



Northern Tier Hardwood Association

NTHA Activity Report:

Serving the Northern Tier counties of Bradford, Tioga, Susquehanna, Sullivan, Wyoming, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Wayne, and Pike

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Beach Lake Fire Company
 Byers Logging LLC
 Chambersburg Fire Dept
 Cole Logging and Firewood
 Dean L. Whitesell
 Edwin Royer II
 FWM Vol. Fire Company
 Kevin Snyder Logging
 Lava Vol. Fire Dept.
 Matt Cottrell (DCS Logging)
 Milford Hill Logging
 Ordie Price Sawmill, Inc.
 Pepper Logging
 Pierron Reasner Logging
 Smallwood-Mongaup Valley Fire District
 Southwest Energy
 Sweet Valley Do it Best
 Tusten Vol. Ambulance Service, Inc.
 Walck Custom Wood Products
 Ward Forestry & Logging
 Watters Logging
 White Lake Fire District

CONTACT US:

NTHA
 PO Box 7
 Tunkhannock, PA 18657
 Phone: (570) 265-7753
www.nthardwoods.org
 Email:
nthapa@nthardwoods.org

Throughout March, April and May we have completed two classes of GOL-1, GOL-2, GOL-3, and Storm Damage. We offered three classes of CPR/First Aid, three Advanced Logger Rescue trainings, and one Hardwood Log Bucking course. Combined we have helped to train 99 industry people and 45 EMS, Fire and township personnel. NTHA is always looking for more trainings that will benefit the industry. If you have any suggestions for trainings please call or email the program manager, Connie Ridall. We are looking to provide more trainings to areas in need. If you are interested in NTHA providing trainings closer to you, please let us know and we will try our best to bring it as close as possible.

NTHA has been busy visiting schools on Career Day. To date we have talked to well over 800 juniors/seniors and fifth grade students about the opportunities in the Wood Product Industry. If time allows, a poster of many different products that have wood (-products) in them is shown and discussed with students (example- glue, plastics, vanilla, maple syrup). A question is then asked: Which of these products do not have wood in them? They are surprised to hear that all of the products, except one, is a product of wood or has wood fiber (cellulose) in them. This exercise is to help them realize that we use wood products for everyday life and not just for homes and furniture. Another question that is asked is: what kind of job do you think we are doing for our forest? After many mixed answers and many concerns about wildlife, there is a short lesson on how we need young forest for habitat health. We manage our forests to create good habitat for them. Our forest is growing at twice the rate at which it is being harvested and we are insuring that we are managing our forest so that it will be there for generations to come.

We have also participated in several events promoting the industry. We had representation at the Allegany SAF conference, PFA annual Banquet, Contractor's workshop at Keystone College, and the Farm Show. I had the opportunity to talk with industry people as well as a vast community of people from all walks of life on NTHA and the Wood Product Industry as a whole. Finally, NTHA was recognized at the FFA banquet in Wellsboro, PA for the contribution given to their forestry team in the national finals held in Louisville, KY in October, in which they placed high in many categories.

NTHA participated in the legislative event held in Harrisburg on April 14. Together with over 40 other industry people, we took this opportunity to talk with our legislatures on issues facing our industry. We discussed adding logging to the sales and use tax exemption as all other agriculture related operations are. We also discussed continuing to fund the Hardwood Development Council and the utilization groups as they are vital to our industry. Finally, we discussed adding an extra axle to tractor-trailer trucks traveling on major highways and raising the weight limit to 90,000 lbs. to increase production and lower the cost of transportation. These issues were also addressed as part of the HDC meeting, as well as providing regional updates to our industry partners, the Secretary of Agriculture and other officials who were present.

NTHA is always looking for areas to promote the industry. If you have an event near you that would give us an opportunity to talk with people, please contact the program manager, Connie Ridall.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists Northern Long-eared Bat as Threatened Species

As of May 4, 2015 the Northern Long-eared Bat has been listed as threatened. This is due to a white-nose syndrome that is killing the species.

