

# 2012 Resource Development Council Alaska Forest Products Industry Overview


By Keith Coulter





# **Good News: Robust export market last several years for Alaska logs**

**Port of Shanghai, China (6/12)**





**The not so good news....**





**Statewide: The Alaska forest products industry is suffering and enduring major raw material supply issues**

## Historic Timber Harvest by Landowner

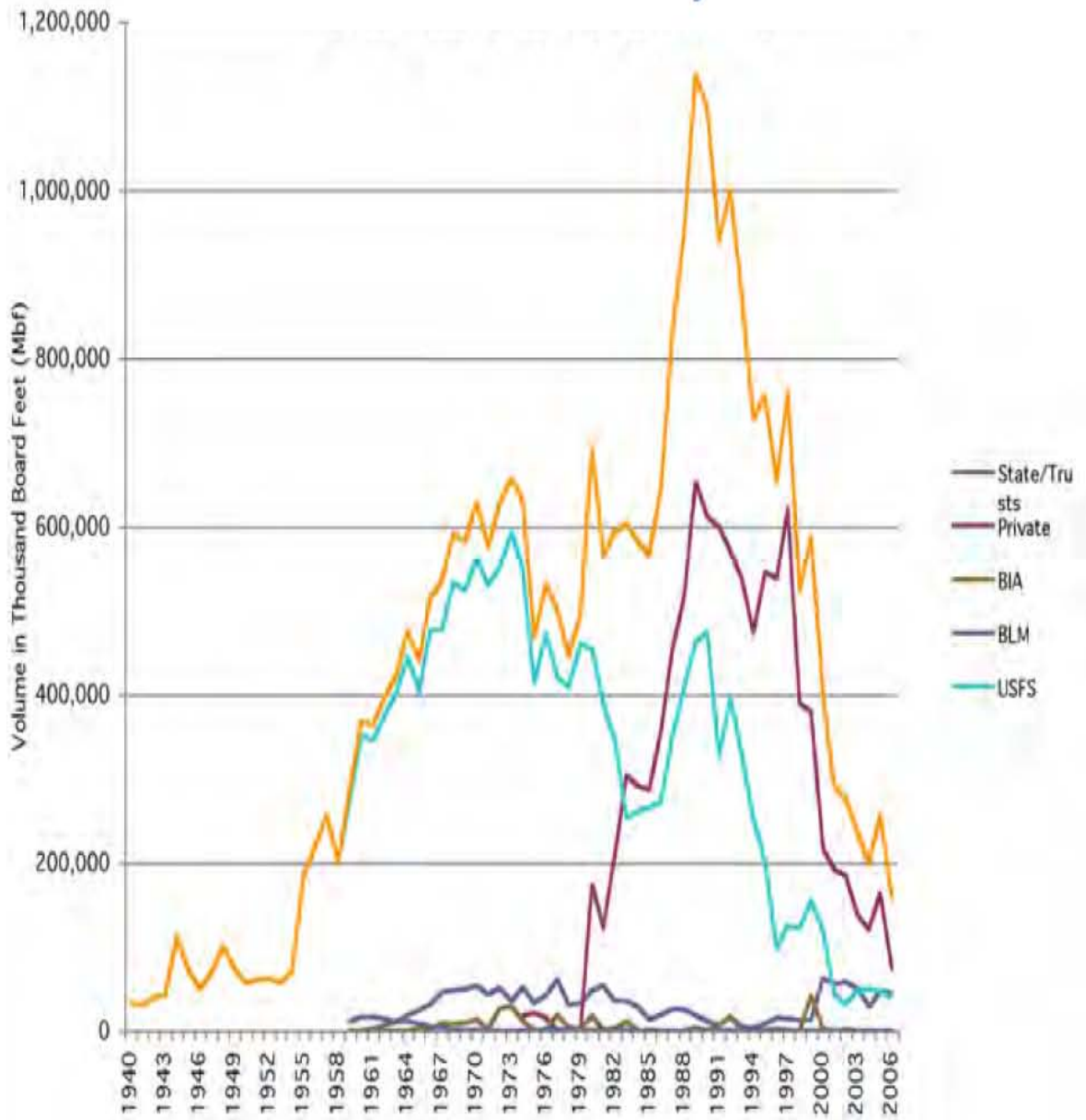


Figure 17 Harvest in Alaska. (Brackley et al. 2009)

From: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/2010AlaskaStatewideAssessment.pdf>



A photograph of a forest with moss-covered trees and a forest floor. The trees are tall and thin, with moss growing on their trunks and branches. The forest floor is covered in moss and fallen branches.

