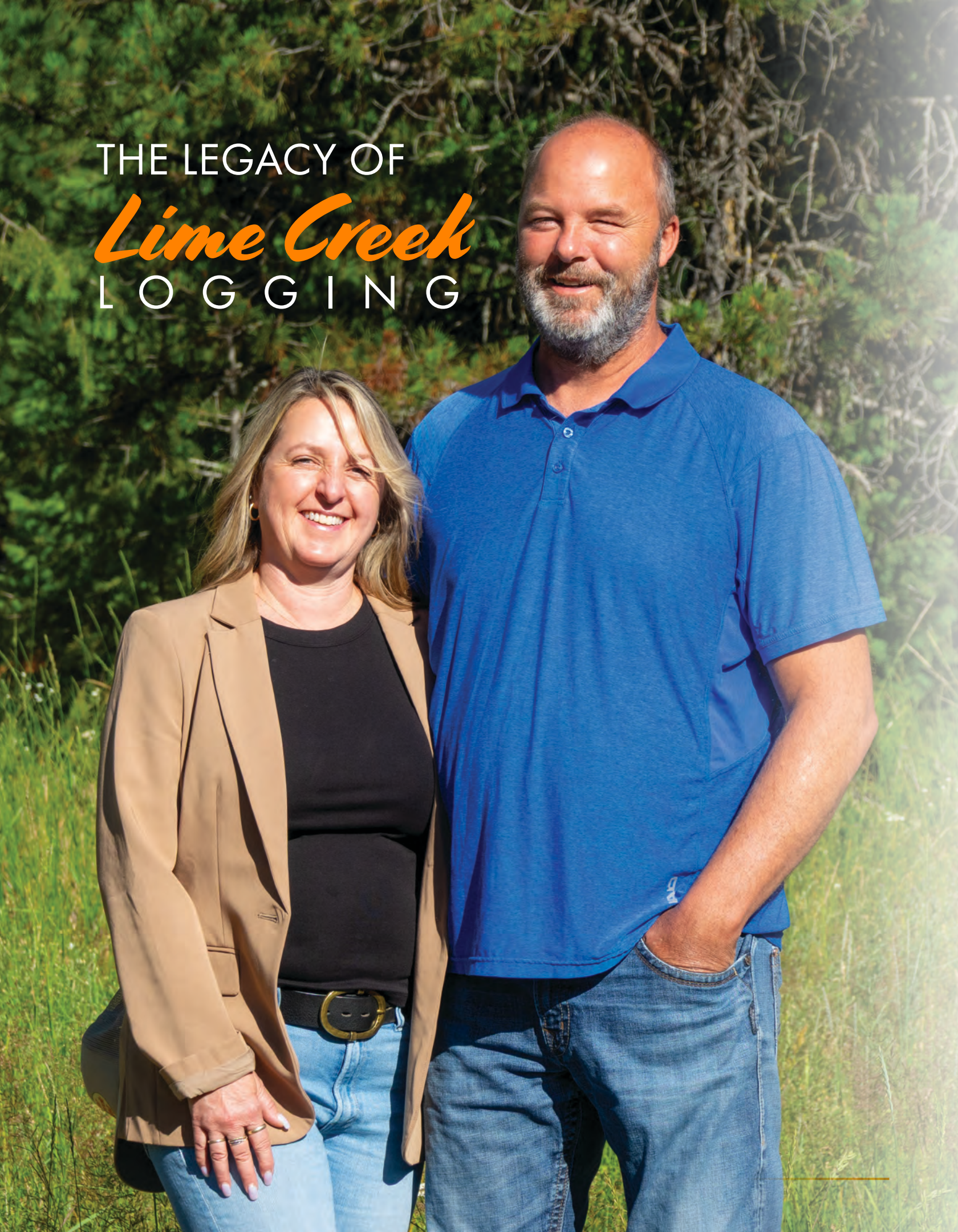

Dan demonstrates the E.A.S.Y. software functions while connected to the PT Box during a Tier 4 aftertreatment course for Latin Equipment Chile. Factory Support Representative, Pedro Venegas, translates as technicians review diagnostics on an LS855E Tier 4f machine. Sessions are often recorded for future reference in multilingual settings.

**"WE WANT TECHNICIANS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE ADJUSTING, WHY, AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS KNOWLEDGE ENABLES THEM TO TROUBLESHOOT EFFECTIVELY IN THE FIELD, DIAGNOSING ISSUES LIKE INCORRECT PRESSURES AND INTERPRETING SCHEMATICS, SO THEY CAN WORK INDEPENDENTLY, REDUCING SERVICE CALLS AND DOWNTIME."**

– Dan Smith

## A FULFILLING CAREER

The Tigercat Industries service department offers a rewarding career path. A background in automotive or heavy equipment is typically required, along with a willingness to learn and adapt. Success in this field also requires strong problem-solving skills and the ability to communicate technical information clearly. Service representatives must work well under pressure, diagnose complex issues, and support customers in a variety of situations. While the role can be demanding, it is also highly fulfilling — often providing opportunities for travel, continuous learning, and exposure to new technologies. For those passionate about machinery and making a hands-on difference, a service department role offers both personal satisfaction and the chance to contribute meaningfully to the industry.



# THE LEGACY OF *Lime Creek* LOGGING

Shawn and Jinny McIver, owners of Lime Creek Logging.

**Nestled in the heart of British Columbia's Boundary Country, Lime Creek Logging stands as a lasting symbol of family, resilience, and innovation in an industry that's long defined the region.**

– Samantha Paul

Based in the scenic city of Grand Forks, situated between the southern Okanagan Valley and the West Kootenay region near the US border, Lime Creek Logging has deep roots. It began in 1978 as a small-scale operation founded by Shawn McIver's father, Dale McIver, and uncle, Hank McIver. By the early 1980s, the company had expanded into stump-to-dump logging for Sander Brothers. When Sander Brothers ceased operations in the mid-1980s, Lime Creek adapted, shifting its focus to cable yarding.

The company continued to evolve through the 1990s, securing an evergreen contract and long-term relationship with Pope & Talbot. After Pope & Talbot's bankruptcy in 2007, Lime Creek transitioned its operations to Interfor, growing steadily between 2008 and 2022 with an emphasis on conventional logging.

Today, Lime Creek Logging employs 50 people and runs multiple crews handling everything from conventional and cable logging to road building and right-of-way projects. The company also operates its own quarry and offers a range of construction services. "Employees make all this work and ours are all second to none anywhere. I expect excellence, and that is what I get every day from my guys," says Shawn.

Now led by Shawn and his wife Jinny, the company remains a family affair. "The only way a small business works is if you're family," Shawn reflects. "You can't pay people to do this job. It never stops." Their son, Quinton, works as a processor operator and helps supervise crews when required. With Level 3 first aid certification, a solid understanding of the operations, and experience running the equipment, he is eagerly taking on more responsibility. Meanwhile, daughter Kolby, who holds a master's degree in environmental management, has expressed interest in joining the family business one day.

