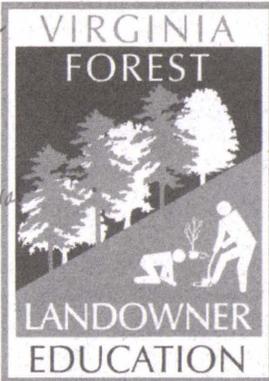


# VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE

Events, news, and information promoting the stewardship of Virginia's natural resources.



**WELCOME** to the *Virginia Forest Landowner Update!* You and your family or organization are invited to learn about your role in Virginia forest stewardship by attending the events listed within these pages. These programs will provide practical information to forest landowners, natural resource professionals, youth and other interested parties on the many components of sustainable forestry.

**Update sponsors include:**

- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources
  - Department of Forestry
  - Cooperative Extension
- Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries
- Virginia Forestry Association

**TO SUBMIT EVENTS AND INFORMATION.....**

If your organization is sponsoring a program or has information of benefit to landowners or natural resource professionals, please contact: Dylan Jenkins  
 Virginia Cooperative Extension  
 216 Cheatham Hall (0324)  
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
 phone: 540/231-6391  
 fax: 540/231-3330  
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## Conservation Easements - Effective Tools for Open Space Conservation

by John Hutchinson, V  
 Western Virginia Land Trust

*Editor's note:* This article is the second in a three-part series on conservation easements. The first article discussed the recent forest land assessment conducted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and the implications of land use change for the future of Virginia's forest land base. This second article explains how conservation easements work, their economic and ecological benefits, and were to obtain easement assistance.

### Easements as a Land Conservation Tool

The Virginia Forest Land Assessment, completed by the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDof) in 1997, found that because of the conversion of forest land to other uses, current levels of timber consumption meet or exceed current timber growth. The study concluded that "to sustain current consumption levels on a long-term basis, either the suitable rural forest land base needs to be protected or expanded, or its productivity increased, or a combination of both"

One solution to the pressure on Virginia's forest land is to increase the use of conservation easements to protect forest resources. Conservation easements protect millions of acres of farmland and open space throughout the United States. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the state chartered and funded land trust that is responsible for upholding most of the conservation easements in the Commonwealth, currently holds easements on nearly 112,000 acres.

Individuals permanently protect their land with a conservation easement while maintaining ownership. Owners still live on their land, and can sell it or pass it on to their heirs. Conservation easements also reduce taxes that can force families to sell farms. In areas where development is unwanted or inappropriate, local governments can take steps to encourage the use of conservation easements to protect areas in their jurisdiction. These steps include: educating landowners about this conservation option; offering local property tax incentives; encouraging developers to proffer easements when applying for a rezoning or conditional use permits; and purchasing easements from landowners in targeted areas.

### What are Conservation Easements?

Easements are legal documents, just like other deeds, that allow individuals to keep their property yet convey certain specified rights to an easement holder. Easement holders are nonprofit, charitable land trusts, and public entities. Easements are written specifically to meet the property owner's wishes for the future use of the land. The easement holder is responsible for seeing that these wishes are upheld by future owners of the land. An easement does not grant the public access to a property unless its owner specifically agrees in the easement document to grant such access. The land remains private property and is protected from trespass just as any other private property. Most conservation easements restrict uses that destroy natural or historic areas while allowing traditional uses such as farming and forestry.

### How a Conservation Easement Works

Most landowners hold a "fee simple" interest in their property. This interest is often compared to a bundle of sticks, with each stick representing a specific right associated with the property. Such rights include, among others, the right to farm, to hunt, to extract minerals, to cut timber, to subdivide, and to do anything else with a property that is not prohibited by law. Any one of these rights can be legally separated from the "fee simple" interest through an easement and transferred to other parties in a "less than fee" or "partial interest."

Easements are often granted to utility companies so power and telephone lines can cross a property. Neighbors also grant easements so the owners of an adjacent parcel can cross their land to access a road or bring cattle to a watering hole. When such transfers involve a landowner's development rights they are called conservation easements. For example a landowner can forego construction rights or the right to subdivide property beyond a specified number of parcels through a conservation easement. When granting specific development rights away, a property owner retains title to the land along with the rewards and responsibilities of ownership.

