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Report of a Survey of Idaho Timber Workforce Issues

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presented to:

The “Group”

Associated Logging Contractors – Idaho

Intermountain Forest Association

Idaho Forest Products Commission

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Executive Summary

As part of an Idaho Timber Workforce Improvement Project surveys were conducted with selected leaders to gain their insights. Sixty interviews were completed by 16 logging firms, 13 milling firms, 3 trucking firms, 4 forestry services firms, 6 large private landowners, 5 public landowners, 3 representing other industries (Construction, Pulp & Paper, & Machinery), and 12 other experts. Six women provided input while the rest were men. The average age of ss was ~53 years. Summary results and the survey form are included in Appendix 1. and with more details in subsequent appendices.

This Report identified some Guiding Principles for consideration of improvement efforts.

- Imperative for sector leaders to get everyone behind something—not just react to external forces individually
- Forestry sector is a changing sector not a dying sector (mature, sunset, old-age, low-tech, etc)
- Sector needs to recognize that the new generation will not perform like the current generation of managers and workers
- Sector leadership is questionable if individuals cannot put aside self interest for the common good
- Scrupulous honesty and openness are crucial
- A substantial statement for improvement is needed and the sector must assure success of the first visible effort
- Public interests must be addressed and connections to workforce emphasized, eg, stewardship, environmental protection, rural communities, etc.
- Single, identifiable voice would be best-- one credible with the sector and the public
- Safety and health of workers is a unifying force
- Cheap fix is not a lasting fix—problem is intergenerational
- Future sector leaders need knowledge of workers and their issues, eg from Universities.
- Solutions for individual firms may not affect sector much—need a rising tide to lift all boats
- Pessimism can be overwhelming—a spark of optimism will need fans to ignite the flame

The mass of interview information has been reduced to a group of survey themes that are more fully developed in the Report. These include

Aging Workers

Pay a Major Issue

Single Firm Solutions

Job Leavers...Job Stayers

Challenges and Obstacles

Rural Communities

The Sector is in Doubt—for Everyone?

Generation Gap

Technology—Perceptions and Gaps

Professionalism of Workers not just Pay

Subjects Speak Out

The section on Towards Improvement lists some concepts that might improve the Idaho timber workforce but offers no guarantees of success. The general list is abbreviated below:

- **Maintain knowledge in aging workforce**
- **Address stability issue – forestry is a changing industry not a dying industry**
- **Set up structure to make improvements—Idaho Action Planning Committee**
- **Find permanent funding source**
- **Involve individual workers**
- **Emphasize technology**
- **High school counselors?**
- **Consider paid summer camp**
- **Review training**

- **Consider workers compensation offset**
- **Work with state labor economists**
- **Image and media (tv, radio, web) approaches**
- **Work design for a new generation**
- **Engage a task force to look at the issue of “season length”**
- **Consider more detailed interviews with young**
- **What are options for providing “benefits” (health insurance, retirement plan, etc.)**
- **Discussion of who are the “players” in workforce issues**

Concluding Remarks comment on the greater detail in the survey and invite readers to participate in the Summit.

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Introduction

This Report is a summarization of a recent survey of selected organizations in Idaho and a discussion of approaches to workforce issues. Workforce issues in logging, trucking, forestry services, and primary sawmilling in the state of Idaho have reached such a level of concern that a coalition of organizations have stepped forward to look for improvements. The Associated Contract Loggers, the Intermountain Forest Association and the Idaho Forest Products Commission (known as “the Group”) have commissioned an Idaho Timber Workforce Improvement Project.

A general description of the Project by the Group shows the four step approach used:

The project will consist of four parts; an overview, a survey, a report and a summit. The overview will gather timely and relevant information on current and future forest workforce issues. The survey will solicit the opinions, observations and suggestions of employers, employees and others about workforce issues. The report will summarize the survey findings and provide a slate of possible recommendations the forest industry might implement to improve their competitive advantage in recruiting, hiring and retaining a qualified workforce in the region. Finally, the summit will provide an opportunity to present and discuss the project findings with members of Idaho’s forest business and develop actions that businesses, associations and government agencies may implement. The summit will be held in spring of 2008. (May 13th in Post Falls)

From Comprehensive Workforce Overview, at www.idahoforests.org

The Report provides survey details on more than sixty interviews and begins a discussion on possible improvement approaches to critical workforce needs. From this information and the author’s forty years of experience in the forestry workforce and studying forestry workers around the world, a comprehensive picture emerges of the Idaho Timber Workforce. The picture is always a changing one as market conditions change and have dramatic effects on the viability of everyone in the forestry sector. However, people are at the center of all decisions and productive activity-- from workers planting the new forest to CEOs deciding the fate of rural communities. The Report seeks to improve understanding of the workforce dynamics in logging, trucking, forestry services, forest land management and primary sawmilling. While surveys were largely completed before the recent dramatic industry downturn, survey subjects (ss) have been through ups and downs before and their comments are from a long term perspective.

Report Organization

The organization of the Report attempts to help readers sift through the substantial details to get key ideas as in the **Executive Summary**. Some **Guiding Principles** emerged from the author’s review of all materials and are presented first. The **Survey Subjects (ss)** section describes who was interviewed. Several important **Themes** emerged for consideration from all the information reviewed. The section on **Towards Solutions** identifies actions for consideration to help stimulate thinking at the Summit on May 13, 2008. Finally, **Concluding Remarks** may help readers move forward to participation in the Summit.

The **Appendices** are organized so that Appendix 1. is the survey form itself with summary responses for the questions inserted into the form. Subsequent Appendices cover greater details

from questions that involved responses too long for the form in Appendix 1. In most cases, these responses are categorized and grouped to help readers sense the relative frequency of responses.

Guiding principles

From the author's interaction with the entire project and especially from speaking with survey subjects, a series of Guiding Principles emerged. After reviewing all of the surveys, the list below was summarized for readers to consider.

- Imperative for sector leaders to get everyone behind something—not just react to external forces individually
- Forestry sector is a changing sector not a dying sector (mature, sunset, old-age, low-tech, etc)
- Idaho is not alone dealing with workforce issues—western states, U.S. and World have similar issues
- Sector needs to recognize that the new generation will not perform like the current generation of managers and workers
- Sector leadership is questionable if individuals cannot put aside self interest for the common good
- Scrupulous honesty and openness are crucial
- A substantial statement for improvement is needed and the sector must assure success of the first visible effort
- Public interests must be addressed and connections to workforce emphasized, eg, stewardship, environmental protection, rural communities, etc.
- Single, identifiable voice would be best-- one credible with the sector and the public
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- Cheap fix is not a lasting fix—problem is intergenerational
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Readers may be able to relate to these principles and perhaps offer their own at the Summit.

Survey Subjects (SS)

More than sixty interviews were completed between December 11, 2007 and February 19, 2008. Eight interviews were face-to-face and the rest by telephone. The average survey took about 48 minutes, the shortest 24 minutes, and the longest 91 minutes. It was not easy to schedule the survey because respondents are busy people and have some aversion to surveys. However, once the reason and sponsors of the survey were explained, ss were more cooperative.

The survey was not meant to be a statistical sample representing the forestry sector but rather is a compilation of views, opinions, and ideas by individuals nominated by the Group or survey subjects (ss) themselves. Some ss nominated other firms, contractor leavers, job leavers, job stayers and other experts to be interviewed. The ss were identified so as to span the firm sizes

from small to medium to large-sized firms and organizations. There were surveys completed by 16 logging firms, 13 milling firms, 3 trucking firms, 4 forestry services firms, 6 large private landowners, 5 public landowners, 3 representing other industries (Construction, Pulp & Paper, & Machinery), and 12 other experts. Six women provided input while the rest were men. The average age of ss was ~53 years.

Half of the ss were owners, almost half managers, and the rest workers or other experts. Employment for ss organizations ranged from one single employee to 1200 in the sector. The Survey covered a total of 7678 employees (including ~3000 representing other industries), thus, leaving 4678 employees covered within the forestry sector. There were duplicate employees covered for some firms as managers at different levels may have been interviewed. Some 38 ss respondents used contractors for forestry work and they affected a total of 7,322 of contractor employees.

The average number of employees in each logging firm was 38, mills were 244, trucking was 88, and forestry services firms were 84. The estimated capital investment for ss organizations ranged from as low as \$100,000 to over \$9 Billion in land values for forest owners/managers. Trucking firms hauled as low of 9,100 tons to 303,000 tons annually. One trucking firm hauled logs over 17 million miles. Forestry services firms impacted areas from 3,500 acres to over one Million acres. The average logging firm harvested 32 MM (million) board feet of logs annually and the average mill produced about 150MM board feet of lumber.

The education varied across the ss but all would be considered smart and successful. Two completed grade school, twenty-three high school, twenty-five were college graduates and of those eight had Masters degrees or graduate school. Their firms were in business for 51 years on average with more than half the firms in business over 40 years. Sixteen firms anticipated changes in ownership in the next three years: 3 sales, 2 retirements, 3 turning over the firm to children or employees, and 8 other changes ranging from closures to forming a stock ownership company.

Nearly all subjects requested that they receive a copy of the survey results when available. Almost as many would like to be invited to the Idaho Timber Workforce Summit on May 13th with some ss having reservations about business demands on that date.

Survey Themes

A number of overall themes emerged from the Survey that merit examination individually. Taken collectively, the views of the survey subjects come forward. More details are in the Appendices.

Aging of workers

The Survey confirmed the aging of the forestry sector workforces as shown in the earlier Overview. For all of the workers covered by the survey, the percentage over age 40 totaled 67% while logging was younger with 56% over 40 for the firms sampled. The employees of mills in the survey totaled 69% over 40 years. The few trucking firms in the Survey had a bulge of drivers in the 60-69 age group at 49% and an additional 20% in the 50-59 age group. The

Forestry Services firms had a bimodal age group with workers mostly in the 18-29 age group at 53% and older managers/supervisors in the 50+ age groups at 37%. See figure 1.

One Survey question dealt with the ages of key employees if ss could provide those ages. For the key employees in Mills, Forestry Services, Trucking, and public and private landowners, half the key employees were over 50 with an average age hovering around 48 years. Key Logging employees were slightly younger with half over 45 but still averaging 46 years.

The implications with the aging talent pool in the forestry subsectors are that decisions about retention of skilled workers and training and development of future key employees are needed **now**. Individual firms may face age distributions where key older workers are likely to leave within the next five years.

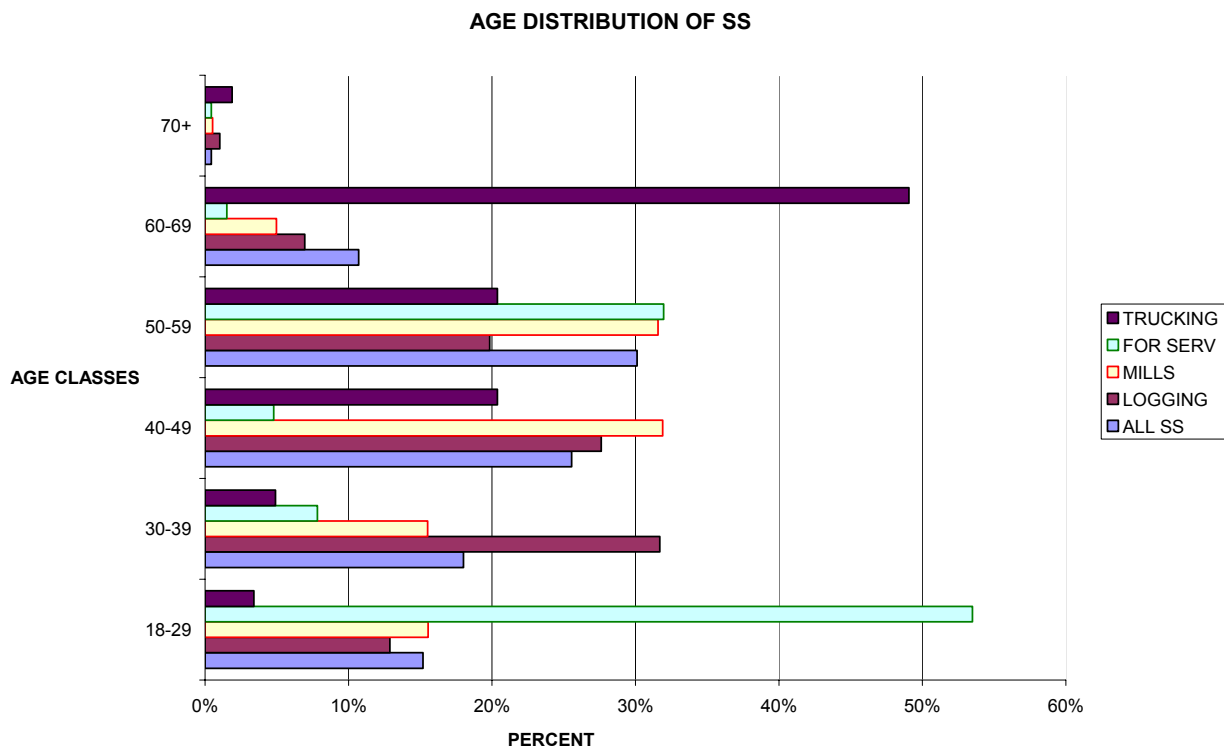


Figure 1. Age classes by survey subject employees

It seems obvious that managers are concerned not only about the aging workers but also about the limited number of younger workers in the subsectors in key employee positions. The age distribution in the Overview (Appendix A. of the Overview document) is more representative for the entire Idaho forestry sectors. However, for small sample sizes in this survey, the implications for individual firms are shocking. More than half the drivers in the trucking firms are over age 60. For the mills in the sample, only about 30% of the workers are under age 40.

