



Speak with one voice

By Sarah Smith

It's hard to imagine Northland Forest Products' president, Jamey French, magic markers in hand, making posters for the first Earth Day in 1970. But, in 1970, Jamey was on his way to a teaching career or a career as an environmentalist, certainly not the lumber business that had been his family's business going back to the 1880s. It just took Jamey a while to make the connections and find his niche.

With a degree in history from Trinity College, Jamey headed to the University of Edinburgh in Scotland to pursue a graduate degree in economic history. After college, he accepted an invitation from a family friend to spend time in Liverpool, England, to experience the lumber business from another perspective, an international one. It was there that Jamey found his place in the lumber world, combining an interest in international trade and environmental issues. Even back then, there were questions about illegal logging in tropical forests. In the mid-1970s, with a new global understanding, Jamey returned to New Hampshire and joined the family business, Northland Forest Products, a hardwood lumber wholesaler in Kingston, as export manager.

"It always bothered me that the North American hardwood producers were lumped in with those responsible for the deforestation of tropical rainforests. I knew that the Northeast had a good story to tell about our resilient forests and a culture of responsible forestry. In order to do this, we needed to speak with one voice," Jamey said.

Today, with Jamey at the helm as President and CEO, Northland Forest Products exports about 50 percent of its lumber production to 23 countries around the globe. And Jamey will be the first one to clarify that the lumber business is an environmental business. Northland Forest Products is one of the earliest companies in North America to become chain-of-custody certified by the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) standards. This commitment extends to the French family's land holdings, Meadowsend Timberlands, certified under the American Tree Farm program.

In 2008 Jamey was on the forefront of those pushing to expand the Lacey Act to include making it illegal to trade in plants or plant products that were in violation of laws in a foreign country. The Lacey Act requires importers to file a declaration on their products to include country of harvest and the genus and species of the plants

Those that know Jamey are not surprised by his unique combination of a solid business acumen and a committed social consciousness. Jamey's contributions to the lumber industry read like a who's who of the most important organizations in the business: Hardwood Federation, American Hardwood Export Council, and the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. Jamey has served as chairman for all three.

"Jamey French brings a unique perspective to federal legislation and regulations impacting the U.S. hardwood industry,"



Northland Forest Products courtesy photo

Jamey French, President and CEO of Northland Forest Products, stands next to several bundles of lumber at Northland's Kingston, N.H. facility. Northland exports approximately 50 percent of their annual volume of hardwood lumber to over 20 countries around the globe. Jamey is very involved in a variety of environmental and trade associations that advocate on behalf of working forests and hardwood lumber.

said Dana Cole, executive director, Hardwood Federation. "He of course has a strong interest in policies that support the ability of the industry to thrive economically, create jobs, and support local communities. But he also has a strong interest in working across traditional boundaries and engaging groups that share common goals of environmental sustainability and maintaining healthy forest systems. Politics is too often viewed as a divisive process; Jamey's focus is on using the political process to identify mutual priorities among potential allies and move forward towards policies that benefit us all."

Not only does Jamey contribute and belong to organizations,

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Lacey Act

The Lacey Act was introduced into Congress by John F. Lacey (Iowa Republican) and signed into law by President William McKinley in 1900. Under the Lacey Act, it is unlawful to import, export, sell, acquire, or purchase fish, wildlife, or plants that are taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of U.S. or Indian law or in interstate or foreign commerce involving any fish, wildlife, or plants taken, possessed, or sold in violation of State or foreign law. In 2008 the Act was amended to include a wider variety of prohibited plants and plant products, including products made from illegally logged wood for import. 🗨️

Industry profile

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he is committed to taking on leadership roles that have accomplished great things. “Jamey is smart, articulate and incredibly generous. He is generous with his time and his money. He puts his dollars toward causes that are important. It’s great to know him,” notes Ross D’Elia, owner of HHP Inc.

His commitment to environmental organizations is equally as impressive: the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), Land Trust Alliance, National Wildlife Federation, and The Nature Conservancy, to mention a few. And, his devotion to the revitalization and growth of Portsmouth, particularly the success of the Music Hall, is astounding.

“Conservation is in Jamey’s DNA,” said Jane Difley, president/forester, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. “He sees it as a way to protect productive forests for the future, whether that’s serving on the Board of the Land Trust Alliance, advocating policies to mitigate climate change, or supporting land protection in New Hampshire. The two aren’t in conflict for Jamey; they are inextricably linked. And, he is uncommonly effective in both arenas.”

When asked how he can devote so much time to industry issues on the national and international scene, Jamey agreed that it takes an incredible amount of time away from day-to-day operations. “I could not do this work if I didn’t have a great team behind me at Northland Forest Products. I feel it is my obligation to an industry my family has benefitted from for generations. And, per-



Northland Forest Products courtesy photo

Johnna Neeper of Northland Forest Products staples a label on to a bundle of 5/4 White Ash lumber at Northland’s facility in Kingston, N.H.

haps, generations to come. It goes beyond my family to the greater good,” Jamey noted.

For more information about Jameson French and Northland Forest Products go to: www.northlandforest.com. 📧

Sarah Smith is forest industry specialist with UNH Cooperative Extension and served on the NHTOA Board of Directors from 1994 to 2000. Sarah is also the recipient of the 2004 Kendall Norcott Award, the NHTOA’s highest accolade.

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The *Timber Crier* – Spruce/Fir issue

The spring issue of the *Timber Crier* will feature articles about New Hampshire’s Spruce/Fir timber resource. According to the USDA Forest Service, approximately 8 percent of New Hampshire’s forests are dominated by Spruce/Fir. Although a timber type more common in northern New Hampshire, pockets of Spruce/Fir do occur “south of the notches.” Articles will highlight New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association members who grow, manage, and process Spruce/Fir.

Advertisers that want to participate in this issue should contact the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association’s office at (603) 224-9699.