The USFWS has also adopted a special 4(d) rule under the ESA which will continue to allow forest management within the white nose buffer zone-including all of PA- if they follow certain guidelines. Which includes, but not limited to: timber harvest and silviculture activities, prescribed burning, invasive species control, wildlife openings and temporary roads. The 4(d) rule does not exempt the conversion of mature hardwood forests into pine plantation or non forested treatments.

Under the 4(d) rule, forestry activities can continue to be conducted throughout the year, providing these activities include the following measures:

- Activities occurs more than .25miles from a known, occupied hibernacula during the year;
- Activity avoids cutting/destroying known, occupied hibernacula during the year.
- Activity avoids clear cuts (seed tree, Shelterwood, etc) within 0.25miles of known, occupied roost trees during pup raising season (June 1- July 31);

Known, occupied hibernacula and known roost trees are documented entities that can be identified by contacting the USFWS state filed office or the DCNR PNDI website. Reportedly, there are only 117 known occupied NLEB hibernacula in PA. Landowners can also challenge if the hibernacula or roost sites are still occupied. Private timber harvests not requiring federal and state permitting will not be required to conduct and hibernacula or summer roost surveying.

The 4(d) rule also allow for other actions that could harm a bat, such as removal from human structures, research, minimal tree removal (up to one acre of removals); hazardous tree removals, maintenance and expansion of right of way, prairie management.

The 4(d) rule helps to ensure that private landowners are not burdened by the ESA take provisions (to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, etc). Without the 4(d) rule, federally threatened wildlife species automatically get the same provisions as federally endangered species. Other actives will be under greater impacts from this USFWS decision.

The USFWS has also reopened the comment period on the 4(d) rule to gather additional information on possible additional modifications ore exemptions in the rule. Comments can be submitted until July 1, 2015. (See main USFWS links below)

The USFWS originally proposed in October 2013 that the Northern Long-eared bat be listed as endangered as a result of its declines du to white-nosed syndrome. If the original endangered proposal had been adopted, it could have shut down timber harvesting in PA from April 1 to into November.

During the process reviewing public and state agency comments, the USFWS determined to list the species as threatened and adopt the 4(d) rule to eliminate unnecessary regulation.

Source:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information on the NLEB Threatened Listing:

NLEB Homepage:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nlba/index.html>

FAZ's on Listing:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nlba/FAZsFinalListNLEB.html>

A Key to Northern Long-eared Bat Interim 4(d) Rule for non-Federal Projects

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nleeb/Interim4dRuleKeyNLEB.html>

Information courtesy of PFFPA at the regional meeting.



Expansion of Sales and Use Tax Exclusion for Timber Operations Update:

HB 504 was introduced by Rep. Gabler (R-ELK). Reported from House Finance Committee as introduced on April 21. Approved by the House on May 13, after adding the School District Millage Rate Reduction Fund and the School District Homestead and Farmstead Relief Fund.

SB 657 introduced by Sen. Hutchinson (R-Venango). Referred to the Senate Finance Committee. To date has not been moved.

The Pennsylvania tax code, as it stands, provides sales and use tax exclusion for purchasing equipment, material and services used in both agricultural and manufacturing/processing operations. However, loggers do not have this exemption. Adoption of the provision will allow logging operations to be more competitive with those in surrounding states who already are included in the exemption. With loggers facing high equipment costs, elimination of the tax will help loggers make the decision to upgrade with new equipment that will make their job safer, more efficient, and thus, more productive. More updates will follow as we get them.

New Fund to Assist Logging Accident Victims : ALIFT

With an office located in Tunkhannock, PA, a new non-profit charitable organization known as ALIFT (Assisting Loggers Immediately Fund Trust) has been established to financially assist logging accident victims and their families. Logging is such a vital industry to northeastern PA, and the timber industry is one of the top industries in Pennsylvania employing approximately 90,000 workers. Over 10% of the state's manufacturing workforce is involved in the forest products industry.