No Single Voice

One major impression from conducting the present survey is that employers and others have some difficulty talking about the workforce. When asked about their degree of support for a particular idea, subjects were comfortable speaking for themselves. Unless they were the actual owner of the company, many felt uncomfortable speaking for the firm on these ideas. Finally, it was hard for respondents to speak for the entire sector on those same ideas. There is apparently no single source that forestry sector leaders can look to for information on the forestry workforce. There is apparently no single voice that communicates within and without the forestry sector regarding workforce issues.

When sector leaders are tied so directly to their own experience with their own workforce, it is harder to get past personal and confidential perspectives to address sector-wide issues. Positive statements about the future of the forestry sector in Idaho are missing as well and that translates to the future of a potential worker in the sector. While there are serious workforce problems facing the forestry sector, there are many positive messages that future workers need to hear. It wouldn't hurt for the current forestry workforce to hear those same messages either.

What form a single forestry sector voice on workforce issues takes is unclear at present. It is clear that a single voice with consistent messages about the forestry workforce would benefit future forestry workers and the sector itself.

Pay a Major Issue

The survey dealt specifically with entry level pay for ss employees. Appendix 1. shows the aggregated responses to the question by each forest industry subsector. In addition, many respondents offered comments on pay and compensation in relation to other questions. Comparative entry level pay is not the same as yearly wages and thus, workers consider seasonal lengths in making job choices.

Loggers: Specifically, loggers equate pay with professionalism and felt that they had lost ground to competing industries over the years. This loss is confirmed by the Overview (Appendix B of the Overview) chart showing declines for logging relative to all Idaho pay. The logging firms were not able to pay many benefits (health insurance, retirement, vacation, etc.) for their employees and were trying to do so but felt it was not possible. Logging firms pay overtime when required but their season length was shortened to about 10.25 months on average.

Mill respondents in general felt less pressure for competing wages for skilled positions and were able to offer benefits in most cases. Some smaller mills were not able to compete at entry level wages in their opinion. Mills were able to operate for the 12 months for the period of the survey. That situation may have changed recently.

Trucking firms and some logging companies that employ drivers pay on a percentage of the daily truck rate, eg, 28-35%. Because many log truck drivers come from "over-the-road" trucking operations, the wages are higher to start. Firms in the sample had average driver pay rates likely to be higher than all log trucking firms because of the small sample. However, sample firms only operated 9.66 months last year. Many truck drivers are sole operators and the likelihood of having employment benefits is not high. Hours of driving service for fleet operations are

mandated but many log truck drivers have long hours starting at 2-3 am and running until 7-8 pm depending on haul distances.

Forestry services firms may have minimum pay set by federal contracts or other agreements. Firms in the sample worked 11 months last year. However, most forestry services firms have a core workforce that operates longer than the part year employees hired for the fire or planting seasons.

Appendix 1. shows the entry level pay for work categories in the survey. By comparison, survey firms paid entry wages higher than what is reported for entry wages in the Idaho 2007 Wage Report for similar categories (Idaho. 2007. Occupational Employment & Wage Report. Idaho Department of Labor. Boise, ID. 210p.). Figure 2. shows the visual comparison below. Not all categories are strictly comparable. For example log truck drivers in the survey are compared to heavy hauling drivers in the all Idaho data (that work category however is the recruiting source for log truck drivers). Small sample sizes for survey firms in trucking and forestry services probably bias those entry pay levels upwards.

Within the survey, a single sample for forestry machinery produced entry wages nearly triple forestry sector pay but that entry level is for a skilled woods mechanic with extensive training and thus, is not comparable. From the survey, pulp mill workers may start at about \$14 per hour but wages quickly rise after training (>\$20/hr) and ultimately are higher on average than the forestry sectors in the survey. In contrast, the professional forester entry level pay in the survey was \$19.32 versus all Idaho forester entry wages at \$21.60.

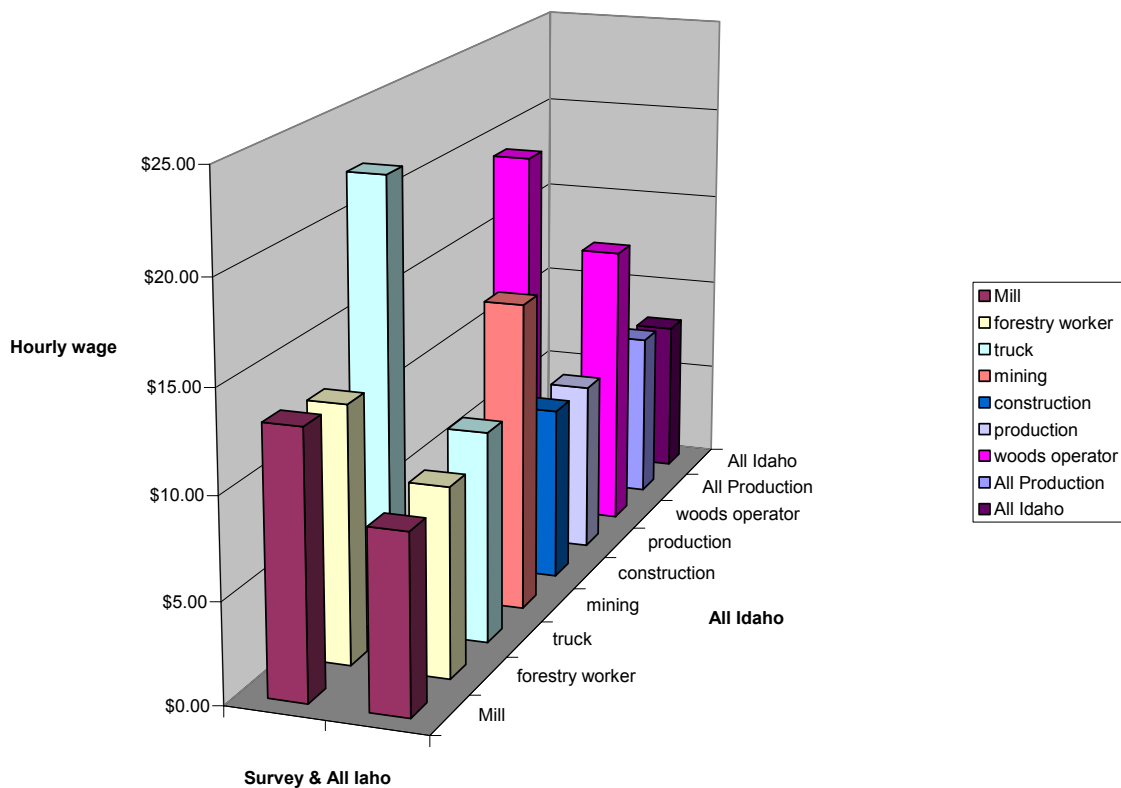


Figure 2. Entry level wage comparisons for survey firms and All Idaho entry pay levels 2007.

Higher entry level wages in the survey notwithstanding, many firms cited pay as a problem for both retaining and recruiting workers. When asked to give reasons for workers leaving the firms, at least ten firms in the sample cited pay issues. Another ten firms said pay and benefits (health insurance, retirement, etc.) were a way to start improvements. Also in several other survey questions: eg, obstacles, challenges, what's needed first, comments, etc., pay and benefits are addressed. See sample comments below:

- We lose people to USFS – their salaries national
- Go back to money -- if money is there, people will show up to work.
- wish could pay more and better benefits
- not enough season, low pay, cannot make living;
- Construction jobs are better - they offer health benefits
- compensation inadequate
- Need to be paid as professionals with benefits
- Goes back to money from industry --Need to put money up
- Compensation; pay; benefits
- Competition with other industries; cannot offer healthcare and benefits
- Long hours; long days; money to pay; and seasonal work (9 months rather than 12 months)
- Downsizing; lack of funds
- younger want more money with fringe benefits
- cannot pay to attract; always come in second to competitors

A few firms in the sample were adamant that the firm just needs to pay what is needed to get productive workers. These firms seemed successful as well at gaining the actual productivity, contract prices, product prices or whatever was needed to cover the higher wages. It is unclear that such a strategy can work for all firms in the forestry subsectors. However, these firms do show that paying higher wages allows them to attract and retain workers.

Single Firm Solutions

One theme emerged from talking with a few firms who saw themselves as successful with their workforce issues. The discussion above relative to pay illustrates the point. A very few firms paid better (sometimes substantially) than competitors and were able to recruit and retain productive workers. Why doesn't everyone just pay better wages? The response is that product markets, labor markets, and competition push to set prices paid for logging, trucking, and forestry services at rates near the lowest levels that keep firms still in business. Thus, a few firms may have competitive advantages to allow higher wages, but not all firms have such advantages and must directly compete with other firms paying lower wages. How does the sector achieve higher wage rates?

Collective actions of firms in the forestry subsectors are needed to make progress. The safety issue in forestry provides an example. By regulation or volunteerism, firms band together to cover workers' insurance for on-the-job injuries. The collective injury experience of firms covered sets the base insurance rates (reserves, annual payments, etc.) to cover the entire group. Individual firms who have claims are protected from catastrophic losses because they are spread over the group. However, individual firms who have no claims pay the base rate anyway (experience modifiers make some adjustments). In order to bring the base rate down, the entire experience of the group covered must make improvements in claims experience. Many individual firms must avoid losses and the catastrophic losses need to be limited to keep insurance base rates acceptable.

I believe the same analogy applies to workforce improvement efforts for the Idaho Timber Workforce. When only a few firms make improvements and are successful, they themselves may benefit and marginally improve the overall view of the forestry sector. However, for all firms and society to benefit, larger sector-wide improvement efforts need to be undertaken to achieve benefits for all workers. The old saying, "A rising tide lifts all boats," applies to Idaho workforce improvement efforts.

Job Leavers...Job Stayers

Job separations for organizations in the survey provide some indications of why the forestry sector has difficulty retaining workers. Job separations are those employees who quit or are fired. When the sum of quits/fires is divided by the average employment in the firm, the result is the "turnover" rate—often expressed in percent. In large samples of like firms, the turnover rate differences may be significant for the group. The table below shows the turnover rates for the firms in the sample as an average and median. Because there were firms of varying sizes and some with large turnover rates, the average certainly does not represent the subsector. The median value is perhaps more representative.

Table 1. Turnover rates for survey firms.

Turnover Rates	Logging	Mill	Forestry Services
Average	12.1%	32.9%	6.2%
Median	7.3%	19.6%	6.2%

What is perhaps more relevant for this project is why workers leave or get fired. Not all firms have data or recollections on hand as to why people leave or get fired. Only one manager interviewed pulled out a report on the firm that showed not only who left but why they were fired or quit. Some had strong recollections for particular individuals such as one fellow who “Got shot on 4th of July” and never came back. Another owner was amazed that one of his better workers left because he “Followed girlfriend.”

Listed below are some summary sample reasons for fires and quits in the survey. More workers quit than were fired. From the author’s view, it took some severe reasons to fire workers when workers were scarce, while workers quit for reasons of pay, working conditions, and their lifestyle choices. The survey tried to determine if workers left the sector after termination and data is sketchy. However, more people who were fired stayed in the sector, while those who quit went to other sector work.

Reasons for Firing

depression, alcohol
 Failed drug test
 overcharging hours & poor equipment maintenance
 Wrecked trucks (2)
 Fired chokersetter
 Incapable of performing
 Fired = behavior or unreliability
 Dishonesty
 Drug issues; work ethics

Reasons for Quitting

Better Wages (11)
 Hard physical work; left sector (7) eg, tired of hours and working conditions, & Quit = disillusioned by working conditions & physical Labor Required
 Didn't want to commute
 Went to jobs in oil fields
 Work - life balance
 Living Location; less demanding job

Follow up Surveys: Employers were asked for names and locations of some job leavers for more detailed interviews if possible. It seems that few employers follow workers who quit or get fired, but several names were provided, including a logging contractor who sold out his business. A few vignettes of the job leavers and job stayers are below.

Woods Boss with over 20 years experience left to work as contract excavator operator in construction. Reasons were: mill closures, shortage of timber, pay same as 20 years ago, and competition with Canada. Wouldn't advise high school students to take the job but he didn't want to quit logging and start over. Now paid 30% better for less work hours.

35-Year Old Trucker sold his truck in 2005 because he could not get enough of a season to cover costs. From 1996-2004, his seasons were 8, 11, 7, 9, 10.5 months. While truck rates seemed high to him, he had high insurance, fuel, maintenance that ate up money and no health benefits. Would advise high schoolers to get into construction to make money and not get killed. He sees logging as a dying industry with USFS tied to environmentalism. He is now well paid as a mechanic in the oil/gas industry.

Logging Equipment Operator with 18 years experience loved his job, the work and the people, but he could not make a living at it. He was working away from home for 6 months logging, living in a camp trailer, paying his own per diem and the season was getting shorter. He tells young people not to go into the business. He left and started out in Construction at \$15/hour with benefits and made more the first year than he ever made logging. He thinks N. Idaho needs USFS cutting because the wood there is wasted while the private ground is overcut. Mills turn loggers on and off like a light switch.

