

## IV. MARKETING MERCHANTABLE SAWLOGS

### A. Commercial Sawmill Operations

Although typical production-oriented sawmills shy away from street tree logs, some, particularly the smaller mills (such as a mill that saws less than 1.5 million board feet per year), may purchase them. Normally, sawmills located near urban and suburban areas are relatively small and may be best suited for your needs. In fact, some urban and suburban mills actively buy street tree logs (see Case Study on page 27). There are many ways to locate potential sawmills interested in buying street tree logs. The easiest ways include contacting the following:

1. State Forestry Offices
  - Sawmill Directories
  - Marketing Bulletins
2. Consulting Foresters
3. Forestry/Wood Products Extension Offices
4. Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Program
5. Word-of-Mouth

#### 1. State Forestry Offices

Most state forestry offices have staff specialists who work closely with the forest products industries of the state. These individuals may be able to direct you to sawmills that buy street tree logs. The addresses and phone numbers of the forestry offices are listed in Appendix C. When contacting a state forestry office, ask to talk with a forest products utilization and marketing specialist. These specialists are generally the best source of assistance in helping you make contact with sawmills.

A service which most state forestry agencies provide is the publication of a state-wide sawmill directory. Normally, these directories list sawmills by county and include helpful information about each. Consulting this type of directory is a good way to locate sawmills in your area. Contact your state forestry office for a copy.

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**Marketing street tree sawlogs depends on locating cooperative sawmills in your area.**

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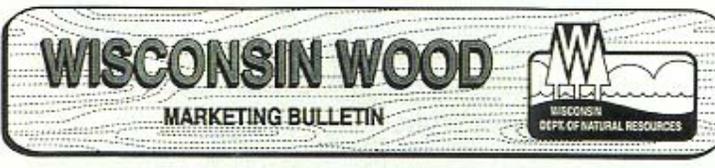
Sawmill directories are helpful because they allow you to learn more about the sawmills located near you. This example is from the West Virginia Forest Industry Directory.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY						
Green Lumber						
Company Name and Address	Mill Type	Size Class	Associated Equipment	Products Purchased	Principal Species	Products By-Products
<b>H A M P S H I R E   C O N T</b>						
<i>Shingleton Timber &amp; Trucking</i> Post Office Box 486 Augusta, WV 26704 (304) 496-7055 Fax: (304) 496-8972 Galen Shingleton	Band	4.5MM	Debarker Chipper Planer Dry Kiln Edger	Stumpage Sawlogs	Mixed Hdwds	Lumber Ties
<b>H A N C O C K</b> None Reported at this Time						
<b>H A R D Y</b>						
<i>Bradfield Lumber Company, Inc.</i> Route 1, Box 104 Rio, WV 26755 (304) 897-5138 Glen Bradfield	Circle Portable	100M	None Listed	None	Mixed Hdwds Red Oak White Oak	Lumber Ties
<i>Brill's Lumber &amp; Logging</i> Post Office Box 142 Wardensville, WV 26851 (304) 874-3060 Leland "Ike" Brill	Circle	100M	None Listed	Stumpage	Mixed Hdwds	Lumber
<i>Curtis Miller Sawmill</i> HC 87, Box 87 Wardensville, WV 26851 (304) 897-6448	Circle	600M	Top Saw	Stumpage	Mixed Hdwds Red Oak White Oak	Lumber Ties Blocking

Another service that some state forestry agencies offer is a monthly or quarterly marketing bulletin. State marketing bulletins serve as an avenue that connects suppliers and buyers of wood products with each other.

Advertisements about your available logs can be placed in your state's marketing bulletin. Normally, there is no charge for advertising. Appendix D lists state forestry offices that publish a marketing bulletin.

Advertising in state marketing bulletins can be an effective method for locating log buyers. To place an ad, simply contact the appropriate state forestry office.



