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The Cutting Edge



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Cover Photo: Connecticut DEEP Sawyer Jim Moore, (front) and staff (left to right) Keenan Humble, EP Maintainer 3; Stephen Quick, Seasonal Resource Assistant; Ben Morton, Skilled Maintainer; Rupert Neysmith, Seasonal Resource Assistant; Joseph Clausi, Seasonal Resource Assistant

Cover art: Deborah Roach

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Come take a tour

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association, Inc. (TIMPRO CT) is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)6 non-profit corporation. Our mission is to enhance the image and understanding of the forest products industry throughout the state through public outreach programs, education, and a commitment to professionalism among our members.

TIMPRO CT NEWS

TIMPRO DELIVERS LOG-A-LOAD DONATION



It is always a proud moment when we deliver our donation to the Children's Miracle Network Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut. On February 25, 2025, our Secretary and Treasurer Kit Serafini (right) handed a check for \$2,933.00 to Caroline Killeen, Manager of the Children's Miracle Network Hospital, Corporate Partners of the Connecticut Children's Foundation (Left). Making the handover even more special, Kit brought her daughter Maggie (center).

Maggie said, "It felt good, and I was proud to help contribute because I know the donation is going to a good cause. I know that even small donations help."

Kit says her response was more complicated. "As a wife and mother, I am all too familiar with how overwhelming the stresses of everyday life and parenthood can be, how easy it is to get so wrapped up in our own day-to-day lives that we sometimes don't notice those around us that may need our help. I can only imagine

the stresses are multiplied when you have a child with an illness. I am often proud and humbled by my children when they remind me that no matter how small a sacrifice we make, that if a community of people do the same, it will add up and help those around us that truly need help. No family should ever have to worry about what tomorrow will bring. Every child deserves to see sunshine on the horizon."

Membership in the Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association

Membership is open to sawmills, loggers, foresters, landowners, supporting businesses and anyone else interested in supporting the forest products industry in Connecticut. Benefits include educational programs, a voice in the Connecticut Legislature, a listing on the TIMPRO CT website, current information on issues affecting the forest products industry, a free subscription to ***The Cutting Edge*** and more.

Dues are \$150/year. \$25.00 for student memberships.

Applications are available by calling TIMPRO CT at 860-948-0432 or visiting the website at www.timproct.org.

REACHING OUT TO STUDENTS

At an E. O. Smith student outreach event, Timpro was joined by trade organizations and technical schools representing steelworkers, carpenters, aerospace technicians, automotive technicians, welders, diesel mechanics, masonry builders, and other hands-on skilled trades. Recruiters from all branches of the military as well as law enforcement and firemen were available to speak to the students.

Joan Nichols spoke to interested students about the various career options in environmental science, natural resources, and the forest products industry. Questions ranged from educational and course requirements to pay scale. One young woman was interested in both civil engineering and environmental science. She was intrigued to learn that many disciplines intersperse with environmental science. For instance, she was pleased to learn that both the USDA US Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service employ civil engineers. Another student expressed an interest in wildfire training. The natural resources instructor in the agriscience department was unaware of the logger training program offered by the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine which is now accepting out of state students. Timpro has been invited to speak to high school and agriscience students in Glastonbury, Killingly, Ledyard, Lebanon, Vernon, Stamford and Washington, CT. More on the next page about Joan Nichols' student outreach plans.



THANK YOU TO OUR LOG-A-LOAD DONORS



Timpro has donated over \$50,000 since we began supporting Log-A-Load in 2007. We couldn't do this without our generous donors who helped fund this gift through contributions, raffles, and events such as fishing derbies. Thank you!

