

VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE

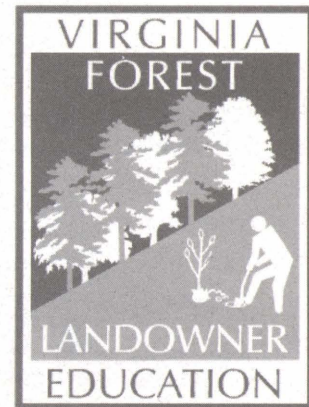
Events, news, and information promoting the stewardship of Virginia's natural resources.

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.

Calendar sponsors include:

Virginia Forestry Association (VFA)
Virginia Department of Forestry
Virginia Tech College of Forestry & Wildlife Resources
Virginia Cooperative Extension



New Name, Larger Format!

The Virginia Forest Landowner Events Calendar has been expanded to include information on natural resource management and issues. A calendar of natural resource educational events may still be accessed on the internet by typing:

www.fw.vt.edu/forestry/event.html

HOW TO USE THE EVENTS SCHEDULE

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 **RS** = Robert Shaffer, Virginia Tech Department of Forestry). If your organization is sponsoring a program that would benefit forest landowners and/or natural resource professionals, please contact *Dylan Jenkins*, Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension, 228A Cheatham Hall (0324), Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 (phone: 540/ 231-6391; fax: 540/ 231-3330; e-mail: dylan@vt.edu).

Forest Health versus Forest Change in Virginia: A Primer

by *Tim Tigner, Virginia Department of Forestry*

Unfamiliar or unexpected change usually arouses concern. Sometimes, just a report of change is enough to make us uneasy. This has certainly been the case with perceptions about forest health. Forests all over the globe are changing in both obvious and imperceptible ways. Virginia's forests are changing too. Is this healthy? Should we worry?

A brief review of forest history in Virginia should help to put things in perspective. Pollen records reflect major shifts in vegetation over time. About 18 thousand years ago, at the peak of the last ice age, part of Virginia was in tundra and northern pines probably dominated open woodlands. Spruce came to share dominance with pines over the next few thousand years while birches, alders, firs and oaks were present in lesser amounts. Between 12 and 9 thousand years ago spruce dwindled fairly rapidly in abundance, oak became much more common and hemlock reached its zenith. Over the next 3 thousand years northern pines became less abundant as the southern pines moved north, and oak gained dominance. Chestnut began to increase, as did the hickories; and hemlock declined fairly rapidly. During the last 5 or 6 thousand years the southern pines and eastern white pine exhibited a resurgence and oak became slightly less abundant. Throughout this whole period the relative abundances of individual species were constantly changing.

When Europeans first came to Virginia they found forests that were quite different from those of today. Many early accounts depict open woodlands and grasslands resulting from the effects of native agriculture and fire. Captain John Smith, in his writings about conditions surrounding native communities, noted: "Near their habitations is but little small wood or old trees on the ground, by reason of their burning of them for fire, so that a man may gallop a horse among these woods any way except when the creeks or rivers shall hinder." A diary entry by German explorer, John Lederer, on June 16, 1670 states: "The country here [probably what is now Madison County], by the industry of these Indians, is very open and clear of woods." In another entry, made somewhere in Virginia's southern piedmont along the Roanoke River, Lederer wrote: "...where it is inhabited by Indians, [the country] lies open in spacious plains." Other accounts indicate that those lands not affected directly by human activity were affected intermittently by fire. In a chapter on "Aboriginal Virginia" in his *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, P.A.* Bruce cites various original descriptions of magnificent, dense timber and adds: "Freedom from undergrowth was one of the most notable features of the original woods of Virginia." This he attributed to intentional burning and deep shade.

