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### **NATHAN HARKER RECOGNIZED WITH VFA LOGGER MERIT AWARD**

**Richmond, VA** – The Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) recognized Nathan Harker with its Logger Merit Award during the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit in Blacksburg, Virginia. VFA’s Logger Merit Award recognizes and honors the performance of one or more outstanding logger(s) in the Commonwealth. Winners are chosen based on a written evaluation of the total logging operation. Recipients of the Logger Merit Award represent the “best-of-the-best,” and exemplify the highest professional standards, as they serve as effective positive public role models for the entire logging industry.

Mr. Harker began his professional forestry career upon graduating from Virginia Tech in 2003, with his first job working as a forester for Smith Mountain Land & Lumber in Huddleston, VA. Nearly four years later, he started Staunton River Timber, a wood dealership in which he remains invested. In 2009, responding to a need for loggers to harvest small acreage tracts and select cutting of valuable grade timber, Mr. Harker partnered with a former classmate to found Pittsylvania Forest Products in 2009.

Pittsylvania Forest Products specialized in site sensitive logging on small acreage tracts. At the beginning, all felling was done by hand by Mr. Harker and his partner. Eventually, strategic equipment purchases served as an invaluable part of their light impact operation. Among early jobs was the harvesting of White Ash in low lying, poor access area devastated by the Emerald Ash Borer. Pittsylvania provided services by salvaging timber others could not using a conventional large-scale approach.

As Mr. Harker grew the reputation of Pittsylvania Forest Products, the company also grew to become the conventional logging operation it is today. Currently, Pittsylvania Forest Products has 7 employees, all of whom Mr. Harker holds in high regard as evident by their loyalty through numerous years of service with the company. Pittsylvania carries between 60-75 loads per week, providing logs to a wide range of buyers throughout central and southwest Virginia.

In nominating Mr. Harker for VFA’s Logger Merit Award, Stephen Holt of Georgia Pacific LLC in Brookneal, VA shared, “Over the course of his career, Nathan has committed to doing the right thing for the landowner in all aspects of his business.”

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#### **About Virginia Forestry Association:**

Founded in 1943, the Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) is a not-for-profit organization that represents Virginia’s diverse forestry community and promotes the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources to ensure their long-term benefits for all Virginians. VFA’s membership of more than 1,000 companies and individuals includes landowners, foresters, forest products businesses, loggers, forestry consultants, and stakeholders who value the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources as a driver of ecological, economic, and social prosperity in Virginia. Learn more at [www.vaforestry.org](http://www.vaforestry.org).

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