

Maine Division  
NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

**Maine  
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**Maine Division Website**

[www.mesaf.org](http://www.mesaf.org)

April 14, 2007

Dear Maine Division Members:

My mid career transfer from Vermont to Maine was the point I pretty much hung up my paint gun and buttoned down my last operations. Those ten years of layout, high production loggers and tight budgets are far enough in the past that I only remember the good parts. Working both sides of the Connecticut River meant mostly Northern Hardwoods, White Pine, or White Pine-Red Oak types. The historic ownership pattern and forest history there resulted in mostly even aged stands. My work was mostly in tight stands of small to medium sized sawtimber. The quality, value, variability and complexity of those stands were best served by marking and I was fortunate enough to have clients who recognized the value added by that service. Upon moving to Maine in 1992, my niche in forestry became facilitating timberland investment transactions. In that capacity I have the pleasure, privilege and occasional shock of looking at all kinds of working forests and thus a variety of other peoples work. I have even been lucky enough to get back and look at some of the stands I worked in back when.

I relate all this to disclose my biases and reference points as we head into what looks to be a very interesting Spring meeting: "Foresters and Loggers: Myths, Misconceptions and Common Ground." This meeting, on May 24 is jointly hosted by the Maine Division of the Society of American Foresters and Maine Master Logger Program. The purpose of our meeting is to consider the interrelationship between loggers and foresters as parts of a matrix that also includes owner objectives, current markets, future values, soils, existing stand structure, available iron, regulations, etc. etc. Let's get together and hone the way we and our kindred friends in the logging community optimize, or at least strike the balance in this matrix.

Certainly not every acre needs to be marked. Neither does marking assure positive results. We've all seen marking and layout we do not understand or agree with. Without question there are many forester/logger affiliations that implement unmarked prescriptions with extraordinary quality. Nevertheless, the finest forest management outcomes I see are the result of careful marking and layout followed by skilled harvesting. Even though there is built in tension between loggers and foresters, I conclude we clearly need each other to achieve excellence across the working landscape.

Elsewhere, your executive committee learned recently that the Board of Licensing for Professional Foresters has dwindled below a quorum. This has potentially profound consequences. We are trying to attract the Governor's attention in order to see appointments made. Simultaneously we formed a Task Force to focus on "The status of forester credentialing in Maine." The charge is to study how/if this board is serving us, along with alternatives. A link to this letter to the governor is on the MESAF web site. This Task Force will update us at the Fall Meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Please contact me if you are interested in serving. We need some help.

Finally, a plug for volunteers to serve as officers or members-at-large for MESAF. The executive committee has voted in favor of budget items to drop financial impediments to participation. Personally, I'd like to see a few more early-career foresters on board. Great leadership opportunities, a good group of compatriots and, to my pleasant surprise, not too much of a time commitment. So think about stepping up if you are asked. Or even if you are not. It is truly a pleasure to serve. Cheers.

Gary Bahlkow, Maine Division Chair