**Total volume harvested across all land ownerships in  
Alaska: 180 MMBF** (personal comm. Owen Graham, AFA, Oct. 30, 2012)

**Compare /contrast this with State of Idaho land  
ownership: 330 MMBF**  
(<http://www.forestbusinessnetwork.com>, News Article from 8/9/12)

**Total volume harvested across all land ownerships in  
Idaho: Approx. 1 Billion Board Ft/Year (Log Scale)**

(Brandt et al., 2012: Idaho's forest products industry and timber harvest, 2006)



# What's the problem?

On its side.







**Federal land ownership issues: Many forested areas that industry relies upon in Alaska are federally owned (mainly SE AK)**

**“Changes in National priorities”**

- \* Cumulative effects of past timber harvesting**
- \* Extensive litigation by environmental groups**
- \* Federal land’s competing/conflicting management objectives/policy (NEPA)**

(Alaska Division of Forestry Statewide Assessment, 2010)



**Results:**

**Massive industry wide “restructuring”**

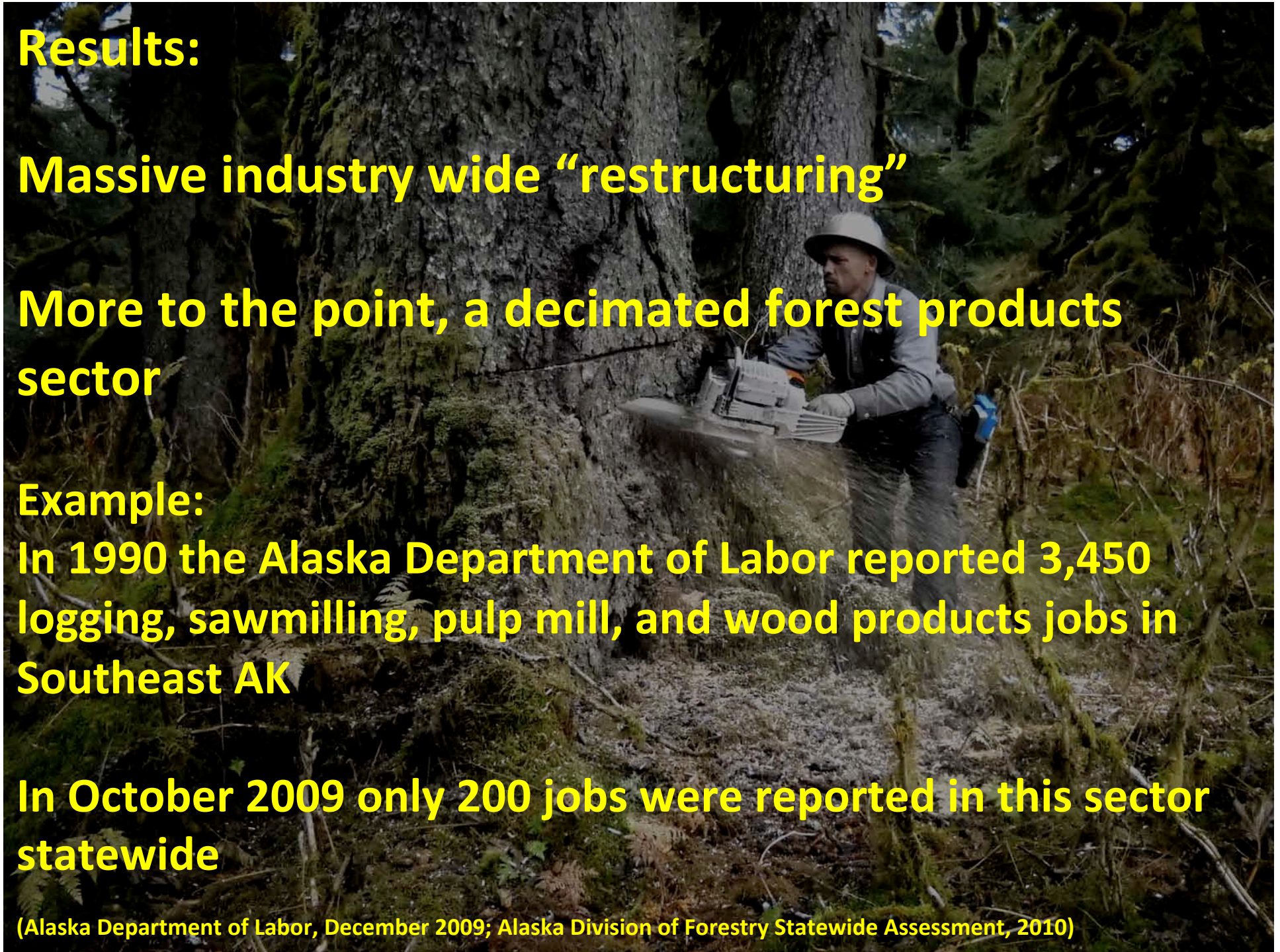
**More to the point, a decimated forest products sector**

