



Northwoods Environmental Scholars Strap on Their Boots,

Learn the Timber Industry

The Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) and Ponsse North America, Inc. recently hosted a forestry education and outreach workshop for local students from Rhinelander and Lakeland Union High Schools. The workshop was a component of this year's Seventh Annual Northwoods Environmental Scholars Program, a partnership between the Rhinelander High School (RHS) Science Department, U.S. Forest Service's Northern Research Station, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that is designed to foster awareness of science and natural resources in local youth.



The group observing the chipping operation. (Stop 3)

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Finlee Saari, RHS scholar, inside the Ponsse 8W Ergo Harvester. (Stop 3)

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“Eight years ago we were looking for ways to reduce nature deficit disorder in our students,” said Ron Zalesny, a research scientist at the Northern Research Station’s lab in Rhinelander, the Institute for Applied Ecosystem Studies, and co-director of the Scholars Program. “We wanted to get them out in the environment, let them see all that nature has to offer, and expose them to career opportunities in natural resources.” Along with John Schutts, retired science department chair and chemistry teacher at RHS, and

yet our children are disconnected from their surroundings.” The mission of the GLTPA is to protect multiple-use forests for future generations. Educating younger generations is necessary to achieve this goal. As a result, Schienebeck developed the workshop with Stacy Wagler, business development manager at Ponsse North America, Inc. The workshop consisted of four steps:

Stop #1

The first stop was at the GLTPA headquarters in

“Education of our youth is paramount for the future success of the timber industry. It is very surprising how we live in a heavily forested area yet our children are disconnected from their surroundings.”

~ Henry Schienebeck, GLTPA Executive Director

Northern Research Station colleagues Adam Wiese (forestry technician) and Ed Bauer (technician emeritus), Zalesny has mentored nearly 50 scholars through supervised field projects, field trips, and classroom exercises. In addition, the program has expanded in recent years to include RHS students receiving high school credit for participating.

This year’s GLTPA- and Ponsse-sponsored workshop is a new addition to the Scholars Program. “Education of our youth is paramount for the future success of the timber industry,” said Henry Schienebeck, executive director of the GLTPA. “It is very surprising how we live in a heavily forested area

Rhinelander. Schienebeck provided a detailed history of forestry and logging in the Lakes States, as well as a discussion of the GLTPA’s role in the logging industry. The current emphasis on the ecological implications of forestry practices was also discussed. The stop ended with an invitation from Schienebeck for the scholars to attend the Logging Expo in Escanaba, MI, (which was held September 10-12, 2015).

Stop #2

Following the GLTPA activities, the workshop moved to Ponsse North America, Inc. in Rhinelander

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Will Taege, RHS scholar, next to the PONSSE Scorpion. (Stop 4)

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where Wagler provided a facility and equipment tour (including the control simulator) along with a presentation about the company and its role in international forestry. The potential negative environmental impacts of harvesting were discussed, and scholars were impressed that the air quality

coming out of the exhaust of newer Ponsse machines is cleaner than that going in.

Stop #3

Scholars visited a Fink Brothers Logging chipping operation in Harshaw, WI, where they got to see trees



The National Wild Turkey Federation invites you to watch a special two-part series of the **NWTF Save The Habitat, Save The Hunt** television show, entitled **“Forestry Connections.”**

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The first episode will air on the Pursuit Channel (Dish Network Channel 393 and DirectTV Channel 604) on Wednesday September 23 @ 9:30pm, Thursday September 24 @ 5:30pm, and again on Sunday September 27 @ 11:30pm Eastern Time.

Those unable to access this channel can view it at <https://www.youtube.com/user/NWTFonline> after it airs.

Contact Rebecca at 803-637-7509 or rbarnard@nwtf.net for more info.

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The chipping operation. (Stop 3)

being harvested and skidded to a chipper capable of filling a semi-trailer in less than ten minutes. A highlight of the day occurred at the end of the stop when scholars were able to climb up into a brand new Ponsse 8W Ergo harvester, with Wagler showing them the state-of-the-art features and controls.

Stop #4

The final stop of the day featured numerous types

of harvesting equipment owned and operated by TNT Logging, from traditional feller-bunchers to Ponsse's latest product: the Scorpion. At this stop, scholars moved among the types of equipment and saw them in action. The stop ended with a discussion of the day's activities.

Both the workshop's organizers and participants expressed satisfaction with the day. "It was extremely

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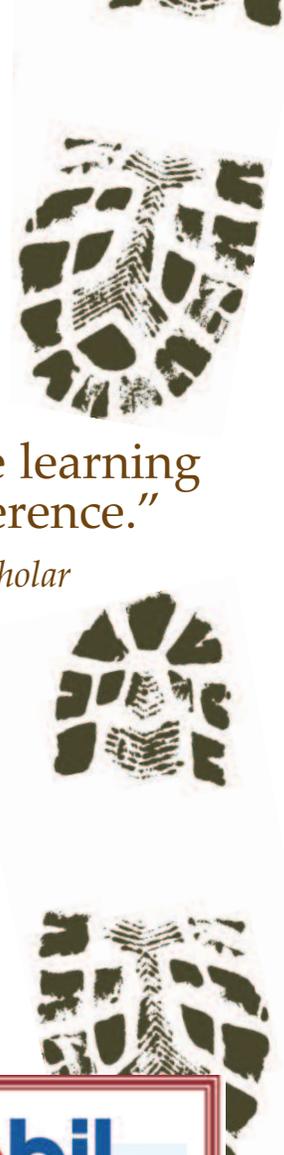


The Ponsse Scorpion in action. (Stop 4)

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educational to see multiple facets of an industry that I knew very little about," said Amanda Foust, scholar mentor. Zalesny and his co-directors expressed gratitude to Schienebeck and Wagler for their dedication to community outreach. Wagler informed the group that Ponsse is a Finnish family-owned company started in 1970 by

community we thrive in." Similarly, Schuttts said he was impressed with how willing the loggers were to share their time with the scholars to explain their profession. "They all said that production was the key for them to make it financially, yet they stopped working when the scholars came to visit," he said.



"It was nice to see how you can take what we are learning in school and actually apply it and make a difference."

~ Kaiya Shrader, RHS scholar

entrepreneur Einari Vidgren, and that 2015 marks Ponsse North America's 20th year anniversary. He shared Ponsse's outreach mission, "We feel by helping further the education of students in the Rhinelander area, we will reap the rewards of attracting young students to the industry along with enhancing the community in a better way by attracting educated individuals to the area to call the great Northwoods, "home." As a successful organization, we have a responsibility to give back to the

Scholars ranked the day among the best of the entire 2015 program said that they were excited to learn about an industry that created the Northwoods lifestyle. "It was nice to see how you can take what we are learning in school and actually apply it and make a difference," said Kaiya Shrader, an RHS scholar. "Use all of the trees you harvest and be able to calculate the mass of each part of the tree before sale. It's just great to get out there and use what we've learned." ▲

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