PRIMER continues on page 6

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

event contact	date/location	event/description (preregistration required unless noted otherwise)	time	fee
DS1	April 5-7 Hagerstown, Maryland	Natural Resource Income Opportunities on Private Lands Conference. Over 35 speakers will share their expertise and answer questions on many aspects of developing income opportunities on private lands. Topics include: timber management, hunting leases, ginseng growing, biking, horseback riding, nature walks, fishing, and recreation clubs. Issues of liability, insurance, and marketing will be covered.	8am-5pm daily	\$95.00
DP	April 9 Northern Neck (Warsaw area)	Northern Neck Velpar ULW Forestry Tour. Tour will feature 4-5 stops illustrating the growth benefits/responses on sites which were chemically site prepared with Velpar ULW. Sites will range from 3-10 years in age. Discussions will include site specifications, growth responses, economic benefits, return on investment, mid-rotation opportunities, wildlife implications and more. Dress for adverse weather; lunch provided.	8:15am-4pm	no fee
	Two dates and locations:	Owning or Using Forestland in Virginia Seminars. One-day intensive seminars for forest landowners, hunters, hunt clubs, or anyone interested in forest recreation. Learn about your rights, responsibilities and liabilities, private property rights, trespass law, land use law, conservation easements, forestry law, game laws.		
HO	April 14	Roanoke - Virginia Western Community College	9am-3:30pm	\$15.00
HO	April 16	Abingdon - Virginia Highlands Community College	9am-3:30pm	\$15.00
LS	April 18-19 Roanoke	Mill Mountain Zoo Conservation Festival & Earth Day Celebration. Weekend of family fun at Mill Mountain Zoo and Park will feature numerous exhibitions by area conservation organizations. Presentations will focus on natural resource conservation, recycling, and kids events. Children under 12 receive free admission. http://www.mmzoo.org	10am-5pm each day	\$5.00 (adults)
CS	April 23-May 14 Culpeper	Introduction to Woodland Management Short Course. Forest landowners will learn basic forest management principals and practices including how to: establish objectives, write a management plan, obtain professional assistance, interpret topographic maps and aerial photos, basics of pine and hardwood management, wildlife management, and more. Each course consists of four different evening sessions. Sponsored by the Rappahannock Forest Landowner Education Committee.	6:45pm-9:30pm Thursday evenings	\$25.00
GP	May 1 Virginia Beach	Profitable Timber Marketing and Harvesting Short Course. Learn how a timber sale is managed and conducted including: sources of professional assistance, harvest planning and BMP's, timber sale contract terms, re-investing timber sale income, and tax considerations. Pre-conference seminar to VFA Annual Convention (see below).	8am-4:30pm	\$35.00
GP	May 1-3 Virginia Beach Sheraton Oceanfront	Virginia Forestry Association Annual Convention. Join Virginia Forestry Association members from around the state for informative, educational programs and family fun! Convention theme is "Education - Its Impact on Forestry." Optional programs include: Timber Marketing and Harvesting Short Course (see above), PLT Facilitator Workshop, Stihl Manufacturing Facility Tour, and lunch cruise on the Discovery Yacht.	8am-8pm each day	\$125.00 per person \$185.00 per couple
DD	May 7 Lexington	Rockbridge Area Forestry and Wildlife Dinner Meeting. Enjoy dinner and discussion with local landowners and natural resource professionals. Evening talk will be on control of Ailanthus altissima (tree-of-heaven) and downtown Lexington tree programs. Sponsored by the Rockbridge Area Forestry & Wildlife Association.	6:30pm-9pm	\$10.00
VFPA	May 8-9 Richmond Virginia State Fairgrounds	26th East Coast Sawmill and Logging Equipment Exposition. The year's largest showcase of sawmill, logging, pallet and related manufacturing machinery and equipment, supplies and services in the Eastern United States. 12 acres of outdoor exhibits and hundreds of indoor exhibits including active "hands-on" demonstrations and educational programs. The newest and most advanced machinery, equipment and technology in the forest products industry will be on display. Preregistration not required.	9am-5pm each day	\$5.00
LC	May 8-10 Wintergreen Resort	15th Annual Spring Wildflower Symposium. An exciting mix of hiking, slide presentations, and practical hands-on work with some of the regions most noted scholars and naturalists. Activities will include exploration of rare habitats, tours of native gardens, medicinal uses of native plants, seed dispersal mechanisms, beginner wildflower identification, relationship of geology and botany, and wildflower photography/sketching. Lodging fee not included with registration.	6:30pm Friday through 5pm Sunday	\$80.00 \$85.00 after 3/31

