

The **FOREST INDUSTRY**

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The forests of Western Oregon have long been recognized as being among the world's most productive. They are also forests that have thrived on disturbance. Physical examination of the forests' history confirms both early Native American stories and the reports of the early post-Native American explorers who left records of immense fires, huge wind blows, and other catastrophic events that would level the forest periodically only to see it, in a remarkably short period of time, regreen the mountains and hills of the region.

Today, those same forests still thrive on the disturbance silviculturists have shown is necessary and healthy for them, but with a difference. Instead of the devastation to native species, greenhouse gas releases, and particulate pollution that



A LANDING IS AN ACTIVE PLACE; ON THE F & B LOGGING TOWER SIDE, LOGS COME IN BY CABLE, ARE DELIMBED AND CUT TO LENGTH, THEN MERCHANDISED AND LOADED. BECAUSE EVERYTHING MUST BE ORCHESTRATED FOR MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY, THE EQUIPMENT CHOSEN MUST BE RELIABLE, FAST, AND EFFECTIVE.

F & B Logging—Keeping the Forests Alive with New Technology

By David Otto

fire and other natural kinds of disturbance bring, the disturbances of yesterday have been replaced by the loaders, loggers, and trucks of today's harvesting contractor. While much is different in that a harvest can be more environmentally sensitive in terms of preserving the lives of fish and other wildlife than many kinds of natural disturbances are, the end result is the same: in a remarkably short period of time, the hills are green again and the forest regenerates.

The ability of harvesting equipment to mimic the impacts of natural disturbance and allow the continued generation and regeneration of a healthy forest is important to Don Falleur, a founding owner of F & B Logging, a harvesting firm op-

erating in Oregon's northwestern forests near the coastal towns of Seaside and Astoria. "I've got grand-kids to leave this land to after I'm gone," he comments. "I want them to enjoy everything I've enjoyed here, so it's important to me to leave the land in as good or better condition than I found it." According to Don, the capacities his Link-Belt based firm brings to the harvest allows his company to not only provide the fiber society needs to be economically and environmentally healthy, but it also provides the range of abilities needed to do the job in an environmentally sensitive way that assures his grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be able to appreciate the forest of the future as much as he appreciates the forest of today.

As Don recounts it, he began his career in the forest in the early 1960s when he hired on with Crown Zellerbach to plant trees. He says he still thinks that may have been the hardest work he ever did, but—he says with some pride—he was one of the few hands hired early in the year to make it all the way through to the end of the planting season. His work was impressive enough to the company that he was able to stay on as a choker setter. By 1963 he'd done and seen enough to believe he could go into business on his own, so he and his brother-in-law threw in together and began to do contract "pre-logging" for Crown Z.

The new company prospered and grew throughout '60s, '70s, and into the '80s. Through those years, Don

says, the firm utilized traditional equipment including skidders and dozers. In the mid-'80s, he comments, the enterprise began to move toward more mechanized and environmentally sensitive forms of logging as new technology came to the marketplace. A tower was purchased and the firm began to use the new style loaders Link-Belt was bringing on-line in those days.

Today, Don said, his firm is a "full-service, clear cut logging company," harvesting primarily on Weyerhaeuser lands in Northwest Oregon. The company has the technology and abilities, he said, to harvest to the highest standards of the industry as well as to the exacting demands of Weyerhaeuser's silviculturists who carefully plan harvests to be both productive and environmentally sensitive. "Weyerhaeuser takes a great deal of care to do its harvests right," he comments. "We have to be able to live up to their expectations if we want to continue to work for them."

To assure it can live up to the expectations of its most important customer, F & B Logging maintains two separate sides, a yarder operation and a shovel-based side. While the equipment is generally assigned to a particular side, Don says it can be mixed and matched to meet the needs of an individual harvest if need be. Generally, Don says, F & B's yarder side includes a 172 Madill Yarder supported by a 240 LX Link-Belt with a Pierce delimeter mounted on it. A Link-Belt 4300 loader is utilized for merchandising and truck loading

and a D7E tail hold Caterpillar is kept for miscellaneous work around the site.

On the ground side, a Pierce delimeter is mounted on a Link-

plished using a Link-Belt 2700 equipped with a grapple and bucket, a 330 Cat loader, and a D5H with an ESCO grapple. The 2700, according to Don, is used as an all around machine for ditching, clean up, and other tasks around the job site.

F & B's equipment mix leans heavily towards Link-Belt both in the machinery utilized for loading and moving material from the felling site to the processing equipment, and as the carriage for the processing equipment used on both the yarder and the ground sides of the operation. Don says the prominence of

Link-Belt on the F & B site is no accident. His company started out using other well-known equipment brands but he explains, switched in the mid-1980s almost exclusively to Link-Belt because of the service he was able to get from that supplier.