Published by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison, WI 53711 March/April, 2003

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**WOOD MARKETING BULLETIN**

The Wisconsin DNR publishes the "Wisconsin Wood" marketing bulletin every two months. It serves the timber producing and wood using industries of Wisconsin by listing items. For sale - forest products, equipment and services, wanted - forest products, equipment and services, employment opportunities. There is no charge for the Bulletin or inserting items in it. Only items deemed appropriate to the timber producing and wood processing industries will be listed. Also the Bulletin will feature forest products utilization and marketing news, safety news, coming events, new literature, tips to the industry, and listing or employment wanted or positions that are available.

If you know of someone who would like to be on the Bulletin mailing list, please ask them to send their name, address and zip code to the return address on the back page. Also, if you have items to list, send

"Unfortunately, outsourcing often refers to importing, as finished wood product manufacturers are purchasing their components from both domestic and offshore suppliers," he says. "Therefore, the battle is now between domestic and offshore component manufacturers."

The three most common strategies utilized by U.S. woodworkers competing with imports have led the WCMA in three distinct directions in its efforts to help members remain competitive. "The first thing a company ought to do is conduct a thorough cost analysis to establish costs and identify areas of cost reduction," says Lawser. For this reason, the WCMA developed a Cost-of-Doing-Business Survey to help members compare their costs with costs encountered by their peers and identify areas for improvement.

The second strategy is to improve production efficiencies and labor productivity. "Modern woodworking machinery and equipment have helped significantly in the critical areas of lumber

order on time, are willing to work with you, and their products match your production capabilities. These customers need to be treated as top priority before chasing new orders from new or unknown companies."

**Membership** - Representing about 150 manufacturers of various dimension and wood component products, the UCMA membership includes some companies that have their own timberlands, sawmills, and a few that produce finished products. Members produce a variety of rough, semi- and fully-machined wood component products for the furniture, cabinet, molding, millwork, building products, and related decorative wood product industries.

Components include cut-to-size blanks, edge-glued panels, solid and laminated squares, dowels, moldings, turnings, table and chair parts, cabinet doors and parts, cabinet doors and parts, frame block, staircase parts, interior trim, millwork, engineered wood components, and other

## 2. Consulting Foresters

Consulting foresters provide forestry services and expertise to landowners for a fee agreed to by the landowner and forester. Consulting foresters are usually familiar with sawmills in their work area. They may be able to direct you to potential sawmills interested in purchasing your logs. Many state forestry offices (Appendix C) maintain listings of consulting foresters in their individual states. Also, the Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc., maintains a detailed directory of its members' services. A copy can be purchased by contacting them at the following address:

The Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc.  
732 North Washington Street, Suite 4-A  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1921  
Phone: 703-548-0990  
FAX: 703-548-6395  
Email: [director@acf-foresters.com](mailto:director@acf-foresters.com)  
Web site: [www.acf-foresters.com](http://www.acf-foresters.com)

## 3. Forestry/Wood Products Extension Offices

Many land grant universities employ forestry/wood products extension specialists as part of their forestry/wood technology programs. These professionals can provide information pertaining to sawmills located in your area. Appendix E lists the land grant universities that employ forestry/wood products extension specialists.

## 4. RC&D Program

The RC&D program is a national program that assists rural communities in improving their economies through wise use and development of natural resources. Each RC&D area has a full-time coordinator who oversees the daily program operations. Many coordinators are familiar with sawmills in their area (which usually consists of several counties). They may be able to provide you with names and addresses of sawmills that might purchase your logs. Appendix F lists the individual state-wide RC&D program administration offices.

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**There are many ways to locate sawmills that purchase street tree logs.**

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**Crafters, hobbyists, and custom sawmillers are potential buyers of street tree logs.**

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## **5. Word-of-Mouth**

Another way to locate sawmills willing to purchase street tree logs is by word-of-mouth. For instance, employees of other municipalities and tree care companies may be able to direct you to potential buyers. Remember, there may be potential buyers in your backyard, it's just a matter of being aware of who they are.

