

# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



VADIM KOVALEV  
Founder, Koval

Vadim is a passionate advocate and storyteller in the wood industry, traveling globally to engage with every link in the supply chain—from land and seedlings to sawmills, panel mills, and mass timber, as well as machinery manufacturers and service providers.

As the founder of Koval, Vadim merges his **mechanical engineering expertise with storytelling to elevate the industry's** image and solve key challenges. His journey began at JoeScan, where he developed 3D laser scanners for sawmills and holds a patent for innovative designs. Through global travels, he realized the industry's untapped potential for storytelling.

Now a recognized influencer, Vadim produces high-quality video content that highlights industry innovations and tackles key issues like workforce challenges and public perception. He also hosts the *Wood World Podcast*, exploring industry trends and interviewing key figures.

As a speaker, Vadim shares insights from both the technical and marketing sides of the industry, helping companies tell their stories, recruit talent, and grow their businesses. His work spans from small firms to large corporations, combining industry expertise with cutting-edge marketing strategies to create meaningful impact. His mission: to bridge gaps and improve lives within the wood industry worldwide.



SANDY DEER  
Chief People Officer, Koval

Sandy is said to have “sawdust in her veins” after being introduced to the wood industry at an early age. She is passionate about people, which she comes by honestly as both her father and grandfather were innovative senior leaders in labor and human relations.

She is known for her work advising and guiding leaders through the wide range of people challenges of the wood world. Over her 36-year career in the industry this has included expansions, downsizings, acquisitions, greenfield builds, skill gaps, retention issues and many other people challenges that leaders face every day. She has done so with a focus on creating and maintaining participative and principal-based cultures.

Sandy holds a BA in Psychology from the University of Michigan, is certified by the Society of Human Resource Management as a SHRM-SCP and is a John Maxwell Certified speaker, trainer, coach.

# SPEAKERS



MARK  
BOISVERT  
Product  
Development  
Manager  
Quadco  
Group

Mark brings over 25 years of forestry industry experience, spanning oilfield and mining exploration, construction, land clearing, and corporate sales management. His expertise makes him a perfect fit for this role.

He collaborates closely with customers to understand their needs and ensure top-tier service. His background working with all management levels in resource-based industries adds immense value to our team.

Mark's strategic vision and customer-focused approach enhance both client satisfaction and our organization's strength.



JERRY  
BONAGOFSKY  
CEO  
Safety Director  
WCLA

Jerry has worked at Washington Contract Loggers Association (WCLA) since 1995. From 1988 to 1995, he worked for the Washington Department of Labor & Industries, primarily as their statewide logging safety consultant. He also worked as a logger for about 17 years.



SHERI CALL  
CEO/  
President  
Washington  
Trucking  
Association

Sheri has been with the Washington

Trucking Association since 2001, has served as President & CEO since 2016, managing the Association and lobbying. She sits on the Executive Board of the Washington Highway Users Federation and the Puget Sound Regional Council Transportation Policy Board. Sheri is on ATRI's Research Advisory Committee and represents freight on Washington's Interstate Bridge Replacement Project and Workers Comp Advisory Committee. She also advises on zero-emission vehicle projects. With a background in freight businesses, she previously served on FMSIB and Washington's Freight Advisory Committee. She holds a B.S. in accounting from the University of Utah.



FELIX  
CHENG  
Co-Founder  
and CTO,  
Forest  
Vision.

Felix has spent decades in high-tech, specializing in machine learning, computer vision, and generative AI applications. Most recently, he was the Senior Director of AI Science at Zendesk, leading advancements in AI-powered customer service. Prior to that, he served as the Head of Science at a Seattle logistics startup. Earlier in his career, Felix was a Senior Applied Science Manager at Amazon, where he led initiatives to optimize Amazon's inbound supply chain network and improve its advertising relevance engine. As a Tech Bar Raiser at Amazon, he mentored senior tech talent and played a key role in hiring and developing high-performing teams. Felix has built and scaled multiple AI-driven tech organizations, bridging science and engineering to deliver impactful products.