Beaver Brook Saw Shop
Gerald Bellows
Stanley Burr
Robert Carrington
City Hardware True Value

Goff's Equipment Service Inc
Henry Gundlach
Eric Hansen
Peter Hart

E. R. Hinman & Sons, Inc
Hull Forest Products
Joan Nichols
The Serafini Family

WELCOME TO NEW TIMPRO MEMBERS

Ryan Biscow, John J. Pawloski Lumber, Inc, 4 Pleasant View Terrace,
Bethel, CT 06810, 203-794-0737

Chris Latz, Thrive Farm, 73 Wolcott Rd,
Simsbury, CT 06070, 860-838-7015

Owen Lenahan, Lenahan Land Clearing & Grinding, Inc. 105 Transylvania Road,
Roxbury, CT 06783, 203-506-0667



JOAN NICHOLS MOVES ON TO NEW PROJECTS

On Jan. 31, 2025, Joan Nichols stepped down as Executive Director of the Connecticut Farm Bureau. But she is emphatic that she is not retired! "I'm still working," she stated in a phone interview. "I'm still working on some really cool stuff."

Top of her list right now is outreach to students in secondary schools. "Kit [Serafini] did a really really good job reaching out to agriscience school programs offering to have Timpro members speak to students about careers in natural resources and expose them to professionals who work in the forest products industry. That means someone has to show up during the school day, 9-2. It's difficult for the loggers to take this time - usually 1/2 to an hour or so. Now that I'm my own boss, I can do it," she explained.

At the Yankee Division SAF meeting in Stockbridge, MA recently, she asked Chair Michelle Woods how we can get more foresters to participate and got 5 minutes to talk about outreach. She gave a quick review of what TIMPRO is doing and asked CT foresters to help. "Tom Worthley, who helped coordinate the meeting, contacted me and invited me to do a breakout workshop at the New England SAF March meeting in Devon, Massachusetts on how to interest kids in natural resource management."

"We desperately need young people," she added. "I've been to UMass to meet a Natural Resources club. People are interested but few want to do forestry. I feel that once they know what we do, they become interested. I get a lot of that. But next time I'm going to ask the students why they're not interested. Do they think all we do is cut down trees?"

One question she gets is "How much money can I make?" She explains she's worked for industry, private sawmills, federal agencies, co-owned a production logging company, worked for a non-profit and as a lobbyist, and now as an independent consulting forester. She's done almost everything you can do!

"What I say is that you can only love it so much but that doesn't put food on the table. You've got to maintain really good relationships. You have to work hard and can't watch the clock. The demand dictates your day. Now as a consulting forester, I've had the benefit of 40 years work in the industry and now the work finds me. It's not just tree marking, but also estate planning, forest health, and more"

"Any forester that's successful, it's a very rewarding career. You'll have amazing experiences and meet phenomenal people that become lifelong friends, clients, and colleagues. You can't put a price tag on seeing a grizzly when you're marking a job. You take raw material out of the woods and turn it into a global product. You can't put a price tag on that!"

COME TOUR THE NEW PORTLAND SAWMILL

In 2019, we reported on Jim Moore's first experience reopening the sawmill owned by the State of Connecticut, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. In August 2018, he told us how he cautiously opened the door to his new workplace: "There were cobwebs hanging everywhere. I walked into what would be my office and a squirrel ran out through a hole above the door!"

"As the newly hired sawyer, I needed to know what products we needed to make," Moore explained.

The sawmill was the last survivor in Connecticut of the eighteen Civilian Conservation Corps camps. They were created in 1933 for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's program to employ thousands of people without jobs and to put them to work enhancing public parks and forests throughout the country.

Now Moore is presiding over a different kind of reopening. Read about it in the following pages and see the transformation for yourself.



View from inside the new sawyer's HMC cab

Photos on this and following pages courtesy of Connecticut Sawyer

Jim Moore



The renovation plans go back to 2012 when money was bonded. The original idea was to put new equipment in the old building but it's too small for today's equipment. A completely new, modernized building with new equipment is replacing the 57-year-old sawmill. At the beginning of November 2024, Moore texted, "All equipment (4 truckloads) came this week." He supervised the installation of the equipment while also training new hires to operate it: "The controls are buttons, joystick controls with thumb buttons, and foot pedals." For the present, the staff is Moore, two full-time employees, and two to three seasonal employees.