Placing an easement on land does not mean it cannot be developed at all. The owner states the types of development he wants to prohibit. The property can still be sold, rented, bequeathed, or otherwise transferred but the conservation easement is recorded with the deed and passed on to future

**EASEMENT continues on page 5**

# EVENTS CALENDAR

MORE EVENTS ON THE WEB AT:  
<http://www.fw.vt.edu/forestupdate>

event contact	date/ location	event/description (preregistration requested unless noted otherwise; TBA = to be announced)	time	fee
EL	January 26-28 <i>Hotel Roanoke &amp; Conference Center</i>	<b>Appalachian Society of American Foresters 2000 Annual Conference.</b> Celebrate 100 Years of Appalachian Forestry with natural resource professionals from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Keynote speaker U.S. Congressman Bob Goodlatte will provide an overview of national forestry legislation. Earn CFE credits at preconference communications workshops and general session. Speakers will take a look back at Appalachian forestry over the past century and look forward to coming changes in the forestry profession.	all day each day	\$115.00
		<b>Spring Forest Landowner Short Course Series:</b> <b>Introduction to Woodland Management.</b> Overview of basic forest and wildlife management concepts and practices; topics include: management planning and objectives, resource assessment, sources of management assistance, basic pine and hardwood forest ecology and management, and basic wildlife management.		
DC	Jan. 19 - Feb. 16	<i>Albemarle County - Charlottesville (earns 1 credit hour from Piedmont Community College)</i>	6:30-9pm	\$45.00
DH	Feb. (TBA)	<i>Montgomery County - Riner *includes special session on conservation easements*</i>	6:30-9:30pm	\$35.00
MH	Feb. 1 - 22	<i>Augusta County - Fishersville; Tuesday evenings</i>	6:30-9:30pm	\$35.00
DG	Feb. (TBA)	<i>Campbell County - Lynchburg</i>	6:30-9:30pm	\$35.00
DG	Feb. (TBA)	<i>Pittsylvania County - Danville</i>	6:30-9:30pm	\$35.00
		<b>Profitable Timber Marketing and Harvesting.</b> Designed for landowners considering timber harvesting; topics include: professional assistance, sustainable harvesting practices, water quality, environmental regulations, timber sale planning and process, taxes and cost-share programs.		
DK	Feb. (TBA)	<i>Grayson County - Galax; *one all-day session*</i>	8am-5pm	\$35.00
CC	Feb. (TBA)	<i>Smyth County - Marion; *one all-day session*</i>	8am-5pm	\$35.00
PT	Feb. 19	<i>King William County - Glens (Rappahannock Community College); *one all-day session*</i>	8am-5pm	\$35.00
PT	Feb. 26	<i>Westmoreland County - Montross area; *one all-day session*</i>	8am-5pm	\$35.00
RK	Mar. 14 - Apr. 4	<i>Patrick County - Critz (Reynolds Homestead); Tuesday evenings</i>	6:30-9:30pm	\$35.00
DC	Apr. 5 - May 3	<i>Albemarle County - Charlottesville (earns 1 credit hour from Piedmont Community College)</i>	6:30-9pm	\$45.00
		<b>Introduction to Wildlife Management.</b> Principles and techniques for enhancing game and non-game wildlife species on private lands; topics include: basic wildlife requirements, applied habitat ecology and management, forest practices, habitat structure, open field management, and riparian forests and corridors.		
GD	Jan. 13 - Feb. 3	<i>Frederick County - Middletown (Lord Fairfax Community College)</i>	6:30-9:30pm	\$35.00
DC	Feb. 23 - Mar. 29	<i>Albemarle County - Charlottesville. (earns 1 credit hour from Piedmont Community College)</i>	6:30-9pm	\$45.00
VH	March (TBA)	<i>Charles City County - Charles City (Charles City Neighborhood Facility)</i>	6:30-9:30pm	\$35.00
DD	Feb. 3-4 <i>Lexington HoJo I-81, Exit 195</i>	<b>Rockbridge Area Forestry &amp; Wildlife Association/ Region 5 Tree Farm Dinner Meeting.</b> U.S. Forest Service Forester Arlyn Perhey will cover hardwood silviculture in the Appalachian region. Field trip on Feb. 4 will show crop tree release and hardwood management techniques.	Feb. 3: 6-9pm Feb. 4: 8am-noon	\$11.00
PC	Feb. 20-22 <i>Blacksburg</i>	<b>Virginia Gamebird Conference.</b> For anyone working with gamebird propagation or interested in gamebird hunting. Conference will provide producers and preserve operators opportunity to learn effective game bird raising and holding, successful preserve establishment and providing a safe hunting experience; network with other producers and operators.	all day each day	\$60.00
HH	Feb. 24-25 <i>Blacksburg</i>	<b>Timber Income Tax.</b> Provides participants with a working knowledge of the major federal income tax aspects of timber resource management. Emphasis on implications of recent tax changes for timber investment, marketing and management planning.	all day each day	\$275.00
		<b>4-H Forestry Field Days.</b> Youth ages 9-19 and their coaches will learn skills needed to compete in the national 4-H forestry judging program.		
	<i>Three dates and locations:</i>			
DJ	March 4	<i>Luray - Lake Arrowood</i>	10am-3pm	no fee
NB	March 11	<i>Marion - Hungry Mother State Park</i>	10am-3pm	no fee
PBH	March 18	<i>Williamsburg - York River State Park</i>	10am-3pm	no fee
BF	March 7-8 <i>Blacksburg</i>	<b>Faster Point Sampling.</b> Course provides knowledge to better design, conduct, and analyze point samples for pulpwood and sawlog volume estimates. Learn to collect cruise samples faster with no loss of accuracy.	all day each day	\$225.00