Successful Logging Contractor sold out after running the family business for ten years. He had real trouble finding workers even though he paid competitively. “Wages in town are too much and nobody wants to physically work.” He was told by mill owners he paid too much to his workers. One procurement forester didn’t like to hear that his chokersetters were paid more than his forester’s salary. His own sons won’t go into the business, and he tells high schoolers to do something else. He was always afraid of having the bad accident on his crew. His comparison was to school teachers who are paid \$250 per day with employee benefits while loggers work 14 hours for that much and have no health insurance. At 48, he can do other things and live off his business sale because his equipment was new.

After hearing about job leavers, the question came up... Why Stay?

Log Loader Operator has been at it since 1980 and was asked why he continued. He responded that it was “the only thing to do. Not much else around. Not much else for me to do.” He was once badly burned and off for two months without pay. He tells young people to do something else and don’t come into this work if you don’t like working in weather. He likes his time off from his 11.5 month typical season.

Equipment Operator of 58 years has spent 40 years in the woods running every type of machine. He says he stays because “it’s what’s available locally. Doesn’t farm. This pays more than farming.” He tells high school students to learn how to run equipment if they want to work out here but “there’s not much future in it.”

Commentary: From the author’s personal experience, there are people who love working in logging, trucking, forestry services and sawmilling. However, this sample showed little of that loyalty or commitment to the industry. Rural communities have limited options and may capture some youthful workers but all over the world, mobile societies allow young workers to leave their origins for better opportunities. A major effort at job re-design to reduce negatives in the work itself and better pay/benefits are needed just to retain workers. Perhaps more documentation is needed on why people stay from a positive perspective, eg, controlling your own work, challenging work, good camaraderie, etc.

Challenges & Obstacles

The two questions below in the survey were designed to gather different sorts of information. The significant challenges question was to get general problems identified while the biggest obstacle question was to get a specific roadblock named. Respondents did not make such a distinction and thus responses from the two questions are grouped together.

What are your most significant challenges in hiring qualified workers for your firm?
What are the biggest obstacles to hiring employees for your kind of business?

Nineteen ss saw challenges and obstacles for new workers dealing with the work conditions and physical workloads in the sector. Logging and forestry services work are difficult in harsh environments. Mill workers have shift work to contend with and physical demands as well. Truckers and all in the sector have long hours of work at early morning starts. Working alone in remote locations was also identified. New workers seem to have different expectations for the work environment.

Eighteen ss addressed the issues of “work ethics” for new workers. New workers seem less willing to work long hours to get the job done. Attendance was raised in this section along with three others separately. The loss of “farm kids” as potential sector employees was raised several times. The issue of “work ethics” generally describes the nature of the Generation Y (or Why?) employment pool. Young workers have not demonstrated that they know how to work.

Eighteen respondents saw the size or location of the potential employment pool as problems. Small rural communities have limited young people available for work and many leave the communities for better opportunities. Some reported difficulties in attracting new workers to such communities with housing, schools, and spousal work opportunities mentioned. Some did see local knowledge of workers as being positive as they knew who they were hiring from past experience, eg sports, summer work, etc.

Sixteen ss pointed to pay and benefits as limiting their opportunities for hiring. All sub-sectors faced competition for pay from construction, services, freight hauling, and mining. Knowledge about relative entry level pay seemed to be missing from respondents. They felt they could not compete.

Sixteen in the sector had difficulty finding trained or qualified workers. Loggers could not find machine operators; mills lacked workers in trades and crafts; truckers left trucks idle for lack of drivers; and forest managers were dissatisfied with graduates. The many unsolicited negatives for university graduates was surprising as employers described education lacking in basic forestry subjects and field skills needed to do entry jobs. One employer hires graduates at sub-professional levels until they acquire subject knowledge and pass exams to be in the professional pay levels.

Fourteen ss pointed to problems with knowledge of the forest industry and its image. New applicants had no knowledge of what the loggers, mills, truckers, etc do in society. They had misinformation that needed to be corrected before they were hired.

Nine respondents gave the term “competition” to challenges and obstacles. Not all were related to pay issues but also to the kind of work being done and the work environment. New workers seem to see working in offices and service work as preferable to forestry and mill work.

Five ss described specific problems of the new younger workers. How to find them, where to recruit, how to train them and how to communicate with them were concerns.

Five respondents raised issues about recruiting worker who do not use drugs. One mill volunteered that 50% failed the employment drug test. Many folks don’t even bother to apply when they see a drug test is required.

Other responses were fewer:

- (2) Some firms just poach experienced workers from other firms
- (2) Lack of training within firms so advancement possibility deters applicants
- Lack of a career ladder not appealing
- H2B Visa doesn’t work anymore in forestry services

Rural Communities

A number of responses in the interviews touched on the special nature of rural communities in Idaho. Certainly, the influence of these communities on the forestry sector workforce can be both positive and negative. Some influences include:

- Small communities have only a limited number of potential work applicants (the pool) and many young people seek to leave the area once through high school
- Almost everyone knows everyone else in small communities and potential workers are known quantities that forestry employers may have followed through sports, community activities and so forth
- Small rural communities may lack the schools, health facilities, and commercial amenities for families and job opportunities for spouses.
- Small rural communities offer an outdoor lifestyle of clean living, beautiful surroundings and recreational opportunities
- The rural beauty and recreation can give rise to inflated housing prices by non-residents to such an extent that middle-class workers cannot afford homes in their communities
- Public land ownership in Idaho is so extensive that local communities and their needs may only occupy a small portion of the landscape with land use decisions made elsewhere or by legal wrangling at a national scale
- Small rural communities may be entirely dependent on a mill or forestry sector activities and suffer harshly in economic downturns
- Small rural communities generally support their citizens and could be helpful in workforce improvement efforts.

In any improvement effort for the forestry sector workforce, the special nature of small rural Idaho communities may need to be taken into consideration with strengths reinforced and negatives minimized.

The Sector Future is in Doubt—for Everyone???

If anyone were to talk with as many forestry sector folks as the author did in the interviews, they would come away with the impression that doubt and uncertainty are pervasive in the industry. Few subjects spoke with any optimism about the future and most could more easily describe the problems than generate potential solutions. Many spoke with a determined, stoic viewpoint that bad times have come and gone before and they will try to stick it out. The line from a Logger song, “It just don’t get any better than this, but then again, it can’t get a whole lot worse” (Craig & Terry, Snag Fallers Ball album) was about as strong of a positive view encountered.

Surprisingly, the negative outlook ran from the top of the industry leaders to those operators working on their last contract for the season. Those surveyed from outside the forest industry had as much a negative view as insiders. The terms subjects used to describe their own sector future were the same as those used in negative press descriptors such as: Dying industry, Declining industry, Sunset industry, Mature industry, industry in a Survival Mode, and an industry with no future. Data in the survey questions regarding recent past employment trends and future expectations confirm that most firms have lost workers and are not expanding employment (questions 11. & 12. Appendix 1).

By comparison with other industry sectors in Idaho and across the United States, a more complete description would be that industry sectors are constantly changing. High tech and dot.com industries were once booming and then fell off; housing and construction were sky high and now are retreating (pulling wood products with them); mining was at a low level and now has rebounded; agriculture prices were so low that farms were left fallow and now prices are skyrocketing; and the message is that all sectors change. Fundamental characteristics for a forestry sector in Idaho are promising and could be even better with overall economic growth and specialty markets like biomass energy. Forest lands can produce multiple products and amenities that society needs and workers are needed to bring those benefits to society. Over-exuberant optimists can be just plain annoying and not credible, but the forestry sector could use some positive views that provide a basis for future employees.

Generation Gap

The Overview document raised the issue of the Generation Gap between managers and workers and the Survey confirmed a large divide. Many ss identified what they termed a lack of a “work ethic” found in younger employees. Some employers were generally baffled by how younger workers think about the jobs they offer and their responsibilities to the company. In some cases, the employee’s apparent reason for quitting shows the differences over views of the work environment. A few employers spoke positively about specific individual younger workers, but as a group, forestry employers saw younger workers quite different than themselves.

Two related questions from the survey can be considered together to provide insights on the differences. They are:

29. What is the biggest skill gap for workers coming into your field?
30. What is the biggest problem you think workers have starting to work in your business?

On one side, employers were asked to identify skill gaps of workers and then on the other side, are asked to put themselves in the place of workers starting in their business to list problems they face. From doing the surveys and interviews, it was apparent that many employers had not thought about these questions. A number of ss were slow to respond or gave a first response of “good question,” “can’t say,” “no idea,” “don’t know,” and so forth. These responses were more prevalent for the employers who had some difficulty putting themselves into the place of a new worker entering their business. The generation gap may be involved as work expectations for employers and new workers are likely to be different on that basis alone.

Considering all employer subsectors, the common skill gaps for workers coming into the forestry businesses were:

- Forestry knowledge and skills relating to tree species, forestry technical knowledge of soils, silviculture, logging/forest operations, and the physical skills of working in the woods.
- Technical skills like computers, math, electrical, mechanical, general mill operations, machinery operations, and maintenance
- Communications skills in writing, speaking, working in teams, talking to employers, etc
- Not skills but attitudes often mentioned: work ethics, not willing to work hard, won’t show up for work.

The issue of work ethics and generational differences about hard work were raised in responses to a number of other questions in the survey. See Appendix 2 for the responses to the challenges and obstacles faced by employers.

Common problems that employers thought new workers faced coming in to all subsectors:

- Work environment: Physical work, heavy workloads, long hours, shift work, away from home and family, outdoor work, weather, etc
- Understanding the way the industry works: What to expect in the job, how logging and milling work, seasonal work, layoffs, production emphasis, & how communications work
- Wages, compensation, pay, seasonal work, housing affordability, & rural community limits

More responses are outlined for the two questions above in Appendix 2. Two ideas are suggested by the pattern of responses. First, more detailed information about what skill sets are needed by each of the subsectors might be needed. A job/task analysis for entry level jobs or common tasks could be useful for guiding training within firms and with institutions.

The other idea is that employers may have difficulty understanding the problems faced by new employees coming into the business. It seems right to directly ask that question of new employees and cross check responses with what employers think. Congruent thinking might be the basis for improving employer/worker understanding.

A number of studies, observations, and educational programs about the “generation y or generation why” could help forestry sector leaders better understand the future workers (www.GenerationWhy.com).

Technology—Perceptions and Gaps

One of the largest misconceptions of the forestry sector is that it is part of the “old economy” which implies it is not part of the “new economy” using the latest technologies or computers. Nothing could be further from the true reality. In fact, some employers seek potential employees who are familiar with computers and even “games” that require eye-hand coordination and knowing how computer programs work.

In the survey, logging ss were asked to estimate the percentage of their operations that were manual versus mechanized (workers using hand tools versus operating machines). Of the sixteen loggers surveyed, thirteen were mechanized (average ~80%) and five of those were 100% mechanized. The mechanized operations worked 10.25 months and the median number of crews was three with four workers per crew. The part of the logging operations that were not mechanized were cable logging operations which involves heavy manual work for part of the crew, but the rest of the crew operates machines to support the yarding.

A recent trade journal featured a pilot for a Scandinavian airline who earlier in his career was a forestry machine operator. His comparison is significant:

“It’s often claimed that a harvester operator makes more decisions per unit of time than an aircraft pilot. ‘Definitely. A harvester and an airplane also have more similarities than you’d first think,’ says pilot and former harvester operator Patrik Gustavsson” (Valmet, Just Forest, 1-2007)

These are the same type of machines used by loggers in Idaho! Some logging ss spoke of seeking new machine operators from applicants who were familiar with video games and computers—skills that might transfer to operating sophisticated harvesting machines. Loggers themselves accept and recognize the technology demands but the pervasive view of others in society is stuck in the past perceptions of logging work.

While some small, older mills may not have as high a level of electronic skills demanded of their workers as large, modern mills, sawmills need skilled workers. Entry level jobs may be in cleanup and lumber handling, but machines in mill operations centers are often computer controlled and operators must use process control logic to run and maintain equipment. On-the-job training in mills is often by machine vendors, and the electronics and millwright trades demand extensive high tech training.

Some forestry services work is heavy manual work like tree planting, pre-commercial thinning, and fire fighting. Yet, much of the work requires use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), map reading, surveying, use of hand-held computers, and operating heavy equipment. The fire fighting system requires extensive training before workers are allowed on the firelines or to conduct prescribed burning. As workers advance, the skill requirements increase.

Driving and maintaining modern log trucks requires skills and abilities somewhat different from the past. New trucks are full of electronics to control engines, transmissions and even tire pressures. Fleet operations need well-trained mechanics to keep trucks running and owner-operators must do it all themselves!

In general, there is a technology demand for forestry sector work that is under-appreciated by nearly everyone other than those directly involved.

High Schools

In the survey, the question: “Thinking about all of the ways to attract and retain workers to the Timber workforce, what one approach should be implemented as soon as possible?” resulted in the most-mentioned response was to work with high schools. In the numerical preferences for improvements, the idea to “work with high school counselors” was the most highly supported idea by individuals, firms and the sector. Other educational approaches were also mentioned.

