TREE Cookies Etc.

Winter 2012/13

Volume 7, Issue 1

tree cookie (trē´ kookē) **n.** a cross sectional slice of a trunk or branch. The concentric rings tell not only the age of that part of the tree, but also a story about the environmental conditions, history, and dynamics of that tree, in that place.

TREE Cookies Etc. **n.** 1. a free electronic newsletter dedicated to tell the story of forest stewardship, tree care, and natural resource management. 2. to help people make best decisions regarding the resources entrusted to them.

Calendar

- January 8, 12 & 7pm **Charcoal Making** *PSU Webinar*
- February 4&5 **Forest Health Conf.** *Blacksburg, VA*
- February 23 **Landowner's Woods & Wildlife Conf.** *Culpeper, VA* *Registration opens 1/7*
- March - May **Woodland Options for Landowners** *10 weeks online*
- March (TBD) **NoVa Urban Forestry Roundtable** *Prince William County*
- April 3 **SHARP Logger BMP Update & GPS basics** *Louisa, VA*
- April 11-13 **Forestry Summit** *Hot Springs, VA*
- August 13 & 20 **Family Forests: Land Transfer to Generation NEXT** *Fredericksburg, VA*

Virginia Extension Cooperative

VirginiaTech Invent the Future

VSU Virginia State

www.ext.vt.edu

ANR-33

Dear Reader,

"Money. Economy. Fiscal. Deficit. Cutting. Value. Budget. Revenue." These words and their companions are nearly in-escapable these days by even the most casual of news consumers. Rightly so, it's important stuff; uncertainty is very uncomfortable.

Both my wife and I fall into the "savers" (vs. "spenders") category. When we are considering a worthwhile purchase we sometimes need to remind each other that "it takes money to live", and that helps loosen the purse strings.

Trees, be they in a city, neighborhood or a rural woodland are worthwhile investments. Their role in the economy, society and ecology are real and certain. Your impact as a citizen is also worthwhile for trees, forests and the economy. May I gently encourage you to loosen the strings of your time to add knowledge, understanding and skills by participating in one of the many great educational offerings through VCE and our partners. This helps ensure that your contribution to Virginia's forest wealth is certain.

Merry Christmas!

Adam

Our Forests and the Housing Industry – a Primer

By: Urs Buehlmann[1], D. Alderman[2], and A. Schuler[2]

The United States (U.S.) wood products industry is closely connected to the U.S. housing market, a market that has seen large swings in its performance over the past decade. While single-family housing starts were above 1.5 million per year until 2007, they were below half a million in 2009, 2010, and 2011. As can be seen in Figure 1, by September 2012, housing starts are slightly above 600,000 (SAAR, 872,000 total) and some analysts are projecting further increases in the future.

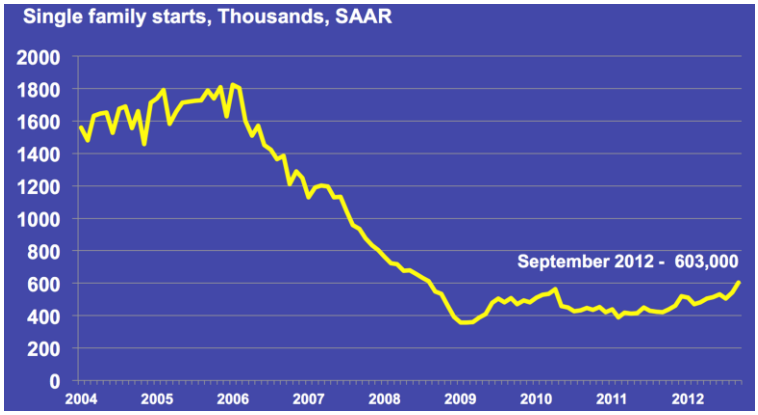


Figure 1: Single family housing starts 2004 to 2012 (source: Census www.census.gov/const/www/newresconstindex.html).