## USING THE CALENDAR

For more information or to register for a specific event, identify the event contact (whose initials are to the left of the event), by referring to the "Event Contacts" information box (for example VT = Virginia Tech).

event contact	date/location	event/description (preregistration required unless noted otherwise; TBA = to be announced)	time	fee
HH	March 14 Blacksburg	<b>Forest Finance I: Basics.</b> Course will emphasize basic financial tools including compound interest concepts and techniques, decision trees for selecting analysis formulas, and estimating interest rates.	8am-5pm	\$175.00
HH	March 15-16 Blacksburg	<b>Forest Finance II: Applications and Case Analyses.</b> Continuation of Finance I; covers advanced forest finance concepts and techniques including: land expectation values, valuing land and timber at intermediate ages, measures of inflation, timber price series and measures of real price change, and sensitivity analysis.	8am-5pm each day	\$295.00 (\$425.00 Finance I & II)
FLA	March 22-24 San Antonio Texas	<b>59th Southern Forestry Conference: Running a Family Forestry Business.</b> Forum for landowners to interact with some of country's most knowledgeable forestry experts. Seminars will focus on incorporating family members into the family forestry business, emerging forestry technologies, pricing trends for the next century, and tax and government affairs. Concurrent trade show highlights forest and wildlife management products and services.	all day each day	\$199.00
		<b>Quail Management Workshops.</b> Quail ecology and recent research findings, managing pine timber for quail, habitat management strategies for early succession species, and warm season grass establishment and management. Each workshop will include an afternoon field tour of examples of good quail management. Sponsored by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.		
	Two dates and locations:			
DF	March TBA	Albemarle County (location TBA)	8am-4pm	no fee
DF	March TBA	Halifax County (location TBA)	8am-4pm	no fee
		<b>Prescribed Burning and Pine Thinning for Wildlife Workshops.</b> Landowners will learn the benefits of prescribed fire in wildlife and forest management. Topics include: fire and weather, types of prescribed fire, fire management, and pine thinning.		
	Three dates and locations:			
DF	Feb. 23	Appomattox - Holiday Lake 4-H Center	9am-6pm	no fee
DF	March 1	Louisa County (location TBA)	9am-6pm	no fee
DF	March 22	Montgomery County - SELU Conservancy (course will not include section on pine thinning)	9am-6pm	no fee
BS	April 13-14 Charlottesville	<b>Growing Forest Products in Your Community.</b> Designed to assist Virginia communities increase forest products industry recruitment. Offers opportunity to gain information on industry resources, meet key contacts, and learn economic development strategies for business development. Includes tour of nearby primary and secondary wood products manufacturers.	all day each day	\$95.00