Fifteen ss said it would be best to start with the High School Guidance Counselors which is consistent with the numerical responses earlier to what the sector would support. Education other than high school received five responses indicating the need to get to kids earlier. Vocational education at high school and community college received four preferences. Two would like work done with the universities to start with future foresters.

Many industry employers talked strongly against the advice from high school counselors to “go to college” for nearly all high school students. They argued that not everyone is suited to college and good lives can be made from careers that don’t involve college degrees. In more than one case, logging and forestry employers attempted to work with high school career counselors and were either re-buffed or not treated well in the process. Several ss were disappointed with what their own children were told at school about their industry and the potential careers there.

Experience in many high schools shows high school guidance counselors are most familiar with college bound options and they tend to push most students in that direction. Some programs that give non-college career options have been instituted, and only a carefully crafted effort for forestry sector career options might be successful. One ss employer is working to start a “technical high school” to cater to students interested in non-college career and life preparation.

Professionalism of Workers not Just Pay

An earlier theme emphasized that pay (including benefits) is a major issue for improving the sector’s ability to recruit and retain workers. The survey responses also emphasized that pay itself was not enough but that the image of workers in the sector was also critical. The treatment of each other within the sector was also raised by survey subjects:

- Will take a concerted cooperative effort, must work together to re=energize image of industry to good citizen
- Image of going out of business
- We have to be a more consistent industry; declining industry for decades; can't find security -- going to struggle
- Would not encourage my children to go into industry
- Need more working together with mills.
- Adversary relation with mills.
- Mill at the head -- the cost of doing business
- State patrol weighmasters treat drivers like dogs

There was a feeling that even within the sector itself there was little understanding of how the businesses of logging, trucking, forestry services and sawmilling were organized. Loggers and

mills don't understand each other, loggers don't understand truckers, and forestry services are an afterthought.

A renewed effort at asserting the professionalism of the forestry sector workforce is overdue. Starting within the sector itself, efforts to reinforce the professionalism of workers is needed:

- Loggers are “applied ecologists” treating the forest for society!
- Millworkers are “production technologists” in high tech factories!
- Forestry services workers protect the forest, renew/regenerate the forest and tend the forest!

Engaging the forestry sector workforce to serve as spokespersons for the entire sector has been undertaken in some respects. However, starting with a positive image of themselves, workers can better speak to neighbors, friends and everyone about their role in a crucial industry.

Subjects Speak Out

In two questions in the survey, participants were able to give open responses:

57. Thinking about all of the ways to attract and retain workers to the Timber workforce, what one approach should be implemented as soon as possible?

That's the last of our questions. Do you have any additional comments, or questions about the study?

Appendices 5 and 6 provide greater detail on what ss thought on these issues.

Several general comments are useful here for readers.

General Comments

Questions broad

I am happy somebody is taking initiative to deal with problems before it is too late

We are in dire need for moving this forward.

Do what it takes to get it done

Covered them - operators; also trucking needs, all operators

No, Happy somebody is doing this

Tough things to overcome

Glad you are doing it!

Serious issues

This survey is in a tough market

This study is important for workers, logging contractors looking for results.

So little thinking beyond 10 minutes from now; High quality thoughts mapping future of workforce is nil

These comments suggest strong support for the survey and even for the overall Idaho Timber Workforce Improvement Project. Expectations are high for some effective improvement efforts.

Towards Improvement (NO GUARANTEES)

The purpose of the workforce improvement project is to first understand the issues, hear from sector leaders, consider some improvement options and then galvanize the sector into some cooperative actions. What kinds of improvements are suggested by the project thus far?

From the author's perspective, a dialogue with industry leaders at the Summit (May 13th) is needed to further identify viable improvement options. There are no magic bullets and unfortunately there are **NO GUARANTEES** of success.

The list below identifies some concepts that merit further development for workforce improvement efforts. Granted they need further elaboration and development but only serve as a starting point for discussions.

- **Maintain knowledge in aging workforce—reduce workloads, consider pay differentials to retain older workers**
- **Address stability issue – forestry is a changing industry not a dying industry**
- **Set up structure to make improvements—Idaho Action Planning Committee**
- **Find permanent funding source—cents per hour charge?, self assessments, start with foundation funds?, others?**
- **Involve individual workers—Provide individuals with \$200 individual improvement account as a tax credit, index to inflation, 10 year for sunset, approve actions**
- **Emphasize technology in logging, forestry services, trucking, mills, ---show it!!!**
- **High school counselors? Get from their perspective! What do they get from College recruiters?, show Beyond Corvallis High School example**
- **Consider paid summer camp for forestry sector to get students involved, like in Construction. May need to start earlier as in Jr. High, eg grades 6-9 before HS counselors go negative**
- **Review training from on-the-job approaches to institutional and apprenticeship concepts**
- **Consider workers compensation offset for workers in training when they are exposed less to job hazards because they are under direct supervision as a means to stimulate training**
- **Work with state labor economists to educate them on the sector. They tend to reinforce the stereotypes.**
- **Image and media (tv, radio, web) approaches on the forestry sector and workforce opportunities**
- **Work design for a new generation of workers (work hours, week, schedules, advancement, etc)**
- **Engage a task force to look at the issue of “season length” in the forestry sector**
- **Consider more detailed interviews with young forestry sector “job leavers” and “job stayers”**
- **What are options for providing “benefits” to those forestry workers not covered?**
- **Discussion of who are the “players” in workforce issues: individuals, firms, associations, government (federal, state, county, local), non-profit organizations, foundations, and so forth**

A more complete “menu” of options is needed for consideration. All of the above need more details but should at least begin discussions.

Concluding Remarks

This Report has commented on many but not all of the issues raised in the Survey. A number of survey questions provided more detailed information than what is shown in the Summary of Survey Appendix 1. For example, the issue of training within the various subsectors is covered in four survey questions and more fully outlined in Appendix 3. A review of the 1 to 5 responses to ideas for improvement is helpful to see how different subsectors view support. The responses show differences between how individuals, firms and the sector view support for improvements. The issue of H2B Visas for foreign workers is interesting as well (covered in Appendix 1.)

Readers are directed to Appendices 5 and 6 to review the open-ended commentaries provided by survey participants on topics of what should be done first and their additional comments. Surprisingly, a number of survey subjects took the opportunity for commentary to express their dissatisfaction with university education of foresters. Not only were technical and field knowledge lacking in new employees but working relationships with universities in the region were unsatisfactory.

The Idaho Timber Workforce Improvement Project has now completed the issues Overview, a Survey of sector leaders, and a summary Report. What remains is the Summit. How can readers participate in the Summit effectively? The Summit is designed for participants to bring forestry workforce issues for discussion, suggest improvement efforts, evaluate ways to make improvements and to commit to a path of action for the Idaho Timber Workforce. The Summit details are below:

Tuesday, May 13, 2008
Red Lion Templin’s Hotel
414 East 1st Avenue
Post Falls, Idaho

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Interested readers who wish to participate in the Summit may complete the registration form attached as a separate document.

Appendices

All Survey Summary Idaho Timber Workforce

Subject ID Number: **60** subjects

Date/time: **_** Dec 11, 07 to Feb 19, 08

Location/phone: **_** 8 face to face & remainder phone

Average survey took 48 minutes, min 24, max 91

Please provide your contact information below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime telephone: _____ Evening phone _____

Email: _____

Would you like a copy of the results of this survey in the Report when it is available?

59 Yes **1** No

Would you like to be invited to the Summit on May 13, 2008 in Post Falls?

57 Yes **3** No

1. Do you own, manage or work in an independent forestry business?

28 Own **25** Manage **7** Workers & Others

What is your occupation? **___ varies from CEO to worker**

2. In what state does most of your production take place based on volume?

Idaho, followed by Washington, then Montana

3. Please estimate your annual production for the last year.

_____ MBF and/or _____ Tons and/or _____ units _____

Logging averaged 32 MMBF

Mills averaged 150 MMBF

Forestry services acres ranged from 3,500 acres to over 1 million

One trucking firm hauled over 17 million miles and firms ranged from 9100 tons 303000 tons annually

Other industries surveyed had other metrics, eg sales volumes \$500 million annually

4. Besides your primary business do you have other businesses? **20** firms had other businesses

___ road construction ___ trucking ___ other? _____

Logging firms had rock pits, timber land, heavy hauling, trailer manufacturing, waste treatment, even mini markets & car lots

Mills had other wood processing, co-generation, land sales, and so forth

Private landowners had real estate sales,

One trucking firm also had an equipment rental outlet

How many employees are in those other businesses? **296**

5. Do you contract out any of your operations? **38** Yes No

How many employees are you contracting for or are supporting your business? **7322**

6. What is the Total Employment at your PRIMARY company site?

Logging ranged from 1 to 70 and averaged 32 with 615 total

Mills ranged from 40 to 1200 and averaged 244 with 2923 total

Forestry services ranged from 8 to 230 and averaged 84 with 335 total

Trucking ranged from 1 to 230 and averaged 88 with 263 total

How many people did your company employ in each of these primary job categories in the last year?

Woods:

608 woods workers **1418** operators **134** truck drivers **78** office workers

181 foreman/supervisors mechanics other (specify) _____

Mills:

2933 production workers **537** supervisors/managers **1056** maintenance, etc

166 office

Truckers:

209 drivers **44** maintenance/shop **5** office **3** supervisors/managers

Forestry:

420 workers **148** supervisors/managers **90** office **319** others = **machine operators & foresters**

For logging only, please estimate the percentage of the following operations, manual versus mechanized, based on your last year harvest volume.

Total = 100% **16 loggers, 13 mechanized ~80%, 5 =100% worked 10.25 months**

How many crews did your company manage in the last year? **3 median**

Average workers per crew? **4 per crew**

The part of the logging operations that were not mechanized were cable logging operations in some cases which involves heavy manual work for part of the crew, but the rest of the crew operates machines to support the yarding.

7. Do you employ any part-time workers? **26** Yes No

If so, what is the number of Full-Time-Equivalents (FTE) employed at your operation? **~149**

8. How many of your employees in the last year fell under each of the age categories?

___ 18-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60-69 ___ 70+

AGE Groups	ALL	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
all SS emp	6985	15.19%	18.01%	25.55%	30.11%	10.71%	0.43%
Sample logging		63	155	135	97	34	5
	489	12.88%	31.70%	27.61%	19.84%	6.95%	1.02%
All logging ID		160	460	480	800	400	
	2300	6.96%	20.00%	20.87%	34.78%	17.39%	0.00%
Sample mills		482	481	989	979	154	16
ALL WP ID	3101	15.54%	15.51%	31.89%	31.57%	4.97%	0.52%
Sample forestry services		246	36	22	147	7	2
	460	53.48%	7.83%	4.78%	31.96%	1.52%	0.43%
Sample trucking		9	13	54	54	130	5
	265	3.40%	4.91%	20.38%	20.38%	49.06%	1.89%
Other Industry		500	750	2000	1250	400	100
Assoc.Gen. Contractors	5000	10.00%	15.00%	40.00%	25.00%	8.00%	2.00%
Est. Machinery		15	45	210	15	15	0
	300	5.00%	15.00%	70.00%	5.00%	5.00%	0.00%

9. Do you have any “key” employees? **42** Yes No ___ What are their ages?

Subsector	Sample n	Average	Median (1/2 over/under)
All	255	48	50
Logging	62	46	45
Mill	89	49	50
Forestry Services	17	49	52
Landowners	43	50	52

10. In the last year how many months did you operate?

logging **10.13**
milling **12**
forestry
services **11**
trucking **9.67**

11. For your operation over the past 3 years has employment in the categories listed, decreased x, stayed the same y, or increased z? Response x,y,z for the number of firms responding

Woods:

5,2,0 woods workers **3,10,4** operators **4,7,4** truck drivers **1,10,2** office workers
2,9,2 foreman/supervisors **2,10,1** mechanics other (specify) _____

Mills:

4,5,6 production workers **4,8,3** supervisors/managers **4,7,4** maintenance, etc **1,10,1** office

Truckers:

0,1,1 drivers **0,2,0** maintenance/shop _____ office _____ supervisors/managers

Forestry:

2,4,5 workers **2,7,4** supervisors/managers **2,7,4** office **3,3,5** others? ***Foresters & machine operators***

12. For the next 3 years do you expect employment in the categories listed to decrease (x), stay the same (y), or increase (z) ? Response x,y,z for the number of firms responding

Woods:

5,12,0 woods workers **5,11,1** operators **4,8,2** truck drivers **3,11,2** office workers
4,9,1 foreman/supervisors **3,9,1** mechanics **0,1,1** other (specify) _____

Mills:

8,2,5 production workers **5,8,2** supervisors/managers **7,4,4** maintenance, etc **5,9,1** office

Truckers:

1,0,1 drivers **0,1,1** maintenance/shop **0,2,0** office **0,2,0** supervisors/managers

Forestry:

0,7,5 workers **0,9,4** supervisors/managers **1,9,3** office **1,8,3** others?

13. For each of the occupations, please list the number of workers who have quit/been fired in each of the categories.

Woods:

225 woods workers **258** operators **26** truck drivers **13** office workers
8 foreman/supervisors **7** mechanics _____ other (specify) _____

Mills:

605 production workers **26** supervisors/managers **58** maintenance, etc **18** office

Truckers:

10 drivers **4** maintenance/shop _____ office _____ supervisors/managers

Forestry:

42 workers **23** supervisors/managers **7** office **78** others?

