

# Swamp Logging...

## The Road Less Traveled

By Gary Williams, Koppers Inc.

Logging sites can be visually impressive, whether it's a team of horses pulling two logs down a lazy mountain trail on a sunny summer afternoon or a diesel-powered Timberjack skidder straining to move several logs from the stump to the landing through several inches of snow. But nothing can compare to the sheer investment in time, money and effort required to move logs out of the swamps of eastern North Carolina.

Goodson All Terrain Logging (made famous by the Discovery Channel reality show "Swamp Loggers") moves up to 100 trailer loads of saw logs and pulpwood out of these swamps every week. And, because their work place is generally under water, one of the few weather-related restrictions they have is when highway conditions make it too dangerous to get logs from the woods to the mill.

Many of these timber tracts would have been inaccessible 15 years ago, but new technology and specially made machinery has at least made the logging possible for those few hardy souls up to the challenge.

In many cases, wooden mats are needed to stabilize the road cut into the tract. Goodson's current job is three miles off the road and

required nearly 100 mats at a cost of around \$300 each just to make it from the highway to the log landing.

Steel bridge sections or combinations of steel and wooden mats are used to build bridges over moving water and will have to be removed when the job is done. To begin the logging operation, a large feller-buncher on tracks cuts trees in a wide swath on its way to the backside of the tract. A track knuckle boom (called a shovel) follows and lays the downed trees end to end and side by side to make a wooden road that will be used to support large rubber tired skidders needed to pull logs out to the landing. Following these "log roads" in and out of the woods literally keeps the skidders from sinking in the mire.

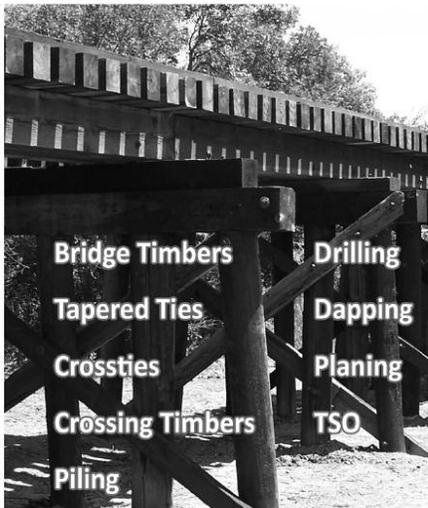
Woods Foreman Justin Goodson says they can economically skid logs up to three-quarters of a mile, and then it's time to move the landing to a new location. Their current 300-acre job requires three landings to keep the skid distance to a minimum.

Once the last trees are cut at the end of a skid trail, the trees making up the road itself are picked up as man and machine retreat to the higher ground of the log landing, only to then venture out in another direction. These stands are largely made up of gum, cypress,



ash, maple, and some oak, and are clear-cut jobs so everything goes, typically yielding three trailer loads of pulpwood for every load of saw logs.

The ability to harvest areas that, until fairly recently, were inaccessible and the ability and determination of professional loggers like Goodson All Terrain Logging to harvest and market these logs has opened a new natural resource stream. That's the *reward* enjoyed by sawmills, lumber buyers, treating companies and railroads. The *risk* is in investing in multiple half-million-dollar machines, \$6,000 skidder tires, \$25,000 per week diesel fuel bills, and putting skilled professionals in harm's way on a daily basis. Goodson has taken that risk, and we're all better for it. ■



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## Sawmill Profile:

### McDowell Lumber Company

At The Corner Of Innovation  
& Customer Satisfaction

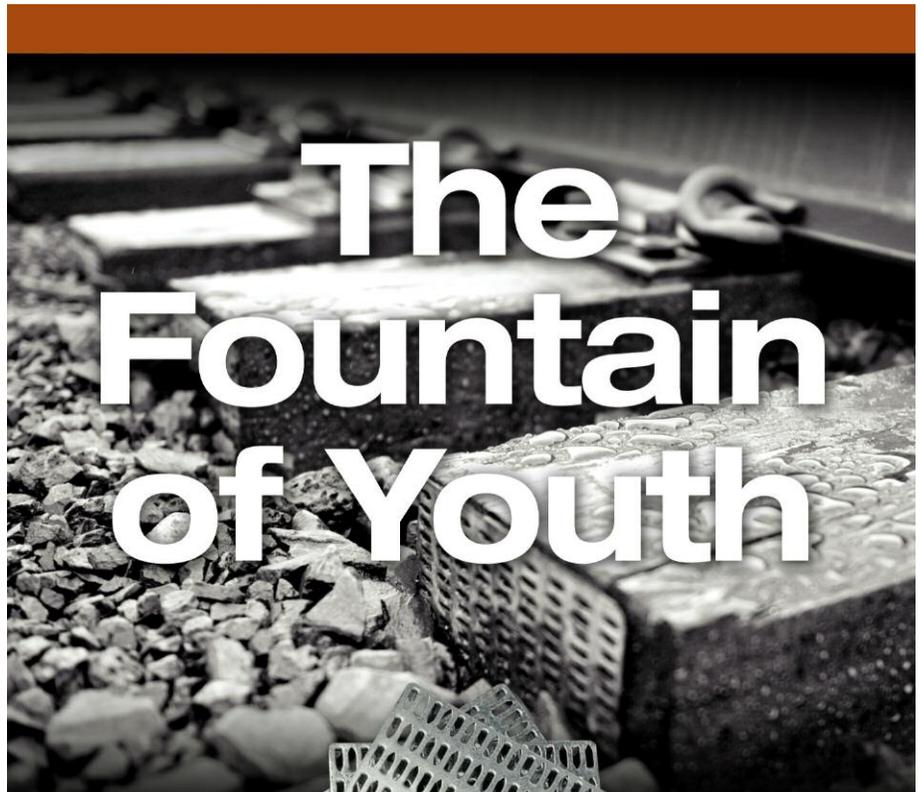
By Scott Hanks

Manufacturing quality products, paying close attention to detail, and providing quality customer service are all hallmarks of Tony McDowell's business model.

Located in Asheboro, N.C., McDowell Lumber Company's operation includes a "two bite crane," so named because it is designed to unload an 80,000-pound load of logs in just two "bites" of the grapple.

To maximize time efficiency and lumber recovery, the logs are diverted by diameter. The larger go to the six-foot McDonough band and then to a vertical resaw, while the smaller are consumed courtesy of a Cooper scragg and then on to a gang edger. This minimizes waste and boosts production. To complete this set up, a Hemco 30-bay sling sorter complements the operation.

McDowell Lumber annually saws up to 20MMBF of lumber, crossties and other railroad material, and pallet cants needed to feed their own on-site pallet operation by keeping one eye on the process and the other on the people who ultimately use their products. And, after thirty years in the hardwood lumber business, McDowell Lumber is still conveniently located at the corner of innovation and customer satisfaction. ■



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