The State of Connecticut has a long history of operating sawmills across the state since the CCC era. "DEEP's primary focus is lumber to make picnic tables. The goal is to replace 1,000 tables a year," Jim explained. That's a lot

of 2x6s and 2x10s! It's estimated there are over 10,000 DEEP tables in service across the state, made of various oaks, planed smooth with quarter round edges and trimmed to 8' long allowing park staff to assemble with less work on their end. We produce a gamut of various wood products for DEEP agencies including dimensional softwood lumber, T&G hardwood and softwood wainscoting, shield signposts, shield signs, routed signage, fencing, trailer decking, sideboards, rough sawn pine used by Wildlife for nesting boxes for bats, bluebirds, and Wood ducks."

"We also provide products for other state departments such as the Department of Transportation and the Department of Military, which oversees and runs two farms for the horses for the Governor's horse guard. We make fencing for the horses. In 2023, the DEEP sawmill in Portland provided oak, maple, ash and cherry tongue-and-groove wainscoting, baseboard, chair-rail, window trim and door trim for the inside of the new platinum LEEDS-rated DEEP Western District HQ at Black Rock State Park. Finally, there are smaller novelty items such as 3" tree cookies, branded trivets, hardwood award plaques, and hand-carved hiking sticks for Park's Outreach annual hiking challenge 'Sky's The Limit'."



Top: A sample of the picnic tables made by the Portland sawmill.

Bottom right: The new HMC sawmill blades ready to go

The supply chain issues made it important for Moore to work with HMC, a reputable company in New Hampshire. "The equipment is American-made to keep running for many years. It should last a few generations! There was a lot of collaboration – the engineering department, the project architect, and many others. A lot of thanks go to Alex Curry, a civil engineer with DEEP. Understanding the flow was critical with putting new machinery together in a new building. I've also worked with site guys, riggers, electricians, carpenters, the general contractor and vendors," Moore said.

"I was hired as the Connecticut 'sawyer' of DEEP's last remaining sawmill. It has been a unique opportunity. I am the third sawyer at the Portland Complex since the CCC era! I've been pushing this sawmill's rebirth far. I have learned much about the many wood products the state sawmill produces for the public good whether a picnic table in a state park, a welcome sign in a state forest, a wood baffle in a fish hatchery, a shield sign to announce you have arrived at a park or T&G paneling inside a campground office – all products of the Portland Sawmill," Moore concluded with satisfaction.



Top: HMC sawmill dial

Above: The Debarker

Left: The Portland sawmill provided maple, ash, cherry, and oak baseboard, wainscot, chair rail and door and window casings for the new DEEP Western District Black Rock Headquarters.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PORTLAND SAWMILL'S PRODUCTS FOR CONNECTICUT



*Top left and right: Connecticut Wildlife Envirothon Connecticut-shaped award plaques
Above: Portland Sawmill Sign
Left: Shield for the Portland sawmill.*



Bits and Chokers

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DEFINING A FOREST

The concept of “forest” arose with the creation of royal hunting reserves as far back as 700 BCE in Assyria. The word *forest* came later from the Latin word *foris*, the land which lies outside or beyond habitations.

But as early as ancient Roman times, conflicts and questions arose over ownership of the forest and its resources. For example, under Roman law, no one owned wild animals – until a chase began. Then the wild animal became a game animal that belonged to the hunter and it was unlawful for another hunter to take it.

In Medieval Europe, deer and wild boar were the property of the king. There were harsh penalties for commoners who killed them. In England,

some 30,000 peasants were torched out of their homes to create a hunting preserve known then and still today as the New Forest. By the 13th century CE, 30% of England was classified as forest although only about 1/3 of that was actually woodland.

In other words, a “forest” was not a vegetation type but a royal jurisdiction.