The U.S. economy, the world's largest, is driven by consumers like you and me. As can be seen in Figure 2, over 70 percent of all activity is derived from consumers, followed by roughly 20 percent that is spent by the government. Currently, 5.3 percent of all economic activity is residential investment, and 11.0 percent is non-residential investment. Also, a part of the consumer-spending category is driven by the residential and non-residential investments, for example, new furniture in a house or utility payments.

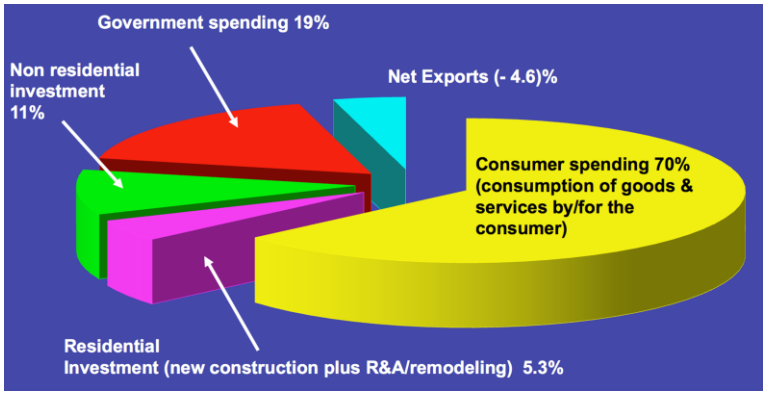


Figure 2: U.S. economic spending 2000 – 2010 (source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), bea.gov/national/nipaweb.

Taking another look at the importance of housing, almost 20 percent of the U.S.' GDP is derived by housing. Figure 3 shows the percentage of housing services (gross rents paid by renters including utilities and owner's imputed rent (e.g., how much it would cost to rent owner occupied homes), plus utility payments, and residential investment (e.g., construction of new residential structures, remodeling, and broker's fees).

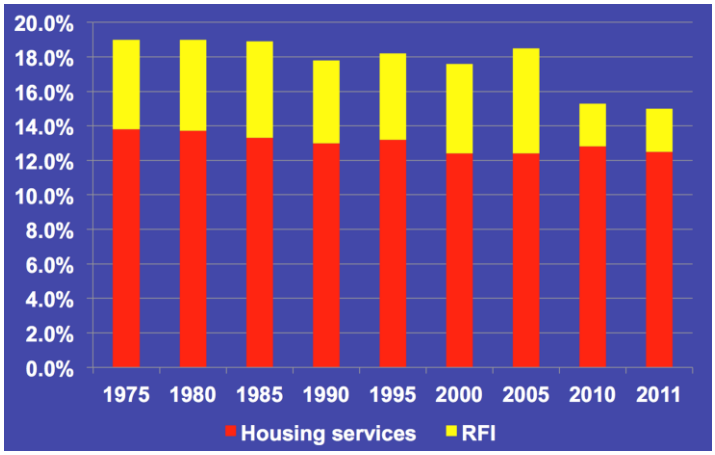


Figure 3: Percentage of U.S. GDP directly derived from housing (source: National Association of Home Builders).

The U.S. wood products industry is closely interconnected with the U.S. housing market. For example, roughly 70 percent of U.S. softwood lumber and U.S. structural panels are consumed by residential housing construction (new construction and remodeling, Figure 4). The remaining 30 percent is used in non-residential construction, in industrial applications (mostly packaging), or is exported.

Housing, continued pg. 4

Be on watch for this "Beauty"

Asian-longhorned Beetle (ALB) Adult
Credit: Michael Bohne, Bugwood.org

Anoplophora glabripennis is the Latin name for the Asian-longhorned beetle. While it is one of the most charismatic looking creatures, it's death to trees. In the family of *Cerambycidaeor* with other "long-horned beetles", their characteristic long-horns (antenna) with black and white bands, their large size and random white spots make them stand-out from most of our native beetles.

According to the USDA - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), this is why we care: The beetle has no known natural predator in the United States. It threatens urban and suburban shade trees, recreation, and forest resources valued at billions of dollars, as well as the industries relying on them. If the ALB becomes established in the United States, it has the potential to cause more damage than Dutch elm disease, chestnut blight, and gypsy moth **combined**, destroying millions of acres of America's treasured hardwoods, including national forests and backyard trees, with the potential to impact industries like timber, nursery stock, and maple syrup producers.