What were the reasons for quitting or firing? By employee...

(if applicable, would you mind if I spoke with an employee who left your firm?)

See main text for greater detail

Average and median of firms turnover rate as % . Turnover = (quits & fires)/annual employment, as %

Turnover Rates	Logging	Mill	Forestry Services
Average	12.1%	32.9%	6.2%
Median	7.3%	19.6%	6.2%

14. For the occupations listed, please indicate the current entry level wage per hour.

Woods:

21.96 woods workers **19.36** operators **18.25** truck drivers **15.06** office workers
23.56 foreman/supervisors **18.25** mechanics _____ other (specify) _____

Mills:

13.13 production workers **24.37** supervisors/managers **19.46** maintenance, etc **12.78** office

Truckers:

22.50 drivers **14.30** maintenance/shop **10.00** office _____ supervisors/managers

Forestry:

12.76 workers **22.48** supervisors/managers **13.19** office **19.32** others? **Foresters**

15. For the categories listed, how many workers do you expect to lose to retirements in the next 3 years.

Woods:

16 woods workers **27** operators **11** truck drivers **3** office workers

10 foreman/supervisors **3** mechanics **1** other (specify) _____

Mills:

304 production workers **12** supervisors/managers **5** maintenance, etc **10** office

Truckers:

22 drivers _____ maintenance/shop _____ office _____ supervisors/managers

Forestry:

30 workers **27** supervisors/managers **14** office **34** others? **Foresters & Machine operators**

16. Does your firm have a written employee information guide? 37 Yes No

Could I get a confidential copy for comparisons? ___Yes ___No

Dr. Garland has received some examples but they have not been evaluated.

17. How many years has your company been in business? ____ years

Average firm ~51 years with median of 40 years over all firms

Respondents ranged from 1 year to over 170 years.

18. Describe your career in the forestry sector? Jobs held? How long? Your career ladder?

The typical survey subject within the forestry subsectors had a long career in the industry.

Logging ss started young and mostly worked every job in the woods at one time or another.

Trucking ss were similar and had worked in logging as well. Most mill ss started near the bottom and worked their way up to management from long careers in production.

One mill manager more recently came from another industry before working in a mill environment and another manager came into the family business from an accounting background.

Private forest owner ss had lengthy careers in the forestry field at various levels before becoming managers.

Public forest managers were similar in their forestry backgrounds to private landowners with a few agency managers coming from disciplines other than forestry.

The other industries in the survey had long experience working in their industries before reaching their current levels.

Backgrounds of the "other experts" varied widely but none could be considered inexperienced as shown by their working careers

About eleven of the ss indicated they were from a forest industry family or had ties to sector from family relationships.

19. Are career ladders apparent to workers in your company? 29 Yes No

For respondents indicating a career ladder was not apparent, they cited machine specialties or functions as the reason, eg, truck driving, mechanized harvesting equipment, etc. Some small firms indicated they had no way to train for next step although they promoted from within.

What would be a typical one?

Logging: Manual operations to various machine operation to supervisor—needed to know all jobs

Mills: Cleanup to machine center operations in various departments, quality control to supervisor to superintendent

Landowners: Field forester to division forester for larger land units & more responsibility to general land manager.

Forestry services: varied by individual pathways and initiative

20. Do you anticipate a business ownership change in the next 3 years? 16 Yes ___No

3 sale 2 retirement 3 hand over to partners/children 8 other *closures to stock ownership*

21. What is your age? ____ years

*Average age of respondents was ~53 years with half younger and half older
The age ranged from 32 to 72 years*

22. Describe your level of formal education.

*All smart & successful
2 completed grade school
23 completed high school
2 had some college or post high school training
25 were college graduates
8 held Masters degrees or graduate level education*

23. Describe what you do (is done) to assess new applicants for hiring?

In general, the larger the organization, the more involved the assessment for hiring new workers. Large mills have Human Resources departments that get involved with hiring. Public agencies have somewhat elaborate hiring processes that, in some cases, involves testing procedures. One forestry services firm used testing and skill demonstration of computer use. Small firms try to hire applicants known to them or recommended by other employees. Professional foresters were mostly hired after various interview processes and resume verification. Some firms did background checks on driving (obvious for trucking). Many firms indicated they checked background employment and references but not all mentioned checking.

A few firms required full or partial physicals by medical staff. Some mills had physicians document that applicants could physically move, bend and lift the loads the job entailed. Few logging firms made physical assessments other than a visual one—the first day on the job would likely tell.

Seventeen firms used drug testing, usually after an offer of employment had been made. Some firms used random drug testing and advertised that fact in employment offerings. One firm said the sign about drug testing posted next to the office door caused applicants to turn away from submitting applications.

*Few organizations mentioned probation periods although there may have been some specified. Thirty days to six months is common for new workers, but with workers in short supply, just keeping new workers is difficult.
The matching of new workers to jobs was not mentioned.*

24. What would you advise job seekers to do to prepare for work in your firm?

High School students

Logging and trucking firms emphasized the physical nature of the work (long hours) and mechanical abilities.

Mills talked about electrical/mechanical skills and post high school training for trades including computer controls, etc.

Forestry services and landowner organizations required degrees with technical forestry training not enviro content only. Computers and communications were also often mentioned.

A number of ss respondents would not advise students to go into the forestry sector for reasons of instability, lesser pay, work conditions, and so forth.

Some firms sought out students who were into computer games for operators, maintenance, options.

Adult Job seekers from other industries

Many ss responded that it would be the same for high school students. However, some thought the physical work would be a deterrent for entering the sector later in life.

Some mentioned that machine operation skills might be transferable and that computer knowledge would help adult workers.

One respondent noted that it would be unlikely the firm would invest as much for training in a 50 year old as in a 30 year old.

For whatever reasons, forestry sector firms did not see recruiting adult workers from other industries.

25. What are your most significant challenges in hiring qualified workers for your firm?

Appendix 2

26. What are the biggest obstacles to hiring employees for your kind of business?

Appendix 2

27. Describe the kind of training provided entry level workers in your firm?

Appendix 3

28. Describe the kind of training provided to existing workers in your firm?

Appendix 3

29. What is the biggest skill gap for workers coming into your field?

Appendix 4

30. What is the biggest problem you think workers have starting to work in your business?

Appendix4

31. What training methods are most effective for your employees?

Appendix 3

32. What new training will be needed in the future (2-5 yrs) for your employees?

Appendix 3

33. Have you ever been injured during your work? Please describe. What is the injury history of your firm?

Seventeen respondents have been injured in their work. Five ss were rather seriously injured in logging accidents. Two trucking respondents had been injured in truck accidents. Mill and forestry services injuries were less severe. One respondent from another industry had serious knee problems from work.

Nearly all organizations said their safety performance was above average. Some provided workers' compensation insurance experience modifiers below 1.0 as evidence of their records. One mill acknowledged its safety performance was below average and another indicated its incident rate was higher than average but its severity rate much lower than average.

There was overwhelming concern over safety of workers as an organization commitment.

34. Please estimate the total capital investment of your operation.

*The range was as low as \$100,000 to over \$9 billion dollars (land & timber value)
Half the respondents had capital investment less than \$6.5 million dollars and half were more
The average of such a wide range is not meaningful*

Now I am going to ask you some hypothetical questions about what you favor or support. These are just ideas or things other industries are doing with their workforces. They are not proposed actions for the forestry sector. We want to get your response to the ideas.

I ask that you respond according to a 5 point scale where the value 5 indicates you strongly favor or support, 4 means you favor or support, 3 means you are neutral about the idea, 2 means you don't favor or support the statement, and 1 means you strongly don't favor or support the idea.

Is the scale clear to you? (Repeat scale periodically to keep it in mind during phone the interview. Provide a written scale in face-to-face interviews)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Oppose or Don't Favor	Oppose Don't Favor	Neutral	Support Favor	Strongly Support or Favor

If you don't have an opinion, you can just say "no opinion"

How do you feel as an individual worker about the following ideas for attracting and keeping workers in the forestry sector?

35. Recruitment or retention payment schemes to individuals?

	Sample Size	Logging	Mill
	57	16	13
Strongly Oppose=1	4	0	1
Oppose=2	5	3	1
Neutral=3	16	2	6
Support=4	26	8	5
Strongly Support=5	6	3	0

Overall for individuals, felt appropriate to pay recruitment or retention payments. Some unions or firms did not support the idea.

36. A payment method that pays for qualifications of workers?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill
		57	16	13
Strongly Oppose=1	1	3	1	0
Oppose=2	2	5	1	1
Neutral=3	3	9	3	3
Support=4	4	17	4	4
Strongly Support=5	5	23	7	5

Larger support for pay differentials for qualifications of workers

37. Certifications for holding certain jobs?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking
		57	16	13	3
Strongly Oppose=1	1	3	1	0	0
Oppose=2	2	2	1	0	0
Neutral=3	3	14	4	3	0
Support=4	4	24	8	4	2
Strongly Support=5	5	14	2	6	1

General support or recognition that certifications are important to individual workers

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Forestry Services
		56	16	13	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	4	2	1	0
Oppose=2	2	5	1	2	0
Neutral=3	3	24	5	6	1
Support=4	4	19	8	4	1
Strongly Support=5	5	4	0	0	2

Strong statement of neutrality with some positive support for housing assistance.

38. Company assistance in dealing with housing or providing work camps?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Forestry Services
		56	16	13	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	4	2	1	0
Oppose=2	2	5	1	2	0
Neutral=3	3	24	5	6	1
Support=4	4	19	8	4	1
Strongly Support=5	5	4	0	0	2

Strong statement of neutrality with some positive support for housing assistance.

39. Improving scheduling of seasonal work to even out cyclical ups and downs that cause disruptions to operations and financial impacts?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Forestry Services
		46	16	7	3
Strongly Oppose=1	1	1	0	0	1
Oppose=2	2	3	1	2	0
Neutral=3	3	7	0	1	0
Support=4	4	11	2	3	0
Strongly Support=5	5	24	13	1	2

Fairly strong statement for individuals to improve seasonal nature of work.

How does your firm view the following ideas for attracting and keeping workers?

40. Alternative payment schemes like recruiting payments, pay for qualifications, and so forth

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill
		55	16	13
Strongly Oppose=1	1	3	0	1
Oppose=2	2	6	1	1
Neutral=3	3	17	6	6
Support=4	4	21	6	3
Strongly Support=5	5	8	3	2

More neutral positions but still strong support compared to unfavorable views.

41. The firm outlining a career ladder for employees?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill
		56	16	13
Strongly Oppose=1	1	1	0	1
Oppose=2	2	6	3	0
Neutral=3	3	16	6	5
Support=4	4	26	6	5
Strongly Support=5	5	7	1	2

Strong third at neutrality but majority favorable with fewer unfavorable positions.

42. The firm's supervisors providing employee career planning and guidance?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill
		56	16	13
Strongly Oppose=1	1	2	0	1
Oppose=2	2	4	1	1
Neutral=3	3	11	4	2
Support=4	4	28	9	7
Strongly Support=5	5	11	2	2

Strong favorable for the firms' supervisors to do what they may not know how to do.

43. Providing benefits- health insurance, retirement plans

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking
		57	16	13	3
Strongly Oppose=1	1	1	0	0	0
Oppose=2	2	0	0	0	0
Neutral=3	3	3	1	0	0
Support=4	4	12	3	4	0
Strongly Support=5	5	41	12	9	3

Virtually all would see benefits as critical to the sectors employments.

44. Working with long term, multi-year contracts?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill
		48	16	9
Strongly Oppose=1	1	3	0	1
Oppose=2	2	3	0	1
Neutral=3	3	8	1	3
Support=4	4	10	1	3
Strongly Support=5	5	24	14	1

More neutral but mostly positive to longer term employment

45. Would your firm support a state training tax credit for employee training?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Forestry Services
		49	16	13	3
Strongly Oppose=1	1	0	0	0	0
Oppose=2	2	3	2	0	0
Neutral=3	3	7	1	1	0
Support=4	4	17	2	6	1
Strongly Support=5	5	22	11	6	2

Mostly positive support for the idea.

Trying to speak for all the firms, how do you think the collected firms in your business would view the following ideas?

46. Forming a cooperative logging training school for machine operators?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking
		54	16	12	3
Strongly Oppose=1	1	1	0	1	0
Oppose=2	2	5	1	1	0
Neutral=3	3	5	2	1	1
Support=4	4	32	11	6	1
Strongly Support=5	5	11	2	3	1

General support for idea but not unanimous for Mills & Truckers

47. Forming a trucking school for owner/operators

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking
		55	16	12	3
Strongly Oppose=1	1	3	1	1	0
Oppose=2	2	3	0	1	0
Neutral=3	3	14	3	5	2
Support=4	4	25	9	3	0
Strongly Support=5	5	10	3	2	1

Less support with more neutral and negatives than for machine operator training

48. Getting all the sawmills involved in a recruiting effort?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		56	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	5	2	1	0	1
Oppose=2	2	7	0	1	1	0
Neutral=3	3	7	1	3	0	0
Support=4	4	20	3	5	1	2
Strongly Support=5	5	17	10	3	1	1

Somewhat bimodal for moderate support with reservations by ~a third

49. Cooperating to set up an H2B Visa program to bring in foreign workers?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		56	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	15	5	3	2	3
Oppose=2	2	9	1	1	0	0
Neutral=3	3	11	2	2	1	0
Support=4	4	11	3	3	0	1
Strongly Support=5	5	10	5	4	0	0

Bimodal with more negatives than positives overall and some sectors

50. Cooperating in forestry wide approach to reach high school guidance counselors about forestry jobs?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		57	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Oppose=2	2	1	0	1	0	0
Neutral=3	3	3	2	0	0	0
Support=4	4	23	7	8	1	1
Strongly Support=5	5	29	7	4	2	2

Nearly all favorable except for one respondent who tried it and got negative responses.

