



## Tamihi Logging ramping up

**B.C.'s Tamihi Logging is one busy operation these days—harvesting upwards of 400,000 cubic metres a year—and it has made some significant investments in new iron the last several years, including four Hitachi ZX290 Forester log loaders.**

*By Paul MacDonald*

After a period of years of just plain hunkering down to keep equipment and people busy, logging contractors in B.C. are now ramping up to take part in the recovering markets for both lumber and logs.

Tamihi Logging, based in the Fraser Valley east of Greater Vancouver, knows what that is all about. Over the last two years, they've invested in iron—a lot of iron.

This year, Tamihi Logging will harvest around 400,000 cubic metres, about 210,000 of that through the company's forest licences and woodlots, and the rest from bids on B.C. Timber Sales. In addition, they do logging and forest management work for five First Nations bands in the Fraser Valley. At any one time, the company will be logging in up to 11 different areas in the region, producing 40 to 50 truckloads of logs a day. They run two log sorts, and three sorts in the summer months.

Tamihi Logging is owned by Brian Dorman, who started up Dorman Logging on southern Vancouver Island right out of high school, in the 1970s.

“When we started out, I was complaining to the contractor that he wasn't moving the logs we'd harvested from the landing fast enough for us to make any money,” recalls Dorman with a laugh. “So things went round and round, until they said I could do the loading and see if I could do better than them. Turned out I did do better. By the next summer, we were double shifting and I owned a logging truck.” That was a Mack truck, affectionately nick-named “Thunder-Momma”, with a Poclair loader

“That was 40 years ago, and I've haven't slowed down since,” says Brian.

In recent years, Brian has moved operations over to the B.C. Mainland, to take advantage of better opportunities, in the timber-rich Fraser Valley, with Tamihi Logging, which is named after a local creek.

Today, Tamihi Logging has a large array of logging equipment, and three of Brian's sons are in the business. His oldest son, Jesse, 27, is a woods foreman and dryland sort supervisor, and Justin is a scaler at their sort in Harrison Bay and Jordie works with their engineering department. Twins Justin and Jordie are 25-years-old.

Jesse used to run a buncher for the company on Vancouver Island, when it was doing work for Island Timberlands and TimberWest. He moved over to the B.C. Mainland about three years ago, to be woods foreman.

These days, Tamihi has 26 highway trucks, five off-highway trucks, two low-beds, 16 log loaders, three bunchers, two processors and they run three Madill grapple yarders. In the equipment fleet is a fair bit of Hitachi equipment, from B.C. Hitachi dealer, Wajax. Included in this are four new Hitachi ZX290 Forester log loaders, a ZX290 Forester road builder, a



210 road builder and a 290 Rock Drill. “We’ve picked up seven pieces of new Hitachi equipment in the last two years alone,” says Jesse, as part of a general equipment upgrade/ramp up.

And the Hitachi iron is working out well for the operation. “The current series of Hitachi machines seem to be bulletproof,” says Brian. “We’re running them hard, yet we’ve had no warrantable items fail whatsoever. We change the oil and air filters, wash the machines, and they just run and run.”

Hitachi and Wajax put together an attractive equipment deal for them, says Jesse. “Equipment pricing and financing are always a big item, and the financing package was attractive. And the Hitachi equipment gets the job done at a good cost. The machines are good on fuel, with their Isuzu four cylinder engines.”

The Hitachi’s are a good fit working with a grapple yarder, a mini-tower operation or just plain loading, he says. “And they do some solid hoe chucking. We’ve got a good operator doing hoe chucking on one of the Hitachi machines, and he’s getting good production numbers, even in some big wood.”

Tamihi Logging also has a fair bit of Madill equipment, including eight log loaders—a combination of 2800, 2850 and 3800 machines. “The 3800s are just plain workhorses”, says Jesse. “For hoe chucking, you can’t beat them. They have such good swing power uphill.”

They also have three Madill grapple yarders—two 120 machines, and a 122 unit—three Madill 071 mini towers and two older 90-foot Madill yarders. They have two Madill bunchers, a 2250 tilter with a 24-inch Quadco head and a 2250 flat bottom, with a Madill head.

Also fairly new to the operation is a Tigercat 870 buncher, with a Tigercat head, and a massive Tigercat 635D skidder, from B.C. Tigercat dealer, Inland Kenworth Parker Pacific. “That 635D is a monster,” says Jesse. “It can move a lot of wood. The Tigercats are working out great—we’re happy with them, and the operators love them.”

Just prior to their purchase of the Hitachi equipment, they bought three Cat 325 machines, two of which are doing processing work, and the other is a log loader. The 325 machines have Waratah 624 heads. Also new in the last few years are two Cat 320 machines, and a John Deere 210.

Also in the equipment line-up at Tamihi Logging are some Link-Belt loaders, and a Hyundai loader with a power clam in one of their log sorts.