ALB emergence holes
Photo Citation: E. Richard Hoebeke, Cornell University, Bugwood.org

So here is another call out for your ears and eyes to be drafted into service in this ground war. If you see something, say something. Early reporting is crucial in limiting the impact of damage caused by ALB.

Checkout: www.beetlebuster.info

EAB Update

Officials continue to monitor movement of the exotic invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis*, which reappeared in Virginia in 2008 after an attempt to eradicate it following the initial 2003 infestation. Both of these infestations occurred in the Northern Virginia area.

Adult Emerald Ash Borer
Credit David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

This summer EAB was confirmed in Loudoun, Stafford, Caroline, Hanover, Prince Edward, Frederick, Pittsylvania, Charlotte, Buchanan, Halifax, Mecklenburg, Giles and Lee. As a result, a statewide quarantine is in effect.

Ash trees can be valuable for timber, shade, wildlife, aesthetics and more. According to the Virginia Department of Forestry, the value of Ash statewide is $170 million. Forestland owners have very little recourse in saving ash trees within their stands, as methods have not been developed for widespread treatment. Homeowners, however, can pre-treat ash trees if desired. Most insecticides labeled for EAB purposes are restricted use products requiring a license to apply. Homeowners would be wise to carefully consider this decision. Information to assist with decision making and otherwise is available at www.emeraldashborer.info

Housing continued

Softwood lumber and structural panel prices are closely interrelated with housing. As shown in Figure 5, prices of these commodities dropped with the decline in housing activity. Figure 5 also illustrates how capacity adjustments by producers of lumber or panels can support the price of these products. The reason for the price spikes in 2010 is found in a sudden increase in demand as a result of the tax credit for a first time house purchase, while at the same time the industry reduced their capacity through either mothballing or shuttering existing production plants.

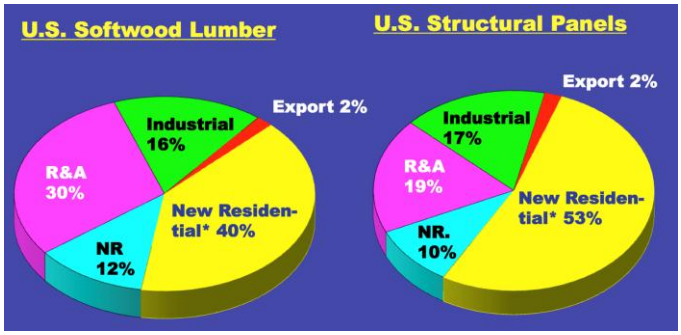


Figure 4: Softwood market shares, averages 1998 – 2007 (new residential includes single and multi-family and mobile homes, sources: lumber – Western Wood Products Association ; panels – the Engineered Wood Assoc).

Hardwood lumber followed similar trends as softwood. With the collapse of housing activity in 2007, a steep decline in hardwood lumber production followed. As noted in Figure 6, in 2009, U.S. sawmills produced only 6.5 billion board feet, or about half of what was produced in the peak year 1999. In fact, production in 2009 was about the same as it was in the early 1960s.

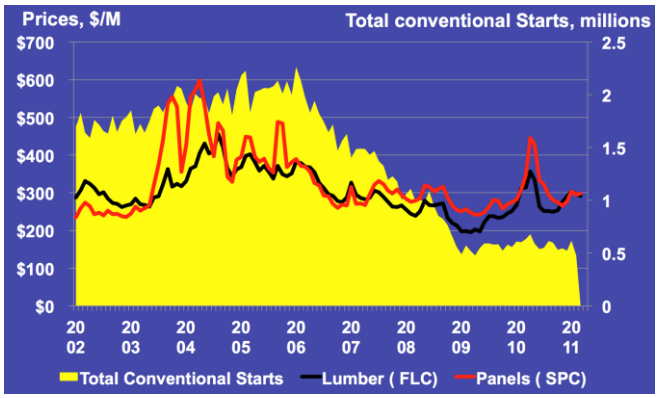


Figure 5: Lumber and panel prices follow housing starts (sources: Census; Western Wood Products Association the Engineered Wood Association).