51. Producing television ads to feature jobs in forestry?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		57	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Oppose=2	2	5	0	1	0	0
Neutral=3	3	6	2	3	0	0
Support=4	4	19	5	4	2	0
Strongly Support=5	5	26	9	5	1	3

Generally strong support but some questioned the economy and effectiveness.

52. Establishing targeted vocation education programs in local community colleges or institutions?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		57	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	2	1	0	0	1
Oppose=2	2	1	0	1	0	0
Neutral=3	3	2	0	1	0	0
Support=4	4	25	6	6	1	1
Strongly Support=5	5	27	9	5	2	2

Favorable responses with some singular exceptions.

53. Establishing forestry sector scholarships for worker training?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		57	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	2	1	0	0	1
Oppose=2	2	1	0	1	0	0
Neutral=3	3	9	1	3	1	0
Support=4	4	20	4	6	0	0
Strongly Support=5	5	25	10	3	2	3

Favorable with some reservations

54 Using a State tax credit for worker training/re-training?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		55	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	3	2	0	0	1
Oppose=2	2	3	0	1	2	0
Neutral=3	3	4	0	0	1	0
Support=4	4	24	3	7	0	1
Strongly Support=5	5	21	11	5	0	2

Favorable support overall with some reservations on how it would work.

55. Increased state regulations requiring all firms to increase safety and health training on the job for workers (including enforcement increases)?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		57	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	12	3	1	2	3
Oppose=2	2	10	0	5	0	0
Neutral=3	3	17	6	3	0	1
Support=4	4	14	5	3	0	0
Strongly Support=5	5	4	2	1	1	0

Negative to neutral but some see it needed

56. A compulsory assessment of cents per hour to support forest industry recruitment and training like in the Construction industry?

		Sample Size	Logging	Mill	Trucking	Forestry Services
		55	16	13	3	4
Strongly Oppose=1	1	10	1	2	1	2
Oppose=2	2	8	1	3	1	1
Neutral=3	3	18	2	3	1	1
Support=4	4	16	9	5	0	0
Strongly Support=5	5	3	3	0	0	0

Novel idea with modest support by loggers and mills but opposition as well.

FINAL

57. Thinking about all of the ways to attract and retain workers to the Timber workforce, what one approach should be implemented as soon as possible?

Appendix 5

That's the last of our questions. Do you have any additional comments, or questions about the study? Is there someone else you think we should talk to using this questionnaire?

Appendix 6

On behalf of the Associated Logging Contractors, the Intermountain Forestry Association, and the Idaho Forest Products Commission, thank you for helping with the survey.

Two questions: Similar responses

What are your most significant challenges in hiring qualified workers for your firm?
 What are the biggest obstacles to hiring employees for your kind of business?

The two questions above were designed to gather different sorts of information. The significant challenges question was to get general problems identified while the biggest obstacle question was to get a specific roadblock named. Respondents did not make such a distinction and thus responses from the two questions are grouped together.

Nineteen ss saw challenges and obstacles for new workers dealing with the work conditions and physical workloads in the sector. Logging and forestry services work are difficult in harsh environments. Mill workers have shift work to contend with and physical demands as well. Truckers and all in the sector have long hours of work at early morning starts. Working alone in remote locations was also identified. New workers seem to have different expectations for the work environment.

Eighteen ss addressed the issues of “work ethics” for new workers. New workers seem less willing to work long hours to get the job done. Attendance was raised in this section along with three others separately. The loss of “farm kids” as potential sector employees was raised several times. The issue of “work ethics” generally describes the nature of the Generation Y (or Why?) employment pool. Young workers have not demonstrated that they know how to work.

Eighteen respondents saw the size or location of the potential employment pool as problems. Small rural communities have limited young people available for work and many leave the communities for better opportunities. Some reported difficulties in attracting new workers to such communities with housing, schools, and spousal work opportunities mentioned. Some did see local knowledge of workers as being positive as they knew who they were hiring from past experience, eg sports, summer work, etc.

Sixteen ss pointed to pay and benefits as limiting their opportunities for hiring. All sub-sectors faced competition for pay from construction, services, freight hauling, and mining. Knowledge about relative entry level pay seemed to be missing from respondents. They felt they could not compete.

Sixteen in the sector had difficulty finding trained or qualified workers. Loggers could not find machine operators; mills lacked workers in trades and crafts; truckers left trucks idle for lack of drivers; and forest managers were dissatisfied with graduates. The many unsolicited negatives for university graduates was surprising as employers described education lacking in basic forestry subjects and field skills needed to do entry jobs. One employer hires graduates at sub-professional levels until they acquire subject knowledge and pass exams to be in the professional pay levels.

Fourteen ss pointed to problems with knowledge of the forest industry and its image. New applicants had no knowledge of what the loggers, mills, truckers, etc do in society. They had misinformation that needed to be corrected before they were hired.

Nine respondents gave the term “competition” to challenges and obstacles. Not all were related to pay issues but also to the kind of work being done and the work environment. New workers seem to see working in offices and service work as preferable to forestry and mill work.

Five ss described specific problems of the new younger workers. How to find them, where to recruit, how to train them and how to communicate with them were concerns.

Five respondents raised issues about recruiting worker who do not use drugs. One mill volunteered that 50% failed the employment drug test. Many folks don't even bother to apply when they see a drug test is required.

Other responses were fewer:

- (2) Some firms just poach experienced workers from other firms
- (2) Lack of training within firms so advancement possible deters applicants
- Lack of a career ladder not appealing
- H2B Visa doesn't work anymore in forestry services

Training Issues

27. Describe the kind of training provided entry level workers in your firm?
28. Describe the kind of training provided to existing workers in your firm?
31. What training methods are most effective for your employees?
32. What new training will be needed in the future (2-5 yrs) for your employees?

A series of questions relate to training issues within organizations. Two relate to the kind of training provided to entry level and existing workers, one asks about new training and the one asks about effective methods. There was some commonality for the training methods so that question is combined for all subsectors. The other questions are better answered by subsectors. A full listing of the question responses are below.

Methods

For the question, “What training methods are most effective for your employees?”, there is overwhelming preference for hands-on, on-the-job training. Thirty-two respondents indicated that was the most effective training method. Two other methods mentioned had both positive and negative comments: Vo-Tech training and Computer based (online) training. A few organizations use mentoring/shadowing approaches. Classroom training is used but not often preferred. Only one firm mentioned machine operator simulator training. Perhaps the most direct comment is most useful:

“Can't scream at them; talk/explain way you would like to learn; screaming at them doesn't work”

Logging

The training for entry level loggers is usually hands-on, work-by-me training with experienced workers or supervisors. Training in first (FA) and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) are mandated along with safety training. One firm mentioned simulator training before putting an operator on a harvesting machine. Many prefer to hire only experienced loggers.

Existing workers get FA/CPR and ID OSHA training roughly annually. A number of firms send workers to Logger Education to Advance Professionalism (LEAP) programs by Idaho Forestry Extension. Other firms send workers to programs along with processing firms to meet the certification criteria for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative or Forest Stewardship Council. Technology and new regulations are also topics for training

New training for loggers is needed on mechanized harvesting, including training on computerized controls and data handling. LEAP programs on forestry topics like disease and tree selection were mentioned. Technical training on machines and systems was needed including use of a simulator. Changes in markets, log grades, and regulations were seen as needed also.

Mills

Safety is primary for entering mill employees: FA/CPR, Lockout/Tagout (LO/TO), Haz Mat, etc. Training is provided to work in specific machine centers and many mills have Standard

Operating Procedures (SOPs) as the basis for training. Maintenance is a topic for much mill training. Mills are involved with apprentice programs for the trades like electrician, millwright, etc. Some mills identify skill sets defining training needed to work in certain areas or to advance from entry status.

Existing mill employees get training on new SOPs for changing jobs to new operating centers. They may be more involved with training provided by equipment vendors. Safety is continuously a part of training. Some of the skilled trades in mills need training for periodic (annual?) certification, eg boiler operations, electrician, grading, etc. Computer controls and electronics are part of typical mill training. Existing employees may be deeply involved in trades training using apprenticeship. One firm advances pay schedules for employees who complete specific defined skill sets.

New training for mills involves high tech process control technologies for equipment, computer applications, and mechanical processes. Some firms see a need to provide basic reading, writing and mathematics to future employees. Safety training needed continuously.

Forestry Services

Entry level workers in forestry services are both technical workers and professionals. For both groups, fire training is a detailed and complex process ranging from 2 weeks to months (20% of time) of training year round. FA/CPR are needed for field workers. Employers do job training needed to get the job done to meet quality standards. Some organizations do remedial training not accomplished at educational institutions.

Existing workers get annual training and updates for fire. Professional training is individual and centers around conferences and professional preferences.

Future needs relate to computer use for GIS, inventory, mapping, and GPS technologies. Laser and mapping were also mentioned.

Landowners

Entry level professionals for landowners may receive training needed to do a specific job. Part of the training is remedial as forestry institutions may not provide entry level field skills needed by organizations. Topics include: silviculture, surveying, cruising, field skills, etc. Training is individual and public organizations have training programs.

Existing training for foresters is largely individual based on needs and varies from Forester Forums to courses leading to certifications. Other training is related to product and land management certification, SFI, FSC, etc.

New training for landowner employees seems to be around computer technologies and organization management systems. GPS, GIS, spreadsheets and economics were mentioned.

Truckers

As entry level truckers need a commercial drivers license (CDL), training is more on woods operations, procedures and log truck maintenance.

Existing truckers get the safety training and maintenance issues on brakes, electronics, etc.

New training is usually around new equipment and new regulations by state and federal government.

What training methods are most effective for your employees?

On the job training

Actual on-the-ground with experienced person
On-the-Job training
Learn as you go, On-the-job training
One-on-one; face to face; personal, teach by example
On-the-job training work by experienced employee;
On-the-job training but each person different
On-the-Job Training
Hands on; on-the-job training, videos help
On-the-job training, classroom
30% class; 70% on-the-job training
On-the-job training with experienced operator
On-the-job training and one-on-one with supervisors
OJT Hands on
Hard to substitute experience; Hard knocks; face-to- face
On-the-job training
On-the-job training with field environment
Hands-on-training
On-the-job training steps in a ladder
Hands on
On-the-job training
Patience; on-the-job training
On-the-job training
Hands-on training
On-the-job training
Hands on
On-the-job training with experienced worker
Learn as you go; Experience
Everyone learns differently; hands on;
Working with experienced people
On-the-job training
On-the-job training

Shadowing/Mentoring

Shadowing and question and answer with experienced employee
Experienced mentor

Vo-Tech

Vo Tech programs in machinery and equipment; HR - get baseline job skills, if they lack rudimentary skills cannot train them from start
Teach voc ed classes; basic intro expectation 2 weeks -- success rate terrible; internships are terrible
Voc programs; diesel mechanics (sawmills supported it) at Rogue Community College in 1971

Classroom

Classroom, various on the job training
Mix; hands-on-training, class, mentor
Class and hands-on; principles to practice; summer camp
Get it from books ourselves
Classroom seminars OK for Forest Practices Act good for experienced employees
Log Hauling Government Regulations class
Usually, all segments of meeting

Computer based

Interactive learning; use on-line
Formal training off the forest - is web based and it sucks!
Simulator in beginning

Other Comments

Fewer skilled workers, targeted training assessment and then training specific
Varies by age bracket; cultural mindset of company; 1to1 good - group get same effects
Needs to be proper based training and true orientation
Can't scream at them; talk/explain way you would like to learn; screaming at them doesn't work
Ours seem to work
None – survival learning
Trials
Continuous updates

XX

Forestry Services Entry Level Training

Well developed training 300 days per year. Don't expect technical training for entry level, cruising, fire, schedule all inside National five certifiers for fire, jobs, wildfire & RX fires, GPS, computers, safety, FA?CPR
2 weeks formal forest wildland fire training --30 degrees C to 70 outdoors
Everything to do job - got to learn it the way I want
Basic job/techniques & safety

Forestry Services Training for Existing

Sponsor Foresters Forum; 2 days in CDA; 1-2 trainings per year by lead person
Continuous forestry and fire qualifications training or 20% year in training
Do it on the fly - available self learning, GPS
Safety, FA, chainsaws, falling

Forestry Services New Training Needed

Electronics, laser measures, GPS, GIS, Inventory plots data
Additional mapping GPS - ARC view; new electronic technology
More technical