Tamihi Logging’s large number of loaders gives them flexibility in the bush, and at their log sorts, says Jesse. “We have some spare equipment that we can rotate in if a loader needs to come in to the shop or needs some maintenance out in the bush. We just had one of the Madill 2800s in for some work—but that wasn’t a problem.”

Some years ago, Tamihi Logging took over a maintenance shop and office building from forest company Canfor, which used to have operations in the region, and they have since expanded the shop to five service bays.

On the maintenance side, equipment reports are issued every week, showing operating hours and what equipment is due for servicing. They also have an annual capital project plan. “It deals with major repairs, such as equipment rebuilds and undercarriages, that kind of work,” says Tamihi operations manager, Rick Delves. Rick adds that the plan is flexible, however, so if something pressing comes up on the repairs side, they can re-allocate the capital and manpower in the shop.



One of the more recent changes at Tamihi was the installation of a weigh scale at the sort at Hatzic. “That was a big step in the right direction,” says Jesse. “We get a lot of big beautiful fir, but we also get some smaller hemlock, too, which means a lot of pieces. The weigh scale sure saves us time vs. the guys doing manual scaling.”

The company now also has its own in-house log broker, Daryl Rouleau, which helps maximize revenue for the mix of species and log sizes. “Daryl is very hands on—he makes the bucking cards for the guys, goes out to the field to talk to the processing operators and goes down to the log sorts, to talk with them about what the markets are looking for.”

Because of their proximity to urban areas—they are fairly close to the communities of Mission, Abbotsford and Chilliwack, and sometimes to major roads—with their logging operations, Tamihi has had some problems with equipment damage, and even arson. Several years’ back, a dump truck, excavator and rock drill owned by the company were destroyed by a fire that had been deliberately set. Tamihi now uses the services of a security firm to monitor its logging sites, log sorts, offices and shop, using hidden cameras and patrol vehicles.

Anyone looking to do further mischief is going to pay the price. Jesse notes that they recently discovered someone looking to steal some tools from equipment in the bush, on an early morning. “Rick was out there with the RCMP, and the RCMP officer had their gun drawn on the guy. The guy was arrested and charges are going to be laid.”

But their location also works favourably for Tamihi, too, in that it’s close to home for a lot of their employees. Experienced people are hard to come by in the B.C. forest industry these days. “We’re probably the biggest logging company operating in the Lower Mainland, and it’s a desirable place to live and work vs. operating up the B.C. Coast, which is more remote. If guys have options, they’d rather be home with their families at night,” says Jesse.

Jesse, for example, lives in an eastern suburb of Vancouver, and commutes to the Tamihi operations.

Jesse says the move from running a buncher to managing operations in the woods for Tamihi has been a good one for him. “I enjoyed running buncher—ever since I was a kid, I loved machines, and I’d be out there with my Dad every chance I got. But I like managing, too, and being busy, and making sure things are going as best as they can in the bush.

“But I do miss running equipment a little,” he admits. “I hopped on a buncher the other day for a couple of hours, and it was nice to only have to worry about what’s going on right in front of you, at least for an afternoon.”

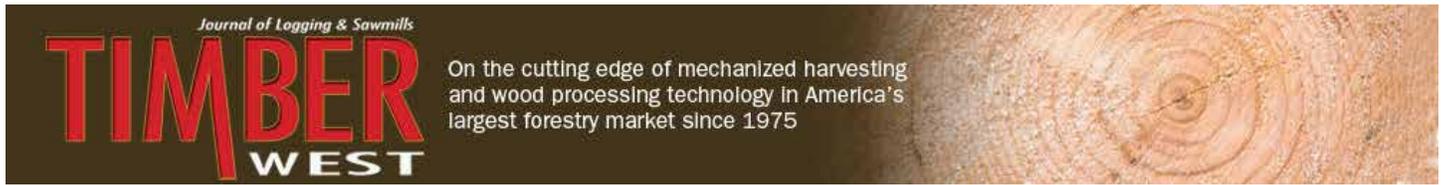
Jesse’s Dad, Brian, thrives on getting out in the bush. He enjoys the challenge of figuring out the engineering and logistics of how to successfully harvest trees on a particular block—since, of course, no two are the same.

“Figuring out what timber there might be on a mountain side, walking it and then figuring out how you’ll build the roads and landings to maximize the harvest with minimal impact—that’s exciting to me,” says Brian.

Brian also works closely with the First Nations bands in the area, offering to help out with business plans and strategy. They also offer engineering services, since Tamihi has its own engineering department.

In fact, Tamihi pretty much does it all—from the planning and engineering right through to overseeing the tree planting.

While Tamihi will be busy with its own tenure, the company is also looking to do more Timber Sales in the future, says



Jesse, and it's well equipped to do that. "There are smaller companies that can do Timber Sales, but a lot of the sales are high lead and mechanical, so that fits us quite well, since we can do both."

They are also looking for further opportunities to do more work with local First Nations bands, to help the bands increase their forest management capabilities.