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LOGGING RESIDUES ON SAW LOG OPERATIONS, ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO

Theodore S. Setzer, Alvin K. Wilson,
and Grover A. Choate

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USDA Forest Service
Research Paper INT-78, 1970

INTERMOUNTAIN FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION
Ogden, Utah 84401

COVER PHOTO

Although the longbutt shown has a large rot column, it also has a measurable volume of sound wood, which may be salvageable.

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ABSTRACT

Reports results of a survey made of logging operations to estimate the volume of logging residues in relation to the volume of saw logs harvested in Arizona and New Mexico. Results show: conversion factors that can be applied to product volume to estimate total removals from inventory; residue volume as a percentage of saw log volume; the relative importance of felling and skidding as causes of residues; and the numbers of trees removed from growing stock inventory by logging. Survey methods and reliability of data are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The volume of timber cut or killed during logging operations and left in the woods represents a reduction in the inventory volume available for future management and harvesting. Consequently, the volume of unused timber should be taken into consideration if differences between successive inventories are to be more fully understood. Estimates of the amount of logging residue potentially marketable as chips are of interest also.

In 1968, Forest Survey at the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station conducted a survey of logging residues in Arizona and New Mexico. Logging residue surveys yield various types of information,¹ but only data considered to be sufficiently reliable for purposes of this report were used here. Information not included in the present paper may be combined with data from future residue surveys of other areas to provide adequate reliability for further analyses. Since 1965, Forest Survey has surveyed logging residues in Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and in South Dakota west of the 103d meridian. If present plans are adhered to, residues will be re-surveyed periodically in all Mountain States.

¹Conversion factors to be applied to product volumes for estimates of total volumes removed from inventory in commercial logging; average conversion factors used to express product volume in several units of measure (cubic feet, International 1/4-inch rule, and Scribner log rule); the diameter distribution of trees removed from inventory by logging; the proportion of timber products harvested from growing stock trees compared to that of products from non-growing stock trees; cull and breakage losses by species; the relative importance of felling and skidding as causes of residues; and the proportion of logging residue volume made up of pieces of various size classes.

This report includes statistics for New Mexico and Arizona and for the two States combined.

REMOVAL ESTIMATES

Expansion factors are computed to permit calculation of the inventory that remains following commercial logging operations. To adjust the inventory, removals (volume of products plus residues from felling and skidding) must be subtracted from the pre-logging inventory. However, the removal volume should omit material that was not included in the inventory, i.e., the portions of tree stems overutilized by inventory standards. Such material can come from cutting below the minimum stump height (1 foot by Forest Survey standards) or from harvesting product volume beyond specified top diameters. It also can come from harvesting saw logs from growing stock trees of less than the sawtimber size specified for inventory or by cutting roundwood products from cull trees.

Overutilized material (by Forest Survey standards) was excluded from the removal volume when the conversion factors shown in table 1 were developed. However, the overutilized volume normally is part of the reported product volume to which these factors will be applied.

Therefore:

$$\text{conversion factor} = \frac{\text{removal volume}}{\text{product volume}}, \text{ which is}$$

equivalent to

$$\frac{\text{net product volume (excluding overutilization)} \\ + \text{residue volume}}{\text{product volume (including overutilization)}}$$

In the Arizona-New Mexico area, as well as in each of these States individually, the net volume of timber removed from growing stock inventory averages 1.12 times the cubic-foot volume of saw logs harvested (table 1).

Table 1.--Conversion factors to estimate total net removals from inventory, Arizona and New Mexico

| Unit of measurement and minimum top diameter : | : | Arizona : | New Mexico : | Arizona- New Mexico |
|--|-------|-----------|--------------|------------------------|
| Cubic foot 4 inches | 1.122 | 1.122 | 1.122 | |
| Board foot ¹ Variable | 1.052 | 1.063 | 1.056 | |
| Board foot ¹ 7 inches | 1.051 | 1.061 | 1.055 | |

¹International 1/4-inch log rule.

