

Virginia Forest Landowner Update

May 2023

Featured Events

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

- Join us live every other Friday at 12:15 on [Facebook](#) Or [YouTube Premier](#)

Landowner Retreat

Southwest Virginia

- May 19-20
- Galax

Spring Venture Outdoors

- May 11 - Red Oak
- May 18 - Halifax
- June 9, Bedford
- 10 - 3:00
- \$10 - includes lunch

The Woods in Your Backyard Workshops

- May 3, Schuyler
- Jun 24, Raphine

Online Woodland Options for Landowners

- June 5 - Aug. 11
- Online
- \$55/family

Tree to Products Program for Teachers

- July 10-13
- Wise
- \$25

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

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Good Morning Forest Update Subscribers,

Now that my husband and I are both well into middle-age, we have put up the requisite bird feeder that we enthusiastically watch while we sit on our front porch. Because, apparently, that's what older people do and [it's good for our health](#).

Many of the visitors to the feeder are the expected sorts, tufted titmice, American robins, northern cardinals, Carolina chickadees, and song sparrows. But I'm pleasantly surprised at some of the other visitors, such as the downy and red-bellied woodpeckers. And I'm annoyed at the bossiest and piggiest visitors - the brown-headed cowbirds which feed constantly and chase off other birds.

Although native, brown-headed cowbirds are brood parasites. A female cowbird will search for other species that are actively laying eggs. Once she has found a suitable host, she sneaks onto the resident bird's nest when it is away, damages or removes eggs, and replaces them with one (or more) of her own. The foster parents unknowingly raise the young cowbirds, usually at the expense of their own offspring (watch a [cowbird fledgling being fed by an Eastern Phoebe](#) and a [cowbird removing an Eastern Kingbird nestling from a nest at 0:45](#)). Cowbird eggs usually hatch first and the nestlings grow quickly. These advantages result in them getting the most food from their foster parents, usually resulting in reduced nesting success of the host species.

Brown-headed cowbirds inspire hatred among some naturalists, even those that love birds. Personally, I struggle with my feelings about them. They are, after all, just trying to make a living like everything else. But when I see the cute, shy, tufted titmouse, I worry for its young. Some evenings, I get annoyed enough that I will shoo the cowbirds away, thus making room for other less-aggressive species. Proof that I am, indeed, middle-aged.

We have many educational programs for woodland owners coming up. See below for featured events and find a full listing here: [Events Calendar](#).

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And of those of you who enjoy taking surveys, here are a couple that may be appropriate for you to fill out:

1. Woodland owners in AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, MO, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, & VA. The Southern Group of State Foresters needs your input in the 2022 Costs and Trends of Southern Forestry Practices Survey. Your total time commitment will be approximately 45 minutes depending on the availability of your information. [Take the survey.](#)
2. If you own land in Virginia, I can almost guarantee you have nonnative invasive plants on your property. The Virginia Department of Forestry has recently hired an Invasive Species Specialist, Lindsay Caplan. Lindsay has put together a short survey to help her develop programs that help you control nonnative invasives on your land. [Take the survey.](#)

Featured Events

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

- Fifteen Minutes in the Forest videos are shown every other Friday at 12:15 on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube Premier](#)
- May 5 - Riparian Buffers
- May 19 - What is a Healthy Forest Understory?
- June 2 - Why Edge Habitat Matters
- June 16 - Making Your Own Charcoal & Biochar
- [Watch archived on our YouTube Channel](#)

Spring Venture Outdoors

Are you a woodland owner interested in tree identification, invasive plant/insect management, hardwood management, and stream water quality? If so, this spring your Central District Extension Forestry Program, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Forestry, is offering one-day short courses on management options for your timberland in Southside.

- May 11 - Red Oak
- May 18 - Halifax
- June 9, Bedford
- 10 - 3:00
- \$10 - includes lunch
- Register [online](#)
- Register [by mail](#)

The Woods in Your Backyard Workshops

These workshops will introduce basic vegetation, wildlife and woodland management principals relevant to small acreage owners and "DIY" landowners. Both workshops will include outdoor demonstrations while the longer workshop in June

will provide a broader context and suite of practices as an indoor portion.

- May 3
 - 9 - 12
 - [The Quarry Gardens](#), Schuyler
- June 24
 - 9 - 2
 - [Shenandoah Valley AREC, McCormick Farm](#), Raphine
- \$25
- [Register online](#)

Landowner Retreats

Developed for those new to actively managing their woods, the Retreats combine classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities to teach concepts of sustainable woodland management.

Southwest Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat

- May 19-20
- Galax
- Agenda
- Register [online](#)
- Register [by mail](#)

Southeast Virginia Beyond the Basics Advanced Woodland Owner Retreat

- September 8-9
- Providence Forge

Agendas and registration available 8 weeks prior to Retreats

Online Woodland Options for Landowners

This 10-week self-paced online course teaches the fundamentals of forest management. Upon completion of the class, you can have a draft forest management plan. The class wraps up with an optional end-of-the-semester hands-on field trip in Appomattox on Saturday August 5th. Registration fee includes 5 books

- June 5 - August 11
- Online
- \$55/family
- Syllabus
- Register [online](#)
- Register [by mail](#)

Trees to Products Teacher Program

Teachers will tour key forest-industry sites to learn about sustainable forest management. They will also learn how forests provide wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and the importance of forests in view-shed and water-quality efforts. Participants will see how trees are

converted into a variety of everyday products. Teachers will receive Project Learning Tree® certification at the completion of the course. In addition, the Trees to Products program is designed to correlate with the Virginia Standards of Learning for grades K - 12. It awards 30 hours of professional development credits for participants. Registration fee includes transportation, lodging, and meals.

- July 10-13
- Wise
- \$25
- Register [online](#)

All the best,

Jennifer

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