## EVENT CONTACTS

for more information or to register for a specific event, please contact:

event contact	name/affiliation	phone	fax	e-mail
BF	Barbara Falls, Virginia Tech Division of Continuing Education	540/231-3122	540/231-9886	bfalls@vt.edu
BS	Bob Smith, Virginia Tech Dept. of Wood Science & Forest Products	540/231-9759	540/231-8176	rsmith4@vt.edu
CC	Charlie Conner, Smyth County Cooperative Extension	540/783-5175	540/783-2151	conner@vt.edu
DC	David Coffman, Virginia Department of Forestry	540/977-6555	804/296-2369	coffmand@hq.forestry.state.va.us
DD	Donald Drake, Virginia Department of Forestry	540/463-5253	540/463-5253	draked@r5.forestry.state.va.us
DF	Debbie Flippo, Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries	804/598-3706	804/598-4934	dflippo@dgif.state.va.us
DG	Dan Goerlich, Halifax County Cooperative Extension	804/476-2147	804/476-7777	dalego@vt.edu
DH	Doug Harris, Montgomery County Cooperative Extension	540/382-5790	540/382-5729	rdharris@vt.edu
DJ	Deb Jones, Page County Cooperative Extension	540/743-5794	540/743-2013	dejones2@vt.edu
DK	Dean Karlovich, New River Highlands Resource Cons. & Develop.	540/228-2879	540/228-4367	dean.karlovich@vawytheville.fsc.usda.gov
EL	Easton Loving, Westvaco Corporation	804/352-2622	804/352-2804	relovin@westvaco.com
FLA	Forest Landowners Association	800/325-2954	404/325-2955	snewton100@aol.com
GD	Gary DeOms, Frederick County Cooperative Extension	540/665-5699	540/722-9354	gdeoms@vt.edu
HH	Harry Haney, Virginia Tech Department of Forestry	540/231-5212	540/231-3698	hhaney@vt.edu
MH	Mark Hollberg, Virginia Department of Forestry	540/332-7770	540/332-7773	hollbergm@forestry.state.va.us
NB	Nancy Breeding, Southwest District Cooperative Extension	540/676-6160	540/676-6156	njbreed@vt.edu
PBH	Phyllis Bess Holland, Southeast District Cooperative Extension	757/365-6258	804/524-5452	phhollan@vt.edu
PC	Phillip Clauer, Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension	540/231-9185	540/231-3713	pclauer@vt.edu
PT	Pat Tyrrell, Tidewater Resource Cons. & Develop.	804/443-1118	804/443-1511	pht@tappa.vatappahan.fsc.usda.gov
RK	Richard Kreh, Reynolds Homestead Forest Research Center	540/694-4135	540/694-2971	rkreh@vt.edu
VH	Vernon Heath, Charles City County Cooperative Extension	804/829-9241	804/829-9820	vheath@vt.edu

# Making Sense of the Chip Mill Issue

## A Contentious Issue

Due to many economic and environmental factors, the number of chip mills in the southeastern United States has increased in recent years. Because of the diversity of views on the potential impact of chip mills on local economies and forest health, new chip mill construction has become a highly contentious issue. Some characterize the increase in the number of chip mills as a threat to the forest resources of the region, claiming that chip mills are synonymous with poor timber harvesting practices, and if not stopped, will lead to rapid total devastation of the region's forest resource and rural communities. In addition, some sawmillers are concerned that currently smaller high quality growing stock may go to chip mills before reaching sawlog size, resulting in a lower future supply of quality saw logs.

Other groups contend that chip mills are simply another player in local, active, free markets for a wide range of raw forest products and provide forest landowners with an additional opportunity to retain and manage their forest resources for long-term sustainability. Further, that the right to sell and harvest pulpwood and timber, along with unrestricted access to competitive pulpwood and timber markets, is necessary to maintain and even improve the health and quality of the forest resource, and to generate the competitive economic returns necessary to minimize the fragmentation and conversion of forest land to less environmentally preferable uses such as commercial or residential development.

To address this diversity in views, on January 21, 1999 the Virginia General Assembly passed Resolution No. 730 "establishing a joint subcommittee to study the impact of satellite chip mills on Virginia's economy and environment." Specifically, this study will gather information on the positive and negative economic and environmental impacts of satellite chip mills with the intent of submitting findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly.

The following discussion is excerpted from the Appalachian Society of American Forester's (APSAF) *Chip Mill Position Statement* and is provided to help landowners understand the economic and environmental conditions giving rise to the recent increase of satellite chip mills. APSAF represents the states of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina and is part of the Society of American Foresters (SAF), an organization of more than 18,000 members. The SAF represents all segments of the forestry profession in the United States and includes public and private practitioners, researchers, administrators, educators, and forestry students. The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the forestry profession to insure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

## Chip Mills Defined

A chip mill is a stand-alone facility that converts pulpwood into chips. The wood chips from a chip mill are transported by truck, rail, or barge to a paper mill where they are used to make paper. A typical chip mill consists of platform scales to weigh the truckloads of pulpwood, a portal (overhead) crane to unload the trucks, a debarking drum to remove the bark from the pulpwood, a large roundwood chipper, and conveyer belts to move the chips into trucks, rail cars, or barges (if applicable). A modern chip mill employs 5-10 workers on-site, purchases approximately 40 to 50 truck loads of pulpwood per day, and produces about 4,000 to 5,000 tons of chips per week. (Note: An average-size paper mill uses about 40,000 tons of chips per week.) Properly located and designed chip mills produce little off-site impacts. As with any industrial site, noise and dust abatement techniques are commonly employed, and storm water runoff is controlled.

Wood chips for paper mill furnish are produced at many locations besides chip mills. Most paper mills have a large chipper on-site to convert pulpwood into chips. Sawmills are one of the largest sources of chips. Most modern sawmills have chippers that convert slabs, edgings, end-trim blocks

and cull logs into chips that are sold to a paper mill. A few loggers use portable in-woods chippers to produce chips directly at the logging site.

Siting and constructing a "new" chip mill is generally a sign of free market equilibrium at work in the forest products industry. Assuming the chips are being produced for domestic use (approximately 95% currently are), and there has been no major expansion of production capacity in the regional paper industry, the chips from the "new" chip mill are often simply replacing chips (or more likely pulpwood) previously being purchased in areas where wood prices have become higher due to increased competition and/or less available wood supply. For example, a paper mill located near a population center sees the available timber supply near their mill being reduced by development, and locates a chip mill in an area 100 miles away. The chips they supply from the new location (where timber harvesting increases) replaces wood (and reduces timber harvesting proportionally) in the "higher cost" area near the paper mill. Thus, the regional "net gain" in timber harvesting from a new chip mill is often negligible.

With regard to timber harvesting, chip mills provide a market for forest landowners to sell pulpwood. Other than firewood, pulpwood is the lowest value (with the lowest quality standards) form of wood raw material. Veneer logs, poles and pilings, plywood logs, and sawlogs, all bring a much higher per unit price than pulpwood. For example, many sawmills will not purchase sawlogs that are smaller than 10 inches in diameter at the small end. Chip mills purchase pulpwood as small as a 4-inch diameter. Thus, the upper 10-to 20-foot section of a harvested sawlog tree, less than 10 inches in diameter, can be sold to a chip mill. No chip mill owner would knowingly use sawlogs or other higher value raw material to produce chips, as this would be the equivalent of throwing away money.

A chip (pulpwood) market can also offer a forest landowner the opportunity to harvest and regenerate a poor-quality timber stand that has declined from

For more information on chip mills, visit these websites:

Appalachian Society of American Foresters  
[www.apsaf.org/Chipmill.htm](http://www.apsaf.org/Chipmill.htm)

The Dogwood Alliance  
[www.dogwoodalliance.org/](http://www.dogwoodalliance.org/)

Virginia Department of Forestry  
[state.vipnet.org/dof/chip\\_mills.htm](http://state.vipnet.org/dof/chip_mills.htm)

Willamette Industries  
[www.wii.com/CHIPMILL.HTM](http://www.wii.com/CHIPMILL.HTM)

previous periodic "high-grading" (selectively cutting the best trees and leaving the poor quality ones). Without this "low-grade" market, landowners would be quite limited in their ability to improve the overall quality of their timber resource.

Twenty-five years ago, there were several hundred "pulpwood yards" located across the rural South, where paper mills purchased and inventoried truckloads of pulpwood, loaded it on rail cars, and shipped it to a paper mill. Today, many of those pulpwood yards have

been replaced by a much smaller number of higher production chip mills, because chips can be transported and stored more efficiently, safely, and at less cost than pulpwood. Again, chip mills are simply a reflection of market efficiencies at work in a free market economy.

In conclusion, the Appalachian Section of the Society of American Foresters supports: (1) free, competitive markets for all classes of raw forest products, including chip mills, with unrestricted market access for forest landowners to harvest and sell their timber to any market that meets their personal economic objectives; (2) responsible and professional timber harvesting that complies with all applicable laws and regulations, protects the environment including water quality and site productivity, and follows the principles of sustainable forestry; (3) the gathering and reporting of timely, accurate forest inventory analysis (FIA) data at the local, state, and regional level to enable both the public and private sectors to closely monitor the ratio of annual growth to annual harvest and natural mortality, as well overall forest health and timber quality; and (4) public and private programs and policies that encourage private forest land ownership and sustainable forestry practices, including reforestation.

## EASEMENTS from page 1

holders of the land. If prohibited by the easement, the land can never be subdivided or converted to more intensive uses. The property remains in its current use or a compatible use perpetually.

### Landowner Benefits

**Permanent Protection** - Easements allow owners to ensure their property remains largely undeveloped, as a farm, a woodlot, or a natural area, permanently. There are few things one can control after death. With an easement, a landowner can protect the things they value most about their property, permanently. The holder of the easement is there to ensure those wishes are met after the grantor's ownership comes to an end.

**Continued Private Ownership** - Land protected by a conservation easement is still private property. Most easements do not change the way private land is used. Grantors design the easement to ensure that future owners will continue to use the land as they have. If an easement is placed on a farm, the owners can guarantee their farm is available for active agricultural production. Land which is under easement can continue to play a role in the local economy through agriculture and forestry. The owners also continue to pay real property taxes to support local government and services.

**Each Easement is Unique** - Conservation easements meet the specific desires of landowners and fit the property they protect. An easement for a small property, such as a family camp, might be quite different from one designed for a large, working farm, for instance. Some owners allow new construction or subdivisions. Others reserve the right to divide and sell some parcels for financial reasons or for one or more new home sites for their children.

**Lower Taxes** - Conservation easements provide financial benefits to landowners who protect their land. They reduce state and federal income taxes, estate taxes, and capital gains taxes. In jurisdictions with no land use taxes, easements also cut property taxes. The tax advantages of easements can make it possible for another generation to keep a family farm. They can make conservation goals affordable that are beyond the means of many people.

**Table 1.** Conservation easement types and descriptions.

Easement Type	Description
<b>Agricultural &amp; Forest</b>	Sets aside agricultural and forest resources while allowing compatible development on less productive lands; allows for agricultural and forestry uses
<b>Historic Preservation</b>	Protects architectural features and setting of historic structures; may require owner to get approval from easement holder before altering buildings
<b>Riparian</b>	Focuses on streams, rivers, and flood plains, setting aside the "riparian" areas of a property; often the only right granted in the easement is the right to destroy vegetation that protects the stream bank
<b>Scenic</b>	Protects the views along a historic or scenic road or the vistas the public sees from a historic site, such as a Civil War battlefield
<b>Public Recreation</b>	Creates recreational opportunities by protecting land traversed by trails for equestrians, pedestrians, and cyclists and by providing public access
<b>Wildlife Habitat</b>	Protects high-quality native ecosystems and land forms that provide habitat to rare, threatened, or endangered species, or that contribute to the ecological viability of a public park or conservation area

### Types of Conservation Easements

Conservation easements target a variety of resources and provide various public benefits. To qualify for federal tax advantages, easements must be permanent and provide a public benefit by protecting an identifiable resource. Easements are often called historic preservation easements, scenic easements, or riparian easements depending on the resource they target, but they are all conservation easements and all offer landowners the same basic options and benefits. Some ways easements are tailored to target specific natural resources are listed in Table 1.