Rob McIver, Shawn's uncle, has also played a pivotal role in the company's growth and success over the years. Serving as both a foreman and a general overseer, Rob takes charge of managing the crews, coordinating daily operations, and ensuring that everything runs efficiently in the woods. His experience and leadership have been instrumental in maintaining productivity and addressing on-the-ground challenges.

## Commitment to community and education

While Shawn oversees all field operations, Jinny McIver is the organizational heart of Lime Creek Logging. As office manager, she handles payroll, HR, safety, and finances for the company. A former municipal employee from a forestry family, Jinny joined the business and has since helped foster a supportive, family-first culture.

Jinny is also a passionate advocate for trades education. She played a leading role in launching Project Heavy Duty, a hands-on initiative that introduces high school students to careers in heavy equipment operation. Students receive safety training before trying their hand at real machinery.

The program has delivered impressive results. Several participating students later returned to Lime Creek Logging to begin careers, receiving direct training from Shawn. Building on this success, Jinny collaborated with Sales Specialist Glenn Holbrook, and Regional Equipment Sales Manager Tavis Mann, from Inland to bring a Tigercat Industries forestry machine simulator to the local high school, further sparking student interest in the industry. "We interacted with lots of great students during our time on site," said Tavis.

"Afterward, several kids said they wanted to be loggers," Jinny recalls. "They didn't even know it was a career path before."

Shawn feels that the simulator is a great tool to gauge interest and evaluate natural ability. "You can


The three generations of Lime Creek Logging (left to right): Dale McIver, Hank McIver, Rob McIver, Jinny McIver, Shawn McIver, Quinton McIver.

tell within a few hours whether someone has the knack to be an operator," he adds. "And when they do, we've got the right place for them to learn."

### An operator's perspective

With over four decades in the industry, Mike Miller has seen firsthand how logging technology has transformed. He's spent 36 years running feller bunchers and now operates the new Tigercat LX877, having logged 170 hours with the machine.

Having previously run the LX870D and older C-series models, Mike is impressed by the LX877's refinements. "The slope-tail design is a game changer," he says. "I'm not catching the counterweight on the line anymore when tethered. It's tighter, more compact. The boom geometry lets you pull in closer, which reminds me of the old C, but with much better performance."

LX877 operator, Mike Miller, greasing his machine after a day's work.

## LIME CREEK'S TIGERCAT GEAR

LX877 | 180 | 880E | LX870D (2) | 850/568 (2) | 875E | 632H | H855E | 635G

Mike often works on extreme terrain – grades of 80% or more – and praises the tilt capability and stability of the LX877. "You're practically lying back in your seat when it's tilted forward. But it feels solid, even on brutal, boulder-covered ground."

Pat McIver, nephew of Shawn, is a seasoned operator with deep roots in the industry. For Pat, logging isn't just a career, it's a family tradition. "My dad and my uncles and cousins… it's kind of in the blood," he says. With over 20 years of experience, Pat has been a dedicated member of the Lime Creek crew, managing the company's steep slope operations and preparing to one day partner with Quinton. Pat currently operates a Tigercat 880E logger and has high praise for the machine. "The reach is good. It's got good track power. It's very stable. The grapple is awesome, best grapple around." Pat values the solitude of working in the bush. He appreciates Tigercat's operator-focused approach and the company's openness to feedback. "It makes a real difference," he says. "And they're specific to logging, so they build it right." While his son may be focused on hockey now, Pat jokes, "He'll be logging one day."

### Strength in support

Lime Creek Logging relies on a fleet of Tigercat machines, chosen for performance and long-term value. Shawn especially values the Canadian roots of Tigercat Industries and willingness of company team members to engage directly with operators. "You talk to Ken [MacDonald] at Tigercat, and he's bringing in engineers to hear your idea. That kind of responsiveness is rare."

Another reason for Shawn's choice of Tigercat equipment is the dealer representation in British Columbia. Inland has played a pivotal role in supporting the growth and operational success of Lime Creek Logging. The opening of Inland's Castlegar branch marked a turning point for Lime Creek, offering closer proximity and significantly

Pat McIver, an 880E operator and 20-year logging veteran with Lime Creek Logging, says, "Best grapple around."


A Tigercat 880E logger equipped with a PC10 power clam grapple sorting logs and building the deck of unprocessed wood at the base of a mountain in British Columbia.

improved service response time. Shawn emphasized that Inland's commitment to customer service and quick support has been essential. "The dealer is probably 50% of the equation," Shawn explains, "Inland has done a great job as far as support goes."

Yet, like many contractors, Shawn faces mounting challenges. From shifting regulations to public misconceptions, Shawn says the industry's biggest hurdle is often perception. "People don't realize, we're just farmers. We grow and harvest trees. They grow back," he explains. "Vancouver drives the policy, but they don't understand the reality of what we do in places like Grand Forks."

As a board member of the Interior Logging Association, Shawn also raises concerns about the viability of the industry under