**Example:**

**In 1990 the Alaska Department of Labor reported 3,450 logging, sawmilling, pulp mill, and wood products jobs in Southeast AK**

**In October 2009 only 200 jobs were reported in this sector statewide**

**(Alaska Department of Labor, December 2009; Alaska Division of Forestry Statewide Assessment, 2010)**





**“The very survival of the timber industry hangs in balance with total industry harvest levels reaching their lowest level in a half century.”** (Alaska Division of Forestry Statewide Assessment, 2010)







**Complex issues and many stakeholders:**

**“The timber industry in SE Alaska is still alive due to the extraordinary efforts of organizations such as AFA, RDC, Southeast Conference.”**

**(Rick Harris, Sealaska 6/14/12)**



A photograph of a person standing on a large log in a forest, with other logs in the foreground. The person is wearing a dark jacket with a red lining and a black hat. The background shows a forest with trees and a clear sky.

**Alaska's forest products sector  
faces many critical challenges**

**Such as... intensively framed  
environmental campaigns**





## The Tongass: America's Salmon Forest

Working to Conserve and Restore Southeast Alaska's Wild Salmon Watersheds

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"THE TONGASS IS AMERICA'S SALMON FOREST  
AND ONE OF THE FEW PLACES IN THE WORLD  
WHERE WILD SALMON AND TROUT THRIVE.

**"The Tongass is America's salmon forest and one of the few places in the world where wild salmon and trout still thrive. Some 65 percent of Tongass salmon and trout habitat is not Congressionally protected at the watershed scale, and is currently open to development activities that could harm fish. It's time for Congress to better protect the richest resource of the Tongass: wild salmon."**

Tim Bristol  
Trout Unlimited, Alaska Program Director

Support the conservation of high value salmon and trout producing watersheds on the Tongass National Forest

Sign On

### Blog Updates

[The Future of Wild Salmon in Alaska](#)

[Don't Turn the Clock Back on the Tongass National Forest](#)

[From Timber to Tourism: Hoonah](#)

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[The Drake Magazine Selects "The Last Salmon Forest" for Award](#)

### Connect With Us





A photograph of a forest landscape. In the foreground, there is a body of water. The middle ground is filled with a dense forest of evergreen trees. In the upper left portion of the sky, a bird is captured in flight, its wings spread. The overall scene is somewhat dimly lit, suggesting an overcast day or dusk.

**What can we do?**

**Perhaps our message needs to adapt to capture more social license by targeting the benefits of forest management vs. “our remaining mill needs more old growth”**



A large truck is shown from a low angle, heavily loaded with large logs. The truck is on a dirt road in a forested area. The logs are stacked high, and the truck's large tires are visible in the foreground. The background shows a dirt road leading into a forest of tall trees under a clear blue sky.

**Outlook: Without serious overhaul of Federal land management policy, more hard times**

**A future of chronic uncertainty....**

- \* Difficulty attracting any large scale investment in forest products industry (no reliable raw material supply)**
- \* Loss of *interdependent* milling infrastructure (pulp mills, saw mills, biomass, secondary wood products manufacturing)**
- \* Loss of *non-metropolitan infrastructure* (funding for schools, roads, etc...)**



A photograph showing a logging worker in a hard hat and dark clothing, working with large logs and heavy machinery cables. The worker is positioned in the lower right, leaning over a large log. The scene is filled with logs of various sizes and heavy cables, suggesting a logging operation. The text is overlaid on the image in a bright yellow font.

## Take Home Message:

If the effort that halted forest management on Alaska federal lands was this effective, your sector is just as at risk.



# Thank you

## References:

**2010 Alaska Division of Forestry Statewide Assessment found at:**

**<http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/2010AlaskaStatewideAssessment.pdf> (accessed on 11/7/2012)**

**Brackley, Allen M., Haynes, Richard W., and Alexander, Susan J. 2009. Timber Harvests in Alaska: 1910-2006. U.S. Forest service Research note PNW-RN-560**

**Brandt, J. P. , T. A. Morgan, C. E. Keegan, J. M. Songster, T. P. Spoelma, and L.T. DeBlander. 2012. Idaho's forest products industry and timber harvest, 2006. Gen Tech. Rep. RMRS-RB-12. Fort Collins, CO; USDA, Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station. 45 p.**

**Idaho lands agency reports record timber harvest, news article found at: <http://www.forestbusinessnetwork.com> (accessed on 11/8/12)**

**Owen Graham, Alaska Forest Association, Personal Communication on 10/30/12**

**Rick Harris, Sealaska, Personal Communication on 6/14/12**

**The Tongass: America's Salmon Forest (website) found at: <http://americansalmonforest.org> (accessed on 11/5/12)**