MATT  
COMISKY  
AFRC  
Washington  
State

Matt spent the first 15 years of his career in private industry providing engineering, forestry, construction management, and real estate services to both large and small private landowners. Prior to joining AFRC, he worked for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as an engineer. While at DNR, he managed a variety of duties, including road and stream crossing design, and road maintenance projects. Matt also is a graduate of Class 31 of the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Leadership program. At AFRC, Matt is responsible for monitoring both State and Federal timber programs within Washington.



JOEL  
DRYDEN  
Manager,  
Pilchuck Tree  
Farm

Joel graduated from Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN in 2008, and started his forestry career one month later as a Forester for the Dept. of Natural Resources in Sedro-Woolley, WA. He worked in pre-sales layout and planning throughout the NW region for several years and finished the final year of his DNR career as a Forest Practices Forester. In 2017, he began a career in the private sector with Pacific Denkmann Company managing Pilchuck Tree Farm, a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation family-owned 15,000-acre tree farm in Snohomish and Skagit Counties. He and his wife, Andrea have two children; daughter Ezra (11) and son Zeke (8).



**CAM  
FIELD**  
Retired  
Merrill  
& Ring

Cam started his career in 1975 with **DNR as a timber cruiser's compass driver**. In 1978 he was assigned to work out of Forks, WA, for a fellow named Jack Zaccardo. Through Jack he experienced the history of early logging practices. When Cam was in the 4th grade at Monroe School in Port Angeles, **Jack's grandfather, Bert Kellogg**, came and presented a show of old time logging through negatives he had developed into slides which Cam never forgot. During his career at DNR and Merrill & Ring, Jack and Cam remained good friends. Cam always looked forward to seeing Jack with his trays of slides, the original ones **collected by Grandpa Bert! Cam's** one regret was not taking Jack up on **"personal tutoring" of the slide collection**. He is now excited and proud to be the presenter of Olympic Logging History, the old **Jack's Spot, presenting the original slides of Bert Kellogg**.



**HUNTER  
HARRILL**  
President,  
Pacific  
Logging  
Congress

Dr. Hunter Harrill is the Associate Professor of Forest Operations at California Poly Humboldt, his alma mater. Hunter began his industry **career on California's North Coast** working for Green Diamond Resource Company laying out harvest plans. He then spent a decade living in New Zealand where he earned his PhD in Forest Engineering and then worked at the University of Canterbury as a teacher, researcher and industry extension specialist. Hunter has

conducted many applied research projects on tethered harvesting systems, cable logging and biomass harvesting working with logging contractors, forest owners and equipment manufacturers. He has served on the board of the PLC for the last seven years and was appointed to be this year's 2025 PLC president.



**PETER  
JANICKI**  
Operations  
Manager,  
Janicki Logging

Peter is operations manager and part owner of Janicki Logging located in Sedro-Woolley, WA, a third generational logger and 4th generation in the timber industry. Janicki Logging specializes in long term land management on private and public property. Janicki Logging currently operates Cut-to-Length thinning sides, traditional shovel logging sides, tethered logging, small and medium cable logging; as well as, road building, rock blasting and bridge construction. We pride ourselves in completing complex timber sales which are common in the Pacific Northwest.



**ERIC  
KRUME**  
Founder,  
Summit  
Attachments

Eric has been a logger for 40 years and founded Summit in 2004 after **searching for a solution that didn't exist—the self-contained tong tosser. When he couldn't find what he needed, he did what all contract loggers do—he found a way.** Working late nights in his garage, he built the first self-contained tong tosser, which quickly gained traction among fellow loggers. As demand grew, Summit expanded into yarder manufacturing, driving

**the company's rapid growth and the formation of Summit Attachments.** Today, Eric is fully dedicated to Summit, deeply involved in every aspect of the business—from design and engineering to manufacturing, delivery, training, and service. Like every contract logger, he shows up early, stays late, and always finds a way.