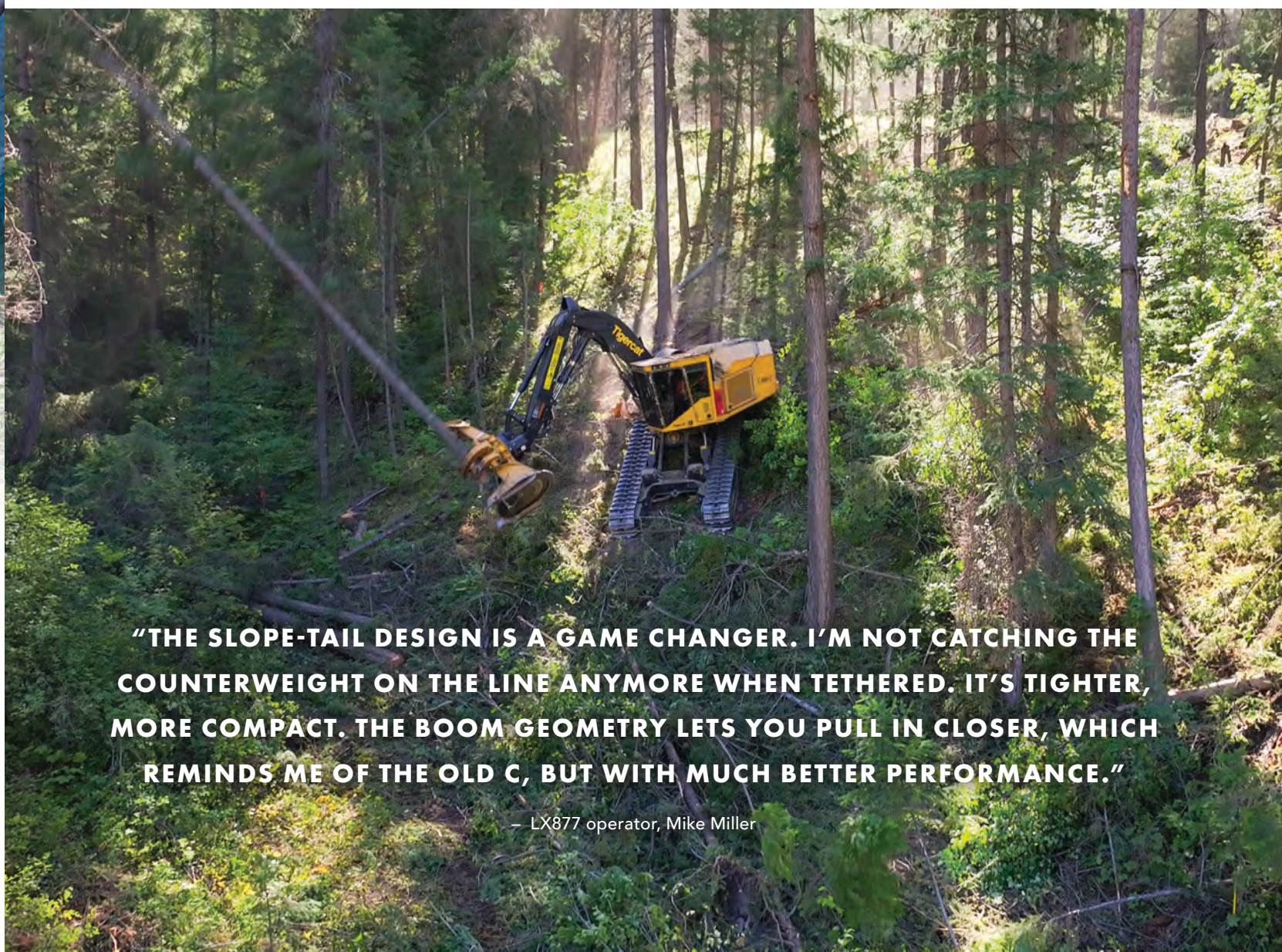
current conditions. While wildfire mitigation is important, it won't sustain the sector on its own. "We need 250 000 to 300 000 cubic metres a year to survive," he says. "Thinning one hectare at a time isn't going to cut it."

Despite the current challenges, Shawn is optimistic but cautious. Growth is possible, but not at the expense of the company's integrity. "If I know I've got the right people, we'll grow. But I'm not risking our reputation for anything less than excellence."

## SUSTAINABILITY AND BIOCHAR

A passionate part of the conversation with Shawn included his take on the future of sustainable forestry and biochar, especially the potential for Tigercat's 6040 carbonizer. "The opportunity is huge, but governments don't get it. The science is there. The benefits are clear. What's the holdup?" Despite demand, a lack of policy and support, and an inflexible green credit system have made it difficult to deploy these machines effectively in Canada. "We burn slash piles year after year. That carbon could be captured and put back into the forest floor. The solution is right in front of us."

The LX877, fitted with a 5702-26 felling head, completes operations at the base of the mountainside before moving to the next job site.




**"THE SLOPE-TAIL DESIGN IS A GAME CHANGER. I'M NOT CATCHING THE COUNTERWEIGHT ON THE LINE ANYMORE WHEN TETHERED. IT'S TIGHTER, MORE COMPACT. THE BOOM GEOMETRY LETS YOU PULL IN CLOSER, WHICH REMINDS ME OF THE OLD C, BUT WITH MUCH BETTER PERFORMANCE."**

– LX877 operator, Mike Miller


00:53:15
1/4
0%
Tigercat
Tigercat
cmlabs
Tigercat

# SIMULATOR *for* WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**University of Idaho partners with logging industry stakeholders to develop simulator-based education and outreach to secure a future workforce and improved public perception of commercial forestry.**

– Dr. Ryer Becker

The growing need to address workforce capacity in the logging industry necessitates the development of innovative and non-traditional methods for education, recruitment, and training. Regulatory, economic and cultural changes have created an environment where recruiting and retaining employees has become increasingly difficult for logging businesses. Despite advancing technology and increased mechanization ushering in safer and more productive operations, many company owners have been unable to consistently meet their workforce needs for skilled operators. Struggles with self-promotion, advocacy, and recruiting coupled with skewed public perceptions, or a fundamental unfamiliarity with the forest industry, hinders efforts to attract the required workforce.

A key strategy to addressing these needs is the development and delivery of innovative and impactful educational and recruitment efforts. Ensuring a vibrant and well-trained logging workforce begins with engaging the next generation and educating them on career paths in our forest products industry. With this comes a need to champion the industry and highlight the advancements made in recent decades surrounding safety, technology, and forest sustainability. Successfully doing so also promotes positive public perceptions surrounding logging and the forest products industry.

While workforce challenges in the forest products industry have a global impact, they are of particular concern in areas where the timber industry is a significant contributor to economies, and failure to successfully manage forestlands has economic, social, cultural, and biological ramifications. In Idaho, the forest products sector adds $2.8 billion and 30,000 jobs to the state's economy annually. Given the significant value of the timber industry, the University of Idaho has partnered with state, private, and federal stakeholders on new training, outreach and educational efforts aimed at enhancing forest industry-based workforce capacities in Idaho and beyond. These new initiatives complement existing degree programs while adding training pathways related to logging and forest operations.

It is ideal to incorporate experiential learning and hands-on training into outreach activities. However, this is challenging in logging due to the high capital cost and inherent risk associated with heavy equipment operation. Fortunately, advanced logging equipment simulator offerings from Tigercat Industries and others make outreach and training easier than ever.

In early 2025, Tigercat Industries and other key stakeholders in the forest products industry partnered with the University of Idaho to mobilize a custom logging simulator trailer. Other project partners who supported the initial project launch included Idaho Workforce Development Council, Green Diamond Resource Company, Jesse Hunt Logging, JEM Forestry, Nelson Brothers Timber Management, and Associated Logging Contractors – Idaho. The self-contained teaching and training trailer is the second in the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources' fleet and the first to showcase two Tigercat-TCi equipment simulators.

The trailer was unveiled at the 2025 Oregon Logging Conference


With prompted, step-by-step training exercises, Tigercat-TCi simulators provide a valuable training platform for beginners and more experienced operators alike.

in mid-February. Since then, it has supported nearly twenty events in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon with over 800 participants. Some events supported training, while others focused on introducing participants to contemporary logging operations. The events also provide an opportunity for the University of Idaho team to highlight logging career pathways and the benefits the timber industry brings society through active forest management. The ability to bring this trailer-based simulator technology directly to diverse audiences throughout the western US maximizes accessibility to those who have historically lacked exposure to the logging industry.

