



5th Forest Engineering Conference

Contribution 61 in session "Contractors and durable business"

Logging Capacity Impacts to the US South, 2006-2012

Authors: Baker, Shawn; Greene, Dale

University of Georgia, USA, shbaker3@uga.edu

Keywords: capacity, logging industry, employment, equipment age

During the recent recession and the subsequent slow recovery in housing markets, impacts to the logging industry in the United States were substantial. We gathered data on the ten states comprising the US South and calculated estimates of logging capacity between 2006 and 2012. Over this timeframe, employment levels in the logging industry declined by 19%. Many of the logging firms still working were reluctant (or unable) to invest in their businesses during the recession. The average age of operating logging machinery increased by 1-4 years (depending on machine type) between 2007 and 2012. Despite these challenges, logging employees continued a 20+ year trend of increasing productivity. Thus, while the total number of employees has decreased 19%, the total logging capacity has declined only 14%. The excess logging capacity has remained relatively unchanged; however, comparison at the regional level across the South reveals that some areas suffered greater capacity reductions than others.