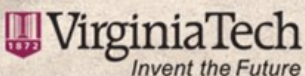


Virginia  
Cooperative  
Extension

A partnership of  
Virginia Tech and  
Virginia State University  
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## A Few Words from Bob Smith

As we begin another fall semester, I remember seeing many school-aged children on Virginia Tech's campus this past summer. One way the university keeps engaged with communities during the non-academic year is by hosting everything from summer camps for children and training for school teachers, to short courses offered by faculty in numerous disciplines. These activities both spread the good word of Virginia Tech and help promote future relationships. That is what our engagement program at the university is about—developing partnerships that mutually benefit one another. These partnerships can consist of educational opportunities, research projects, or joint efforts for a common goal. We hope to get our students involved in these activities early on, not only to help with their education but also to provide a sense of community and responsibility. It is our goal to have well-educated students who have a civic mindset and strive to contribute to their communities upon graduation.

To better reflect the quality and breadth of our programs, the college's name was officially changed to the College of Natural Resources and Environment. We believe that this change better defines the mission of our college and the needs of our student population. Everything we do to better manage our natural resources has a strong impact on our environment.

Governor Bob McDonnell stopped by the college's exhibit at the Virginia Forest Products Association's Machinery Expo held in Richmond this spring. I got a few minutes to share with the governor many of the aspects of the Extension programs that the college is leading. He has already demonstrated a strong interest in forestry and forest products in the commonwealth. Secretary of Natural Resources Doug Domenech and Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and

Forestry Matt Conrad accompanied the governor. All were complimentary of our engagement efforts.

In this issue you will read about Catawba Landcare's streamcare



*Governor Bob McDonnell, holding hard hat, visited the college's exhibit at the Virginia Forest Products Association's Machinery Expo in Richmond this past spring.*

*Continued on page 2*

## What's Inside

Streamcare in Action	2
Urban Forestry Faculty and Students Continue Engagement Excellence	4
Introducing Virginia Water Radio	5
Virginia SHARP Loggers Program Offers Online Continuing Education Training	5
In the Field—Woodland Production of Medicinal Herbs	6
News Briefs	8
Visual and Tactile Examples of Wood Structural Systems	9
Directory of Natural Resources Extension Staff	11

## ENGAGEMENT matters

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*Smith continued from page 1*

approach and how it is helping to address land fragmentation, Virginia Tech urban forestry faculty and students and their engagement work from last spring, the Virginia Water Resources Research Center's radio segments to assist in keeping citizens informed about water resources, SHARP Logger online training classes, the benefits of growing medicinal herbs in Southwest Virginia, and what is new in the arena of wood structural systems. In addition, please take a moment to review the wonderful work of our Extension agents and specialists under the News Briefs section.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the articles in this newsletter or would like to be part of our engagement efforts. I can be reached at 540/231-7679 or via e-mail at [rsmith4@vt.edu](mailto:rsmith4@vt.edu).

## FEATURE

### Streamcare in Action

Courtney Kimmel, Ph.D. Student  
Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation  
College of Natural Resources and Environment

*Streamcare—an ethic and practice of restoring and caring for contiguous sections of a tributary as it crosses property lines—has been heavily promoted by the landowner group Catawba Landcare.*

Taking a water break and leaning up against his truck, Justin Laughlin, stream restoration biologist for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, surveyed progress being made by volunteers planting seedlings and jamming cuttings into the stream banks. Standing in his waders, he had just told me that Catawba Valley was one of his favorite places to work in his 13-county operating region. I looked out at the volunteer army representing Catawba Landcare, Trout Unlimited, and other land conservation focused groups, who were busily planting seedlings on that warm March day. "What's different about Catawba?" I asked.

"Because it's the only place where they are doing this from a watershed perspective," he responded, sweeping his arms across the scene in front of us, where the stream restoration work on one farm property along the North Fork of the Roanoke River had just met and connected with the restoration work done on the neighboring property the previous spring. "This program was intended to work this way, but they are the only people doing it."