Simulators offer an environment to introduce equipment operation and mechanized logging independent of safety concerns, costly repairs, or lost production, while providing a powerful hook to engage youth or adult audiences. Further, the Tigercat-TCi simulator provides opportunities for training and professional development with built-in training exercises to track progress and ensure competency benchmarks are met. From control familiarization to a progression through increasingly more advanced machine manipulations, the training exercises integrated into the Tigercat-TCi simulators prompt and guide operators as they hone skills and build fundamental competencies. These progressing exercises take trainees through varying topographies, forest types, and common operational tasks. Weather, including rain, snow, wind, fog, and varying levels of daylight can be adjusted to introduce additional environmental challenges. These settings can be quickly changed on the fly through the touchscreen interface.

The Tigercat-TCi full-motion base simulators currently provide five equipment training options: feller buncher, roadside processor, rubber-tired skidder, wheeled harvester and forwarder. Transitioning between equipment and its associated training exercises can be done quickly through the user control interface touchscreen. When selecting between equipment, a carrier is first selected followed by the desired attachment and the training environment. OEM controls are matched to the machine and easily swapped out. The Tigercat Industries simulator design team has sought feedback, demonstrating the company's desire to offer the most impactful and realistic training aid possible.

It should be noted that simulators are not meant as a replacement for live, in-the-seat training, but as a complement to field-based instruction. However, the intentional design and OEM configuration of the Tigercat-TCi simulators prove invaluable for training applications. Button mapping and adjustable simulated valve controls provide an unmatched level of customization and configurability. The ability to quickly and easily map button layouts and change pressure ramping for machine controls allows for targeted training in situations where a trainee is being prepared to operate an existing machine in the field.

To date, the Tigercat-TCi logging equipment simulators have been used for outreach and education at career exploration events, logging conferences, public engagement events, career and technical education competitions, and more. While education and outreach have proven to be a great opportunity to leverage this resource, operator training remains another critical application. Workforce development and industry training remain top priorities for the University of Idaho through various pathways including four-year forestry degrees, a two-year degree in Forest Operations and Technology, and additional logger training offerings currently in development.

Requests for other training efforts and events can be made to Dr. Ryer Becker with the University of Idaho and will be supported where feasible. Logging contractors interested in leveraging these resources for training support should also contact Dr. Becker to discuss opportunities as this is an area of particular interest. As training program development continues, the vision is to also provide modularized simulator-based workshops to support introductory operator training, though there is no definitive timeline for when these will be made available to the public.

Any further questions related to this simulator trailer, requesting simulator support, or other information related to workforce development efforts underway at the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources can be directed to:

**Dr. Ryer Becker**, Forest Operations and Products Manufacturing Extension Specialist; Assistant Professor of Forest Operations at: rbecker@uidaho.edu

To support these pathways and the active, sustainable management of the nearly 10,000-acre (4 050 hectare) University of Idaho Experimental Forest (UIEF), the University of Idaho currently operates a student-run mechanized logging crew. Recent investments in full mechanization (feller buncher, grapple skidder and processor) support unique educational and training opportunities not readily available elsewhere in the United States. Access to cutting-edge equipment simulator technologies provides a complementary training platform to support existing workforce development pathways.

Still in the first year of integration into current educational and workforce development programming, the Tigercat-TCi logging simulators and associated custom training trailer are well on their way to providing critical resources needed to help educate, engage, and train the future logging workforce. Trailer mounting and transporting the simulators supports widespread use. In addition to supporting degree programs at the University of Idaho, the simulators have been made available to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and schools throughout Idaho. Where possible, support for other programs elsewhere in the western US will be considered. The simulators will also continue to be made available at regional logging conferences in the western United States.


In February 2025, the University's simulator trailer was set up in front of the Idaho State Capitol Building to provide the public, lawmakers, and their staff an opportunity to try simulators during Loggers and Haulers Days organized by the Associated Logging Contractors – Idaho.

# STORM Chaser

**Hard-working contractor employs Tigercat grinders in intensive material reduction operations, helping residents to return to some sense of normalcy after devastating natural disasters.**

– Paul Iarocci

Dustin Cooper, in partnership with his father, David Cooper, is the owner of South East Mowing. The Bristol, Tennessee native started in business straight out of high school in 2008, primarily taking on federal, state, and municipal government grass-cutting contracts on roadsides and highway embankments. "We started off with four John Deere tractors, grew it to 25 or 30 tractors, and then started filling the gaps with right-of-way clearing work."

Hungry for growth, Dustin was constantly looking for new opportunities and diversification. As the ROW contract work increased, he found that the crew was generating a lot of debris. "We were looking for a way to reduce that vegetation and we knew we could put at least one grinder to work." The company purchased a second-hand Tigercat 6900 from Tidewater Equipment's Newberry, South Carolina branch in June 2024. "After we got one, we were looking for ways to expand." Storm debris reduction seemed a logical choice.

Dustin was well accustomed to travel, having completed mowing and ROW contracts throughout the southern US. Crucially, he also had previous knowledge of the sector and the major players. "When I was growing up, my dad was in the disaster recovery business, so I knew this was something that I could drive towards."

Dustin explains that his father, David Cooper, quit high school and went to work in a coal mine. Wanting more than a wage, he began supplying the mine with timber. "He would work an eight-hour shift, then go cut mining props, carry them out on his back, load them on a one-ton truck, carry them to the same mine, and sell them the next morning before he went to work." It was a roundabout way to get into the high-value hardwood harvesting industry in eastern Tennessee and southwest Virginia. "He was running a pretty good-sized veneer wood operation, and that market crashed in 1997." The downturn happened to roughly coincide with Hurricane Fran in September 1996, prompting David to work on his very first storm cleanup in North Carolina. David's disaster recovery business progressed from there.

**"IF YOU CAN'T DO YOUR OWN MECHANICAL WORK TO A CERTAIN LEVEL, THEN THIS BUSINESS BECOMES DIFFICULT IN A VERY BIG WAY."**

– Dustin Cooper, owner of South East Mowing

Nearly three decades later, Dustin ramped up his own storm cleanup business quickly and aggressively. Taking possession of the first 6900 in June, he followed up with the purchase of a second used Tigercat 6900 in July. In November, he purchased his third 6900 brand new. By early June 2025, the crew had collectively put over 6,000 hours on the three machines.

### Disaster declaration

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) coordinates the federal response to disasters that receive a Presidential disaster declaration. Once a weather event is declared, FEMA hires a prime contractor, responsible for all aspects of the recovery and cleanup operations. Dustin's company is classified as a subcontractor, working under the prime contractor. "My father has been around all these prime contractors for so long. They knew him, and of course they were willing to give me a chance because of him."

In early June, we visited a cleanup operation in Coffee County, Georgia, in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, which made landfall nine months prior on September 26, 2024, near Perry, Florida. The Category 4 storm carved a 500-mile (800 km) path of destruction, bringing severe winds, heavy rain, surges up to twenty feet (6 m), and mass flooding

Another day at the office with Dustin and David Cooper.

