

THE LANDING

FALL 2021

**RISING
FROM
THE
ASHES**

PAGE 12

NEWS YOU CAN USE

PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE FOR TIMBER HARVESTERS AND HAULERS PROGRAM

Are you a timber logger or trucker whose operation has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic? The USDA Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers (PATHH) program will provide financial relief to timber-harvesting and timber-hauling businesses that experienced losses in 2020 due to COVID-19. This new program is part of the USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative.

For more information, visit:
<http://farmers.gov/pathh>



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Cover image:

Logging in the aftermath of the Creek Fire
in California.

NEW UPDATES TO TIMBERMATIC™ MAPS AND TIMBERMANAGER™

Smart production planning made easier



TIMBERMATIC MAPS UPDATES

TimberMatic Maps gives operators a real-time production view to the logging site. Data collected by the harvester and the precise GPS-based location of the felled timber is automatically transmitted to the TimberMatic Maps application for use by the forwarder. Data is updated through a cloud service. All operators working at the same logging site can see the driving routes, assortments, and tree species right down to the individual logs. New features include:

- A paintbrush tool allows the operator to select or deselect the area from which production is calculated.
- Production can be recorded within an operator-defined distance from the hauling trail.
- Assortments can be defined and displayed as deliveries — for example, according to final destination — as an alternative to showing production by assortment groups.
- All logs or a selection of logs can now be registered as loaded production.
- New production types include energy stems, multi-tree handling (MTH) stems, and unclassified.
- A new setting allows the user to change the landing area's type and location.
- New site-specific custom map layers disappear after the site is archived.
- Screenshots can be exported and opened with other mapping tools.



TIMBERMANAGER UPDATES

In addition to TimberMatic Maps onboard the machine, contractors and supervisors can monitor live progress from anywhere at any time using TimberManager — a web-based solution for PCs, tablets, and mobile phones. Select a logging site and view harvesting and forwarding progress at a glance, along with more detailed information including machine production and efficiencies. New features include:

- Assortments can be defined and displayed as deliveries — for example, according to final destination — as an alternative to displaying production by assortment groups.
- New production types include energy stems, MTH stems, and unclassified.
- Codes can be set for the remaining stems, such as high stump.
- Production is now grouped by species, similar to TimberMatic Maps.
- Storing history is similar to TimberMatic Maps and can be displayed machine by machine.
- A list of previous sites can be viewed for each machine.
- Assortments can be marked as favorites and highlighted on the map.
- Area selection, Points of Interest (PoIs), Areas of Interest (Aols), and cut-block boundaries functions are easier to use.
- PoIs, Aols, and LoIs (Lines of Interest) can be exported as shapefiles.
- Authorizations can be requested for basemaps and synchronized in the cloud.
- New site-specific custom map layers disappear after the site is archived.

Our map-based production-planning and -tracking systems, TimberMatic Maps and TimberManager, provide valuable insight about your logging operations so you can make more effective decisions — and they ultimately help you maximize profits, efficiency, and business opportunities. The latest version of our TimberMatic control system (2.5) for harvesters and forwarders includes improvements to TimberMatic Maps and TimberManager. Here's an overview of the new features.

FOCUSING ON WHAT

John Deere Brazil Forestry provides forum for customer

At John Deere, we put our customers squarely at the center of everything we do. Recently over 60 John Deere Brazil Forestry employees — including sales, marketing, parts, service, technology, and administrative — joined a video conference titled “Knowing Who Matters Most to Us.” The purpose of the call was to learn more about one of our customers, Gaya Forestry Services (GFS), so Deere and the local dealership can better meet the company’s unique needs.

Started in October 1991, GFS is headquartered in Guaíba in Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost state of Brazil. The company employs over 248 workers and runs a large fleet of more than 35 forestry machines, including five John Deere harvesters and four Deere forwarders. The company’s crews work three shifts, with each site typically running four harvesters and three forwarders.