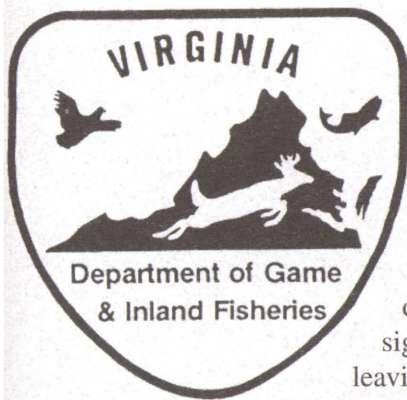
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event contact	date/location	event/description (preregistration required unless noted otherwise)	time	fee
BT	May 9 Augusta County	Marble Valley Forest Management Field Day. View silvicultural practices on public and private lands. Clearcutting, partial cutting and selection harvesting will be reviewed to compare regeneration and productivity. Wildlife, water quality, aesthetics, economics, biologic diversity and political realities will be discussed. View-points of private landowners, associations, public agencies, and industry will be examined.	9am-4pm	\$15.00
AT	May 15-17 Marion Hungry Mother State Park	Appalachian Natural History Field School. Join the staff of the Department of Conservation & Recreation's Natural Heritage Program for a full weekend of field study featuring the natural history, ecology and geology of the Southern Appalachian Region. Programs will focus on field biology, ornithology, geology, herpetology, botany, ichthyology and dendrology. Registration fee includes lodging.	4pm Friday through 5pm Sunday	\$225.00 \$155.00 commuters
DS2	May 17-18 Front Royal Northern Virginia 4-H Center	Virginia State Envirothon Competition. Team-style competition open to high school students within the 46 Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). Teams compete in natural resource areas including soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatics, current issues, and problem solving.	all day each day	\$100.00 per team
BF	May 21-22 Blacksburg	Estate Planning for Forest Landowners. Course provides a working knowledge of federal estate and gift tax considerations applicable to a timberland estate. Strategies for integration and transfer of timberland are emphasized.	8am-5pm each day	\$235.00
WVFA	June 13-14 Barbour County, West Virginia	3rd Annual West Virginia Timber and Wood Products Show. Show will feature a broad range of forestry, logging and equipment displays and demonstrations, along with educational exhibits, World Class Lumberjack Competitions, Game of Logging State Finals, horse log pull demonstration, souvenirs, professional logger and children logging contests, demonstrations, and entertainment for the entire family.	8am-8:30pm each day	\$5.00 (adults)
DC	June 15-20 Holiday Lake (Appomattox)	Holiday Lake Forestry Camp for Youth. For campers ages 14-16. Instruction by professional natural resource managers in forest management, tree improvement, fire control, tree identification, environmental protection, reforestation and wildlife management. Students accepted by nomination/application from local foresters, school teachers, Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's). Administered by the Virginia Department of Forestry, SWCD's, & Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation.	all day each day	\$35.00
		Native Warm Season Grass Workshops. Forest landowners and natural resource professionals will learn how to establish and manage native warm season grasses for wildlife and livestock. Includes field trip to working livestock farms with native warm season grasses.		
	Two dates and locations:			
DF	July 22	Russell County	9am-4pm	no fee
DF	August 5	Richmond County	9am-4pm	no fee

EVENT CONTACTS

for information on a specific event, please contact:

event contact	name/affiliation	phone	fax	e-mail
AT	Angela Thorp, Hungry Mother State Park	540/783-1057		
BF	Barbara Falls, Virginia Tech Dept. of Continuing Education	540/231-3122	540/231-9886	bfalls@vt.edu
BT	Brenda Taylor, Virginia Department of Forestry	540/332-7770	540/332-7773	sneadb@r5.forestry.state.va.us
CS	Carl Stafford, Culpeper County Cooperative Extension	540/825-2233	540/829-2027	ccstaffo@vt.edu
DC	David Coffman, Virginia Department of Forestry	804/977-6555	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	dflipp@dgif.state.va.us
DP	Doug Pond, Timberland Enterprises, Inc.	804/520-0789	804/520-0089	
DS1	Don Schwartz, Washington (MD) County Cooperative Extension	301/791-1304	301/791-1048	
DS2	Dawn Shank, VA Assoc. of Soil & Water Conservation Districts	804/559-0324	804/559-0325	vaswcd@erols.com
GP	Glenda Parrish, Virginia Forestry Association	804/741-0836	804/741-0838	vafa@erols.com
HO	Harold Olinger, Forest Landowners Association (Atlanta)	804/293-7341	804/293-3772	olinwood@aol.com
LC	Laura Covert, The Wintergreen Nature Foundation	804/325-8172		wtnf@aol.com
LS	Laurie Spangler, Mill Mountain Zoo	540/343-3241	540/343-8111	
VVFA	Virginia Forest Products Association	804/737-5625	804/737-9437	
WVFA	West Virginia Forestry Association	304/372-1955	304/372-1957	



Increase Quail Numbers through Native Warm Season Grasses

by Patty Moore, Upland Habitat Biologist,
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Increasing quail numbers on your farm does not always require a significant cash outlay. By leaving 25 feet of fallow edge around row crops, the quality of this type of habitat can be greatly enhanced for quail. To help offset crop income losses, put this edge acreage in the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or the Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program if you are eligible.

Individuals who do not qualify for these programs should consider this: at a width of 50 feet, you would have to leave a strip 871 feet long to have left one acre out of production. At 25 feet wide this would require 1,742 feet to add up to one acre. Given the marginal profits of raising grain on the whole, leaving the least productive part of your field fallow makes good economic sense. And the good you'd be doing for gentleman bob.....