"Streamcare" is an ethic and practice of restoring and caring for contiguous sections of a tributary as it crosses property lines, one

that has been heavily promoted by the landowner group Catawba Landcare. That streamcare has taken hold in this particular valley is especially significant because the region surrounding the Catawba Valley serves as the headwaters for three critical watersheds of the eastern United States—Catawba Creek flows into the James River and down into the Chesapeake Bay; the North Fork of the Roanoke River flows into Albemarle Sound; and the New River drainage eventually finds its way to the Gulf of Mexico. Typical of the ridge and valley region of the Appalachians, the Catawba Valley is a narrow, flat valley surrounded by two parallel ridges with its tributaries meandering across the valley floor, forming a prominent thread for the communities along the valley.

The name Catawba is Siouan for "people of the river," evidence of the important role the rivers have played historically in supporting and connecting the communities along the valley. Catawba Landcare was formed in 2007 with the goal of connecting neighbors and properties along the valley to engage landowners in the sustainable management of the land and resources of the valley and to strengthen economic and social opportunities for its residents. A central focus for the group has

*Continued on page 3*

*Streamcare continued from page 2*



*Ned Yost, Catawba Landcare steering committee member and landowner in the Catawba Valley, works with a young neighbor to plant saplings along the banks of the North Fork of the Roanoke River as part of the streamcare effort in the area.*

been the care of the North Fork and Catawba Creek—what the group has come to call “streamcare.” Several informational meetings and workshops on streamcare have been hosted by the landcare group and co-sponsored by organizations and agencies such as DGIF, Trout Unlimited, USDA NRCS, the Western Virginia Water Authority, and Virginia Save Our Streams (SOS). There have also been several field work days to gather volunteers from the community to help their neighbors plant trees and shrubs along their streambanks, which also helps landowners meet their commitments for cost-share programs.

In July 2010, Catawba Landcare, Trout Unlimited, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries hosted Streamcare in Action on the North Fork, which also received sponsorship from the Virginia Water Resources Research Center, the Skyline Soil

and Water Conservation District, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The event served as the finale for the 2010 Landcare Learning Series, a series of workshops on sustainable land management topics taught by a mix of landowners and agency experts. Streamcare in Action was a self-guided tour of nine different stream restoration sites along the North Fork in the Catawba and Ellet valleys. At each site, residents were on hand to explain how they tackled their restoration work and to answer questions. The event also featured exhibits and demonstrations by the sponsoring agencies about stream restoration options and opportunities.

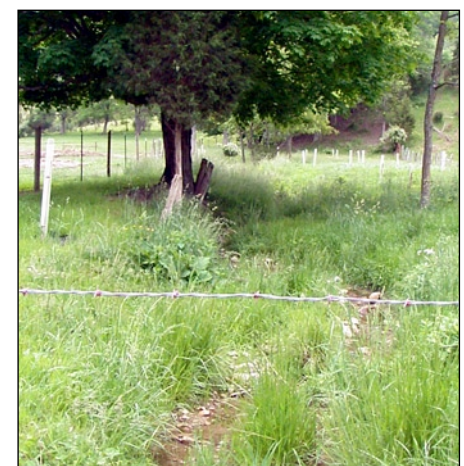
Streamcare is one of many approaches being developed by Catawba Landcare to address the challenges of urbanization and land fragmentation facing the region. By working directly with landowners and residents through community

landcare groups, Virginia Tech students and faculty are helping to respond to immediate problems and issues emerging in the university’s own backyard. Landcare is an international model that can provide one strategy for a land grant university to engage in the 21st century challenges of sustainability.



