

A CUSTOMER'S SUCCESS STORY

Volvo Construction Equipment

Indiana logger carves out a niche as a low environmental-impact company.



Indiana logger Brent Daniels uses his **Volvo L45B** to unload, sort and reload logs at his log yard.

In 1989, Brent Daniels launched his logging business with a Ford pickup truck and a trailer to haul both logs and equipment. He rented a log skidder and delivered logs to sawmills with his truck and the trailer.

By the year 2000, Daniels, who is based in Mooresville, Indiana, had expanded his equipment fleet to include three skidders, three rubber-tired loaders, a semi-truck and trailer. Business was good, and his volume in timber of all kinds grew to about 1.5 million board feet of timber per year.

Today, Daniels is more selective about the timber he harvests. It's more profitable to focus on harvesting high-grade hardwood and veneer logs – walnut, white oak, cherry, and red oak. So his annual volume is reduced to less than 1 million board feet, but his profit has climbed by 50 percent.

"These days I pick and choose my tracts more carefully," says Daniels.

"In the early years I was trying to build volume. I thought I had to harvest every tree I could in central Indiana."

What People Want.

In fact, Daniels has carved out a niche as a logger with smaller equipment that doesn't make a big footprint on the land. "Most loggers have larger equipment, larger log landings, larger trails and larger access roads," says Daniels. "I can do low-impact logging with smaller equipment, smaller landing, smaller trails, and smaller access. That's what people want when they select-harvest these 10- to 100-acre tracts in central Indiana."

That explains why Daniels likes his **Volvo L35** compact loader so much. After the skidders drag logs to the landing, the compact loader sorts and stacks the logs. "With the loader I can sort logs into 10 or 12 decks, but a knuckleboom loader couldn't do that – it has limited reach," says Daniels.

The compact **Volvo L35** features low ground



Daniels' **Volvo L35** loader makes a low impact on the ground, yet can lift the large hardwood logs of central Indiana.

pressure, yet it can lift and load heavy logs. Most of the timber Daniels cuts is large-diameter hardwood; he doesn't do pulpwood or tracts of small timber. "A lot of land owners are impressed with how I can move logs out with this loader, then use it to clean up the landing and the trails," says Daniels. "A knuckleboom loader can just load logs. It can't carry logs or clean up the landing."

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Volvo Versatility.

In the late 1990s, the state of Indiana began requiring loggers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). Those include grading for grass seeding, placing mulch in selected areas, and building water bars and installing rip-rap for erosion control. Water bars are small terraces that control soil erosion by slowing and diverting the downhill flow of storm-water.

"This Volvo loader gives me the versatility to handle all those tasks," says Daniels. "When the state implemented BMPs, I didn't have to buy any new equipment. Some people say that to build a water bar you need a bulldozer. But I say I can build a better water bar with this Volvo loader, because in certain situations I can compact and smooth the water bar and then install rip-rap. With a dozer you couldn't do all those things."

Daniels bought the **Volvo L35** in January 1999. He had run non-Volvo loaders, but says he likes the L35 the best. "I like the quick-attach forks and bucket," says Daniels. "It has good maneuverability and features excellent visibility. Other loaders were slow and heavy and would compact the farm fields. This loader has the traction and the clearance to go into the woods and build water diversion bars.

"The Volvo's light weight and maneuverability have enabled me to remove logs from golf courses, parks, and even back yards – with little or no damage to the turf," says Daniels. "I even removed some logs from the grounds at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Loyd Hacker, one of Daniels' equipment operators, has run the **Volvo L35** loader for about 10 years. "It's very handy," he says. "It'll pick up just about anything you want to. And the four-wheel drive comes in handy when the ground gets a little wet."

Demo Not Required.

In the fall of 2007, Daniels bought a **Volvo L45B** to work in a central log concentration yard. "We use it to unload, sort, and reload logs," says Daniels. "When I needed that loader for the log yard, I did not even demo any other loaders, because they did not offer



"The Volvo loaders have helped my reputation as a low-impact logger," says Brent Daniels.

quick-attach, the high-visibility forks, and the high-quality lights, all as standard equipment.

"We really like the L45B," says Daniels. "The lifting capacity-to-weight ratio is even higher than the L35, yet it's still small enough to take to the woods and work at a landing."

Daniels says he has enough equipment to work a larger project and a smaller one at the same time. At the larger one, he can run two skidders and the **Volvo L35** loader, while a third skidder and a non-Volvo loader handle the smaller project. Meanwhile the larger Volvo loader works the log yard.

"The Volvo loaders have helped me to be more versatile and they have helped my reputation as a low-impact logger," says Daniels. "I have not been stereo-typed as a large logger with big skidders and big knuckleboom loaders. With those machines you always have oil leaks."

Shared Values.

Daniels estimates that last year he harvested about 900,000 board feet of timber – and he says the **Volvo L35**

probably loaded 90 percent of that figure. "It's probably handled 10 million board feet since I have owned it," says Daniels. "And it hasn't leaked a drop of oil."

Daniels appreciates the service he gets from Rudd Equipment, his Indianapolis-based Volvo dealer. "Rudd always gives me same-day service on the loaders," he says. "Plus, Rudd has given me updates on the loaders. They notified me of an electrical upgrade after the warranty had expired, and gave me that upgrade at no cost. And they did the same thing with an upgrade on the joystick.

"I owe the success of my business to the people I work with," says Daniels. "I've been blessed with a faithful timber cutter, Perry McClain, for 20 years. I couldn't have built a good reputation without him."

Plans for the future? "We're going to stick with quality instead of quantity," says Daniels. At Volvo, we're pleased to be part of Daniels' plan for quality.