Research in North Carolina has found significantly higher numbers of quail during flush counts on areas with filter strips (2.49/mile) than those without (0.58/mile). Native warm season grasses (NWSG) provide excellent nesting and escape cover for quail, rabbits, and a number of songbirds. NWSG are tall growing bunch grasses that are open at ground level, allowing quail and rabbits to move unrestricted. Livestock producers have noticed substantial increases in weight gain among livestock that have fed on a rotation of NWSG and cool season grasses (CSG) over animals fed only CSG. NWSG also work well in filter strip plantings as they are non-invasive and will stay where they are planted. They are attractive for this type of planting for farmers who do not like to leave fallow land because of weed seeds blowing into their crop fields.

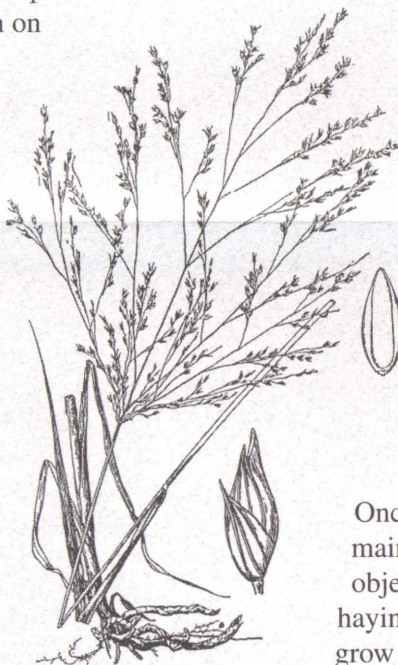
Livestock producers should consider putting about 20 percent of their pasture or hayland in NWSG and use rotational grazing. The main advantage of NWSG in forage production is that as CSG (e.g., fescue) go into dormancy during the summer months, NWSG are producing forage through the dry part of the year. NWSG are drought resistant and can act as a safety valve during drought years by providing forage.

Native warm season grasses can be planted with a cyclone spreader, conventional drill, or specialized no-till warm season grass drill, depending on the desired grass species. The warm season grass drill is needed for grasses that have fluffy seed such as big bluestem, indiagrass, and little bluestem. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and some Soil and Water Conservation Districts have specialized NWSG planters available to landowners. Other NWSG include switchgrass, eastern gamagrass and coastal panicgrass. Planting a mixed stand of grasses creates diversity that will attract a greater variety of wildlife than a monoculture. Seed should be planted by either drilling 1/4 inch into a firm seedbed or by broadcasting and cultipacking. NWSG are planted from May 1 to June 30.

You must have patience when establishing NWSG, which usually require two growing seasons to become fully established.

However, once established, they will outlive most of us. Weed control is very important when establishing NWSG.

Use of herbicides before planting will be necessary for areas infested with fescue and/or weeds. After planting, mowing should occur in June and July during the establishment year. Your goal is to keep weeds at the same level as the planting so grasses are not shaded out. Weeds should be cut just above the top of NWSG.



Switchgrass
Panicum virgatum

Once established, maintenance will be required to maintain optimal wildlife values. Your main objective is to reduce accumulated litter through haying, grazing, or controlled burning. If allowed to grow unmanaged, grasses will become matted inhibiting free movement of wildlife at ground level. When haying or grazing, leave a 10-inch stubble height in order to maintain a vigorous stand. Controlled burning should be done when there is approximately 2

inches of growth in the spring. Burn about 1/3 of the field each year to create a diversity of habitat.

NWSG plantings should be established in blocks or linear strips no less than 25 feet in width. Narrow strips can be predator traps for nesting birds because they are easier for predators to search. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries biologists will be glad to assist you with design plans, planting recommendations, and maintenance schedules. Please call (804)598-3706 for more information.

Submission Deadlines for Education Events

To advertise your organization's natural resource education event in the Virginia Forest Landowner Update, please submit events by the following dates:

Issue:	Submit By:
Summer '98 (July - Sept.)	June 8, 1998
Fall '98 (Oct. - Dec.)	Sept. 7, 1998
Winter '98/'99 (Jan. - March)	Dec. 7, 1998
Spring '99 (April - June)	March 8, 1999

Students Statewide Preparing for Envirothon Competition

by Dawn Shank

Virginia Association of Soil & Water Districts



High school students statewide are taking a close look at the watersheds they live in as they prepare for local Envirothon contests. Sponsored by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Envirothon combines in-class curriculum with hands-on field experiences while demonstrating the role people have in important environmental issues. Students learn about soils, forestry, wildlife, and water quality and apply their knowledge to finding solutions to conservation problems.