*Many of the tributaries feeding into the North Fork run through land used for pasture that has become highly eroded under the hooves of cattle. Above is a photo of one such tributary before being fenced off and revegetated.*

*The photo below was taken just a few months after the tributary was excluded and planted with trees and shrubs.*



## Urban Forestry Faculty and Students Continue Engagement Excellence

Eric Wiseman, Assistant Professor of Urban Forestry  
 Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation  
 College of Natural Resources and Environment

Faculty and students in Virginia Tech's urban forestry program in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation had a busy spring semester working with professionals and citizens throughout the commonwealth and beyond. Eric Wiseman, assistant professor of urban forestry, was reappointed to the board of directors of the Virginia Urban Forest Council (VUFC) last January, where he continues to promote awareness and stewardship of urban forests. He recently assisted the Tree Stewards (a community service group affiliated with VUFC) with a revision of their training manual, which covers topics ranging from tree biology to tree pruning. Susan Day, who holds a joint appointment in both Forest Resources and Horticulture, led a Virginia Tech panel in administering the Garden Club of America's (GCA) Zone VI Urban Forestry Fellowship program. Since 2007, Day has assisted the GCA with promoting the fellowship program, soliciting and reviewing applications from college students throughout the United States. Each year the fellowship panel reviews dozens of applications from undergraduate and graduate students hoping to advance their education and preparation for careers in urban forestry and related fields. From this field of applicants, the panel selects three graduate and three undergraduate candidates and recommends them to the GCA leadership, which awards over \$10,000 in fellowships annually to the recipients.

Wiseman and Day continue to instill an engagement ethic in Virginia Tech's urban forestry students. Doctoral candidate Julia Bartens has become an active volunteer with the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture, helping to organize its upcoming annual conference in Morgantown, W. Va., and promote its student scholarship program. Master's candidate Tyler Wright shared the findings of his research on Virginia's street trees at the annual meeting of the Virginia Association of Forest Health Professionals last February. Over the last two years, Tyler has assisted more than a dozen Virginia localities to better understand the composition and value of their street trees. Closer to home, students in Wiseman's urban forest management course completed a three-year study of street trees in Radford, Va., this past spring. Students collaborated with Radford city staff and citizens as well as Virginia Department of Forestry staff to conduct an inventory of over 1,500 street trees and prepare a report detailing ways to improve the health and management of this

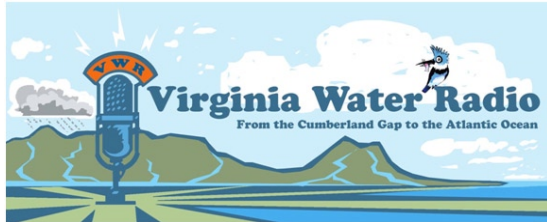


*Urban forestry student and recent alumnus Anthony Dubato (right) assists students in planting a sugar maple on Virginia Tech's campus during an Earth Day celebration last April.*

valuable community resource. William West, who recently completed his master's of forestry with Susan Day, completed a study of student perceptions of service learning while working with a student service-learning project with Gilbert Linkous Elementary School and presented his work at the Pedagogy in Higher Education conference. He is now working on a community effort with the Community Design Assistance Center and has designed an urban forest stormwater management planting for the Mt. Tabor Meadows community in Blacksburg. This work was featured in the *New River Current*. On campus, the Urban Forestry Club continues to show leadership in campus sustainability. This past April, club members led a group of nearly 50 students in a reforestation planting on the west side of campus in recognition of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. Students planted an assortment of hardwood saplings around the perimeter of a detention pond near Duck Pond Drive as part of an ongoing effort to convert resource-intensive lawn areas to forested landscapes that provide numerous environmental benefits.

## Introducing Virginia Water Radio

Alan Raflo, Research Associate  
Virginia Water Resources Research Center  
College of Natural Resources and Environment



Here's a history question. What common everyday item owes its origin—at least in part—to the following men, all active from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s: James Maxwell, Heinrich Hertz, Nikola Tesla, Alexander Popov, and Guglielmo Marconi? All of these men, along with other scientists and engineers, contributed to the invention or development of the radio. From Robert Peary's 1909 message upon reaching the North Pole, to the World War II messages from Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, to the daily talk shows that enliven and influence current politics and culture, radio has been an indispensable part of modern communications.