Predictably the spread of this designation brought royalty into direct conflict with the peasants who had relied for hundreds of years on the woodlands for firewood, building materials, herbs, berries, medicinal products, and game.

So critical were forests that they were known as “the peasant’s overcoat,” a free source of warmth, food, and protection.

The collision of peasant need vs royal right was somewhat settled in England in 1216 CE when King John (above left) signed a Forest Charter recognizing the right for non-royals to harvest forest products – for a fee. But laws couldn’t stop hungry peasants from poaching, a crime punishable by death in England and subject to prosecution all over the world where wild animals “belong” to the landowner.

The European concept of ownership became global as colonizers took ownership of valuable property such as teak forests in Thailand and evicted indigenous people. Even after colonized nations gained independence, ownership tended to pass to elites who enriched themselves at the expense of their citizens.

The newest conflict is over conservation enclosures. Government attempts to protect and preserve nature invariably mean restrictions on indigenous users. As a result, indigenous populations must sue in court to exercise their traditional rights to the forest and its products. Since these people very rarely have written documents stating those rights, they rely on lidar, satellite, and drone footage to provide on-the-ground evidence of cultivation and long-standing silvicultural management such as coppicing.

The final chapter on “the peasant’s overcoat” is still being written.



FORESTS, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

We know that forests play a crucial role in protecting environmental health. But they are also apparently pawns in trade-offs for other purposes. Thus, Michigan is eyeing its own forestland to lease for solar farms. As reported by environmental reporter Sheri McWhirter (mlive.com), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources apparently plans to lease a 420-acre swath of state forestland near Gaylord to a private company which will clear it for a solar farm. In fact, officials with the Michigan DNR recently assessed 1,200 acres of public trust land in Otsego County near a major power transmission line to decide whether it was suitable for solar arrays. Agency leaders ultimately decided to lease 35% of that land to accompany other adjacent solar projects already in the works. One driver of this decision is that the DNR faces dwindling revenues from hunting and fishing licenses. And Michigan risks not meeting its key climate goal – 100% clean energy by 2040.