John Deere Brazil’s Product Marketing Manager Rodrigo F. Barbosa presided over the call. Alexandre Stringhini and Eduardo Stringhini represented GFS and took questions. Here are a few excerpts:

PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY ARE PARAMOUNT

“Thanks for remembering Gaya in this really cool initiative,” says Alexandre. “Our main focus is meeting the needs of our main customers, CMPC Celulose Riograndense and TANAC, for whom we harvest an average of 200,000 to 220,000 cubic meters per month. Our productivity is linked to availability of equipment and having a qualified workforce. The service provided by our suppliers is very important to us. We live on efficiency and productivity.”

“Those two things are more important than ever,” says Eduardo. “The high U.S. dollar has impacted the price of machines and parts, which is our biggest difficulty today. The strong dollar has many positives, too — it’s good for our customers and for demand — but it also brings a very high cost to our day-to-day activities to keep the equipment fully operational. We can’t really talk with our customers about being affected by the exchange rate and pass on that cost. But we have been passing this message on to our suppliers — the imbalance between what we earn and are paying to operationalize the company.”

GAYA FORESTRY SERVICES

STARTED IN
OCTOBER

1991

35+ FORESTRY
MACHINES

HARVESTS AN AVERAGE OF

200-220K

CUBIC METERS PER MONTH

EMPLOYS OVER 248 WORKERS

3 SHIFTS
RUNNING 18-19
HOURS PER DAY

GOAL IS TO WORK 560 HOURS
PER MACHINE PER MONTH

90% MACHINE-
AVAILABILITY
GOAL

WHAT MATTERS MOST

BRAZIL

~
SÃO
PAULO

PORTO
ALEGRE

RIO GRANDE
DO SUL

The southernmost
state of Brazil

UPTIME AND MACHINE MAINTENANCE

“Our goal is to work 560 hours per machine per month in three shifts,” says Alexandre. “We don’t have spare equipment, so our goal is 90-percent machine availability. One of the reasons we chose John Deere equipment is they have a dealership in Porto Alegre. They are extremely agile in delivering and picking up parts, which helps meet our availability goal. We’re very satisfied with the after-sales staff and field-service team.”

“Preventative maintenance is a key focus,” he adds. “We don’t have a central shop, so we do it all in the field. We have a good team that can perform regular maintenance and service, and John Deere staff in the field teaches our group how to perform tasks as well.”

“We perform checks at the end of each shift, especially heads, which experience the most wear,” explains Eduardo. “We have two types of work in our region. Our Acacia forests are very small trees that are light work for the harvesting head. CMPC’s forests are very heavy, so the level of wear on the Waratah H215 heads and the cost of maintenance are higher. But in the end our H215 heads and 2144G Harvesters deliver excellent productivity. The machines have 16,000 hours and are in near-perfect condition.”

TRAINING

“We have a very good, qualified workforce, especially field supervisors,” says Alexandre. “But it’s increasingly difficult to find operators. That’s a very big concern because labor is scarce and the labor market is very competitive. So we are constantly training. We always have two or three people in operational training.”

OVERALL EXPERIENCE IS POSITIVE


“We always receive prompt service from our dealer,” says Alexandre. “They provide rapid service and parts delivery. In this regard and in other areas, we’re very satisfied with John Deere. One area for improvement we’d like to see is more quickly dispatching the part from the Parts Distribution Center in São Paulo to our local dealer. That’s an area we’re working on because we run three shifts 18 or 19 hours a day. Lost machine time is lost production. But overall, working with John Deere is very satisfactory.”

Gaya Forestry Services is serviced by John Deere — Florestal, Porto Alegre, Brazil.



Like
CLOCKWORK

Working together to rise above the storm



A rising tide may lift all boats, as the expression goes, but many loggers prefer dry land. Cedar Creek Logging Company hasn't shied away from wet conditions.

At logging sites about an hour north of Panama City, Florida, Cedar Creek Logging's three crews are hard at work. One is a conventional tree-length crew — also known as the “hill crew.” It runs a John Deere 643L Wheeled Feller Buncher and 748L Skidders, and works on drier land, primarily pine plantations.

The company's other two crews are what Operator and Crew Supervisor Dale Sellers calls “swamp crews.” But owner Shane Messick prefers the term “tracked crews” or “shovel crews.” “I try not to work in swamps but rather in converted swamps with planted pine,” says Messick.