The Virginia Water Resources Research Center is using this tried-and-true technology—matched with some 21st century enhancements—to give residents another way to stay informed about Virginia's water resources. Virginia Water Radio is a weekly, 7-to-9 minute report on water-related news and events in the commonwealth. During the spring and fall 2010 semesters, Virginia Water Radio segments have been broadcast during "The River Roundtable," a weekly show from Emory and Henry College about water-quality issues. The Water Center is working to promote the show to other stations as well.

The Water Center is also posting audio files of the episodes online at the program's website, [www.virginiawaterradio.org](http://www.virginiawaterradio.org). Visitors to the site can listen to previous episodes, view show notes for Internet links to more information, and sign up for notification of future episodes (via RSS feed or podcast download).

In a rapidly changing communications landscape, the Water Center's mission challenges us to find affordable, effective, and widely available ways to deliver water-related information to Virginians. Virginia Water Radio is one of several new efforts by the Water Center to fulfill that mission. We invite you to visit the website and have a listen!

## Virginia SHARP Logger Program Offers Online Continuing Education Training

Scott Barrett, SHARP Logger Program Coordinator  
Department of Forest Resources and  
Environmental Conservation  
College of Natural Resources and Environment

The Virginia SHARP Logger program recently introduced online training as another option for SHARP Loggers to earn Continuing Education (CE) credit. Two trainings are currently available; each one counts for 1 SHARP logger CE credit.



The SHARP Logger program partnered with the Virginia Department of Forestry to create the two training modules, entitled "Protecting Water Quality with Best Management Practices in Virginia," and "Laws Affecting Water Quality and Forestry Operations in Virginia." Combined, these trainings have already been viewed over 170 times. Participants so far have overwhelmingly indicated that the trainings are easy to use and they would like to use online training again. Many SHARP loggers like the online training format because it saves time and money compared with driving to a class and they can complete the training when it is convenient for them. While there is no intention of replacing "face-to-face" classes, the goal is to offer more online classes as another option to help SHARP Loggers earn the CE credits they need.

To view the online trainings, visit the SHARP logger website at [www.sharplogger.vt.edu](http://www.sharplogger.vt.edu) and click on "Online Training," then review the instructions and click on the class you would like to complete. For SAF Certified Foresters, each online training will count for 0.5 CFE credit. There is no charge for the online trainings and anyone is welcome to complete them.

For additional information about the online training, contact Scott Barrett at 540/231-6494 or via e-mail at [sharplogger@vt.edu](mailto:sharplogger@vt.edu).

## Woodland Production of Medicinal Herbs

Bill Worrell, Extension Agent, ANR Forestry and Natural Resources  
Virginia Cooperative Extension Southwest Region, Russell County Office

The climate, soils, and elevation of Southwest Virginia provide good opportunities for landowners to grow many medicinal herbs, especially since several herbs grow naturally in the region. Years of heavy harvesting of native herb populations have threatened the future of many species. Landowners can plant and cultivate medicinal herbs as a crop for alternative income while helping to conserve the native plant populations in the Appalachian Mountains.

The global market for herbal remedies is estimated at \$83 billion annually. Many of the herbal products on the market today are made from medicinal herbs that are collected from native plant populations. Most of these herbs can be cultivated, taking the pressure off of native populations. Cultivating herbs offers landowners an income opportunity, as the crops can be grown in the understory of their forest while the timber crop is growing to maturity.

Some of the medicinal herbs that can be successfully cultivated in our forests and currently have a market include bloodroot, black cohosh, blue cohosh, false unicorn, mayapple, spikenard, pink root, wild ginger, yellow indigo, bethroot, ramps, goldenseal, and ginseng. Some of these medicinal herbs reach marketable size in three to four years while others may take 10 to 12 years.

There are risks associated with growing herbs, such as drought, disease, insect pests, and rodent damage. One of the greatest risks, however, is from poachers stealing crops prior to harvest. With high prices for herbs like ginseng, poaching is attractive and profitable.

