

Gray Logging LLC



“Business and Family, Family and Business”

Laura Bosworth, Director of Forestry & Regulatory Affairs with the Florida Forestry Association said “ We were honored to take over the Florida Logger of the Year in 2020 and after reviewing many great candidates through a long process are confident we’ve made the right selection. We also would like to thank the SWPA for their support and sharing their expertise with us throughout the process as well as the judges who shared their time with us.”

The Roots

Gray Logging, a reputable logging company in North Florida, is well known throughout the region for excellence and integrity. The Gray Logging motto for many, many years has been “Our Roots Run Deep”. Much like the anatomy of a tree, components within the company cohesively work together to uphold health and stability. For the forest and the harvesting of timber to be sustained for the growth and legacy of the industry, current forest management is vital. Jerry Gray, owner of Gray Logging, realizes that Forest Management represents the “root” of timber harvesting.

Loading decks/landings/ramps are crucial in forest management. Gray Logging, LLC utilizes a GPS mapping system, aerial photos, and road access availability in the planning and construction of every logging ramp. Roads on site are maintained, and in many cases improved with grading, rocking, or bulldozing. After harvesting, the deck is left as wanted by the landowner which means, sometimes, debris is piled and sometimes debris is spread out. Other times the deck is stumped and cleared for wildlife food plots. The company’s top priority is making sure every landowner’s needs are met.”

Gray Logging, LLC serves a diverse customer base who desire a variety of different outcomes; therefore, multiple harvesting options, such as a clear cut, a thin, a select cut, and/or a mix of harvesting are possible. Approximately ninety-five percent of harvesting is done on non-industrial private land. A large percentage of the ninety-five percent is Certified Tree Farms. Jerry is ready and able to consult and guide landowners in accordance with Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Florida’s Best Management

Practices (BMPs) as the company is one hundred percent compliant. Recommendations are given on available landowner programs, soil erosion control, stream crossings, and streamside management. Contact information for local, regional, and state agencies are provided to encourage replanting and ease landowners’ apprehensions.

Due to the reduced fuel chip consumption locally, Gray Logging offers cutting/piling/burning of unmerchantable timber to facilitate reforestation. This unique approach has become such a desirable tool that the company is employed by resident consultants, such as, Southern Forestry Consultants, Mitchell L. McElroy, Private Forester, and Alan Tucker, Private Forester, to assist and foster reforestation.

Another unique approach to problem solving for one landowner was implemented ten years ago. The plan included a twenty-year lease arrangement under which land management, wildlife management, and hunting lease management for the property were provided. To facilitate that need, and any others arising in the future, Jerry created Gray Timber, LLC.

Forest Management is a challenging aspect of any logging operation; however, Gray Logging, LLC never backs away from a challenge and is always looking for innovative ideas and solutions to tomorrow’s problems.

**“OUR
ROOTS
RUN
DEEP”**

The Trunk

The “trunk” of Gray Logging, LLC represents every employee and the equipment available for each harvesting tract. One of Jerry’s favorite sayings is, **“you’re only as good as your last job”**. Every employee hired and every piece of equipment purchased works toward making the last job the best job.

Gray Logging, LLC is proud of its twenty-nine employees. At the shop office alongside Jerry is his wife, Ginger. Her duties include handling payroll using QuickBooks Pro, employee health insurance, and bookkeeping of all the required records. Jerry’s father and founder of the logging company, W.C. Gray, at eighty-one years of age, can be found answering the phone in the office or bulldozing roads out on timber tracts.

Josh Ensminger is the shop manager and truck supervisor and has been with the company for over sixteen years. Josh is a Florida Master Logger. His duties are varied and multitasked. He, too, accumulates many maintenance records and logbooks for documentation. Josh plans scheduled maintenances at designated intervals according to mileage on the trucks and the hours on the equipment. Trucks are serviced and maintained at the shop. He is responsible for inventory for repairs and for sale. Two additional men work as a mechanic and welder. There are twelve truck drivers.

The company’s full-time mobile mechanic services all equipment as needed in the woods. Mechanic Steve Schults drives a Ford F550 furnished with a service body, welder, autocrane, and torches. His responsibilities include packing cylinders, steam cleaning equipment, and performing routine maintenance.

