

## 11. A Little Extra "TLC" for New York's Forests

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During the last few years, New York forest owners have gained a new option in their desire for sustainable forest production and rural communities have gained from increased professionalism. What is this new option? A group of loggers who voluntarily developed and participate in the New York Logger Training, Inc., Trained Logger Certification (TLC) program.

Loggers who complete TLC, several hundred so far, are committed to keeping their skills honed and increasing their knowledge about logging productivity and forest ecosystems. Loggers are also making a commitment to continuing education, as the program requires continuous training to maintain certification. As a result, these loggers are better able to meet the stewardship needs of forest owners. Traditionally, New York loggers have received on the job training through their employers or co-workers. While this traditional approach has been sufficient for some training needs, several loggers from across the state felt a need to recognize efforts for increased levels of professionalism. These loggers knew first hand the hazards of working in the woods, the need to work efficiently, and the need to be environmentally aware of the forest resource we all use. They recognized the potential to educate themselves and others through a statewide effort.

The logger training effort began in 1989 with a group of timber harvesters concerned with the need to provide a formalized training and recognition program which would make

limited training resources go farther. In 1994, New York Logger Training was incorporated to coordinate the delivery of educational resources to timber harvesters that will improve their technical skills, and will foster the implementation of environmentally sound harvesting practices. The goal of this training and certification program is increased productivity for loggers, increased use of best management practices (BMPs), and a safer working environment. Together, goals should lead to increased profits for loggers and forest owners while increasing the quality and value of forested lands.

The TLC program includes three core components which are: Standard Adult First Aid and CPR; Environmental Concerns; and Chain Saw Operation, Safety, and Productivity. Each component is a one day session and forms the basis of the initial certification. New York is divided into five area, each with a regional chair and committee organized to arrange local



The TLC program gives loggers training in chainsaw operation, safety and maintenance.

educational programs. The continuing education part of Trained Logger Certification requires loggers to maintain their first aid and CPR certification as well as take additional

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approved courses during a five year period on a variety of topics, such as small business management, sustainable forestry, or advanced chain saw safety. TLC loggers, rapidly growing in numbers, represent another group of resource professionals that forest owners should seek when considering a timber sale.

Of the core components, Environmental Concerns has the greatest direct impact on forest owners and our forest resources. This component addresses the management practices that are necessary and appropriate to ensure the continued productivity and vigor of forests and how the components of forest ecosystems interact. The Environmental Concerns component covers a large number of topics that help loggers understand why foresters make certain decisions. Loggers better understand, for example, the silvicultural marking guides used to determine which trees should be cut during a preliminary versus a final harvest to ensure the long-term growth, regeneration, and health of the forest. After completing this component, loggers have improved knowledge of how forest management practices help maintain water quality and logging aesthetics and why different practices are used in different situations.

The Chain Saw Operation, Safety, and Productivity component provides a “hands-on” session that covers the relationship between safety and productivity. Specific topics addressed in this component include safety protection precautions and equipment, chain saw maintenance, safe chain saw operations, and several tree felling techniques. Currently, accredited workshops are offered by trained and certified professional logging instructors who themselves have a rigorous training and certification program to complete. The Chain Saw Operation, Safety, and Productivity component benefits forest owners as well as

loggers. This safety training has reduced the insurance costs for companies and logging supervisors, reduced damage to the trees left standing after logging because of increased skill in felling trees, and provides land owners with fewer concerns about the safety of those working in their woods.

The Standard Adult First Aid and CPR component is provided through the American Red Cross or other local providers, and also meets the first aid requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Numerous topics are covered, including Good Samaritan Laws, anatomy, cardiac arrest, strains and sprains, transport of injured people, shock, burns, and over a dozen other first aid situations.

The TLC program is gathering momentum among loggers throughout New York. In addition to the loggers who have completed initial certification, hundreds have also complete two of the three components of the



Loggers in the TLC program learn how their chosen practices impact the forest ecosystem.

training program. Many loggers have expressed their appreciation for the program. For example, after one Forest Ecology and Silviculture workshop (which covers the Environmental Concerns component standards) held in Warren County, participants reported a high level of usefulness of topics such as the

importance of aesthetics, skills for interacting with the public, and an improved understanding of the ecology of forested wetlands and watersheds. Sessions in Warren County have drawn loggers from many parts of the Adirondacks, from those who recently joined the ranks of loggers to loggers who have been working in the woods for over four decades.

The TLC program is valuable in that it provides benefits to loggers, forest owners, and the rural communities that include New York's forests. The strength of the program is that it is a cooperative effort on the part of timber harvesters, forest industry, government, and academia. For more information about New York Logger Training, Inc. and the Trained Logger Certification Program, contact Muriel D. Karp, Director of Communications at the Empire State Forest Products Association. Forest owners interested in forestry education programs should contact their county office of Cornell Cooperative Extension.



Loggers who have completed the NY Logger Training Program are an important addition to the team that makes forestry sustainable.