Dustin's three grinders eat away at a mountain of debris. This designated temporary dump site is just one of hundreds that have been in operation in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

throughout the southeastern US. Total estimated economic loss is in the range of $225–250 billion.

Dustin walks us through the process. "Once an emergency declaration is made, the prime contractor mobilizes. In this case, it is Southern Disaster Recovery, or SDR. Homeowners and businesses are responsible for getting the debris to the roadside. The load-and-haul subcontractor, Pride Contracting, based in Middlesex, North Carolina, collects the debris from the street and brings it to designated, permitted temporary dump sites. Then we come in to do the material reduction, turning the debris into a recyclable product." FEMA is responsible for finding outlets for the ground material. In this case, the product is being hauled to blueberry farms in the county to be used as crop bedding.

The volume of vegetation debris generated by a hurricane is difficult to comprehend. In Coffee County alone, in the first five months of this year, South East Mowing (the sole grinding contractor for the county) processed nearly five million yards of material, reducing it to roughly a million and a half yards (one cubic yard is equal to 0,76 $m^3$). The three machines work side-by-side, twelve hours per day, seven days per week, processing 40,000 yards of material every day. The entire operation consumes over 1,500 US gallons (5 700 L) of fuel per day, so fuel delivery planning is an important logistical consideration. To maintain mechanical availability, Dustin has a night maintenance crew that also works seven days a week.

Dustin places a very high value on his crew. They follow wherever the next contract takes him. "Last year we were in Houston, Texas, working on Hurricane Beryl." Including grinder operators, excavator operators, truck drivers, and the four-man night-shift maintenance crew, it's a 40-person operation.


With strong technical capabilities, excellent parts and service support from Tidewater Equipment, and a quality product, Dustin has experienced high uptime with the 6900 grinders.

"We've got a core group of guys from Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia, and Texas. We travel everywhere like a big family. We rent houses for the whole crew and try to keep them all close together. Everybody pretty much lives like a big family in a compound."

It's a gruelling pace, but it's the nature of the work. Speed is of the essence. "Since June of last year, I've been home four days. We didn't go home for Thanksgiving, but we all took the day off. I cooked a big meal here in Georgia and we fed everybody. I drove home Christmas Eve morning and drove back here on Christmas Day. And I went home for Easter Sunday."

Dustin notes that he tries to maintain a close relationship with the load-and-haul contractors, noting that they are his first defence against metals and other foreign materials getting mixed in with the feedstock. Any metal or construction and demolition material that does make it to the yard is separated out and carted to the landfill. "We don't want to put it through the grinder, and we don't want to send it to the end user. Of course, we're relying on the landowners not to put it with the vegetated debris, and we are relying on the trucks that are picking it up. The haulers are motivated to keep it as clean as possible to keep everyone moving. If we can't grind, they can't haul." But as Dustin explains, the most important person in the whole equation is the grinder operator. "The operator is the life of that machine."

The operator must feed the machine optimally, maintaining a constant flow of material. The operator must make sure the material is clean, making time to shake excess sand out of root masses and, importantly, watching the pile for foreign debris — metal, rock, asphalt, and concrete. "It's all on their eyes as to what goes into the machine. It is one of the main reasons we've bought the new T234B — to get the operator up higher compared with an excavator."

Dustin is impressed with the T234B loader, calling it a perfect match for the grinder. Efficient hydraulics and the four-cylinder Tigercat-FPT engine deliver outstanding fuel economy south of two gallons (7,5 L) per hour. It is equipped with a Rotobec RPA grapple sized perfectly for the application — large enough to keep a good flow of material at the infeed and small enough to fit into the infeed trough. "We think we are going to save a lot on wear parts in the back. We are not going to be beating up our chains and our floors because he's easing the logs into the trough. If you go over there and watch the bucket thumb machine, he can't go to the bottom because then he can't open

his grapple without contacting the sidewalls." The high-rise cab significantly improves visibility, allowing the operator to see into the trough. This decreases feeding cycle times and results in a cleaner infeed with less foreign material. Another advantage of a rotating grapple over a bucket is less worry about positioning the grinder at the particular angle required to feed it. The operator can work more quickly with flexibility to rotate the load to best fit the infeed.

### Time pressure

Time is always of the essence in disaster cleanup operations. "FEMA's goal is to get the community back to a normal state as quickly as possible, so they push very hard to get it done and get us in and out to give the community back some sort of a normal life," says Dustin. "They're going to prioritize the high-traffic areas to get those as quickly as possible." There are many additional considerations around prioritization. For instance, in the days following a storm event, material left in drainage ditches or around culverts can cause another round of flooding if additional rainfall occurs. As more time passes, downed vegetation dries out, becoming a potential fuel load, and increasing the risk of fire. Because the dump sites are not infinite in size, Dustin's crew must work quickly to get through the material and get the mulched product moved out so that the next round of biomass can come in.

Maintaining a high rate of mechanical availability is critical to meeting the deadlines imposed by the contracts. For Dustin, it comes down to excellent dealer and factory support combined with a large measure of self-sufficiency.

"As a kid, my dad always sent me with the mechanic truck, and that's what I rode around in all my life. I have always been good with my hands — able to take something apart and put it back together. I enjoyed it and picked up mechanical knowledge as I went along. If you can't do your own mechanical work to a certain level, then this business becomes difficult in a very big way. If I know how to fix it, I'm back up and running in an hour, whereas if I'm waiting on a service truck, it may turn into 24 hours."

Dustin has relied on quick parts turnaround from Tidewater Equipment Newberry. The dealership is flexible, working around Dustin's schedule to

The three machines work side-by-side, twelve hours per day, seven days per week, processing 40,000 yards of material every day.

Dustin likes the high sightline available to the grinder operator from the seat of the Tigercat T234B track loader cab.

get parts to him on weekends or whenever he needs them. In addition, “We carry a 53-foot trailer that is completely stocked with an inventory of wear parts, including blocks, teeth, face plates, hammers, chain links. If we find ourselves working further away from a dealership, we’re just going to up our game even further on the parts that we carry.”

Working in the southeast on his various mowing and ROW contracts, Dustin was exposed to a lot of Tigercat forestry equipment and became friends with several people that were running Tigercat machines. “They talked about how good they were and how good the support was. And that’s hard to come by.” With a solid mechanical background and the specific knowledge of the machines gained over the past year, Dustin has been able to rely on phone support from the service team at Tidewater in Newberry, as well as drawing on the expertise of Randy McDonald, Tidewater’s Industrial Sales Manager and grinder expert, often avoiding the need for a technician onsite. “That’s been monumental. When I was in Houston, it was a phone call away to get me back up and running. A lot of the support has actually been phone support, and we are doing the repairs.”

The operation in Coffee County is 250 miles (400 km) from Newberry, and Dustin has never been closer than 180 miles (290 km) from the dealership. Newberry Branch Manager, Kevin Wright, points out that it is very important for clearing and grinding customers — who typically work over vast geographic areas — to realize what kind of service Tidewater, with additional back-up from the Tigercat Industries field service team, can provide regardless of proximity to the dealership.