Richard Hunter is the company’s Wood Crews Manager. He is a Florida Master Logger as well. He works with and coordinates the nine crew members. One crew of Gray Logging, LLC uses a Barko 595 Knuckleboom loader, a John Deere 643L Fellerbuncher, two John Deere 648L skidders, and a John Deere Track Fellerbuncher. The other crew uses a Barko 495 Knuckleboom loader, a John Deere 643L Fellerbuncher, and two John Deere 648H skidders. Each logging crew has a four-door labor truck equipped with one-hundred-gallon fuel tanks, hydraulic oil, bar and chain oil. All labor trucks contain spill kits, First Aid kits, and a Hazardous Materials List. Also available are a John Deere Bulldozer, a Hotsy Pressure Washer, and a Ford F350 service truck with welder, manual crane, and torches. Husqvarna chainsaws and pole saws are at the job site. Fourteen log trucks, sixteen log trailers, and two lowboys haul all harvested timber. Contract haulers are not used; however, four of the company’s trucks and drivers are contracted out.

Another of Jerry’s favorite sayings, from Coach John Wooden, is **“If you fail to prepare, then you are preparing to fail”**. This is certainly evident in the way Gray Logging, LLC is operated.

The Branches

Gray Logging, LLC never “goes out on a limb” concerning safety. Again, as Jerry says, “If you fail to prepare, then you’re preparing to fail”. Therefore, Gray Logging has established practices, procedures, and expectations for job performance that exceed the minimum regulatory compliance. These safety protocols protect valuable resources, including employee’s lives.

Jerry Gray is a proactive businessman and employer, not reactive; hence, an **“Emergency Response Plan”** is filled out for every tract detailing vital information for any accident or emergency that may occur. GPS Coordinates are listed as well as emergency phone numbers relative to the tract and state and/or county jurisdictions. The company provides for each employee to be proficiently certified in CPR and basic First Aid procedures by local fire/safety personnel in Madison, Florida.

On site safety meetings are conducted monthly by Richard Hunter, Wood Crews Manager. Topics are varied and relatable to current issues, weather, equipment/safety maintenance, and environmental concerns. There is required use of chaps, hard hats, and safety vests.

The company utilizes Verizon Connect, which is a GPS monitoring system. Using this system, speed is monitored, and a graph is printed out weekly showing speeds and highlighting any infractions. The system also shows “hard braking” and “hard turning” maneuvers. A recent addition to safety monitoring is the installment of Dash Cams. Driving habits and behaviors are observable. A Disciplinary Form would be written up for any driver with three or more violations a month. To date, not one employee has been “disciplined” because of speeding.

Gray Logging, LLC takes pride in its company bonuses. There is a Monthly Safety Bonus given to a truck driver who is diligent with driving habits and truck upkeep. There is also a bonus paid to any truck driver for every 50,000 miles of driving without any DOT safety violations. An annual Christmas bonus is also given to every employee.

All the **“branches”** that make up Gray Logging’s safety procedures and practices support the growth and health of the company and the future of the harvesting industry.

The Leaves

The “leaves” of Gray Logging, LLC represent the Business Management practices that guarantee the company is truly “a cut above”. Jerry Gray is not just a business owner, Jerry is viewed as a leader by employees, business associates, landowners, and customers. His innovative leadership in business is the determining factor in keeping the company green because as his wife, Ginger, often says, “money does grow on trees”.

The company pays professional wages and expects excellence in the woods, on the road, and at the shop/office.



The business provides its employees with the following:

- Worker’s Compensation coverage,
- Blue Cross-Blue Shield Health Insurance through a fifty percent employer paid plan
- Edward Jones Individual Retirement Account with a three percent employer match plan

The Seeds

Having been in the timber industry for over forty years, **Jerry is already reaping “seeds” planted in his earlier years.** Jerry Gray and Gray Logging, LLC are intentionally and continually sowing “seeds”. The “seeds” represent seemingly small and insignificant ideas implemented to bring life in the company and a future harvest

Jerry Gray is a Florida Master Logger and a Certified Tree Farmer. He is the current Vice-President of the Southeastern Wood Producers Association and a long-standing member of the Florida Forestry Association and a recent member to the American Loggers Council. He has served many years at the Madison Church of God as a Trustee, Pastor Councilman, and Sunday School Teacher.

Jerry Gray is truly a visionary and lives by the scripture, **“without a vision, the people perish”.** He has clear and concise goals that he strives to accomplish. Jerry believes knowledge is the key to helping others understand the importance of the logging industry and all the benefits that the community receives from wood. He has certainly become a prominent voice for the timber industry.

