

The Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours Celebrate Their 40th Anniversary!

By: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech

Way back in 1976 I was far more concerned about reading the complete Nancy Drew Mystery Series than I was about teaching landowners about practicing sustainable forestry. Luckily though, there were natural resource professionals here in Virginia who were interested in teaching this topic to landowners. These folks included Professor Emeritus Harry Haney, John Gunter, retired USDA Forest Service, and Charlie Finley, former Executive Director of the Virginia Forestry Association. Together, with a host of partners from Federal, State, and private forest industry, they developed what we now call the Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours. Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program have organized these Tours for the past 11 years.

The goal of the Tours was and remains: demonstrate to non-industrial private landowners active forest and wildlife management practices that help them meet a diverse array of goals. To meet this goal, each Tour visits 4-6 different properties. These include privately owned woodlots, industry lands, public lands, and wood manufacturing facilities. At each stop, natural resource professionals and landowners share strategies for keeping the woodlands and wildlife healthy and productive.

The Tours provide many opportunities for landowners to ask questions and share ideas with each other and with natural resource professionals. Additionally, they provide transportation, good food, and plenty of science-based management information. And if that's not enough to convince you to join us on a Tour, please remember that October is a great time to be out in the woods in Virginia.

Over the past 39 years, we've held 216 Tours for well over 11,500 participants and visited every Virginia county except Lee. Something we will remedy this fall. So set aside some time in your schedule and join us this October for the longest-running program of its type in Virginia.

The 2016 Tour schedule:

- October 7 – Essex County
- October 11 – Lee County
- October 14 – Prince William County
- October 20 – Nottoway/Dinwiddie Counties

On-line and mail in registration is available at <http://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu> or contact Jennifer Gagnon at 540-231-6391 or jgagnon@vt.edu.