Logging Entry Level Training

Never stick green guy over the hill without supervision from 1 to 2 weeks
Safety classes; ALC; F A; LEAP classes; CE
Safety, F & A; Basic forestry skills; trees species; mill needs; log qualities and sorts with particular job
No classroom; sit down with safety equipment; On-the-job training; shadow with experienced worker
Begin training entry level, physical labor once see what jobs are, we give opportunity to train on equipment at controlled rate; we use helpers for openings to let already employed workers try the equipment
Supervisor spends days working safely and correctly
Shop to machine; Break in with experienced operator, LEAP, seminars, safety and health
Hands on on-the-job training; safety; few hires; start on processors
FA/Safety; start with experienced person; break-in slowly; see how they work
Work by me training
Don't hire if not experienced
Ride along; trials
Supervisor -- machine training; mechanicals
Hands on with trained operators; simulators
Less; harvester guy was sent to simulator; labor up to '80's made up scale; certain people as Loader to harvester, worked up, on the job training work-by-me training; no people to do it;
Specialists with no general knowledge
Work with experienced crew

Logging Training for Existing

Let work on different machines; get experience working
Safety classes; ALC; F A; LEAP classes; Cont Ed
Annual Safety, F A; Occasional forestry LEAP classes; information on equipment, saws, etc.
Every year First Aid; for Commercial Drivers License; New machine - we learn ourselves
Occasional seminars to equipment maintenance shop, key operators, Idaho Forest Practices Act
Seminars, FPA Requirements, FA

Changing jobs employee gets on-the-job training with experience operator; Safety; First Aid
Same as 16 CFE for Professional Loggers program
Annual FA; Safety maintenance; good at what they do & new machine vendors
Don't need it -- work by example; no school for logging
Safety and FA; LEAP; logger accreditation; cover employees as qualified; take care of problems
Ongoing credits for LEAP, ID, WA; Foresters Forum; SFI; FA and Safety; SFI Loggers;
Workshops on yarding safety
FA/CPR; computers on site; vendors; job rotation
Modern machinery mechanization training; safety; FA, CPR
FA, CPR, OSHA to FSC, SFI; company training meetings; job training them; ID State FPA; &
Potlatch EMS
FA, CPR
Logging Conf in Eugene

Logging New Training Needed

Sawyers & truckers needed shortage. Willing to work hard
Processor operation
Keep updating on market changes, log sorts
Training in dangle head processors; Training in cable system engineering - skyline logging
Technical equipment training with mechanized harvesting, electronics
Chainsaw operations; Equipment operations; people experienced on different types not available
LEAP - Chris Schreff - Insect and disease to take diseased trees, sunscalds, thin lightly; operator
training with new techniques, mostly clear cuts now; Send to tong throwing classes in McCall;
Adapt to new computerized machines
Technology changing to mechanized
I don't see it
More rules regulations on the ground for timber harvesting
Can't get most out of machine; production not enough
Mechanics of machines
Simulator; forestry - harvester select
Progression to train on general jobs
No training involved; do it or you don't

Mill Entry Level Training

Course on safety, dangers, equipment hazards; minimum skill sets needed; placement on-the-job
training thereafter with experienced person supervising
Entry, orientation, learn trade, make training available
Safety everyone; on-the-job training for function, skill sets; classes for mill operations
Start safety and work conditions; how to do job; got handbook; job tasks e.g. clean up/labor
SOP's for each job.
2 day orientation -- general; PPE, safety, Haz Mat; fire training; spills; Job specific working on-
the-job training
8 hours safety before work; on the job training with experienced person
Orientation; sample tasks; on the job training as they perform

Safety, on-the-job training with experienced worker
Everything needed, safety, hands on, Lockout/Tagout (LO/TO); all needed for job
Lot of machine training and rolling stock
Varies by location; orientation, extensive safety; FA/CPR; LO/TO, job itself, safer job; SOP's; writing; on-the-job training thereafter
FA; Safety; Orientation; on-the-job training for machine center with mechanics maintenance
Entry, orientation, learn trade, make training available

Mill Training for Existing

Not specific; various seminars, supervisors, techniques, education
Non-union-- learn more skill sets gets more pay, need at least 2 skill sets; training for more classes
SOP's for each job; skill trade for advanced training like hydraulic, plc (process logic control) for electricians to vendor training
Varies to annual certification current rules, safety; maintenance; vendor training;
Mainly maintenance go to hydraulics seminars, vendors; rest in-house - provide electrician apprenticeship
Work with experienced person on machine center; share job with experienced maintenance
Learning computers; handling lumber; work safety; new equipment
Annual refreshers; electric maintenance, Planer, Boiler, books and programs by operator
Advancement training on new equipment and different areas of mill
12 months of topics; 1/2 OSHA CPR/FA special for positions; paid education for main workers -
- support BS and MS degrees
Safety and process; vendor training formal underway

Mill New Training Needed

Mechanical; having knowledge and interest to perform -- no programs to get skills; part time no prep avoid
Biggest area is getting young people into lumber electronics
Improve process - newsprint technology for raw materials, continuous improvement
Same skill trades, control systems; pneumatics, working with people, shift work
Completed high tech sawmill - new high tech optimization and computers on machines
Do more training in skill areas, electrical
No organized training
Most equipment computerized; learn programming; reading and writing; basic counting
Computer training and automation
Technical training in mechanical; filing; maintenance
Continue electronics in manufacturing mechanical to electronics - work together
Safety ongoing; skills training on basic maintenance to crafts training; supervisor

Landowner Entry Level Training

Individual basis - 1-2 training sessions which gives a guide to their weakness; SFI training, FA

Fire Basic Training - Qualifications couple years future training; experience on fires needed; Silviculture, dendrology, geology, watershed, habitat typing USFS
Depends how they come in -- Full time into job and perform; on-the-job training; students get formal process plan and are sent for training
Resource side little, look for skilled and experienced
Depends on job; trained to death especially fire; mandatory FA, CPR, driving, civil; hiring students for college students
Entry on-the-job-training with team cruising, surveying, contract administration, contract enforcement, getting what is paid for
Internal training for company systems; GIS; continuing education
Development plan for employers SCEP series; grounding in forestry 40 hours to 80 hours; more specific task - don't have field knowledge, we have to refine skills they have no field skills
Hit the ground running - HR stuff, computers; work with experienced to get familiar with area

Landowner Training for Existing

Same as entry approach based on their interest
Senior forester lists; supervisors skills series; continual updates or skills, reforestation work
Not formal plans; provides continuous through internet; technical training expected to be current
Resource - scalers - professionals take classes on site check scalers; standardized safety; FA
Depends on duties and point of career; 40 hours for current proficiencies, NEFE union career enhancement training
Existing - courses around forestry financial analysis; silviculture management and planning, SFI training
Continuing education
Type of work demanded
Work with experienced to get familiar; limited in-house; external per needs expressed; stewardship contracts; foresters forum

Landowner New Training Needed

Always need new skills SFI; certification, etc.;
Harvest planning needs; 14 hours needed for harvest planning and economics, endowment planning, business, lot of training
Computer technologies; losing support personnel; do our own administration
Re-doing log accounting computers
Dramatic administrative change; employees do own payroll, withholding
Refinements of GPS; computer spreadsheets analyses; software planning scheduling
Initiate supervisory people skills; negotiation
Not sure; current technologies
GPS, GIS, Inventory

Trucking Entry Level Training

Ride along; CDL trained; log truck training, how whole operation works, woods etiquette, minor maintenance

Start with driving training then put in truck; put effort into people

Trucking Training for Experienced

Safety training and meetings; on-the-job training

Electronics, motors, brakes, batteries, safety training; wheel seals -- all the time

Trucking New Training Needed

Stay the same -- technical advances

Deal with law enforcement needs training;

Government Department of Transportation Regulations and Training

Two related questions from the survey can be considered together. They are:

29. What is the biggest skill gap for workers coming into your field?
30. What is the biggest problem you think workers have starting to work in your business?

On one side, employers were asked to identify skill gaps of workers and then on the other side are asked to put themselves in the place of workers starting in their business to list problems they face. From doing the surveys and interviews, it was apparent that many employers had not thought about these questions. A number of ss were slow to respond or gave a first response of “good question,” “can’t say,” “no idea,” “can’t say,” and so forth. These responses were more prevalent for the employers who had some difficulty putting themselves into the place of a new worker entering their business. The generation gap may be involved as work expectations for employers and new workers are likely to be different on that basis alone.

Considering all employer subsectors, the common skill gaps for workers coming into the forestry businesses were:

- Forestry knowledge and skills relating to tree species, forestry technical knowledge of soils, silviculture, logging/forest operations, and the physical skills of working in the woods.
- Technical skills like computers, math, electrical, mechanical, general mill operations, machinery operations, and maintenance
- Communications skills in writing, speaking, working in teams, talking to employer, etc
- Not skills but attitudes often mentioned: work ethics, not willing to work hard, won’t show up for work.

Common problems that employers thought new workers faced coming in to all subsectors:

- Work environment: Physical work, heavy workloads, long hours, shift work, away from home and family, outdoor work, weather, etc
- Understanding the way the industry works: What to expect in the job, how logging and milling work, seasonal work, layoffs, production emphasis, & how communications work
- Wages, compensation, pay, seasonal work, housing affordability, & rural community limits

Two ideas are suggested by the pattern of responses. First, more detailed information about what skill sets are needed by each of the subsectors might be needed. A job/task analysis for entry level jobs or common tasks could be useful for guiding training within firms and with institutions. At a minimum, forestry institutions should be given feedback suggested by respondents.

The other idea is that employers may have difficulty understanding the problems faced by new employees coming into the business. It seems right to directly ask that question of new employees and cross check responses with what employers think. Congruent thinking might be the basis for improving employer/worker understanding.

29. Biggest skill gap & 30 problems you think workers face

For the Forestry Services Sector, the biggest skill gaps are:

Environmental Science degree provides no plant identification, tree measurements, roads/harvesting, silviculture, measurement techniques, etc.

Forestry - chainsaw 1-2 years to be put on logging; drugs/competent

Technical forestry; 4 year graduates do not know anything technical

Mechanical skills for firefighters, pumps. no agriculture backgrounds, not now -- urban workers; not mechanics

For the Forestry Services Sector, the biggest problem seen by employers facing workers is:

Steep learning curve -- so much to learn so fast

Being away from home; migratory lifestyle

Physical - take care of yourself; learning on the fly

Future advancement of firefighting techniques and bring low wages up to other fields

For the logging sector, the biggest skill gaps are:

Work ethic -- problem solving; looking ahead and getting around problems

Timber fallers with experience; processor operators

Communications. Problems with dropped ball with what should be done, one to another

Inexperienced operators or drivers just want the job; they come without work ethic and don't show up to work in bad weather

Don't notice it; recognizing tree species

Younger generation had parents don't go to woods, get education and don't stay in timber; 4th-5th generation

Don't hire young guys -- we operate machines

Handle heavy equipment

Rather train than get bad habits; community college worthless instructors not good

Fit job to workers

Think the way I did, mechanical skills; maintenance

No problem

Lack communications with other employees, no teams - individuals; goes to parenting failures

No so much skills as "attitude" - kids not interested in working hard jobs

We train them up - cannot hire skilled

For the logging sector, the biggest problem seen by employers facing workers is:

Physical workload; verbal abuse. Didn't want verbal training.

That full time work equals 9 months

Understanding boss's expectations

Concerned about wage and season length of benefits
Getting up in the morning -- long hours
Not stable; \$15 - \$22 + pickup + insurance; no cost of living, 401K; no increase in pay; 5 week shut down; too many contractors; timber people could help stability
Seasonal work 8-9 months
Fighting elements and workloads
Long hours, work away from home; heavy workload; married life
Adapting to stringent policies - high bar- 18 year employees versus new ideas; work as a team
No enough salary
Good question. Communications?
Job different than appears; difficult, long hours; burn out; commuting
Is he going to give area chance to show capability
Kids not dumb or lazy

For the Mill Sector, the biggest skill gaps are:

Computer skills needed
Mechanical and electrical skills
A real issue to get young people into the industry; atrocious job to get people excited; no communication with outside forces; need better promotion of industry; need private industry broker between mill and FP; in it together and need pride
Trying to hire electrician; work ethic, millwrights
Young kids haven't a clue about 8 hours of work
Math skills; writing
Knowledge of timber industry skills; never done any thing physical like farm kids do
Good question -- 80% never had industrial experience - only manual labor
Computers
Technology skill gap; changing expectations; don't have to work way up; lost touch with reality
Technical analysis skills
No so much skills as "attitude" - kids not interested in working hard jobs

For the Mill Sector, the biggest problem seen by employers facing workers is:

Workers face physical labor and hours not 8-5 -- shift work -- odd hours
Tough to answer. Don't know
Can't say; mature business, long term viability; newest facility
Adjusting to shift work; working overtime
Sawmill pays more; shift work; planer; social workers
Fairly physical hands on; working hard
Good question! Want to ask manager; not well what people thinking; not there
Not making enough money; lots of equipment safety
Being in a production facility -- being on time - no time clock
Understanding industry; wood grades; working safely
Our expectations are greater than their own.
Good question; education doesn't match job requirements; no experience

Boring work for them; laborious, tedious, repetitive versus games they are taught through school;
Parents tell kids cannot work in mills

For the Trucking sector the biggest skill gaps are:

People not safe around equipment
Drivers -- some don't get it; cannot react
Knowledge about logging; how it is done

For the Trucking sector, the biggest problem seen by employers facing workers is:

Short work season
No idea! How industry works versus on the road driving
Don't have problems if they listen; forever try to help people

For the forest landowner sector the biggest skill gaps are:

Supervision and communications skills; ITR skills - need basics of woods work; glaring weakness in finding forestry skills
Basic information on how trees grow!; soils, trees, genetics
Timber sale layout and logging systems
Young lack of Natural Resource experience - come from urban backgrounds; no woods skills
Resource scaling end missing; no pool
Good computer; GIS skills for managers
Entry level don't know field experience through summer jobs
No - great luck
Lack of field skills - foresters; NEPA Act procedures – encumbering (difficult??) to write anything
Woods skills - field work

For the forest landowner sector, the biggest problem seen by employers facing workers is:

Too high expectations for fast track; want to go up high on the ladder versus perform over time
Knowing what they need to know; skills that are needed eg economics, soils
Lack of experience and field work
Can't answer
Skill and experience hard to get
Younger - showing up and willing to work full day; culture clash; no motivation; decline in woods sense
Good question -- don't know
Working from 6 am to dark and Saturday and Sundays -- burned out looking for less hours to work - wife/ mother 12 hours
Remote locations tough on young families; wives need jobs in area
Good question! Locations challenging to salary not competitive for areas. Can't afford to live in area of work.
I don't know any - money just OK

Thinking about all of the ways to attract and retain workers to the Timber workforce, what one approach should be implemented as soon as possible?