Each of these crews runs a John Deere 2156G Shovel Logger, an 853M Tracked Feller Buncher, and L-II Series Skidders. “Our buncher lays down the trees, and the shovel comes up behind to build the mat for the skidder to run on,” says Messick. “You really have to keep the mat up under you or you'll sink a machine.”

Cedar Creek Logging has grown in recent years because of this ability to harvest pine in mucky conditions. “It's the main reason we're down here in the southern Florida Panhandle,” says Messick. “We're one of the few operations around that can work in this environment.”

GET TOGETHER AND GET ALONG

Sellers and his crew typically start the day at 6 a.m. He and his brother Jason often cook chili while performing daily checks on their machines. Or depending on the season, they might cook deer or fish. “It's nice to fix a hot meal instead of the typical cold meals a logger would bring,” says Sellers. “It makes you feel more like you're at home. We make it fun, because if you enjoy your work, it's not really work. That's what makes us unique.”

That's not to suggest the company's three crews don't work hard. Each crew averages about 70 loads a week. When the company started, a crew would do maybe 20 loads a week. “We've grown tremendously over the years,” says Sellers.

“I try not to work in swamps but rather in converted swamps with planted pine.”

SHANE MESSICK

Owner, Cedar Creek Logging Company, Inc.



The comfortable, family atmosphere is what attracted Sellers to Cedar Creek Logging. He's been with the company for seven years. "We all get along," he says. "We've got the right guys in the right places, and it works like clockwork. Logging can be aggravating at times. But if someone is having a bad day, I guarantee one of us will make him smile. And Shane is as good a guy as you'd want to work for. He never raises his voice when things go wrong."

"We just don't have any drama," says Messick. "We're out here with each other for more time than we are with our spouses, so no one puts up with it. That's my philosophy — get together and get along."

Messick owes his success to Sellers, his other crew foremen Chris Doyal and Carl Dawson, and his truck foreman Steve Hallmark. "They are the backbone keeping crews running at optimal levels," he says. "Honestly, I couldn't do it without any of my guys, many of whom have been with me for a long time. That includes Keith Dunson and Clay Shannon, who help in purchasing wood, and Adrian Jenkins, who keeps us all straight with bookkeeping and other office work."

ADAPTING IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE MICHAEL

Cedar Creek Logging started running its first tracked crew about four years ago. "All the dry ground down here was going away," says Messick.

"The 853M is one of the best logging machines Deere has come out with."

DALE SELLERS

*Operator and Crew Supervisor,
Cedar Creek Logging Company, Inc.*

"We were hiring other shovel crews and decided we can do this ourselves. It's allowed us to keep working where the wood is."

Messick has tried many competitor shovel machines but prefers the John Deere 2156G "hands down." "It's been worry free since day one, and we have almost 5,000 hours on it," he says.

The 853M Tracked Feller Buncher has been essential in the conditions Cedar Creek Logging works in. "It just amazes me that it will go almost anywhere you want to put it," observes Sellers. "And it's strong. It can handle as many trees as will fit in the head and set them down, like it's playing a big game. And do it all day long. It makes everything so effortless and efficient. It's one of the best logging machines Deere has come out with."

The company added its second tracked crew after Hurricane Michael struck the Florida Panhandle in October 2018. According to the Florida Forest Service, the hurricane damaged 28 million acres of the state's timberland, or 72 million tons of timber. That's approximately 2.5 million log trucks worth of wood.

Cedar Creek Logging helped clean up downed wood for about a year after the hurricane. "After a year the wood goes bad," explains Sellers. "We're still dealing with a lot of dead wood, but it's only good for pulpwood, and only one mill around here will take it."





After Hurricane Michael, pine inventory declined 28 percent and hard wood declined 19 percent. Loggers in the region have had it tough since the hurricane struck, with many going out of business. “A lot of loggers are still struggling,” says Sellers. “It’s going to take years of replanting and regrowth to return to what it was.”

Messick is grateful his company has adapted and can meet the demand for a booming lumber market right now. “It’s crazy. It’s the highest market since I’ve been in business. It’s a good time for us right now — we’ve been blessed.”