Factors for estimating removals from sawtimber² in inventory are somewhat smaller numerically than the factors used for estimating removals from growing stock. Factors derived for board-foot measurements to the minimum variable top standards used by Forest Survey (see *Sawtimber volume* in Terminology) are not much different from those derived for the minimum fixed top of 7 inches. By both top diameter standards, conversion factors used to estimate removals in Arizona and New Mexico combined amount to 106 percent of saw log volume; the proportion for either State is similar.

Correction factors are numerically less for board-foot measure than for cubic-foot measure because considerable material scaled as net cubic-foot residue is not included in the net board-foot scale. Such material consists of (1) the upper stem portion beyond the minimum top diameter for board-foot measure, (2) the volume in destroyed growing stock trees of less than sawtimber size, and (3) portions of sound trees that are cull (because of crook) for saw logs.

²Board-foot volumes used in this report are International 1/4-inch log rule volumes.

LOGGING RESIDUES AND PRODUCT VOLUME

The net volume of logging residues represents underutilization by one standard or another. By Forest Survey's cubic-foot standards, residues include all unused net volume between a 1-foot stump and a 4-inch minimum top diameter inside bark (d.i.b.). By board-foot standards, net residue volume consists of unused material in sawtimber trees from a 1-foot stump to either the variable or the fixed top diameters. Merchantable logs missed in skidding are included in sawtimber residues.

The net volume of logging residues from harvesting a given volume of saw logs can be estimated by the use of table 2. For example, residues from the reported 1966 harvest of 61,813 MCF of saw logs from growing stock in Arizona are estimated to be:

$$61,813 \times 0.1220 = 7.5 \text{ MMCF.}$$

The largest part of residue volume results from felling. Most of this is material from trees from which saw logs have been cut. Skidding losses are relatively minor and, as shown by the following tabulation, amount to less than 20 percent of cubic-foot residue volume in the Arizona-New Mexico area, as well as in each of the two States.

| | <i>Felling</i> | | | <i>Skidding</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | <i>Product trees</i> | <i>Other trees</i> | <i>All trees</i> | | |
| | - - - - - <i>Percent</i> - - - - - | | | | |
| Arizona | 74.20 | 6.78 | 80.98 | 19.02 | 100.00 |
| New Mexico | 70.53 | 15.42 | 85.95 | 14.05 | 100.00 |
| Arizona- New Mexico | 72.74 | 10.22 | 82.96 | 17.04 | 100.00 |

Table 2.--*Net volume of logging residues from saw log operations as a percent of net product volume, Arizona and New Mexico*

| Unit of measurement : and minimum top diameter: | : : Arizona | : : New Mexico | : : Arizona- : New Mexico |
|---|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cubic foot 4 inches | 12.20 | 12.18 | 12.19 |
| Board foot ¹ Variable | 5.27 | 6.36 | 5.70 |
| Board foot ¹ 7 inches | 5.11 | 6.15 | 5.52 |

¹International 1/4-inch rule.

It should be pointed out that residue volumes derived by the use of factors in table 2 are not totally available for chipping. A more detailed and intensive survey would be necessary to assess residue characteristics and to determine what portion of these residues could be used under prevailing market conditions.

DIAMETER CLASS REMOVALS

Information on the number of growing stock trees harvested or destroyed³ in each diameter class is essential for derivations of diameter class cutting rates used in most stand-table projections of growth and inventory. Reliable data of this kind usually are difficult to obtain. However, logging residue surveys provide means for estimating the distribution of trees removed per unit volume of saw logs harvested.

³Either occurrence removes the trees from inventory.

Table 3 shows the total number of growing stock trees (product trees and others), removed per 1 MCF of product volume in New Mexico, in Arizona, and in the New Mexico-Arizona area. These figures can be applied to a given volume of saw log harvest to estimate trees removed in each diameter class. In turn, this estimate can be related to an inventory stand table in order to compute cutting rates.