One of Jerry’s famous sayings is **“Wood is Good.”** Gray Logging, LLC has several banners that are placed on the fence around the logging shop or hung on loaded log trucks as they participate in the local parades. Whenever

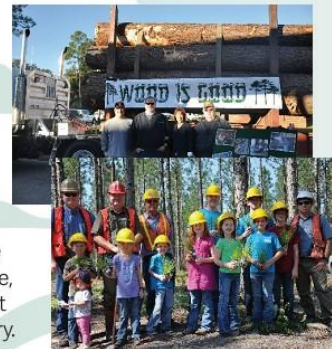
- One-week paid vacation during the week of Thanksgiving
- Incentive Bonuses
- Christmas Bonus
- AFLAC – accident, cancer, dental, disability, and/or vision plans
- Uniforms through Aramark
- Personal Protective Equipment

Jerry believes in “making every move count”, so the company’s objective is to add elements to the business that minimize costs and maximize profit. To this end, Gray Logging, LLC is a dealer of Wix filters, Vitillo hydraulics, and Husqvarna outdoor equipment. Another factor is that the company buys fuel and oil in bulk quantities. Also, the company does in house maintenance and repairs utilizing its shop mechanic and shop welder.

The company has been the recipient of many awards and honors. Gray Logging, LLC was Florida District Logger of The Year in 1999, 2000, 2004, and 2010. In 2010, Gray Logging, LLC was Florida Logger of the Year. The company was awarded 2011 Southeastern Logger of the Year and became runner up for the title of National Logger of the Year in 2011. Jerry has been featured in Southern Logging Times and The Forestry Review.

the company does school programs or field trips, numerous products are displayed that are made from wood or wood by-products.

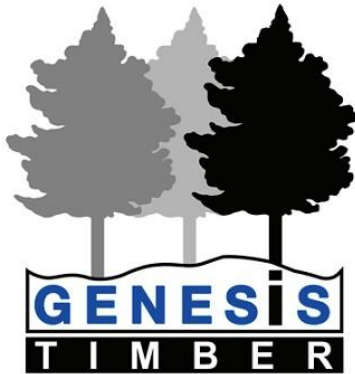
Pine seedlings are always given out to encourage the children to appreciate, respect, and be a part of the logging industry. Gray Logging, LLC also regularly participates in “Log A Load for Kids”.



One of the most significant “seeds” planted has been Jerry’s vision for a CDL Driving School here at the local community college. Jerry recognized that his own truck drivers, and truckers overall, were aging with little prospects for replacements. So, he did what he could do to implement a solution. Working with the community college, insurance agents, and the logging community, a program was created to meet this need. Jerry secured money from loggers and mills to purchase a log truck and trailer to be used to train students. Insurance regulations were adjusted, and guidelines created. The community

college was even paid freight as the students learned to haul logs from “certified” loggers. Many will benefit as this “seed” is continually being harvested.

Jerry Gray is heavily involved in legislative issues. He has worked extensively with past Florida Representative Halsey Beshears, even being invited by him to be a voice at the Florida Capitol. He continues to work with current Florida Representative Jason Schoaf. He calls, writes, and meets with local and state representatives on issues related to the logging industry. One current issue is the Safe Route Act which increases safety for our industry and the general public.



In 2015, Jerry partnered with his son-in-law, Matt Webb, to create Genesis Timber, LLC. Jerry’s other son-in-law, Joshua Light, works for the company as Director of Operations. Genesis Timber, LLC is a timber dealership that currently buys timber for eight logging crews, two of which are Gray Logging, LLC. Genesis Timber, LLC strives to lead the timber industry with innovative ideas and cutting-edge methods as a responsible member of the business community. An example of a cutting-edge method is the use of drone. Operated by Joshua Light, the drone has become another asset to assessing timber value and storm damage. It also helps with timber management.



Jerry has a heart to invest in the county. Thus, Genesis Timber started a college scholarship fund to be granted to a yearly winner majoring in agricultural science. The first year, due to both Jerry and Matt’s generous heart, two girls were awarded a scholarship.

Genesis Timber, LLC also contributes to bringing Combat Marines and their children to a week-long get away to hunt and fish and tour local logging industries and surrounding mills. Gray Logging, LLC provides dinner for one of the nights. Genesis Timber, LLC also sponsors the Fellowship of Christian athletes and both companies support little league ball teams.

All of these “seeds” give birth to new beginnings and new possibilities, ultimately leading to harvests that many people will enjoy far into the future.

The Heart



The “heart” of a pine is usually solid, and this is so with Jerry Gray of Gray Logging, LLC. His passion and love for the industry that he has known since his childhood is evident from the first meeting with him. To Jerry, it is always **“Business and family – family and business”**. From his youth, he has worked alongside of his father, his brother, cousins, uncles, his wife, his father-in-law, a brother-in-law, nephews, and now his two sons-in-law. **After more than forty “rings” of growth, anyone looking can see that “the heart” has gained strength, endured the challenges of the seasons, and is turning golden in color.**