Extension agents and specialists have worked with experts to conduct three educational workshops on income opportunities with botanical herbs. Two field meetings and planting demonstrations were conducted, and participants were given samples of herb seeds and roots to plant in test plots on their woodlots. Research plots of goldenseal and ginseng indicate there are excellent opportunities for significant income by cultivating these and other medicinal herbs. Several landowners in the region are actively cultivating medicinal herbs with hopes of a successful harvest.

For more information on medicinal herbs and other non-timber forest products, visit the Virginia Cooperative Extension web page at [www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu) or the non-timber forest products web page at [www.sfp.forprod.vt.edu/](http://www.sfp.forprod.vt.edu/).



*A ginseng farm in Southwest Virginia.*

## Accolades

Our Extension staff is hard at work, always willing to provide “knowledge for the commonwealth.” But what many probably don’t know is that staff members have received recognition for their various efforts. Please join in congratulating them on a job well done.

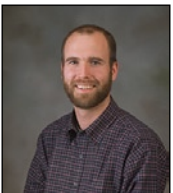
### ► Promotions:



**Neil Clark**, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Southeast Region, was promoted to Extension Agent



**K. Jason Fisher**, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Central Region, was promoted to Senior Extension Agent



**Matthew Yancey**, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Northern Region, was promoted to Extension Agent

*Continued on page 9*

SEPT.

OCT.

NOV.

DEC.

### Online Events Calendar

For the most complete online listing of natural resource education events, visit [www.cnre.vt.edu/forestupdate](http://www.cnre.vt.edu/forestupdate) and click on “Events Calendar.”

## Virginia Ranks in Top Five in National Register of Big Trees

Jeff Kirwan, Professor Emeritus  
Department of Forest Resources and  
Environmental Conservation  
College of Natural Resources and Environment

Virginia is once again well represented in the National Register of Big Trees, which is published every two years by American Forests. The program’s purpose is to increase public awareness and appreciation of trees. Virginia ranks in the top five states nationally, with 68 trees recognized as national champs. Virginia’s biggest tree, a 12.5 ft. diameter water tupelo in Greensville County, is a new national champ, replacing a smaller one in Isle of Wight County. Virginia’s smallest national champ is a four-inch stewartia growing in Chesapeake. Notable additions this year include a new national champion rock elm at Roanoke College, and a willow oak in Chesapeake. Two famous trees dethroned in the 2010 registry are the northern white-cedar in Alleghany County and the serviceberry in Burkes Garden.



*This willow oak in Chesapeake, Va., is a new national champ, replacing one in Northampton County.*

## Visual and Tactile Examples of Wood Structural Systems

Daniel Hindman, Associate Professor of Wood Science and Forest Products  
 Department of Wood Science and Forest Products  
 College of Natural Resources and Environment

The recent revision of the Residential Wood Structures option for wood science and forest products majors has led to the creation of new classes in the areas of green building and structural wood design. Extension and student recruiting efforts need to provide an understanding of construction concepts in an interactive way. One of the more difficult concepts is the idea of *construction systems*. Most study and research related to wood structures tends to focus on the design of individual members (studs, joists, connections). However, the concept of how the construction elements work together to create a system to transfer loads to the foundation has received little attention. Even current pedagogical literature in the area of civil engineering has pointed this out as a deficiency in education.

Structural systems in wood include “conventional framing” using 2x4 stud walls connecting floors composed of wood joists, timber frame systems where all or most connections are composed of wood elements, and post frame construction where posts are embedded in the ground to develop a frame action when combined with trusses. Also, the effect of wood composites and truss systems have resulted in changes in structural systems. Most of these concepts are three-dimensional in nature and are difficult to communicate to students with descriptions and pictures.

Pedagogical work has shown strong responses among students to realistic, tactile examples. If students can see a realistic example and physically touch and connect with the material, their learning potential increases. Two of my graduate students, Lance Shields (M.S., civil engineering) and Jose Villasenor-Aguilar (Ph.D., forest resources), were challenged last summer to construct a model structure that would (1) display multiple building methods and materials, (2) be able to be disassembled using simple tools, and (3) could be transported in the bed of a standard pickup truck. The resulting structure is shown in the picture below. The four sides of the structure were able to represent different building methods and materials.

