

Logger in Brunswick just doing their job

Recently, a timber harvesting operation in Brunswick on behalf of a landowner/developer has drawn heavy criticism and concern from neighboring residents, as outlined in media coverage including a Times Record story entitled [Brunswick Logging Operation Rankles Some Residents](#).

As the trade association representing loggers throughout the Northeast including the logging contractor who performed the work, the Professional Logging Contractors (PLC) of the Northeast would like to commend the Maine Forest Service for making it clear at a special Brunswick Town Council meeting on the issue on June 20 that the logger in question was operating legally and professionally. We further appreciate the council's professionalism in making it clear there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. That said, after reviewing residents' concerns about safety and impacts of the job, we feel some additional comments are needed.

First, safety is the number one priority in the logging industry. No contractor wants an employee or a bystander injured on a job. These are hardworking people who want to go home safely at the end of the day and cannot afford the risk to themselves or to the public. Their operating margins are too thin to take unnecessary risks. There is simply no other way to remain in business today.

Second, while we understand those unused to the sight and sound of mechanized logging equipment can be intimidated by it, the machines they use are their toolbox and are built specifically to get the job done safely and with as little impact on the land as possible. Just like a tractor for a farmer or a boat for a fisherman, logging equipment is vital to their craft. When combined with decades of knowledge and skill, landowners and abutters can be sure the job is being done as professionally as possible, and that means complying with the many rules and regulations on when and how trees can be cut and transported to minimize environmental impacts.

With all of that said, we understand most homeowners would prefer not to see timber harvesting near their own properties or on forestland that they recreate in even though someone else owns it. They are perfectly within their rights to voice concerns and opposition.

At the same time, we'd remind everyone that the logger in Brunswick was just doing their job. Like the majority of logging contractors in the Northeast, this one is a family-owned business working very hard in a very difficult industry, no different from any other service provider, be it building construction, farming or solar installer.

We are fortunate there are still loggers willing to do this work in the woods, because we cannot live without wood and the products they produce. Most of us – including those neighboring this particular timber harvest - live in wooden homes on land that was cleared

by loggers. We use paper and other wood products daily. We cannot live without them, nor do we need to, because wood is a renewable resource and Maine today is more forested than it was in the early 1900's thanks to modern harvesting techniques and forest management.

Finally, we have to add that while the majority of opposition to this timber harvest was respectful, there were notable exceptions. Incidents of trespassing, heckling, and even throwing rocks at logging machines occurred. Don't take our word for it, speak to local law enforcement and the Maine Forest Service if you doubt it. For any who feel such actions were justified, ask yourself if rocks would be thrown at or the integrity questioned of a farmer using a tractor to harvest corn on private land, a fishing boat legally catching fish or a builder using power tools to construct a house? If not, then ask why should loggers be treated any differently? Instead of targeting them, get to know them and the next time you throw wood in your fire or that Amazon box shows up at your house, remember your neighbor, the logger.

By Dana Doran, Executive Director, Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast