



## New Method For Marking Logs

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Contracts to harvest timber from National Forests in the west include requirements for logs to be branded and painted on each end with a spot of yellow paint. In many cases involving small diameter logs, waivers are granted.

A recent American pastime where war games are played with "paintballs" has made promising new tools available for foresters. The guns developed for these games can be used to apply paint spots on logs.



Figure 1.—Gun and ammo.

Recently, engineers at the Forest Service Technology and Development Center have experimented with some of these guns and oil-based paintballs. Favorable reports have been reported by all parties involved in these tests.

During part of the trials, paintball systems were made available through the Salmon National Forest to loggers frustrated with having to mark large numbers of small diameter logs.

Management in the logging companies were concerned about the labor expense and safety of workers crawling over log decks and onto equipment in all kinds of weather and terrain to accomplish the task.

A paintball gun makes it easy to mark a large number of logs from a safe distance. Shooters can mark

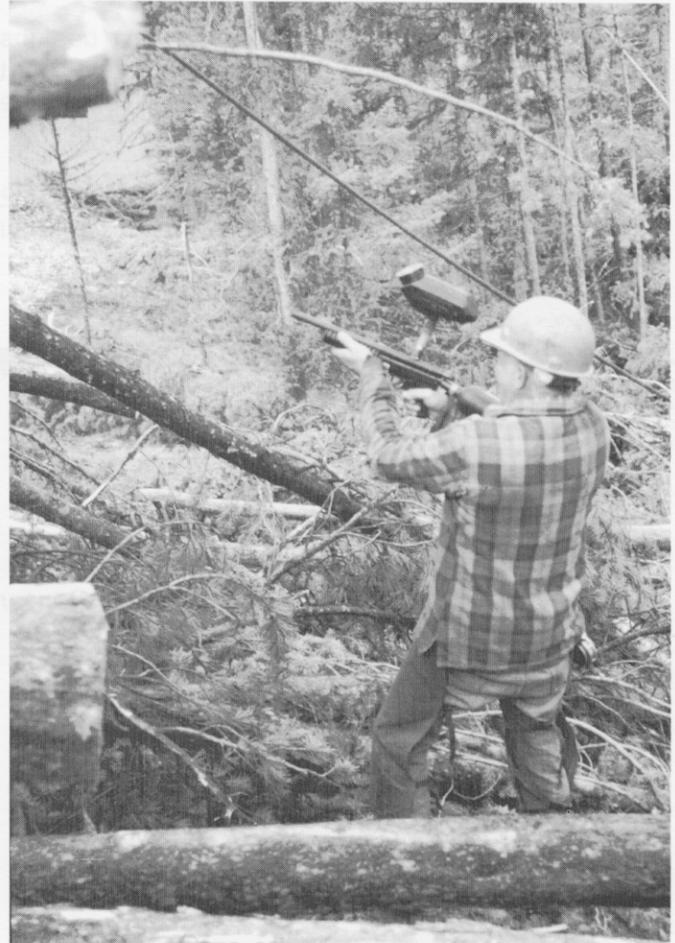


Figure 2.—Logger marking logs.

40 or more logs easily in 1 minute. This may alleviate some of the need to waiver export regulations.

A variety of guns and accessories are available from several manufacturers. Prices range from one hundred dollars and up. Most work well and are quite dependable. Basic semiautomatic or pump models can be purchased or rented as a handgun or rifle with magazine capacity ranging up to 250 rounds.





Figure 3.—Balls being placed in 250-round magazine.

Since this industry is in its infancy, new designs appear frequently. Our experience suggests that obtaining this equipment at the local level, where repair and support are available, is important.

Most guns are powered from rechargeable CO2 canisters, which can be refilled at a local paintball outlet or in the field.

filling in the field requires the purchase of a "transfer station" (several brass fittings and valves and a small hose) and a scale, to prevent overfilling. A larger CO2 bottle with siphon can be rented from a local air supply house.

Paintballs used for "war games" are intended to be rapidly washed away and are filled with water-soluble paint. However, to mark logs, a durable oil-based paint is needed. To SDTDC's knowledge, only the Nelson Paint Company markets paintballs which are filled with a long lasting oil-based paint. Their address is:

Nelson Paint Company  
 P.O. Box 2040  
 Kingsford, MI 49802-2040  
 Telephone (906) 774-5566  
 Toll Free (800) 236-9278  
 FAX (906) 774-4264

The balls cost approximately 6 cents each and are packaged in quantities of 100 or 2500.



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