FROM SWEEPING UP SAWDUST TO MANAGING A LOGGING OPERATION

Before starting Cedar Creek Logging in 2011, Messick had to work his way up. After graduating with a degree in forestry from Lake City Community College (now Florida Gateway College), he toiled for four years in the same mill where his father worked. “I did grunt work pretty much,” he says. “You have to start at the bottom.”

After leaving the mill, Messick bought timber for two companies in the Panama City area for about six years. In addition to buying timber from a landowner, he’d hire a logger to cut it and work with the mills on setting rates.

Starting his own logging operation was a logical progression. Messick bought an old skidder, feller

buncher, and knuckleboom loader from a logger in Bristol, Florida, and he was off and running. Today, he still buys most of his own timber and employs 30 people. And he now runs mostly Deere equipment.

“My first skidder was a used John Deere 648G-II,” he says. “And we continue to run Deere skidders because they are reliable and operator friendly. And the support we get from our local John Deere dealer, Beard Equipment, had been exceptional.”

The two shovel crews run Deere 948L-II Skidders with duals. “It doesn’t matter how boggy the mat is, that machine will drag a load through hell and bring it to you,” says Sellers. “It will pull a massive load of wood through the muck like it’s no problem. The 22-square-foot grapple is strong, and the hydraulics are quick and responsive.”

Sellers has been around Deere equipment all his life dating back to his family’s logging business in the 1970s and ’80s. “It’s always been John Deere for my family, for this company, and for many loggers around this area. The name speaks for itself. It’s all-around good, dependable equipment — as the slogan says, Deere helps us OUTRUN™ downtime.”

Cedar Creek Logging Company, Inc. is serviced by Beard Equipment Co., Panama City, Florida.



To see more of the story, visit [JohnDeere.com/TheLanding](https://www.johndeere.com/TheLanding)

“It doesn’t matter how boggy the mat is, that machine will drag a load through hell and bring it to you.”

DALE SELLERS

*Operator and Crew Supervisor,
Cedar Creek Logging Company, Inc.*



DEERE GEAR

TOUGH TRIO

H425

Introducing three new H400-Series harvester heads for big stems

Rugged new John Deere H423, H425, and H425HD harvester heads for our G-Series Wheeled Harvesters and MH-Series Tracked Harvesters deliver outstanding performance and reliability. A powerful control valve and four roller-feed arm geometry secure a solid grip and agile harvester-head control, for maximum productivity. New feed-motor hosing routings and covers bolster hose protection, for increased durability. Servicing enhancements include a new hinged valve cover and improved access to greasing points.

These H400-Series harvester heads are perfect for everything from thinnings to heavy-duty applications with big stems. And they have the broadest option availability in the John Deere harvester-head portfolio, including several feed-motor, frame, and saw-motor options, making them well suited to a variety of other operations.

To learn more, visit [JohnDeere.com/Forestry](https://www.johndeere.com/forestry).

The smaller H423 is ideal for thinnings and other fellings where the tree diameter at chest height is 150 to 350 mm.

The H425HD is designed to work on the toughest jobs and features a heavy-duty tilt frame and feed-motor guards to boost durability. Other enhancements include expander pins in the upper end of the tilt cylinder, feed-motor arms, and lower delimiting knives.

Combining high productivity with excellent measuring accuracy and delimiting quality, the H425 excels in large-diameter regeneration harvesting.



RISING FROM THE ASHES

First responders and logging companies such as Messer Logging help a community rebound after the devastating Creek Fire



STORY: KEVIN ORFIELD
PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID LEE MJOLSNESS

“We knew it was going to happen. We just didn’t know it was going to be as bad as it was. It just took off.”

TIM MESSER
Owner, Messer Logging



Located in central California, the Sierra National Forest is known for its stunning lakes and mountain vistas. Towns such as Shaver Lake are popular vacation destinations.

At an elevation of 5,500 feet, Shaver Lake is noticeably cooler than nearby, more metropolitan Fresno, which is 50 miles to the southwest. The artificial lake was formed with the completion of a hydroelectric dam built by Southern California Edison (SCE) in 1927. The area covered by the lake was extensively logged, and to this day, the town maintains a nostalgic logging theme. Several of the town’s buildings are converted sawmills.