Meanwhile, back in Tennessee, the municipalities and tree service companies are still tipping brush. If Dustin ever manages to get one of his grinders back home, he has a yard full of debris waiting to be double-ground for mulch or compost production. For all of Dustin’s many challenges, finding material to put through the grinder is not one of them.

Tigercat TV

Scan to watch video.

# ASSISTED LOGGING

**Tigercat is on both ends of the rope at Mecharv's steep slope operation in Araucanía, Chile.**

– Paul Iarocci


Mecharv S.A., based in Los Angeles, Chile, is a large harvesting contractor employing over 260 people. The operations span a vast geographic area, including the regions of Maule, Biobío, and Araucanía. While the company harvests both pine and eucalyptus, most of the company's 1,6 million cubic metre annual volume is comprised of eucalyptus.

Mecharv has seven contracts with Chilean forestry company CMPC. Two of the operations are classified as steep slope, employing yarders. Two infield chipping operations work on flat terrain up to slopes of 50%. The company also has a CTL (cut-to-length) harvester-forwarder operation and a loading contract. Up until now, a winch-assisted ground-based crew has been operating under a contract specifying up to 50% grades.

General manager Freddy Rebolledo is one of eleven partners in the 24-year-old company. "In Chile, a

steep slope is historically where the traditional yarders used to work — up to 100 percent or 45-degree grade," says Freddy, explaining that Mecharv is equipped to take on any steep slope contract as long as no more than ten percent of the terrain exceeds 100% slope.

Mecharv's harvesting operations work around the clock. Most of the crews work double twelve-hour shifts, seven days on/seven days off, or Monday to Saturday triple eight-hour shifts. Because of Mecharv's expansive area of operation, a logistics department manages housing needs for crew members, greatly reducing potential commuting times while increasing worker safety. The modern camps are comfortable, secure, and well maintained.

### World's first 120 owner

In March 2025, Mecharv became the first company to purchase a Tigercat 120 winch assist. The machine was slotted into a steep slope yarding jobsite near the town of Capitán Pastene in the Araucanía region.

"Steep slope harvesting here is divided into ground extraction with skidders and aerial extraction with yarders. In summer, the skidder works on slopes of up to 60% grade. From 60% and up to 110%, the extraction is done with yarders," Freddy explains. Whether or not the skidder is winch assisted depends on the season, which directly impacts soil conditions. In winter, the skidder is winch assisted once the slope exceeds 30%, and in summer, the cutoff is 50% grade. The same guidelines apply to track-based feller bunchers and shovel loggers.

Freddy explains that in the past, many harvesting contracts limited skidder extraction to grades under 50%. Everything over 50% had to be extracted with a yarder. "In our contracts, we discovered that some inefficiencies existed with the yarder. Mininco [CMPC] also discovered this. We realized that if we can get up to 100% slope with a skidder, we will produce more volume at a more competitive rate. It will require investment in more winches, but Mininco will have more volume at a lower cost."

Mecharv currently owns more than 50 Tigercat machines, and Freddy notes the expected rate of machine availability is 85%. Freddy explains that a yarder on average works productively about 160 hours per month out of 295 total available hours, or around 55% availability. Moving a yarder to a new location on the cutblock is a time-consuming process. In Chile, where topography and other constraints frequently limit road system design, these set-ups are also costly in terms of interruptions to other operations — including processing and loading trucks — when access roads are temporarily blocked.

Cable tension management. According to Product Manager Andy Hoshel, engine speed, pump flow, and motor displacement are automatically regulated to meet the demand coming from the winch, allowing the operator-set line pull to be sustained at higher travel speeds.

A 635G skidder working with the 120 winch assist. The 120 has full travel signal integration with Tigercat carriers.

The pivoting sheave allows the assisted machine to work well off centre, resulting in increased operational flexibility and reduced number of set-ups.

(L-R) Freddy Rebolledo, General Manager; Carlos Cerda, Maintenance Manager; Manuel Cid, Operations Manager.

Limited landing sizes also regularly challenge Mecharv's steep slope crews. Often, the landing area under a yarder setup will literally run out of space before all the trees can be extracted. The result is a situation where the yarder moves back and forth along the road, allowing the decked trees to be processed and loaded, before returning to continue the extraction. It results in even more frequent moves, more interruptions and road blockages, and further reductions in yarder availability.

The 120 winch assist is a different animal altogether. Compact and highly mobile, it can pick up and move to a different location very quickly. Even though the production rate of a swing yarder (30-33 cubic metres per hour) is more than a cable-assisted skidder can achieve, the yarder can't compete with a cable-assisted skidder in terms of productive hours. Freddy says that in many of Mecharv's extraction scenarios, median distance is 150 metres and maximum distance about 300 metres — a working range where the 120 has a clear advantage. Beyond 400 metres, a swing yarder becomes the optimal extraction option.

Freddy has experience with several different winch assist machine brands and says each system has its own set of pros and cons. For example, one competing system has a slow line speed that is well suited to the felling machine but too slow for the skidder. Another system has enough speed to work effectively with a skidder but is large and cumbersome to place in tight quarters. Some winch systems work adequately with different brands of machines but do not work really well with any. The 120, on the other hand, has full travel signal integration with Tigercat carriers. "The way it works with other Tigercat machines, it's like a brotherhood. They are well synchronized," says Freddy.

Unlike a skidder, when hooking up the 120 to a track machine, winch speed is no longer the factor that determines overall productivity. Good performance comes down to stability and power to assist 40-tonne feller bunchers and shovel loggers in demanding terrain conditions. The 120 provides the best of both worlds — speed when required and power when demanded. By having full control of the engine and hydraulic system, the 120 winch automatically matches the speed of the assisted machine while maintaining line pull.

"Engine speed, dedicated winch pump flow, and winch motor displacement are automatically regulated to meet the demand from the winch, allowing the operator-set line pull to be sustained at higher travel speeds than winch-assist machines running at constant engine speed," says Andy Hoshel, Product Manager for Tigercat cable logging systems. "This regulation continues up to the limits of engine speed, engine power, or pump displacement. Once one of these limits is reached, the 120 will automatically reduce line pull to match the higher line speed, ensuring that the rope stays tight. As the assisted machine slows down, line pull will again increase, limited by the operator-set maximum." This system ensures that the 120 can provide all available engine horsepower to the winch when speed or line pull demands are high, increasing the productivity of the assisted machine.

A lot of thought went into the design of the cable tensioning system. "We drive the top sheave on the boom in order to pull a small amount of tension between the


The 855C carrier equipped with the 573 head processing Radiata pine. It is a challenging job to manage many different products with limited decking space. Freddy Rebolledo points out that the 573, Mecharv's first experience with a Tigercat processing head, is durable and accurate.

sheave and the winch drum," says Andy. "This keeps the line tight, which makes the rope spool better. When you spool the line without tension, you get gaps and bunching in the middle, ultimately creating wear and shortening rope life."