Survey subjects were asked the question above to get at their priority for immediate action. Some ss (5) were at a loss for a response and said the it was “mind boggling,” “good question,” “tough one,” or “there’s no magic bullet.” Most ss launched their ideas and fired more than one idea to start out. Listed below the ideas are grouped to aid understanding.

Education

Fifteen ss said it would be best to start with the High School Guidance Counselors which is consistent with the numerical responses earlier to sector support. Education other than high school received five responses indicating the need to get to kids earlier. Vocational education at high school and community college received four preferences. Two would like work done with the universities to start with future foresters.

Stability

Eleven ss suggested working on the stability of the sector as an important work area. Most of the responses were framed as identifying the problem to recruit and retain people when mills were closing and other sector workers were being laid off. The periodic nature of these events for all industries is lost on the public and parents. Little news is made of those businesses that keep going through difficult times while rural areas are hit hard by their dependence. Creativity in dealing with the stability question and to whom the message should be directed are questions to resolve.

Pay, Benefits and Season Length

Ten ss felt that increasing pay and providing benefits were the keys to attracting future workers. In fact, some individual firms who pay well and provide benefits were able to keep their trained workers for long careers. Some ss pointed to the professionalism and pay levels of trades and crafts workers, construction, and mining as being better than those in the forestry sector for comparable skill sets. Not offering benefits is a serious detractor for some firms’ employment prospects. Season length was tied to pay for contractors who have to make choices on where limited income goes within the firm.

Image and Media

Seven survey subjects felt that work should begin on the sector image and seven more specifically suggested television and radio advertising. On ss specifically mentioned advertising on Hispanic radio stations. The stability and image question are linked in that the Forestry Sector is not a dying industry but a changing one. The level of workers employed, the technologies used, and social benefits of the sector are not appreciated. In fact, one ss was appalled that the sector leaders talk about the “mature industry” they manage and how worldwide issues control what is done locally.

Other topics to address

Survey subjects listed other issues to address as shown below:

- Four ss wanted the sector to address policy makers (US legislators) and work on the federal supply of timber to help manage Idaho forests
- Three ss felt that better training within firms would help workers advance.
- Two ss said that improving the H2B Visa program was needed to get workers for the sector
- One ss said it is necessary to improve working conditions for heavy physical work
- One ss said that work is needed on the “new workers”
- One ss wanted the machine operator training school implemented

Subjects were given an opportunity at the end of the survey to provide any additional comments they wished to offer. Most offered extensive comments and I have provided broad categories for them in the appendix for their responses. At this time, the responses are not broken down by subsector type of logger, mill, etc. A number of respondents offered general comments on the workforce project overall and those are repeated below. Each different response begins with a capital letter for each respondent.

Additional Comments (separated and categorized)

General Comments

Questions broad

I am happy somebody is taking initiative to deal with problems before it is too late

We are in dire need for moving this forward.

Do what it takes to get it done

Covered them - operators; also trucking needs, all operators

No, Happy somebody is doing this

Tough things to overcome

Glad you are doing it!

Serious issues

This survey is in a tough market

This study is important for workers, logging contractors looking for results.

So little thinking beyond 10 minutes from now; High quality thoughts mapping future of workforce is nil

Issue big -- tough

Make it work

Pay & Benefits

Long term commitment to logging needed to encourage and provide employee benefits

We lose applicants to USFS-salaries higher & benefits better

For ID national Business area federal salary is highest and beats pulp mills

Work out bids for bigger or smaller operations. Bidding really cuts prices. 3 man crew or smaller simply cannot grow.

Go back to money -- if money is there, people will show up to work. We pay money

Wish could pay more and better benefits; Provide good benefits except retirement

Low pay, cannot make living; supply chain critical

Need to get a level playing field by having benefits but good companies get squeezed and take benefits away

Benefits packets not visible and are needed

Lucky to get worker with wages we pay-- \$14 average wage not enough; challenging when products are valued in 1970's prices and costs have gone up to 2007

Goes back to money from industry – firms need to make money not run social program; mills need to understand what it takes – falling should make 3 times that of a school teacher School

teacher = \$30k then Timber cutter = \$90k; Cost price squeeze; End of talent pool. Need to put money up front.

No money left—half million to start month, \$10K at end of month; not profitable, production fell; companies had loggers locked up so set price to get jobs;

Fuel prices leave no money for workers.

Only pay so much -- take it or leave it. Profit all gone.

Wages have gone up but not enough for inflation;

Bids cut corners on workers - required as bidding field gets bigger

Be able to pay enough to do it; Independents want workers trained their way; Issue same in past as now - money; Mills don't want to talk about it

There is money to be made in this business

Compensation inadequate

Contractors are not healthy with prices not same as wages

Pay just OK; Construction jobs are better - they offer health benefits while logging doesn't

Colleges & Universities

Colleges not training Forestry end of it. Skill set - not foresters from ID and MT Colleges; Grads lack skill sets; Log procurement not taught - get it by on-the-job training not professors in forestry;

2 year degree - went to recruit at college and no response. Not enough kids - degree program at U of Idaho forestry no response

Survey of past graduates; Big mistake being made is missing business and productivity courses and have gone to Forest Environmental Science instead; used to be strong demand for Montana and Idaho students; no summer camps; courses were overhauled but not actually taught as planned

Working with university to produce individuals to be forest supervisors; work to see crew is doing it -- not just environmental learning which is what the last year or so has been

Observation: University and colleges less on forestry and more on environmental sciences.

Doesn't strengthen forestry. Forestry has bad name. Don't lump them all together. Emphasis

should be on professional forestry. U IDAHO and WSU responding to less forest use

State operates foresters as generalists on blocks 10-30 K Acres -- all duties, variety but needs training, senior foresters needed, subjects missing in U of Idaho, Montana, OSU, WA, Vtech, Penn State-- schools deficient;

Big things -- more we get cooperation to do standard

Reviewed University of Idaho curricula and not enthralled with it. OSU grad forest management degree reflects what is needed; U of I no field work; no 6 months on-the-job training required to graduate; OSU produces better managers; U of I gone away from practical field work

Spend time training. Can't hit the ground running; Universities failing to produce foresters;

Tried to start operator school University of Idaho 1997 - 2000; Failed - University of Idaho not interested:

University Preparation: Universal 4 year program in forestry that produces ready-to-work forester with hands-on forestry basics - cruising, surveying, reading GPS and GIS

The 4 year schools - college doesn't get it - NIC; What's different? 80 employers locally welding, machines, diesel, electronics, trades and crafts; High School abandoned vocational

education; NIC "Liberal Arts College" Need professional technical college – build technical high school instead
 4 year grads not tech trained; University of Idaho pretty bad - don't know tree spp.; Recruiting most difficult thing I do!; maintain opportunities as company but cannot find good people; can't keep them very long; contracting can be viable way to make a living
 Young foresters need attitude to learn versus know-it-alls; Attitude is important

Image

Appeal to work concepts for younger generation that like the idea of a job that is "fun", talk differently about logging profession.
 Mills shut down... New people see that and do not think there is a steady job
 TV to attract young
 St Maries housing a real shortage
 Get all involved. Future for industry
 Dying workforce because all skill workers leave industry when mills close. Disgruntled workers leave the sector but not the local area
 Sawmill hard to attract workers; we are stepping stone - not a career; bigger mills may work on training
 Slowly dying; forcing out of woods by general public and environmental groups, agency managers, special interests
 Look at timber industry for the future
 Start with youth to build image of forestry - fix gap of perception; use State and federal money
 Biggest thing is survival mode; no career path; feast or famine; industry is "old" hundreds of years; stuck in technologies of the past; new company; new product; new tech versus old tech; no way to attract to "old school"; results are by-product of industry mentality
 They are in "Survivor Mode"
 Workforce is not skilled or motivated to tell the story
 Will take a concerted cooperative effort, must work together to re-energize image of industry to good citizen
 Image of going out of business
 We have to be a more consistent industry; declining industry for decades; can't find security -- going to struggle
 Would not encourage my children to go into industry
 People think industry is dying; Problem is they look at us as a sunset industry
 CEO's treat industry as a sunset industry
 PR statements - main objective is return to stockholders, willing to sell if climate is for the industry to disappear
 Industry not going positive, US should trade with nations with same standards; products driven by slave labor and greed; hypocrisy in the industry

Supply & New Workers

Logging contractors having problems finding people
 Not a lot of turnover; good employees; not unhappy with equipment operators
 General workforce needs new blood

Activity – scholarships

20 - 30 short of drivers; place for people in community - bring log truck drivers in, keep them busy all year round by running 10 dump trucks to keep busy

Lowest levels into operations, they cannot read, write, follow directions.

Industry does not want to pay for recruitment activities

Demographically no young workers are in the pipeline; Industry needs to be proactive in recruiting; 30 years ago not necessary - now it is necessary

Employers in rural areas have no labor pool; not going to impact; recycle available labor pool, Choices Limited - eg commuting; Need more outreach/public relations into school lives before working choice - formative years before entering workforce; Parents need involvement

Local employees just rotating around; came to work hurt in old days; not now; miss 10 -15 days in season; 18 to 30's don't want to start at bottom; want to operate right away; DUII's cannot get transport; good guys quit now 3 linemen with phone company

General workforce in logging is bad - contractors are short of young people

Lots of people over 60 working for contractors to keep working

Struggling for new entrants. Those now in workforce not willing to change or get involved

Only 700 people in town-- need help recruiting; fortunate to keep our crew

General reason for problems is that kids won't work;

Many of them just want to keep their feet under their parents table until they are 25 or so.

Forest Management & Timber Supply

Federal forests locked up; need to utilize them rather than waste them. Provides more work for industry so could attract workforce. Jobs lost - technology losses.

Relied on federal timber but with no federal timber available there is a downturn in mill closures.

Burn forest versus managing it. Healthy forest initiative doesn't work locally; Same old song - nobody listens - falls on deaf ears; Impor

Changing land ownership pattern, REITS and TIMOS disintegration of forestry vertical integration and self interest up and down the line.

Lost the culture of the forestry sector

Timberlands didn't have timber left-- 10mbf versus 1mbf per acre; 20 loads per day versus 5-6 loads; not enough money

Pathetic management of federal land; overcut management private;

Reason is loss of federal land -- no future in private land

High Schools

Don't need to go to college

Talk to High School counselors to help

Need HS prep for Millwright school; electrical school

Need high school contact

Counselors in high schools; Priority thing -- worst enemies talking green to kids;

High schools are not doing job; Health, auto have technical centers; industry should be spending money to get face in front of kids; we are missing young people; Forestry Boot camp was successful - 3 weeks; Classes; internship;

Education at high school; used to have Forestry training in Ag, 1/4 forestry, projects to school

Working conditions

Outside work in winter, bugs, stigma of dangerous jobs, mill fatalities, parents don't want kids in danger job

Employees leave and companies don't have training positions.

Hardest is retention - we have modern fleet with 2004 trucks which require little maintenance;

Biggest problem is getting up early, loading hours changed so driver is up at 2 am and goes to 7 pm

Nobody wants long hours; want computer job

Loggers in same boat; Loggers cannot get field workers, sawyers, hookers, bad weather,

Relationships

On the mill side 2007 yields negative returns

Warm and cosy outfit -- small mills lead the way to improvements not giant corps

99.5% of forestry money goes to woods; little to truckers, we are like bad relatives;

Need more working together with mills.

Adversary relation with mills.

Mill at the head -- the cost of doing business

State patrol weighmasters treat drivers like dogs

Season Length

End of logging season is weather not the calendar per accountants.

Miss one month a year where we cannot find work.

A 5 year contract would be good

Figured out need to do seasonal adjustments double shifting - not enough season,

Stability

Mills shut down for 5 weeks -- VP -- get larger seasons; Shut down so quick - no planning -- mills take it but don't give back; Top down - accountants shut down on year end

Our area has mills shut down

H2B Visa & Foreign Workers

Bringing in Mexicans because running out of people

Consortium to evaluate barriers to getting H2B Visa workers -- more hispanics; bias

White workforce to latin american workforce; H2B workers to illegals workforce

Professionalism

Farmer loggers need to become professionals

Need to be paid as professionals with benefits, vacations, etc.; Top professionals demand respect