

A VIEW FROM YOUR STUMP

BY BOB WILLIAMS

LOGGING'S ONGOING PUBLIC RELATIONS BATTLE

Most forest landowners understand the critical role logging plays in the long-term ownership and conservation of their forest resources, both from an ecological and economic perspective.

The Britannica definition of logging is “the process of harvesting trees, sawing them into appropriate lengths and transporting them to a sawmill.” Of course, there is some variation. Yet both media and extremist environmentalists have successfully redefined logging in the public’s minds as the wanton destruction of forests. Over the last forty years, logging, which is a component of some forestry practices, has been used to demonize our management and use of forest natural resources.

Any reference to logging in the mainstream media usually has a negative connotation. It’s as if there’s some other, more environmentally-friendly way to harvest trees. Just as people don’t like to think of how their animal food is harvested, they apparently don’t want to recognize how trees become lumber.

With the recent passage of the national infrastructure bill, many needed billions of dollars will be dedicated to funding needed forest restoration of our national forests. Already there are efforts in Congress to stop the utilization of this funding to save our national forests from “logging” in the name of fuel reduction, forest restoration, and wildfire prevention.

Full disclosure: I am a forester and over my long career have made decisions to log millions of trees on tens of thousands of acres of forest land across North America. I am proud of the work loggers did on these projects and today, beautiful forests cover all of those lands.

Today, there are significant forest practice standards that ensure logging is done correctly. Yet logging is the primary tool used by extremists to limit, obstruct or prohibit tree harvesting anywhere for any reason. They use the word logging like a battle ax to demean, criticize, or ridicule any forest management activity that involves tree cutting.

Their hypocrisy is staggering. They refuse to speak of the essential use of wood fiber by every single human being on

this planet every single day. We humans are a forest-dependent species, no different than a wood thrush songbird or a grey squirrel. We need forests to survive and sustain our high quality of life for us and generations to come.


The political/social climate of forestry today does not support the management of our forest resources on any level whether public or private.

The latest battle cry to save forests from “logging” is the climate crisis. Most extremists now view the climate issue as the silver bullet they have long tried to manufacture, to prohibit or obstruct the cutting of any tree for any reason.

Most people agree that the world’s forests are critical to sustaining our climate. Trees play a critical role in extracting and storing carbon stocks. Yet when they scream to protect the trees, their hypocrisy grows even louder.

If one understands that wood fiber resources are essential to sustaining our everyday quality of life, how can the extremists be credible if they refuse to address or even mention how and where that wood fiber can or should come from? It is a level of hypocrisy not seen before and simply irresponsible. They all depend on wood every day of their lives yet oppose the sustainable use of wood.

Forest landowners need to pay attention to any proposed climate policy that will impact forest use. People in the forestry world need to participate as these policies evolve. We need to help the public understand that they need to support a balanced approach that provides for the critically needed goods and services that our forests provide. Locking forests down is a policy that is both irresponsible and will result in severe negative social and environmental impacts.

The utilization of wood fiber has always and will continue to play a critical role in sustaining both a healthy climate and a healthy economy. This is just a fact that their hypocrisy will one day have to confront. 

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Got a view? Send it to editor@forestlandowners.com in 700 words or less.