Another big advantage of the 120, especially on small and congested landings is the pivoting sheave. This allows the tethered machine to work well off to the side of the winch assist machine, up to 35 degrees in each direction – more than double the working angle of competing machines. It allows for less frequent repositioning and the ability to deck wood further along the road. The 120 has a sharply angled sloping tail that further assists with machine placement on narrow mountain logging roads.

Freddy says that, as always with Tigercat, a primary advantage of the 120 is that it is a tough, robust machine. He finds some of the competing machines to be "too delicate, too electronic. And the fabrication is noticeably better from Tigercat."

## Processing with the 573

Other Tigercat machines on the jobsite included an LS855E configured with a feller director boom set and equipped with a 5195 directional felling saw, and the 635G skidder handling extraction duties in tandem with the 120. At roadside, an H855E harvester equipped with Tigercat's new 573 harvesting head was processing timber averaging 0,8 cubic metres to the stem with an average diameter of 40-45 cm. A new acquisition for Mecharv, the 573 is the company's first experience with a Tigercat processing head and had acquired 500 hours of operation by March 2025.

The mill requirements add a layer of decision-making for the processor operators. Tigercat Product Support Representative Pedro Venegas explains that "the processor operators have to visually determine if the tree was pruned or not and the length that it is clean and free of knots." The mill specifies two clean products with a minimum 280 mm diameter. The preferred and most valuable product is a 5,3 m clean log. "If it is not possible to get a fully pruned 5,3 m log, then the operator must cut a 2,65 m pruned log. If the operator cannot produce a pruned 5,3 m log, we sometimes see the operator feeding the log backwards to get the next best possible product."

Continuing down the bucking list, after the two clean logs, the mill specifies two different 5 m logs, depending on the diameter, followed by two different 4,1 m

logs, also dependent on diameter. Next is a 3,45 m log. “It’s not a common one, but it is on the list. So the operator can enable or disable some products,” Pedro explains. “And then we have the pulp that is 2,44 m and less than 160 mm diameter. But the operator can also cut a pulp log if a tree is damaged or broken, regardless of diameter.” Despite the many sorts, the operator decision making, and the restricted landing sizes, the 573 is averaging a production rate of 60 cubic metres per hour.

CMPC quality control team members routinely visit the operations, sampling length and diameter measurements to ensure that timber is optimized to the bucking list and that the processing head is operating within the required +/- 25 mm (1 in) tolerances. CMPC also has very strict rules regarding the length and diameter of material that can be left as slash, to maximize the recovery of pulpwood and minimize waste fibre.

In terms of size and capacity, Freddy likens the 573 to a Waratah 623 or Ponsse H9. “The main advantage is accuracy in measurement,” says Freddy. “It is also more robust. I would say that some of the other heads are more fragile in terms of structure and materials and suffer from premature wear.”

## Field day

Tigercat dealer Latin Equipment Chile, along with Mecharv, organized a demonstration day to show off the capabilities of the 120 and the 573 processing head. Approximately 30 representatives from several prominent Chilean harvesting contracting companies attended the demonstration at Mecharv’s worksite. For one hour, the 635G skidder and the 120 winch assist performed several extraction cycles. Mecharv then demonstrated the 573 head for the guests, followed by a snack onsite and lunch in the town of Capitán Pastene.

Carlos Vera, Sales Manager at Latin Equipment Chile, comments, “It was a memorable day for our team and for Chile’s forestry sector. We are truly grateful for the effort and excellent organization shown throughout this visit. Our sincere thanks to CMPC, Mecharv, all our customers, Tigercat, and of course, the Latin Equipment Chile team for making this successful field day possible.”

Carlos says that he and the sales and customer support team present at the event received only positive feedback from the clients in attendance. “Everything went smoothly and exactly as planned,” says Carlos. “This outcome fills us with pride and reaffirms the mature stage our company is experiencing within the Chilean forestry market. For over ten years, we’ve been the benchmark in steep slope operations, and we continue to set the standard in this demanding segment. We will continue to look ahead and ensure that we keep leading the way.” Carlos adds that the 120 demonstration ended with an excellent result. “As the cherry on top, we wrapped up the field day with the immediate sale of a Tigercat 120.” ■

Tigercat TV

Scan to watch video.

Around 30 contractors attended the field day hosted by Mecharv and Latin Equipment Chile on the CMPC jobsite.

HURRICANE HELENE

# *Cleanup* WITH THE **LS857**


**"THEN THE POA CAME TO US AND ASKED HOW WE WERE GOING TO FIX THE BLOWDOWN ON THE STEEP SLOPES. I TOLD THEM THE SOLUTION WAS A TIGERCAT."**

– Chase Fox, Fox Logging & Grading


**BTB visits Chase Fox in the mountains of western North Carolina to see the Tigercat LS857 working in a complex storm cleanup application with seriously steep terrain.**

– Jorge Victoria

I visited Chase Fox, owner of Fox Logging & Grading, to see the first Tigercat LS857 shovel logger operating in the Eastern US. Chase established his logging company in 2016 in Burnsville, North Carolina. Although Fox Logging also provides grading services, the company is predominantly engaged in contract logging. Chase doesn't come from a lineage of loggers. It was a true passion for the trade that brought him in, and like many loggers across America, his beginnings in the industry were humble: manual felling with a chainsaw and skidding with a bulldozer. "My father did not want me to log. He said it was too dangerous. I think I was fifteen when I started selling firewood. And then I went from buying wood to logging my wood. So it was just a progressive thing for me over the years," Chase recalls. Today, the company has a fully mechanized operation with eight employees.

Chase always wanted to own a Tigercat, but the opportunity didn't come until Hurricane Helene smashed into North Carolina in 2024 and he won a contract to clean up a residential area in a mountain setting after the storm. Helene made landfall in late September 2024, causing widespread damage and fatalities. In western North Carolina, up to twenty inches of rain fell in a 48-hour period with some counties

A challenging worksite. Chase believes the Tigercat LS857 is the best solution to safely tackle this extreme terrain storm cleanup contract.

recording as much as 30 inches, triggering catastrophic flooding. Yancey County, where Chase lives and operates, was heavily affected. Estimates place the economic impact of Helene at $200 billion, potentially making it the costliest storm in US history. "I always knew that I wanted to go to Tigercat, but it's a big step. Then we got Helene, and we had all this blowdown in western North Carolina. That's the reason we went to Tigercat, to remove this timber off steep slopes," says Chase. "There was no other way to go in and work this downed timber in a safe manner."

