

Virginia Forest Landowner e-Update

March 2022

Featured Events

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

- Join us live every other Friday at 12:15 on [Facebook](#) or on [ZOOM](#)
- Save the Dates Flier
- [Watch archived on our YouTube Channel](#)

2022 Woodland Owner Retreats

- March 18-19 - Forest Management: Beyond the Basics, [Holiday Lake 4-H Center](#), Appomattox
 - [Register by mail](#)
 - [Register online](#)
- May 20-21 – Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat, [Matthews State Forest](#), Galax
- September 9-10, Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat, [New Kent Conference Center](#), Providence Forge
- Registration opens 2 months prior to events
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Good morning Forest Update Subscribers,

At our recent Woods & Wildlife Conference in Wytheville, Dr. Kevin Hamed spoke about creating habitat for our cold-blooded friends – including snakes. Many people are, well, squeamish about this topic. There is something inside many of us that makes us fear these creatures. I know – I understand – I was one of you.

As a kid, simply seeing a snake in our backyard was enough to cause me to run into the house in complete hysterics – and to avoid the backyard for weeks after. No one taught me to fear snakes. Mom was afraid of spiders (I am not) and dad never let on that he was afraid of anything. It was just a visceral response to the legless slithering creatures. The official term for this fear of snakes is Ophidiophobia.

I remained terrified of all things snake until I was in college. A required wildlife class entailed three species identification exams. One on birds (which I failed with a grade of 7/100), one on mammals (which I did slightly better on), and one on herps (i.e., snakes, lizards, frogs) which I needed to get 100% on in order to pass the class. Needless to say, I studied my head off for that exam. And somewhere along the way, I made the conscious decision to stop being afraid of snakes. I just decided. I learned which ones were venomous; I learned about their importance to ecosystems; I learned to live with them.

And that decision has served me well. When I was a research forester in Georgia, a state with over 40 species of snakes, I encountered them almost every day. Common sense told me I probably only saw a small fraction of the snakes that were close at any given time. I figure I've stepped over thousands of snakes in my life. And I've been bitten exactly zero times.

I realized I was fully over my fear a couple of years ago when we found a black snake in our barn. It was wrapped

2022 Legacy Planning

- Southwest Virginia
 - May 5
 - Blacksburg
- Central Virginia
 - August 26 & 27
 - South Boston
- Southeast
 - November TBA
 - Providence Forge
- Virtual
 - Sept. 8, 9, 14, & 15

Registration opens 6 weeks prior to event.

2022 Virginia Forestry Summit

- May 3 – 6
- [The Inn at Virginia Tech](#), Blacksburg

Visit the [Events Calendar](#) for details!

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up in a tangle of plastic mesh the previous owners had used to keep the birds out of the blueberry bushes. The poor thing was hopelessly stuck. I sat down in the yard, with the snake and a pair of scissors, and spent 45 minutes carefully cutting her out. When I finally freed her, she slithered away thanklessly. I wished her well. Six-year old Jennifer would have passed out at the sight!

I share this to demonstrate that managing Ophidiophobia may be possible. You can start to learn more about snakes by visiting the [Virginia Herpetological Society](#) (warning – when you click on this link you will see images of snakes). I encourage you to give it a try. And while you may never love our slithering friends, perhaps you can work towards tolerating them.

Another topic covered at the Woods & Wildlife Conference was carbon. In the past 24 months, opportunities for owners of smaller woodland properties to participate in the voluntary carbon market have increased tremendously. If you want to get a better understanding of the role forests play in the global carbon balance watch this documentary from the Forest Products Association of Canada: <https://www.forestryforthefuture.ca/doc#about>. And if you haven't watched it, we offered a carbon basics webinar back in December. You can watch the recording on our YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/NMCqAnbR924>.

Finally, The National Association of State Foresters is looking for YOUR input on carbon markets. If you are interested in participating in their survey, go to: https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7QdV2dv1hEKsBUO to learn more.

Check out the [Events Calendar](#) and below for our upcoming landowner education events. All current COVID-19 precautions will be followed at in-person events.

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

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- Save the Dates Flier
- March 4 – Generation NEXT

- [Virginia Tree Farm Foundation](#)
- [Virginia Forestry Association](#)
- [Forest Stewardship Program](#)
- [USDA Forest Service](#)

Contact

Jennifer Gagnon

228 Cheatham Hall 0324

Blacksburg, VA 24061

<https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu>

jgagnon@vt.edu

540/231-6391

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- March 18 – American Beech
- April 1 – Basics of tree ID
- April 15 – Searching SW Virginia for Mountain Chorus Frogs
- [Watch archived on our YouTube Channel](#)

[2022 Woodland Owner Retreats](#)

Our Retreats are hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension. They are geared towards landowners who are new to forest management, provide information on both hardwood and pine forests, offer chances for interaction with natural resource professionals from various agencies in Virginia, as well as with other landowners, provide information on estate planning, management planning and certification, and provide hands-on experience with tree identification, forestry equipment, and more.

The Retreats were developed for those new to active woodland management. But we are excited to announce that in 2022 we will offer Forest Management: Beyond the Basics Retreat. This advanced program will take a deeper dive into specific woodland and wildlife management topics as identified by past Retreat attendees.

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[Forest Farming: In Focus A Deeper Dive Webinar Series](#)

- [March 10, 6-7:30 p.m. – Forest Farming Fungi](#)
- [March 24, 6-7:30 p.m. – Forest Farming Ginseng](#)
- [April 24 – Goldenseal and other NTFPs](#)

[The Woods in Your Backyard online course - Spring 2022](#) – from our friends at the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension

Registration for the Spring session of "The Woods in Your Backyard" online course is now open. This self-directed, non-credit course runs 10 weeks from March 28th to June 6th, 2022. The course will help landowners convert lawn to natural areas and enhance stewardship of existing natural areas. Based on the guide of the same name, the course provides strategies to landowners and managers of small parcels of land that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property. Activities include how to map habitat areas, understand basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choose and implement a few habitat management projects, and how to set a timetable and record your progress. Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

- Monday, March 28 to Monday, June 6, 2022
- Online
- \$95per person, which includes the 108-page "Woods In Your Backyard" guide, workbook, and a tree identification guide
- [Register online](#)

2022 Legacy Planning

Join the Generation NEXT Team and experienced conservation, legal, and financial advisors to learn how to pass your land on to the next generation while keeping it intact, in forest, and in family. Registration opens 6 weeks prior to each event. Save the dates flier.

Southwest Virginia

- May 5
- Blacksburg

Central Virginia

- August 26 & 27
- South Boston

Southeast

- November TBA
- Providence Forge

Virtual

- Sept. 8, 9, 14, & 15

2022 Virginia Forestry Summit

Join landowners and natural resource professionals in beautiful Blacksburg for a week of learning and fellowship. A special Landowner Extravaganza is being planned for the end of the Summit. Stay tuned for details!

- May 3 – 6
- [The Inn at Virginia Tech](#), Blacksburg

Teaching Trees

This 16-hour professional development workshop for middle and high school teachers, will be held July 13-14 in Louisa and Albemarle counties. In this fun and unique two-day workshop, teachers receive training in Project Learning Tree, take a tour of local working forests, and practice field activities they can use with students. Topics include sustainable local forestry, tree identification, forest ecology, and forest products.

The cost is \$50, which includes lunch both days, several PLT modules, and overnight accommodations on July 13 for those who need them. And, the full cost will be refunded to teachers who attend the entire training! Registration will begin in March. For more information, contact Ellen Powell at 434-975-0475 or ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov.

- [Register online](#)

All the best,

Jennifer

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