Students work in teams of five students to answer questions at five stations. Another aspect of the competition is a presentation of the team's solution to a given problem. This year, students are studying a local watershed of their choice and identifying a water quality problem. The team will propose their solution to the problem in the form of a grant proposal and present the proposal to a group of judges.

In the spring, local contests are held. Teams advance to area competitions and then to the state level. The Virginia Envirothon will be held May 17 through 18, 1998 at the Northern Virginia 4-H Center in Front Royal. Between 35-40 teams are expected to compete in the state contest this year. The state champions will go on to the National Envirothon, to be held this summer in East Lansing, Michigan.

If you would like to know more about starting an Envirothon team at your high school, contact your local soil and water conservation district or Dawn Shank at the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts; phone: 804/559-0324, fax: 804/559-0325, e-mail: VASWCD@erols.com

Consider membership with the **Virginia Forestry Association**. For more information, phone: 804/741-0836; fax: 804/741-0838; or email: vafa@erols.com

Video Series Offers Valuable Management Information for Forest Landowners

Developed by the West Virginia University Extension Service, the *Managing Your Woodlot Video Series* is available exclusively through the National Woodland Owners Association (NWOA). Cost is \$19.95 per video (there is no shipping and handling cost) and there are currently 9 different videos in the series. Companion booklets are available for some videos at an additional cost. Videos in the series are as follows:

Video No./Title	Video Cost	Booklet Cost
#1 How it Grows	\$19.95	\$4.00
#2 Building Roads	\$19.95	\$2.75
#3 Helping it Grow	\$19.95	\$4.00
#4 Harvesting and Renewing It	\$19.95	\$4.00
#5 Selling Timber	\$19.95	no booklet
#6 Best Management Practices	\$19.95	no booklet
#7 Being a Good Forest Steward	\$19.95	no booklet
#8 Water in the Forest	\$19.95	\$4.75
#9 The Changing Forest: Ecology & Silviculture	\$19.95	no booklet

For the entire set of videos, or an entire set of videos and publications, a 20% discount is offered. A set of nine videos: \$145.00, a set of five publications: \$15.00, or an entire set of videos and publications: \$160.00. To order, send check or money order payable to: National Woodlands Owners Association, 374 Maple Ave. E., Suite 210, Vienna, Virginia 22180 (phone: 703/255-2700).

With the European settlement and the industrial revolution came dramatic changes in the landscape. Forests presented both impediments to development and raw materials for growth. Trees were cleared to an unprecedented degree for cropland, fuel, building materials, railroad ties, fences, and charcoal for Virginia's iron furnaces. By the beginning of this century few of Virginia's forests had escaped the saw.

During the early 1900's, cutover forestlands began a new cycle of growth and abandoned agricultural lands were reverting to trees. Stump sprouts, full sun and intermittent wildfire favored the regeneration and dominance of intolerant hardwoods. Pines invaded abandoned fields and the drier mountain sites. At the same time, chestnut blight swept across the land and removed a major component of Virginia's forests in just a few decades. Chestnut was replaced largely by oaks and our forests assumed the character that persisted until recently.

Effective suppression of wildfires over the last 50 years, rapid expansion of deer populations and poor harvesting practices have greatly reduced the amount of oak regeneration at the same time that age, drought, defoliation, disease and logging have removed much of the oak overstory. The species composition of Virginia's hardwood forests is now shifting away from

oak toward shade tolerant species such as maple and gum. The continuing establishment of exotic species adds uncertainty about future trends. Wildfire suppression, harvesting and planting of pines have resulted to a considerable degree in the replacement of mixed natural pine stands by plantations of loblolly pine.

Change, even rapid change, is nothing new; but the perception is that changes currently taking place are unprecedented, insidious and potentially irreversible. There is particular concern about the effects of airborne pollutants. However, the biological, political and social complexity of issues surrounding ozone pollution and acid deposition are overwhelming. We simply don't know enough to characterize precisely what is happening or predict what might occur under any particular circumstances. Mitigation, and the need for it, cannot yet be based on a full understanding of the facts; and it will remain controversial.

One change, however, is quite predictable: the continuing reduction and fragmentation of Virginia's forest landbase resulting from the development associated with human population growth. In time, this trend could overshadow concerns about forest health.

Return Service Requested

Virginia Cooperative Extension
College of Forestry and Wildlife Resources
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0324

SPRING 1998

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