There have been great strides in logging safety over the years as a result of training, safety courses and continuing education seminars. Accident rates have decreased substantially, however, accidents still occur. The purpose of ALIFT is to provide accident victims and their families with immediate financial assistance. The fund is not designed to replace or even supplement insurance coverage. It is simply a way to get immediate funds to the families to take care of some monthly household bills while the insurance process runs its course. It is there to give the families "A LIFT!" While fundraisers and benefits are most helpful, they require time and planning. Having the funds on hand will enable those in need to receive help immediately.

ALIFT will be seeking contributions to build funds to help make this financial assistance available to the injured and their families. To make a contribution or find out more about ALIFT, please contact ALIFT at 17 Lake View Drive, Tunkhannock, PA 18657 or by phone at 570-836-5825. Or in care of Rick Huffsmith, Deer Park Lumber, RGM Hardwoods, Mark Ridall.



Timber 2015

Plan to attend the biennial Pennsylvania Forest Products Association (PFPA) Equipment and Technology Exposition. Timber 2015 will have high-quality indoor and outdoor exhibitors with a focus on forest products harvesting and processing,

value-added services, land clearing, and biomass markets.

Timber 2015 will be held June 5-6 at the Ag Progress Days site, 2710 West Pine Grove Road, Pennsylvania Furnace, Pa., 16865.

Demonstrations

Designated Areas of Demonstration, Offered Daily

- In-the-woods harvesting of hardwoods and softwoods—**11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.**
- Feller buncher with cut-to-length processor heads
- Forwarders
- Log Skidders
- Horizontal Grinder and Chippers—**10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.**
- Forklifts—**Noon**

Active equipment on many exhibitor sites:

- Ride-and-drive area with log skidders
- Sawmill equipment displays
- Wood-carvings

Lumberjacking demonstration featuring Penn State Woodsmen's Team:

- Under-hand chopping
- Cross-cutting
- Axe-throwing competition

Timber and Logging Exhibits

Relive history at the Pasto Agricultural Museum with new displays and hands-on exhibits. This year's show will feature the new Pennsylvania WoodMobile, a traveling educational exhibit!

Woodlot Management Tours: Establishing the Next Forest Friday, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. This tour will examine a 15-acre timber harvest that was performed in 2012 using the shelter wood regeneration method. We will discuss harvesting and regeneration challenges, including shade tolerance, seed trees, exotic insects, invasive plants, competing vegetation, and deer-browsing impacts.

Log a Load for Kids Charity PFPA Truck Parade Friday, at 11:15 a.m.

"Log a Load for Kids" has raised approximately \$20 million nationally to help sick and injured children. Individuals and businesses in the Pennsylvania logging and forestry industries donate the value of a load of logs to help local Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. For more details visit <http://agsci.psu.edu/timber>



Saturday-only Game of Logging National Finals Competition for Landowner and Pro Logger Divisions



Upcoming Trainings:

NTHA has concluded the winter/spring training session. A new schedule will be released when it becomes available.

Industry trainings: PA SFI® (Pennsylvania Sustainable Forestry Initiative) Continuing Education Courses at the PFPA Timber Show 2015 - Friday, 1:00 to 4:30 p.m., or Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Receive PA SFI® logger continuing education training credits by attending one of the update courses to be held at the Morton Bldg. during the show. The primary topics of the course will be care and safety considerations for maintaining hydraulic and diesel engine systems, and a tour of a 2012 harvest. It is free to attend a course (public welcome); however, a \$20 administrative fee is required to register for continuing education credit. Walk-ups will be accepted, but preregistration is encouraged to ensure adequate seating and handouts. To preregister, call 814-355-1010 or visit the PA SFI® website at www.sfiopa.org ****members of NTHA receive 50% reimbursement for all trainings****



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Northern Tier Hardwood Association is a non-profit organization serving the wood industry and its supporters throughout Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne, and Wyoming counties of Pennsylvania. We at NTHA take great pride in providing our members and surrounding community with worthwhile programs. If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 570-265-7753 or email at nthapa@nthardwoods.org.