SURVEY METHODS AND RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

A basic need in the logging residue surveys was to develop factors that could be applied to a reported volume of saw log harvest to estimate the resulting volume of logging residues. Estimates of residue volume are based on product volume rather than acreage logged because such information usually is more reliable and available (at least to Forest Survey) than are estimates of area cutover. The survey design prescribed three basic types of measurements of growing stock trees on active logging operations to meet this objective:

1. Net volume of saw logs harvested from *product* trees measured on a logging operation;
2. Net volume of residues from the *same* trees;
3. Net volume of residues from *other* trees cut or destroyed in the process of felling and skidding product trees.

All three sets of measurements were used to determine the residue volume as a percent of saw log volume. Scaling was done in detail to permit estimates of gross and net cubic-foot volumes for all measured growing stock trees, and to provide gross and net board-foot volumes to fixed and variable tops for measured sawtimber trees. Species, diameter breast height (d.b.h.), total height, overutilization (by Forest Survey standards), and cause of residue (felling or skidding) were recorded.

Table 3.--Growing stock trees removed from inventory in saw log operations per 1 thousand cubic feet of net product volume, Arizona and New Mexico

| D.b.h. class : (inches) | Arizona : | New Mexico : | Arizona-New Mexico : |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| | -----Number of trees----- | | |
| 2 | 47.6224 | 33.0149 | 41.8077 |
| 4 | 27.6987 | 20.8377 | 24.9676 |
| 6 | 6.5949 | 4.6189 | 5.8084 |
| 8 | 2.2215 | 1.7846 | 2.0476 |
| 10 | 1.1801 | .7348 | 1.0029 |
| 12 | .5554 | .4199 | .5014 |
| 14 | 1.1454 | 1.2597 | 1.1909 |
| 16 | 1.7008 | .7348 | 1.3163 |
| 18 | 1.9091 | 1.6271 | 1.7968 |
| 20 | 2.2215 | 1.4697 | 1.9222 |
| 22 | .5901 | .9973 | .7522 |
| 24 | 1.3884 | 1.3122 | 1.3581 |
| 26 | .7983 | .6299 | .7313 |
| 28 | .5901 | 1.1022 | .7939 |
| 30+ | 1.6314 | 2.0470 | 1.7968 |
| All classes | 97.8481 | 72.5907 | 87.7941 |

The number of basic sample units used in the survey corresponded to the number of logging operations on which measurements were taken. Before starting fieldwork in a State, an estimate was made of the number of sample units needed to assure a standard error of total residue volume of not more than ± 20 percent to meet Forest Survey objectives. For the survey reported here, 39 sample units--23 in Arizona and 16 in New Mexico--were drawn from a list of known active logging operations in the two States. These were drawn at random from strata defined by land ownership and operator size class. Two ownership classes were used--National Forest and other owners. Operator size class corresponded to the production class of the sawmill for which the logging was being done. Two size classes were used--small (less than 10 MMBF per year) and large (10 MMBF or more per year).

Enough trees were measured on each sample unit to provide a product volume of between 4 to 10 MBF per sample unit. On the basis of previous survey experience, guides were developed so that field crews could estimate the number of trees to be measured to meet volume objectives. The number of trees varied with the range in average tree size, timber type, and stand age (young or old growth). From 10 to 30 trees were recommended for each sample. Actually, 574 product trees were used, an average of 15 per sample unit. The net product volume scaled was 52,107 cubic feet (equivalent to 328,269 board feet), an average of 8.4 MBF per sample unit.

Trees felled for products were measured in place to determine both product and residue volumes. Residue volume from other trees destroyed or cut when product trees were felled also was measured. Skidding damage to trees along skid trails was determined after logs reached a landing, except in those cases where crews had been on hand to witness damage as it occurred.

In clear-cut operations where there was difficulty in relating felling and skidding damage to individual