The structure has been exhibited at the Roanoke Green Living Expo, Greater Roanoke Home and Garden Show, and the college Showcase, as well as several classes at Virginia Tech. This structure is especially useful for classroom demonstrations. To illustrate wood construction principles in Dr. Andrew McCoy’s Building Construction class, the students themselves assembled the structure as commentary was provided about the different materials and building methods.

If anyone is interested in using the structure, please contact Daniel Hindman at 540/231-9442 or via e-mail at [dhindman@vt.edu](mailto:dhindman@vt.edu).

### Features of the Structure

- Timber frame bent composed of 4x6 members showing knee braces and peg joints
- Conventional 2x4 stud wall showing endwall details, insert girder, and typical stud spacings. The oriented strandboard (OSB) sheathing on the wall was recovered from preconstruction waste at a green building project.
- Open web floor truss constructed with metal plate connectors
- Wood composite I-joist materials attached by metal hangers
- Novel column design based upon the double web joist idea to represent future innovations of products and materials, and may become the subject of future work



*Jose Villasenor (left) and Lance Shields  
 the builders and designers*

Accolades continued from page 7

► Awards:



Scott Barrett

**Award:** **2010 Forest Resources Association (FRA) Technical Writing Award, Third Place, Appalachian Region**

**Recipients:** **Scott Barrett**, Chad Bolding, and **John Munsell**

**Awarding Organization:** Forest Resources Association

**Date:** September 22, 2010

**Why:** Awarded for FRA Technical Release 10-R-11, "Loggers' Willingness to Adapt to Biomass Harvesting"



John Munsell



Adam Downing

**Award:** **2009-2010 Pesticide Safety Education Program Certificate of Recognition**

**Recipients:** Leslie Blischak, Adria Bordas, Kirsten Buhls, Tom Burke, Debbie Dillion, **Adam Downing**, Frank Filipy, Lloyd Hipkins, Tim Ohlwiler, and Paige Thacker

**Awarding Organization:** Virginia Pesticide Control Board

**Date:** September 8, 2010

**Why:** Awarded for outstanding performance in the 2009-2010 Pesticide Safety Program "Procrastinator's Pesticide Certification Training and Last Call Commercial Pesticide Applicators Training"



Jennifer Gagnon

**Award:** **Young Forester Leadership Award**

**Recipient:** **Jennifer Gagnon**

**Awarding Organization:** Society of American Foresters, Virginia Division

**Date:** June 2010

**Why:** Awarded for early career leadership

**Award:** **Early Career Leadership Award**

**Recipient:** **Jennifer Gagnon**

**Awarding Organization:** Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals

**Date:** June 2010

**Why:** Awarded for early career leadership



Continued on page 10

Accolades continued from page 9

## ► Awards:



John McGee

**Award:** **Innovative Programs**

Recipients: Jennifer McKee, Jim Pugh, Barbara White, **John McGee**, Randolph Wynne, and Jarlath O’Neil-Dunn

Awarding Organization: Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals

Date: June 2010

Why: Awarded for the Virginia Urban Tree Canopy Assessment Program



Michelle Prysby

**Award:** **Gold Award for Career Leadership**

Recipient: **Michelle Prysby**

Awarding Organization: Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals

Date: June 2010

Why: Awarded to members with less than five years of Extension service who exhibit leadership and excellence in planning, designing, delivering, and evaluating Extension natural resources programs



**Award:** **Silver Award for Individual Program Leadership**

Recipient: **Michelle Prysby**

Awarding Organization: Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals

Date: June 2010

Why: Awarded for leadership of the Virginia Master Naturalist program



Contact information for promotion and award recipients is found in the directory, beginning on page 11.

Our newsletter, *Engagement Matters*, won the Gold Award from the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals “in recognition of an outstanding water resource newsletter or a series of articles published in a newspaper, magazine or newsletter.” Thanks to everyone’s efforts for helping to make “engagement matter.”

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*Continued on page 12*

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