In October 2024, shortly after the hurricane, Fox Logging & Grading was contracted to perform storm cleanup by Mountain Air, a private gated community nestled at 5,000 feet (1 520 m) in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Burnsville, North Carolina. Mountain Air is a private country club community comprised of more than 400 residences, a golf course, nature trails, a restaurant, a network of paved roads and even a private runway. Due to the residential nature, size and complexity of the project, Chase partnered with A&B Construction, owned by Chase's cousin, Avery Austin. The contract entails the removal of all the blowdown, as well as creating water bars for drainage and applying mulch on the slopes. "We came to Mountain Air and started fixing the roads and getting the utilities back on. Then the POA [Property Owners Association] came to us and asked how we were going to fix the blowdown on the steep slopes. I told them the solution was a Tigercat," Chase explains.

Before Chase purchased the LS857, he visited a steep slope winch assisted logging operation in Oregon to see equipment working on similarly graded slopes as those encountered in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Chase observed that the winch assisted Tigercat LS855E experienced interference as the chain contacted the counterweight area of the machine when it was operating on steeper grades. As a result, he opted for the new LS857. Its unique sloping tail design provides clearance for the tracks and winch assist chains and allows for a steeper leveling angle. "I knew

what I was going to be doing, so that's the reason I went with the 857," says Chase. "I've not hit the chain once."

Chase explains that before the hurricane came to Yancey County, it rained continuously for three days. The soil was already saturated, which made the ground loose, and so when the storm came with heavy rain and strong winds, the trees were uprooted. "You don't see many broken trees. You see all uprooted trees. We have to cut the tree off at the root mass but the root masses are still laying there." To eliminate an obvious hazard and improve the aesthetics, Mountain Air specified the removal of the root masses as well.

Logging would not normally be an option on the Mountain Air property, but according to Chase, the community lost about 40% of its standing timber on the 1,300 acre (525 ha) property. Chase estimates over half of the total area will need to be cleaned up. He anticipates it will take him another year to fully complete the project. "This is a one-of-a-kind job. There is nowhere else that you're half logging, half storm cleanup, and every five feet is an asphalt road or a million-dollar home. We're just finding little avenues to get to the worst parts," comments Chase.

The LS857 is equipped with a live heel boom and the 5195 directional felling saw. It is typically winch assisted, operating 600-1,300 feet (180-395 m) from a residential paved road, where the winch assist machine is located. Beyond 1,300 feet, Chase constructs additional roads for extraction access and to locate the winch assist machine. The LS857 progresses down the slope, cutting the root masses from uprooted trees while sorting the roots, trees and brush into separate piles for the skidder. Once the LS857 completes the felling, sorting and shovelling tasks, the assist cable is switched over to the skidder. While the skidder is extracting, the LS857 assists at the landing, sorting and shovelling to roadside. (In scenarios where the LS857 can work unassisted, it pre-bunches and shovels to feed the winch-assisted skidder.)

At the roadside, a loader equipped with a grapple saw merchandises

Two 30-ton off-road dump trucks loaded with brush and root masses, heading to a nearby grinding site. The resulting mulch will eventually be applied to the mountain for erosion control and aesthetic purposes.

the logs and loads them onto trucks. Logs are hauled to either a sawmill or veneer mill. Roots and brush are loaded onto 30-ton off-road dump trucks and transported to a nearby grinding site that Chase operates. The mulch will eventually be returned to the mountain to be redistributed onto the site for erosion control and aesthetic purposes.

### Storm challenges

Extensive debris, fallen trees, and unstable terrain are some of the added challenges and hazards of storm cleanup when compared to conventional timber harvesting. “The roots are the worst up here. We’re in a deciduous forest where it’s all hardwood. We have no pine at this elevation, and the root masses are bigger than a tree and weigh twice as much. And then you involve the steep slope, and it’s just a terrible door to open every day,” explains Chase. He adds that his team treats the project like a harvesting job, but with a higher level of caution due to the hazards. In a conventional harvesting job, Chase and his team would be covering three to five acres per day, whereas here, they are covering half to one acre a day. Chase explains that in his normal logging situations only merchantable timber is extracted from the woods. “We don’t remove the roots and brush. In this situation, we’re removing everything, and it slows us down dramatically. If we go in today and we’re on that 70% slope and we move a half-acre of material, we feel like we’ve done a pretty good job.”

The 5195 directional felling saw is well suited to the oversize timber, often in the 20-36 in (50-90 cm) diameter range, and steep terrain encountered on the jobsite. The versatility of the 5195 covers off many tasks including untangling, felling, shovelling and sorting the trees. “With the 5195, you can process the top out. You can cut the root off, and you can shovel it to a skid road. It really eliminates a

Chase along some of his crew members. (L-R) Chase Fox, Caden Fox, Keith Laws, Josh Wheeler, Gabe Briggs.


The unique profile of the LS857 provides increased leveling capability and improved cable management for winch assisted operations. The machine is paired with a 5195 directional felling saw, making the package versatile for felling, shovel logging, bunching, stacking and sorting.

machine," says Chase, adding that he can cut a 37 in (94 cm) diameter tree in a single pass.

Chase is impressed with the auto-leveling capability and mentions that the LS857 has more lift capacity and leveling capabilities than previous machines he has owned, resulting in increased safety and productivity. "It has more leveling front to rear, and it has more leveling side to side. I can hit the auto-level, and it's the lazy way of running a cutter. It is wonderful," says Chase, noting that the longer undercarriage stance makes the machine feel very stable on steep terrain.

He also comments on operator comfort. "The seat is on another level because it's heated and cooled, and you know you're sitting in there eight or ten hours each day. I'm six-foot three, and I can slide it back and be comfortable," says Chase. Service access is also an important feature for him. "If I need to go change the starter on a Tigercat, specifically that 857, I promise you I can have it off in 15 minutes. And that's worth a lot to me. It may not be tomorrow, but there will be a time when I'll need to change the starter or the batteries or a hose blows. Everything is meant to be worked on, and that's what I like."

Fox Logging employee and LS857 operator, Josh Wheeler, shares his thoughts. "It's a very strong machine. It's got lots of swing power. To me this machine has got better stability than the previous machine I operated. With the grouser extensions, it goes anywhere you want it to go."

The LS857 is serviced by Tidewater's Polkton branch, managed by Jamey Watkins, who has built a strong relationship with Fox Logging. "Tidewater has been fantastic. The support has been great," says Chase.

Tidewater is proud to have been able to provide the LS857 to Fox Logging to help the company tackle this challenging cleanup contract in a safe manner. "Chase Fox is the first customer on the east coast to purchase the LS857 and we applaud him for recognizing the unparalleled engineering of Tigercat machines as well as the outstanding support Tidewater provides. Chase is a new Tigercat and Tidewater customer and we are excited to see the impact he is making in the North Carolina community," says Jamey.


# SECURE™

## EXTENDED COVERAGE

Looking for added peace of mind beyond your standard warranty?

SECURE plans offer four levels of extended coverage, so you can choose the protection that fits your business needs.

**Ask your Tigercat or TCi dealer about SECURE today.**

Tigercat® | TCi®

**www.tigercat.com/warranty**