Don says his firm has received extraordinary service from his region's Link-Belt representatives from the day he bought his first machine. That's vital to an operation like his, he points out, because the cost of machinery and its operation, as well as the schedules of his customers, require that down time on a

job be kept to an absolute minimum. "Our experience has been that when we do have a problem, we get help with it immediately," he says. "We've had them come



DELIMBING ON THE TOWER SIDE IS ACCOMPLISHED UTILIZING A LINK-BELT 240 LX WITH A PIERCE "DELIMINATOR" MOUNTED ON THE MACHINE.

Belt 3400 carriage. Moving stems from the stump to the delimeter, merchandising, and loading out finished logs onto trucks is accom-



DARIN SCHMELTZER OPERATES THE LINK-BELT 290 LX LOADER ON THE F & B LOGGING GROUND SIDE. HE CITES THE WEIGHT OF THE MACHINE AND THE SWING TORQUE AVAILABLE TO HIM AS IMPORTANT FEATURES ALLOWING EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE OPERATION AT THE LANDING.

plished through the use of a variety of Link-Belt loaders, including a 290 LX, a 4300, and a 3400, all equipped with Pierce grapples. Miscellaneous work is accom-

out and work overnight, staying until 2 or 3 o'clock to make sure we're up and working the next day. The service is really what has kept us coming back to Link-Belt over the years."

Mark Schmeltzer is the Territory Manager for Triad Machinery of Portland, Oregon, a major Northwest machinery dealer. According to Mark, Triad's effort to ensure that F & B continues to receive the kind of service it needs from his firm amounts to a three pronged approach. First, he comments, Triad has gone to extraordinary lengths, especially in recent years, to hire, train, and make available a top-flight service team dedicated to the needs of the customer. That service team is supported by an extensive stocking system to assure parts are available in short order when needed.

S e c o n d, Mark contends, his firm receives excellent support in its own service effort from LBX Company, the firm manufacturing the Link-Belt line. Last, according to Mark, the machinery itself is an important part of the service approach. Link-Belt's products, he comments, are designed and built to function in the woods with fewer breakdowns than might generally be expected of machinery taking the beating harvest-equipment is subjected to.

Mark points to two examples to demonstrate his point: weight and swing torque. Link-Belt provides some of the heaviest equipment in the woods, he says, and the design of the machines is such that the weight is distributed to allow the machines the broadest operating range possible. Link-Belt, Mark con-

tinues, also puts more swing torque at the operator's disposal than any other machine he knows of in the woods today. To illustrate, he points to the company's 240 LX loader, which weighs in at 74,800 pounds and gives the operator 73,020 foot-pounds of swing torque to work with.

The two things are important, Mark contends, because the machines are used to manipulate tons of fiber in operations requiring a delicate touch, pinpoint precision, and speed. Adequate swing torque allows for both the delicacy required for safe operation and productivity, while weight allows for a broader

high-line operation. Dubbed the "Yoder," by his granddaughter, Don says the configuration allows his firm a great deal of flexibility in being environmentally sensitive as well as in serving the customer better. A small, oddly shaped bit of a harvest that needs to be addressed is inaccessible using ground-based equipment, but can be easily harvested using the Yoder, thus saving the time, expense, and other impacts of a full tower set up. Likewise, a small bit of woods that might, for example, need to be tower logged to avoid an environmentally sensitive area can be harvested without damage

using the innovation. "It's become an important way to provide better service to our customers," Don explains.

F & B Logging has grown and prospered through some of the most trying times in history for logging contractors. The firm has managed to do that through a combination of service to its customers, innovative approaches to its business like that represented by the "Yoder," and the



A DELICATE TOUCH WHILE SWINGING TONS OF WEIGHT IS A REQUIREMENT AT A MODERN LANDING.

operating range. Machines that must always be stretched to their limits to get the productivity demanded of them break down more often, according to Mark. "The combination of well-distributed weight and the high swing torque that Link-Belt machines provide means they not only perform better, they are also more durable," he concludes.

F & B Logging is a company that has achieved success by being innovative. One of the more interesting innovations the company has put in place involves mounting winches on the firm's 330 Cat loader, allowing the machine to be used in special circumstances as a tower for a small

ongoing acquisition of state-of-the-art machinery designed to allow the firm to meet the demands of ever-changing harvest parameters.

While modest about the success of the firm he and his brother-in-law started together some four decades ago, Don does say, "You've got to change with the times and be able to give your customers the tools they need to manage their woods for the future. We've managed to do that through the years with a lot of luck and a lot of real hard work. We think that as long as we continue to be willing to change and work hard to give our customers our best, we will always have work." ▲