Logger Tim Messer grew up around his father’s sawmill and was raised about five miles from Shaver Lake in the Pine Ridge area. When asked what he loves most about logging, the owner of Messer Logging replies: “The working conditions. I work in an area where people vacation. People would pay to do what I do.” Then he adds reflectively, “When it was green, it was a beautiful view.”

THE FIRE

The view from the logging site over the mountainous valley near Shaver Lake remains austere beautiful. But the acres of burned trees are a stark reminder of the Creek Fire that raged from September until December in 2020.

The largest single fire in California history began on Friday afternoon, September 4. “It was a real eye-opener,” recalls Messer. “We knew it was going to happen. We just didn’t know it was going to be as bad as it was. It just took off.”

Driven by powerful upcanyon winds, the Creek Fire quickly became a firestorm, expanding 20,000 to 50,000 acres per day from September 4–9. Fueled by a pileup of dead trees



due to drought and beetle-bug infestation, the fire literally exploded over the following weeks, consuming almost 380,000 acres by the time it burned itself out. Almost 900 buildings were destroyed by the fire. Hundreds of people had to be rescued by National Guard helicopters, but miraculously no one perished.

THE FIRST RESPONDERS

SCE owns most of the land surrounding Shaver Lake. Messer Logging works almost exclusively for Sierra Forest Products, Inc., harvesting cedar, white fir, sugar pine, and ponderosa pine. When the Creek Fire started, someone from SCE called Messer and told him to move his equipment. "We had machines scattered all over but moved them to a safe spot. I remember watching the fire roar up in the hills. I couldn't believe it had traveled 15 miles in a matter of hours."

An SCE forester asked Messer Logging to build a fire line along Highway 168 at Camp Edison, a campground with 252 campsites located on the lake. The company worked on fire mitigation until mid-October. Due to mitigation efforts from firefighters and loggers such as Messer, the town of Shaver Lake and Messer's hometown of Auberry were saved. "I didn't think there was any way they were going to save these towns, but they did, and everybody is thankful."

Signs thanking first responders are still posted in both towns. "Residents would hang signs on our gate at the shop," recalls Messer. "During the fire, we had people stopping by with granola bars, cases of water, and sunscreen. It's a real close-knit community and people really stepped up."



"It's a real close-knit community and people really stepped up."

TIM MESSER
Owner, Messer Logging

THE AFTERMATH

Today almost all of Messer Logging's work involves removing the burned trees, which must be harvested within one or two years while they are still merchantable. Messer believes loggers will be able to harvest only about five percent of these trees before they are no longer usable.

"We'll be logging the burned trees this year and next," he says. "After that, I'm not sure. Almost half of the Sierra National Forest's 1.2 million acres are black, without timber growing on them. To stay busy, loggers will have to diversify by going into reforestation and site preparation." Messer is already diversified, having started a construction company back in 1998.


Messer's father, Raymond Wesley Messer, better known as R.W., also adapted to changing conditions. He opened his sawmill in 1951, later starting a logging operation in 1973. "My father closed his own mill so he could contract log with larger sawmills," says Messer. "He lived through the Great

Depression so he instilled a great work ethic. We never wasted anything or threw it away. We used what we had."

When he was young, Messer drove the water truck and loaded logs with a front-end wheel loader. Logs were hand felled and skidded to the landing using a bulldozer with a cable and winch. In the mid-1980s, the company purchased its first John Deere grapple skidder, a 648D.

In 1981, R.W. Messer incorporated his company, giving Tim a 45-percent share. Two decades later in 2001, the younger Messer bought his father's share of the company. Over the years Messer Logging continued to hand fell trees until last year, when Tim bought a John Deere 2154G Swing Machine with a Waratah processing head.

"The mills had kept us harvesting big wood on rough ground with chain saws," says Messer. "But when the fire hit, I knew we'd be cutting a lot of small logs, and you can't do that efficiently by hand."