### Help with Conservation Easements

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation was established by the state in 1966 and is the leading easement-holding organization in Virginia. The board of the foundation is appointed by the governor, and operating funds are provided by the state through the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Virginia Board of Historic Resources and Department of Game and Inland Fisheries also hold easements. All agencies and local governments of the Commonwealth are authorized to hold easements. A number of private land trusts whose primary purposes include assisting landowners in the use of easements have also been established around the state. Some of these land trusts can also hold easements. Contact information and service regions for several of these organizations are listed in Table 2.

The Conservation Land Coalition (CLC) is composed of organizations seeking state funding for land conservation in Virginia that will begin to address the VDOF's conclusion that Virginia's "rural forest land base needs to be protected or expanded." Virginia is one of only three states on the entire eastern seaboard without a dedicated funding source for land conservation. North Carolina dedicates more than \$60 million per year to land conservation, while Maryland dedicates more than \$70 million per year.

The CLC is proposing that at least \$40 million annually of the Commonwealth's share of the recordation tax for land be dedicated to conservation land and easement acquisition through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. There are documented needs in the billions of dollars for land conservation in Virginia - needs to conserve important agricultural and forest land, natural areas, open space and park land, and historic lands. These include the acquisition of the 28 places totaling 95,361 acres identified by the VDOF as in need of protection.

The VDOF estimates that acquiring all these lands in fee simple, for inclusion in the state forest system, would cost nearly \$90 million at an average cost of \$933 per acre. Acquiring conservation easements on this land, assuming the easement value would average about one third of the fair market value, would cost about \$30 million at an average per-acre cost of about \$308. For more information please contact Michael Lipford, Conservation Land Coalition Steering Committee, at 804/295-6106 or by email at: mlipford@tnc.org.

**Table 2.** Conservation easement assistance organizations and their service regions.

#### **Chesapeake Bay Foundation**

region: Chesapeake Bay Watershed  
1001 East Main Street, Suite 710  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
phone: 804/769-0653

#### **Piedmont Environmental Council**

region: Northern Virginia Piedmont  
P.O. Box 460  
Warrenton, Virginia 22186  
phone: 540/347-2334

#### **The Nature Conservancy**

region: statewide  
1233-A Cedars Court  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903-4800  
phone: 804/295-6106

#### **Valley Conservation Council**

region: Frederick Co. to Botetourt Co.  
P.O. Box 2335,  
Staunton, Virginia 24402  
phone: 540/886-3541

#### **Virginia Outdoors Foundation**

region: statewide  
1010 Harris Street  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
phone: 804/293-3423

#### **Western Virginia Land Trust**

region: Roanoke Co. to Lee Co.  
P. O. Box 18102  
Roanoke, Virginia 24014  
phone: 540/985-0000

## VIRGINIA'S BURNING LAW (FEB. 15 - APRIL 30)

Normally dry winter conditions will be compounded by last year's severe drought resulting in very favorable conditions for uncontrolled forest fires this spring. Landowners and rural homeowners can play a major role in preventing forest fires this spring by observing Virginia's Burning Law. The burning law affects hours of open-air burning from February 15 through April 30. Section 10.1-1142b of the fire law reads as follows:

*"During the period February 15 through April 30 of each year,...it shall be unlawful, in any county or city or portion thereof organized for forest fire control under the direction of the State Forester, for any person to set fire to, or to procure another to set fire to, any brush, leaves, grass, debris or field containing dry grass or other inflammable material capable of spreading fire, located in or with-in 300 feet of any woodland, brushland, or field containing dry grass or other inflammable material, except between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight..."*

For more information on the burning law or prescribed fire for forest management, contact the Virginia Department of Forestry at 804/977-6555.

## FOREST LANDOWNER WEBSITE UPDATE

The *Virginia Forest Landowner Update* web page is undergoing construction and reformatting for easier use. Education events that are not included in the printed edition of the *Update* will be listed along with printed events as they are received. For the most complete and up-to-date listing of natural resource education events and an archive of past articles, visit the *Forest Landowner Update* online at: <http://www.fw.vt.edu/forestupdate>.

### inside the next issue:

- riparian forest issues
- cost share update
- conservation easements: part 3

APRIL 2000

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