The wood products industry has seen difficult times over the past five years. However, with housing prices stabilizing and housing starts increasing, the future looks promising for those who managed to survive. With the cutbacks over the past 5 years, any improvement in housing will translate into higher prices and allow manufacturers to increase their margins. Manufacturers will also realize that remodeling has become a more important part of their business. At the present time, new construction spending and remodeling spending are about tied. Furthermore, the future well-being of wood products manufacturers will depend on macro-societal developments such as the desire to own a single family home (as opposed to living in a condo or rent), the size of people's home, and the desire of people to own a secondary home.

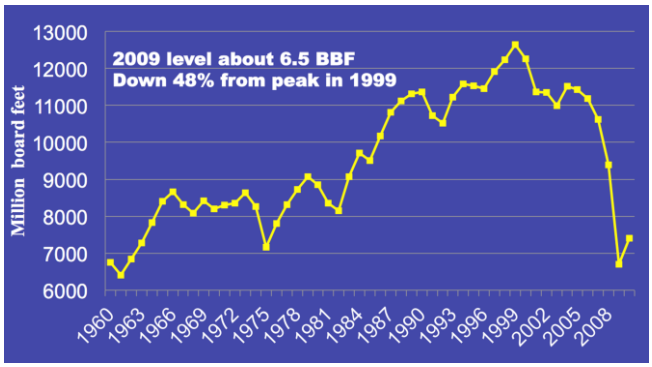


Figure 6: Eastern hardwood lumber production 1958 to 2010 (source: Bill Lupold, U.S.F.S.)

Author Affiliations: [1] Virginia Tech, Department of Sustainable Biomaterials
[2] USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station

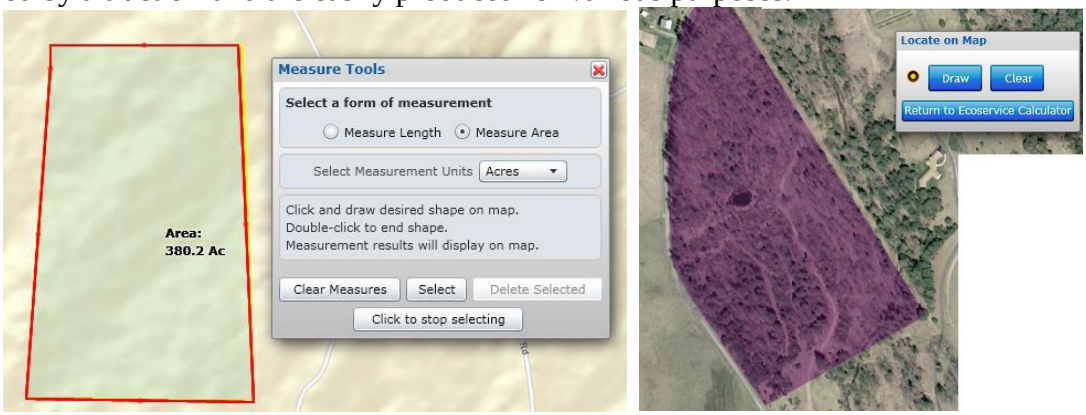
New Tools: For rural woodland & urban forest analysis

Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources & Environment have developed two great tools for Virginia landowners, managers, Urban Foresters, Municipal leaders and more.