**PATRICK  
MAHONEY**  
Grays Harbor  
College,  
Professor

Patrick grew up hunting and fishing in northern Idaho, and developed a passion for nature at an early age. **He holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in forestry from the University of Idaho.** After college he worked for Mason, Bruce, and Girard as a forester/check cruiser, before finding his way back to the classroom. He now teaches forestry at Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen, Washington. Located in the heart of industrial timber country, Grays Harbor College offers three degree options for students studying forestry/natural resources: a one year Technician Certification, an Associates of Applied Science – Natural Resources degree, and a Bachelor of Applied Science – Forest Resource Management degree. Applied science degrees are unique programs that place emphasis on application, rather than methodology. Students learn in real world settings, from instructors with field-forestry backgrounds, by spending as much time as possible in hands-on field sessions.



**MC MCALEER**  
Public Affairs  
Manager,  
Weyerhaeuser  
Washington/  
Canada  
Regions

Mary Catherine (MC) has served the Weyerhaeuser Company's

Washington state and Canadian regions as Public Affairs Manager since 2018, and has been working in and around the Washington State Legislature since 2013. McAleer studied Biology and Economics at Gonzaga University and Middle East Global Politics at the London School of Economics. In her spare time, MC enjoys cooking and traveling with her husband and three stepchildren.



**KEN SHIRMAN**  
Tacoma Branch Mgr., Triad Machinery

Ken has been with Triad Machinery for the last 15 years. Starting out with the company as a Territory Manager, Ken quickly moved to becoming the Tacoma Branch Manager and just completed building our new Sumner facility. In addition to the Sumner operations, Ken oversees Triad's Mt. Vernon facility. Ken is known at Triad for his ingenuity in coming up with ways to make things run better and more efficiently. Ken and his better half, wife Kelsey, live in Kent. They have three busy boys and one daughter to round out the clan. Ken loves the Seahawks, Sounders, hiking, skiing, hunting, and most things that keep him outdoors. He summited Mt. Rainier a few years ago and plans to do it again with his boys, much to his wife's dismay.



**CASEY SMITH**  
Vice President of Lending, WCLA Credit Union

Selling money wasn't always in Casey's plans, but that changed during the drive home after graduating from Bellevue University in Omaha, Nebraska in

December of 2007. The economy was starting to crash, a big windstorm had just rolled through, and his dad didn't want him to start setting chokers in this work environment. There are some more funny details to the story but in the end, it led to Casey landing his first job at WCLA Credit Union. Casey helps direct the lending program at WCLA Credit Union. He has a passion for helping the membership with financial education and helping find ways to get the next generation of loggers financed. Outside of work Casey enjoys spending time with his wife, Laurel, and three daughters, Penelope 13, Paisley 9, and Pippa 8, hiking, biking, and spending time at the lake.



**DAVID STROBLE**  
President, Merrill & Ring Forest Products, VP, Merrill & Ring Family Group, Co-Founder, Forest Vision

David Stroble has been involved in the PNW timber industry for 25 years. His background covers log trading and sales, and timberland management. Management roles have included log export operations for Japan, Korea and China markets, as well as Timber sale procurement, contract management, and log sales aimed at both domestic and export markets. Since 2018, David has been the President & CEO of Ring Family Timberlands, and the family's log marketing arm, Merrill & Ring Forest Products. He is also Co-Founder of Forest Vision, a technology startup that uses patented vision and image processing techniques to measure and scale logs for the forest industry.



**TODD WELKER**  
Deputy Supervisor Department of Natural Resources

Todd is the Deputy Supervisor for State Uplands which oversees all activities on state managed trust lands throughout the state. With thirty-four years of service with DNR, he has held multiple positions throughout the agency. He started his career in SW Washington as the first Region Biologist. Since then, he has worked in the Aquatics and Fire programs. Prior to his current position, he was the SE Region Manager based out of Ellensburg for 12 years. In his free time, Todd and his wife are building their future retirement home in Montana.