A green John Deere grapple skidder is shown in a logging site. The machine is positioned on a dirt path, with its grapple arm extended. In the background, there are numerous charred tree trunks standing as sentinels against a hazy, mountainous landscape. The ground is covered with a layer of ash and charred wood. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

"We'll be logging the burned trees this year and next. After that, I'm not sure."

TIM MESSER
Owner, Messer Logging

Messer also runs two Deere 2656G Swing Machines with live heels. "A front-end wheel loader is fine if you're loading six or eight logs. But when you're loading 40, a log loader is much quicker." The company also runs five John Deere skidders, including a 748L and an 848L.

Including Messer Logging and Tim Messer Construction, Messer owns 27 pieces of John Deere equipment. "We're 99-percent John Deere. I've had good luck with their equipment. They're fuel efficient and reliable. And we get excellent support from our local John Deere dealer, Papé Machinery. If I've got a problem, they're on it. And that's important because if a machine is not moving, we're not producing."

Using JDLink™ machine monitoring, Papé keeps tabs on service codes and can alert Messer if there is an issue. "I got a call the other day from the service manager, who told me the radiator was running hot on one of our machines. I asked him how in the heck he knew that in Fresno. They are able to remotely monitor the machine, and in this case, we resolved the issue over the

phone before it became a major problem that required a service tech to pay us a visit."

JDLink also allows the company to track machine hours, fuel consumption, and idle time. "Our employees are hard workers, but monitoring idle time helps us make sure we're maximizing machine utilization," he says.

Messer is proud of his crew, many of whom have been with him for decades. "I have an employee who graduated high school on a Friday and started working with us on Monday. He's been here ever since, and he's 61 years old now," he says. "I just try to treat them with respect and take care of them, because they're not just employees. They're family."

Messer Logging, Inc. is serviced by Papé Machinery, Fowler, California.



To see more of the story, visit JohnDeere.com/TheLanding

DOWN TIME

CRUISE CONTROL



Logger Jack Sowell enjoys working in the woods, but his true passion is the sea. Growing up in a poor family living on the Florida Panhandle, it would have been difficult for him to imagine that he'd one day be visiting exotic locations on a cruise ship. "When I was young, I had the opportunity to get into the logging business," he recalls. "It was hard at first, but I've been fortunate that it has afforded me the opportunity to go to sea."

Sowell has been on 57 cruises, including trips to the Bahamas and the Caribbean. His favorite cruise was Alaska, which departed from the beautiful port city of Vancouver before traveling up through The Last Frontier's Inside Passage. While stopping at scenic remote Alaskan villages along the way, Sowell watched whales, explored fjords, and climbed glaciers.

Onboard the ship, Sowell enjoys singing country songs at karaoke bars as well as seeing musicians, comics, and other entertainers. The number of cruises he has been on has earned him diamond or platinum status on several cruise lines. Special

privileges include boarding and leaving the ship before other guests. Sowell also enjoys access to exclusive enclaves. "One of the cruise lines has this area on the top of the ship known as 'The Haven.' It's not like the rest of the ship." The spacious suites are completely private and include personal concierge, valet, and butler services; private restaurants and lounges; and priority access to the ship's other services.

Sowell values the solitude and tranquility above all. "Honestly, I don't care where the ship goes," he says. "I'm away from my phone and no one can bother me. I just enjoy the ride."





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**MAINTAIN THE STURDIEST OF FOOTING,
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How do our all-new G-Series Wheeled Harvesters give you more stability and control? Heavy-duty axles and brakes provide a sturdier base for navigating the forest. The auto-leveling cab rotates to keep operators comfortable on hills. While twin-pump hydraulics deliver power to the boom and head at the same time for better control and more efficient processing. This is how you get ahead.



JOHN DEERE

LOG IN, LOGS OUT.

The forestry industry is an increasingly intricate business that requires seamless coordination of your team's performance in the woods and the back office to achieve success. To help take the guesswork out of effective decision making, TimberMatic™ Maps and TimberManager™ are our map-based planning and tracking systems that allow your team to share real-time production and location information. Then, leverage the suite of dealer and factory tools in John Deere Connected Support™ to help reduce, or even prevent, costly downtime. This is how John Deere Precision Forestry simplifies your business operations by optimizing your team's efforts, and in turn, your gains.

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