Both are easy to use and FREE!

http://ifris.dof.virginia.gov/inforest

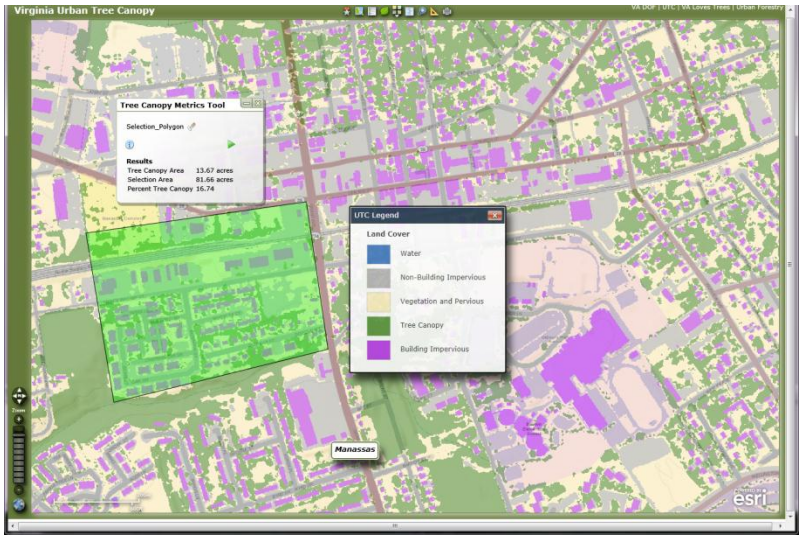
InFOREST is a tool designed to provide landowners, natural resource managers, and land-use planners state-of-the-art access to information about the natural resources they manage. The tool enhances the user's ability to make better informed decisions about their forest management and land conservation activities. Basic mapping and calculations scenarios of ecosystem services provided by a tract of land are easily produced for various purposes.



Simple area calculations or more complex carbon sequestration estimates are two of the many potential uses of InForest.

http://utcmapper.frec.vt.edu

Urban Tree Canopy Mapper is an online mapping tool for both professionals and average citizens to zoom in for views and create custom maps of the urban tree canopy in their communities. This critically important tool can be useful and practical for citizen stakeholders, urban forestry professionals, municipal decision makers and others. It's useful for conveyance of the benefits of urban tree canopy and for planning future tree planting goals, needs and more.

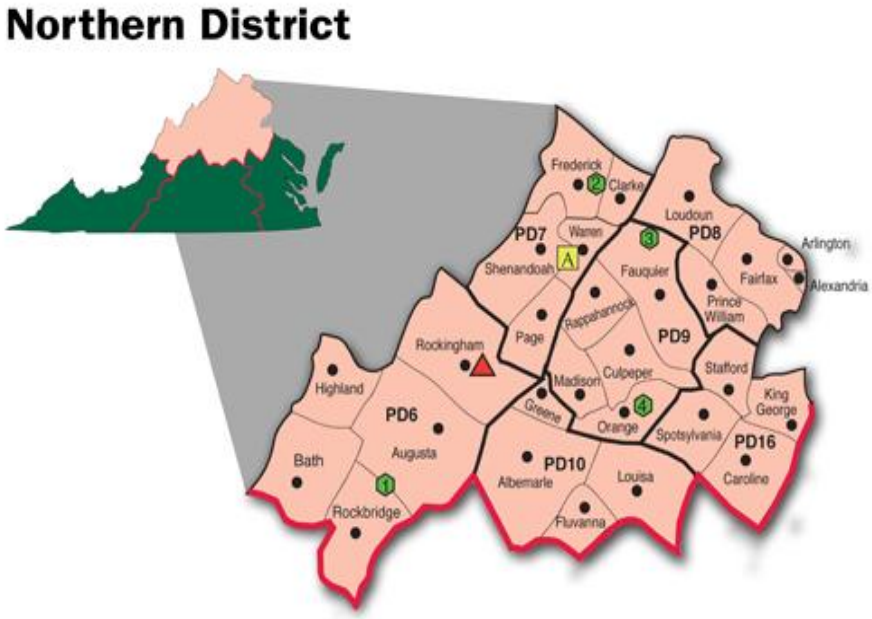


Sample use showing 81 acre area southwest of the intersection of Rt. 28 and 234 in Manassas with 17% tree cover.

Date: December 17, 2012

To: Citizens, Landowners, and Natural Resource Professionals

From: Adam K. Downing
Extension Agent, Forestry & Natural Resources
Northern Region



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