

—Slug:.....COMM-0860.dum.hardy-forestry
—Contributor.....Bill Holiday
—Contributor email.....billholiday92@gmail.com
—For section..... News
—Format..... News feature
—Dateline..... Dummerston
—Article Number:..... 43394



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Anatomy of a forest project

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 A Dummerston harvest reveals how science, markets,
3 and long experience shape what neighbors see on Black
4 Mountain Road

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 For months, neighbors along Black Mountain Road have
7 watched truck after truck haul logs from the hillside.

8 What's happening in our backyard is a carefully planned
9 forestry project led by Steve Hardy — president and owner of
10 Green Mountain Forestry — whose four decades in the woods
11 inform every decision made on the mountain.

12 Hardy has practiced forestry for close to 48 years and
13 founded Green Mountain Forestry 35 years ago. He's a licensed
14 forester in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts,
15 Connecticut, and New York, operating primarily within a 75-mile
16 radius of West Brattleboro.

17 He started with a chainsaw.

18 **A tree's decline and fall**

19 A major driver of the current harvest is the condition of
20 local red pine stands. As Hardy explains, red pines decline when
21 their "live crown ratio" — the portion of the tree with live
22 branches — drops too low.

23 "When pine trees get to a live crown ratio of 15% or so
24 [...] they just don't have enough leaf area, needle area, and they
25 go into decline," he says.

26 He also notes a disease that "travels around" red pine,
27 further pushing the need for removal.

28 Wondering how a forester can tell when a tree is ready to
29 be cut? A look shows broad rings in a growing, healthy tree. The
30 outer rings have narrowed indicating the tree is no longer healthy,
31 thus, ready to be harvested to make space for younger trees to get
32 the light they need to prosper.

33 Many loads that are being seen on the roads of
34 Dummerston are red pine and pulpwood — lower-value material
35 that still "needs to come out of the forest" to improve health and
36 regeneration.

37 You may also see exceptionally long logs; some red pine
38 is being utilized as utility poles, "ranging anywhere from 30 feet
39 to 67 feet long," with shipments heading to Connecticut and
40 beyond, Hardy says.

41 The wood goes to many places. Among them:

- 42 • High-value hardwoods go to regional lumber
43 companies.
- 44 • Pine is split across multiple sawmills, including Allard
45 Lumber and Cersosimo Lumber.

46 • Hemlock logs are used more locally.
47 • Pulpwood heads to paper mills like International Paper
48 (Ticonderoga, New York) and Finch Paper (Glens Falls, New York).

49 • Firewood-grade material goes to a producer in
50 Hartland, where it is processed as cordwood.

51 A significant volume of red pine flows to Canadian high-
52 tech sawmills. Because few local mills invest in sawing red pine
53 and hemlock, loads often “back-haul” across the border.

54 “They bring product down, and then they pick up logs
55 and take it back to Canada,” Hardy says.

56 Doing so improves efficiency in a regional supply chain
57 where many Canadian mills source 80% to 90% of their logs
58 from the northeastern U.S.

59 **How the harvest is run**

60 Though neighbors see constant trucking, the onsite crew
61 is small and efficient — “only three guys working at the site,”
62 Hardy says.

63 The landing is organized with precision to avoid
64 bottlenecks: “As wood goes out, wood is coming in,” he notes.

65 Hardy credits operator skill and planning, noting that
66 skidder operators delicately handle long utility poles and that the
67 whole operation “just flows smoothly” rather than “crashing and
68 banging.”

69 The harvest isn’t just about moving wood; it’s about the
70 next generation of forest. Patch cuts and carefully timed soil
71 disturbance encourage natural regeneration — especially of
72 white pine and red oak.

73 “We had an excellent seed year for red oak,” he says,
74 noting that the logging activity “is driving [acorns] into the
75 ground [...] that protects those acorns to germinate.”

76 Hardy emphasizes that the region is “cutting way below
77 the growth rates,” which will lead to overcrowded canopies and
78 declining crown health over time.

Timelines and ownership

Work on Erica Stahl's property began in mid-October; by February, the cutting was complete and wood was being trucked out.

The adjacent Doubleday property is next, using the same landing by agreement, which is why activity continues even though ownership has changed.

The project operates under Vermont's current use program with associated recordkeeping and state oversight.

A county forester has also spoken with neighbors on site to explain patch cuts and objectives, underscoring the project's compliance with best practices and regulations. Exact volumes and destinations are tracked meticulously as part of the forester's responsibility to the landowner.

Sustainable forestry can look like loss in the short term — logs on trucks, openings on the hillside — but it's designed to restore balance in aging forests, reduce mortality, and establish healthier, more resilient stands.

As Hardy puts it, the goal is "the long-term health and viability of that forest," not simply to "feed the mills."

Cross-border grit

The logging trade that threads through New England and Quebec is built on grit, relationships, and long miles on familiar roads.

In a recent conversation at the site of the landing on Black Mountain Road among trucker Steve Galbreath and other working loggers and haulers, the crew compared routes, loads, and the day-to-day realities of moving timber across the U.S./Canada border, spanning the state north to south, from Sherbrooke down to the Massachusetts border to Connecticut and beyond.

What emerges is a portrait of a business that's as much logistics as it is lumber.

112 Loads of hemlock, pallet wood, and risers shuttle back
113 and forth in a cadence driven by mill demand, customs timing,
114 and weather.

115 A typical run involves delivering a loaded trailer from
116 Quebec from mills across the border (approximately 60 miles
117 into Canada) stateside, swapping for an empty, and turning back
118 north — sometimes multiple times a week when the orders are
119 steady.

120 The human side is just as vivid.

121 Stories from the road — about tough truck yards,
122 language barriers where French is the default, and the handful of
123 drivers that make (or break) a long day — frame the culture of the
124 work.

125 The crew recalls challenging encounters with particular
126 drivers and the ripple effects of a single rough interaction on
127 schedules and sanity. It's a reminder that in trucking, people are
128 the variable that can't be modeled on a route plan.

129 The network behind each load is local and personal.
130 Foresters like Steve Hardy in West Brattleboro connect woodlots
131 to mills, and the truckers fill in the miles between.

132 On weekends, when the mill work slows, the same
133 hands pivot to firewood processing — a separate but related
134 hustle that keeps equipment moving and cash flowing. Prices
135 vary by wood and cut, but demand is steady enough that a
136 processor can justify its keep through the winter months.

137 Even the geography becomes a character: border
138 crossings, the stretch down I-91, landmarks around West Brome
139 north of the border.

140 These aren't just waypoints; they're a working map,
141 sketched by repetition and shared experience. Ask anyone who
142 runs the route, and they'll tell you: Efficiency comes from
143 knowing every bump in the road and who you'll meet at the yard
144 when you get there.

145 In a world that often celebrates high tech and instant
146 scale, this conversation offers a grounded counterpoint — an

147 economy of motion built on trust, timing, and a willingness to get
148 back in the cab for one more turn.

149 Cross-border logging isn't glamorous, but it is precise
150 work, done by people who know exactly what it takes to keep
151 wood moving and mills humming.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

152 #####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL#####

#####END BIO/COATTAIL#####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

#####BEGIN MAXISSUE#####

153 0

#####END MAXISSUE#####

LINKS:

154 #####BEGIN LINKS#####

#####END LINKS#####

VIDEO:

155 #####BEGIN VIDEO#####

#####END VIDEO#####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

156 #####BEGIN LOGLINE#####

#####END LOGLINE#####