

## LCC Tours Precut Hardwood Inc.

In February 2005, the Local Citizens Committee had the opportunity to tour the **Precut Hardwood Inc.** facility, located along Hwy 11, north of North Bay. The company manufactures hardwood palletstock from low quality logs, a timber product that has been underutilized in this part of the province. The slabs and cutoffs left over from the logs are bagged and sold as firewood.

**Precut Hardwood Inc.** is owned by Carl and Suzanne Holtz. The Holtz' have been in the logging and forestry business for many years,



Morgan Edger cutting



11 foot logs



Ontario Parks Firewood

This newsletter is available on the website: [nipissingforest.com](http://nipissingforest.com)  
Ce bulletin existe également en français.

# THE FOREST COVER

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE

May 2005

The newsletter's name "The Forest Cover" was submitted by Frank Tagliamonte, LCC member.

**W**elcome to the first edition of The Forest Cover. This newsletter is from your Local Citizens Committee and provides information on the Nipissing Forest. The North Bay Local Citizens Committee (LCC) was established in 1992 to provide advice to the North Bay District Manager on issues relating to Forest Management Planning (FMP). The committee was renamed the Nipissing Forest LCC to coincide with the renaming of the North Bay Crown Management Unit to the Nipissing Forest in 1996. The committee is very active and an integral part of Forest Management Planning process. **Your Local Citizens Committee is here to represent you.**

Local Citizens Committees are in place for all Crown forests in Ontario. The Committees are established as a requirement of the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA)* and the *Forest Management Planning Manual for Ontario's Crown Forests*.

The Local Citizens Committee is comprised of representatives from a range and balance of interests. Its task is to represent people and organizations who have an interest in the management of the forest.

The Committee assists the author of the forest management plan, members of the forest management planning team and the Ministry of Natural Resources District Manager in the preparation and implementation of the forest management plan.

For detailed information on the Local Citizens Committees, please visit the Ministry of Natural Resources website at [ontariosforests.mnr.gov.on.ca/fmpoverview.cfm](http://ontariosforests.mnr.gov.on.ca/fmpoverview.cfm) and follow the links under Regulated Manuals to the Forest Management Planning Manual (2004).

The members of the Nipissing Local Citizens Committee are:

Member	Alternate	Interest(s) Represented
Lloyd Anderson	James Anderson	access groups and anglers & hunters
Steven Friedrich		cottagers
Dave Minden		cottagers
Bill Steer		public at large and education
Tim Toepfner		public at large
Jon Cutter		forest industry
Brennain Lloyd	Jan Vandermeer	environmentalists
Roy Summers	Lorie Reed	naturalists
Frank Tagliamonte		prospectors and mining industry
Dave Joannis		District Aboriginal Working Group
Dennis Larocque		snowmobilers
Jeff Latimer	Kalvin Young	municipalities
John Matthews	Heinz Erb	trappers
Albert Cloet		tourism industry
Peter Street		Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc.



There are many and on-going opportunities to participate in the planning of Forest Management activities on the Nipissing Forest. Your Local Citizens Committee members are here to represent you. If you would like to contact a member of your LCC, please write to that member,

c/o Guylaine Thauvette  
Ministry of Natural Resources  
3301 Trout Lake Road  
North Bay ON P1A 4L7

or by e-mail at [guylaine.thauvette@mnr.gov.on.ca](mailto:guylaine.thauvette@mnr.gov.on.ca)

## History of the Nipissing Forest

By Roy Summers

**The early people** - prior to European contact. Some areas along the canoe accessible waterways had first nation encampments and villages :

- Ottawa and Mattawa Rivers (Algonquin First Nation)
- Lake Nipissing (Nipissing First Nation - IR 10)
- Upper French River (Dokis First Nation - IR 9)

The Ottawa, Mattawa and French Rivers were part of the main East to West trade route. The people here had collected a form of toll from the trading traffic and the forests provided a vital sustaining habitat to these woodland peoples supplying everything from food and shelter to clothing and tools. At the same time these same forests enriched their cultural and spiritual lives as they regarded themselves as being at one with nature.

They knew how to handle these forests for their needs and because large trees were of minimal use they managed the forests for their own use by setting fire and burning off areas adjacent to their habitations:

- promoting better browse (feed) conditions for large and small animals as well as the birds.
- promoting better natural berry and seed crops
- providing open areas to plant and harvest crops
- providing much better access to shoots, saplings and charcoal for their needs.

