



Forest Carbon Project

<https://fsht.org/forestcarbonproject>

My name is Peter Hagerty and I live on a farm with my family in Porter, a heavily forested community in Southwestern Maine. For the past forty five years, I have logged in the Maine forest, sometimes on our own land, other times as an independent logging contractor for Scott Paper, International Paper and Diamond International. I have had the pleasure of working with some of the best company foresters one could want, Harold Dow for the Diamond and Norman Scott for S.D Warren, to name a few.

I enjoy a unique position of viewing the forest environment from ground level as I walk behind my team of draft horses. And often old timers will drop by our log yard to visit, tell stories and give advice.

“Go light and often” our trucker Mich Beallieu would remind us.

“Let your saw do the work’ Leandre Morin would council me in French.

“Cut the slash up fine. If not, your horses will lose faith in you” said Dwight Mills of Porter. And today I can go back to these woodlots and see the effects of their advice.

Never before has it been so important to understand the complex chemistry of the forest ecosystem. As I visit my loggings jobs of the past, I notice the dark soil from the organic matter, left behind as logging debris, branches and leaves that have rotted into humus, a vital element for tree growth and health. Overhead a dark canopy of well-spaced trees now protects new growth from the ever increasing extreme rain events followed by equally unsettling droughts.

When the woolen mill in our town closed in the 80’s, it was the logging industry that kept us alive. When not cutting on paper company land, the birch I cut went to Sanders Brothers in Westbrook, the beech to Kearsarge Peg in New Hampshire, our red oak to a lobster trap maker

in Freeport and our pine logs to local mills within a few miles of home. And we even had a small mill at the farm that sawed shingles from the pine rejects. Only one of those markets, a local pine mill, remains today.

Twenty two years ago some friends and I started the Low Impact Forestry Project (LIF) at MOFGA which, in partnership with the Maine Forest Service, has conducted, every year, trainings on forest ecology, chainsaw safety and low impact extraction strategies. We have graduated over 1200 students, many of whom are now working in logging companies that reflect LIF's progressive values.

My farm is within a fifteen minute drive of a dozen logging outfits employing upwards of fifty employees each. Everyone is working hard to make it all come together but in spite of the best intentions, one in four people in my town today are on food stamps. And finding an affordable rent for many younger workers is a struggle.

On the bright side, Maine's forest today captures and stores 80% of all greenhouse gasses we, as citizens, emit. With nothing more than continued responsible management, our woods can become the lungs that clean the air for future generations to breathe. And forest management for carbon capture and storage will provide new, well-paying job opportunities for our young people.

Our challenge today as we make the transition from traditional to carbon friendly logging is for landowners and policy makers to work together, debating and agreeing on the science behind changes in forest management and not see them as a threat to either jobs or social stability of the logging communities of Maine. I welcome your participation in this process.

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