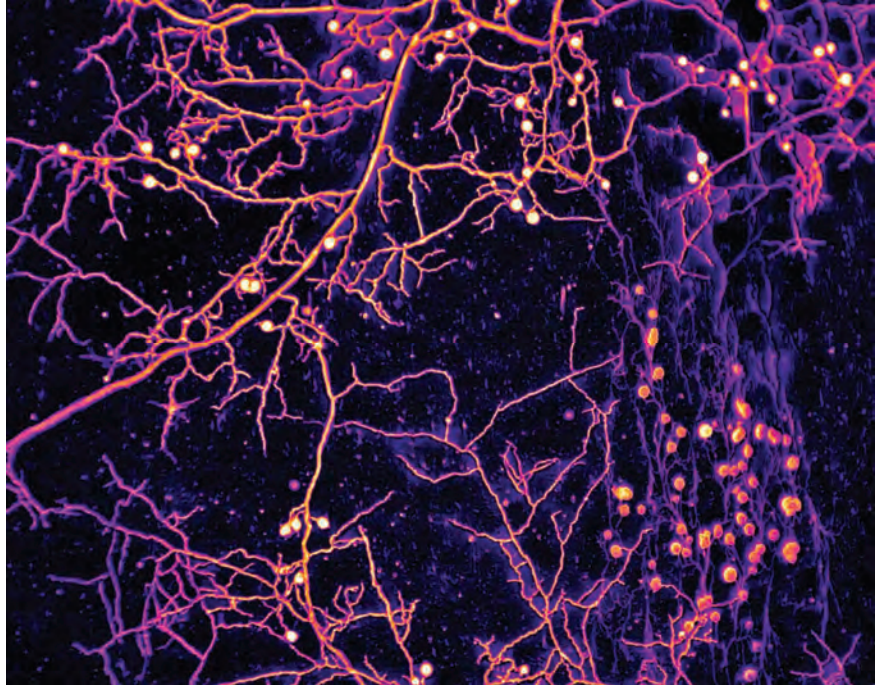


Then there is Brazil's decision to cut a road (photo above) through the tropical rainforest. As reported by the British Broadcasting Company, Brazil is preparing for its star turn hosting COP30 (Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) this November in Belem by cutting a four-lane highway through a protected Amazon tropical rainforest. The goal? To better connect Belem with transportation hubs on the coast so the 50,000 delegates to the conference can enjoy a smooth, swift ride to the conference. And once there? They will address how threats to tropical rainforests in places such as the Amazon. The road cleaves the forest expanse into two separated areas. In addition, the road will be walled off on each side. There are going to be some passageways for wildlife. But as wildlife veterinarian Professor Silvia Sardinha noted, "Land animals will no longer be able to cross to the other side...reducing the areas where they can live and breed."

THE FOREST BENEATH OUR FEET

In our profession, we look up at the trees around us. But beneath our feet is a mirror forest of mycorrhizal fungi actively reaching out, providing nutrients to the trees above.

As Alan Burdick reported in the March 11 New York Times, studies show that mycorrhizae are “the supply chains of the soil.” In exchange for those nutrients, trees provide the fungi with some 13 billion tons of atmospheric carbon dioxide, enabling the fungi to expand their networks. This relationship is essential as fungi need the trees’ carbon and 80% of the world’s plants rely on fungal networks for nutrients.



The fungal networks seem to sense which plants need which nutrients and build networks accordingly.

Dr. Toby Kiers, an evolutionary biologist and director of the Society for the Protection of Underground Networks, is documenting this exchange: “Fungi are super clever,” she said, “They’re constantly adapting their trade routes. They’re evaluating their environment very precisely. It’s a lot of decision-making.”

To find out how they do it, Dr. Kiers and her colleagues grew fungi in petri dishes, then used an imaging robot to track network growth for days, measuring how the organisms reshaped their routes in response to different conditions. The study was published Feb. 26 in *Nature*.

Starting from special nodes, the fungi send out filaments to assess new territory. Over several days, the scientists labeled and monitored a half-million new nodes and mapped the expansion. The fungi’s goal: get the most carbon in return for delivering nutrients. Carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, water and even fungal nuclei move in either direction, even in opposite directions at once.

“That’s physically mind-boggling,” said Tom Shimizu, a biophysicist at AMOLF, a physics institute in Amsterdam whose lab built the robot. The fungus, he said, “is basically a microbe that plays economic games. How do you do that if you’re just a tube of fluid flowing?” The growing tips do the work, constantly forming new branches behind them and when one tip hits another, they fuse and form a loop. The edge of the fungal network expands like a ripple, laying down an efficient trading nexus as it goes.

Scientists still don’t understand how fungi move so much carbon so far without “clogging the pipes.” And they hope to simulate how these ancient organisms respond to wildfires, drought and other disruptions from climate change.

To see videos of the growth and exchanges in action, search “New York Times How Fungi Move Among Us.”



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**CT Professional Timber
Producers Association**

Look for mailings or check the
website for further details and
any changes to the Calendar of
Events.

Ideas for classes you would
like offered?

Contact TIMPRO CT:
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info@timproct.org

Articles, ideas, pictures
you'd like to see?

hallie.metzger@gmail.com

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION

WWW.TIMPROCT.ORG

TIMPRO ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 26, 2025

GUILFORD SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Get Involved

The Board of Directors is seeking members who are interested in helping out with various activities throughout the year such as CEU programming, fairs, Ag Days at the State Capitol in March, Plant Science Day in August in Hamden, programs at the Agriscience Centers and more. The Board, made up of business owners, just like yourselves, is keenly aware of the demands on your time. Any amount of time, no matter how minimal, is greatly needed.

Contact TIMPRO CT for more information:

860-948-0432 or e-mail: info@timproct.org.