Of course, fires that got out of control or that were naturally caused by lightning would be left to burn unchecked because they had neither the equipment or will to stop them. They simply moved out to an island or elsewhere out of way until it was safe to return. These fires resulted in the vast even aged white pine stands that were encountered by early European visitors and extractors.

**The Beaver Wars (1629-1700)** saw much of this population decimated and/or scattered by the Iroquois.

**Square Timber(1830 to 1882)** - for the British shipbuilding market was the first assault on these forests. This was restricted to the far eastern portion i.e. the Ottawa River and the lower portions of the streams that flowed directly into it. In 50 short years virtually all of the accessible large white pine within reach of the waterways was gone. That's bad, but what was worse was that the square timber trade was extremely wasteful so that enormous piles of downed and abandoned cull logs, chips, big branches and gigantic tops were left to rot or dry and catch fire. With this fuel, large tracts caught fire burning completely out of control and completely consuming almost all vegetation. Later because of the reduced tree cover settlers moved into these burnt areas and started to farm them but most were eventually forced to abandon agriculture because of the thin stony soil of the Canadian Shield.



Roy Summers measuring his grandfather pine at his cottage along the Ottawa River.

**Railways in 1882 marked the start of the second assault on these forests** - as these were built it became increasingly possible to ship processed lumber to the tremendous building markets of the growing cities of Montreal, Toronto, New York and other American cities. So logging was the main attraction to the area, mainly for white and red pine but later for pulp. Literally dozens of saw mills, a couple of planing mills and a couple of pulp mills operated within this area. At first, log drives were common with dams being built on lakes, rivers and creeks to raise the water levels facilitating the delivery of saw logs by water usually in the spring. Most of the lakes are still at the artificial levels that the logging companies raised them to (Nipissing +2m, Turtle Lake +2.1m, Talon Lake +2.5m, Nosbonsing +2.1m, Tomiko +2m, etc.) because the government replaced most of these old log and earth dams with modern concrete structures.

**One major exception to this was J. R. Booth Ltd.** who brought the logs from their limits on the Lake Nipissing watershed over the height of land using a water driven jackladder and a 6 mile railway to Lake Nosbonsing and sent them down the Mattawa and Ottawa. Records of that railway make it possible to extrapolate the number logs that were exported -- **more than 20 million pine logs were taken between 1886 to 1914.**

**Many millions of tons of logging slash** (culls, branches, tops) were littered across the logged over areas and were the fodder for large fires. Although none of these reached the devastation of the northlands killer fires (Timmins, Matheson, Hailebury) there were and are vast areas of brule (burnt lands) within the Nipissing forest area. It is curious to note that many of the new "Lands for Life Protected Areas" are these old recovering forest fire areas.

The age class structure of the vast majority of the now almost ready to cut white pine stands is a direct result of those fires and indiscriminate logging activities. But a major problem has occurred because of that cut & run or lack of forest management planning. Intolerant hardwood species (poplar and birch) have invaded and dominated many of these lands (naturally better suited to regrowing pine) but are now growing poor quality, low value hardwoods or balsam fir.

**Improving transportation started the last assault** -- first small logging railways and then progressively modern logging trucks and equipment that could haul the logs that wouldn't float well. No longer was extraction dependent on waterways. So Yellow birch was targeted for its veneer and as this declined there was a switch to hard maple and other hardwood species. Even the slow growing hemlock was targeted for its tannins as well as to build the subway system in Toronto.

**Like they did with the pine they high graded** these forests (taking the best and leaving the rest.) The result now is that many of these stands appear healthy from a distance but on examination consist of a much higher degree of defect and disease than would be naturally encountered! Some of these stands too, have been invaded by poor quality, low value intolerant hardwoods! Don't forget the logging debris and slash!

### Feature Species: Red Spruce

Individual and clumps of red spruce trees are occasionally found on the Nipissing Forest. This tree species used to be common, but logging and forest fires have greatly reduced its abundance on the forest. Red spruce is at its northernmost range in the Nipissing Forest.

Red spruce has very similar characteristics to the white and black spruce, but can be differentiated from its cousins by the fine orange-brown hairs on the twigs, needles that point forward and are pressed close to the twig. The branches slope downward with the tips abruptly turned upward. The twigs on the branches sag giving the tree a drooping appearance.

Red spruce is a valuable wildlife cover because, unlike hemlock, cedar and other spruces, deer will not browse the seedlings because of their bitter taste. The red spruce trees are able to grow and provide cover for wildlife.



**If you see an unusual species on the Nipissing Forest, please let us know.**