



Weyerhaeuser

Trucks, Drivers, Wood and Chains....

By Todd Johnson
Forestry Services Manager
Grayling, MI

As we have been implementing our new contracts with suppliers across Wood Products and Timberlands our people and suppliers quickly identified a gap in the Lake States. Here in Michigan we are an axle state, with a lot of self-loading logs trucks. This creative freedom allows for some of the most efficient hauling in the country. Yet one of the challenges that has been hanging out there is how do we effectively chain these loads down without getting on top of the load?



Through a conversation with Mike Dietsch (Plant Manager Edson OSB) while he was visiting Grayling this summer, I shared some of our challenges. Mike was confident that our friends working within our Kenora Ontario Timberlands had some knowledge for us that would aid in overcoming this challenge in short order. He made the introductions and Nate Christie (Harvest and Silviculture Supervisor Northern Hardwood Lake States Team) and I were off to Kenora to meet up with Matt Wilkie (Purchase Wood and Systems Leader Kenora Timberlands) and the rest of Erik Holmstrom's (Operations Manager Kenora Timberlands) team. Wood is hauled in a pretty similar manner in Ontario as Michigan, the biggest common dominator is crossways and 100". In Kenora they have been working with the suppliers to find ways to use their loaders to drag the chains for binding instead of the drivers climbing on top of the loads and dragging them. They have their chain boxes set up for this type of operation and with a few strategic notches cut into the loader bucket, they are in business.



Once the chains are placed into the notches the loader drags them across the load. With a quick twist of the bucket the chains free up from the loader for the driver to walk around to the back of the truck and complete his chaining process. When we asked Howie Adams (owner Devlin Timber) why he developed this strategy he said “The number one value is safety. Our truckers are 55-65 years old, they are in good shape from working for a living, but we don’t want them climbing and reaching from heights. On top of that, this method probably saves 10-15 minutes per load. It’s so simple.”



Obviously we still have some work in front of us to change a practice that has been in place for over a hundred years here in Michigan. Yet I feel that with our teams and suppliers commitment to safety excellence we will be able to move quickly with the equipment manufacturers to overcome this hurdle!!