## **B. Local Crafters/Hobbyists/Custom Sawmillers**

Beyond commercial sawmills, many hobbyists and crafters are interested in purchasing unique logs for their hobbies and/or profession. Those who have portable bandmills are often interested in purchasing small quantities of sawlogs to cut into lumber. For example, spalted logs are highly desirable for their beauty and income potential once turned into finished products. Consequently, hobbyists or crafters seeking this type of material can become a good market for your logs. Some ways of locating these people are:

1. State Forestry Offices
2. Sawmill Equipment Manufacturers
3. Craft Organizations
4. Word-of-Mouth
5. The Internet

### **1. State Forestry Offices**

Your state forestry agency's forest products utilization and marketing specialist may be able to direct you to potential crafters/hobbyists/custom sawmillers who are interested in street tree logs. See Appendix C.

### **2. Sawmill Equipment Manufacturers**

Portable or small-size sawmill manufacturers usually maintain lists of customers that have bought their mills. Often, they are willing to share these lists with potential customers of their mills. If you contact these manufacturers and explain that you want to market sawlogs and are looking for potential buyers, they may share their lists with you. For a listing of portable sawmill manufacturers see Appendix G.

### 3. Craft Organizations

Most states have some type of state-wide craft organization. Usually, these organizations include crafters who produce specialty wood products. Some of these individuals produce lumber for their own needs. If not, they purchase it. Regardless, these individuals may be able to direct you to small-scale sawmill operators who are interested in purchasing street tree logs. A list of state-wide craft organizations is found in Appendix H.

### 4. Word-of-Mouth

Many good contacts generated come via word-of-mouth. Do not overlook the knowledge of employees from surrounding municipalities.

### 5. The Internet

As Internet usage continues to grow, conducting periodic searches on subjects such as urban wood utilization, urban logs, via various Internet search engines may provide you with additional contacts and/or guidance in regard to moving your sawlogs.



Photo courtesy of Wood-Mizer Products, Inc.

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**Portable sawmills offer crafters and other small business people the opportunity to process logs to their desired specifications. Consequently, companies with these types of mills may be a valuable market for your street tree logs.**

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*Although portable bandmills are not "high" production mills as are conventional bandmills and circular mills, they are capable of processing street tree logs. Portable bandmill blades are thin, have many teeth, and are relatively inexpensive. Because of this, hitting metal is usually not as damaging and/or costly because the blade can be replaced at a moderate price.*

## **C. In-house Markets: Viable Options for Municipalities**

Today's portable sawmill technology allows municipalities to produce products from street tree removals for their own use. These portable mills are relatively easy to operate and maintain and are usually priced in the \$12,000 to \$25,000 range. These mills can produce landscape ties, truck bed material, and a broad range of lumber products to satisfy municipal needs. The portable sawmill manufacturers listed on pages 22 and 23 can provide detailed information about costs, production rates, maintenance, and use of these machines.

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**Some municipalities may want to consider purchasing a portable sawmill for processing their own street tree logs.**

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Many of today's portable sawmills are small-scale bandmills. This type of mill is more tolerant of occasionally hitting a nail or piece of metal than a conventional mill is. If a blade is ruined because of hitting metal, it can be replaced with a new blade. The cost is normally less than \$30 for a portable bandmill blade.

## **V. CASE STUDIES**

### **Case Study A. M&A Tree Service, Garwood, NJ**

*Following is an example of how a tree service company began utilizing municipal street tree removals profitably.*

M&A Tree Service started business seven years ago by providing a standard array of tree service activities, including tree removal and tree maintenance work for both private and public customers. Typically, a tree removal job involved taking the diseased, dead, or hazardous tree down in sections and then cutting the limbs and trunk into short "firewood-size chunks." One by one, these chunks were loaded into trucks for transport to the company's storage yard firewood pile.

This hard labor was followed by more, including handling, splitting, and repiling the wood as firewood for sale. After the wood air dried enough for sale, it was loaded onto a truck for delivery and stacking at the customer's location.

Mike Tomaiolo, owner of M&A Tree Service, got very tired of the strenuous labor of processing, lifting, and hand-loading firewood.