

Virginia Forest Landowner e-Update

March 2024

Featured Events

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

- 12:15 every other Friday
- Watch archived videos on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube Premier](#)

2024 Woodland Stewards Webinar Series

- January 30 – March 5
- Virtual

Generation NEXT Legacy Planning

- March 7
- Virtual

Landowner Retreats

- Beyond the Basics Advanced Retreat
 - March 22-23
 - Appomattox
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - May 3-4
 - Abingdon
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - September 20-21
 - Providence Forge

Gather to Grow: A Conference to Honor the Past and Shape the Future of Forest Farming

- March 22-24
- Roanoke

Online Woodland Options for Landowners

Good Morning Forest Update Subscribers,

This year the e-update is focusing on different aspects of sustainable forestry. Last month I started on the topic of: **Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry** and discussed forest management plans. This month, I'll discuss implementing your plan, because just having a plan does not improve conditions in the forest. The plan needs to be followed to be effective.

A good forest management plan includes a timeline of objectives or activities that will help you reach your management goals. Depending on your goals and your land, you may not have any activities scheduled for many years; or you may have many activities that should be completed as soon as possible. Either way, it's good to regularly check this timeline so you know what's coming up. Some common activities you may have on your timeline include:

1. **Control nonnative invasive species.** If you own woodlands in Virginia, chances are you have nonnative invasive species. While eradication is typically unlikely, control may be possible. The first step is to learn about what you have and what control methods are best. In most cases, you can do the control work yourself if you have the ability. But you can also hire a private contractor. To learn more:
 - a. [Celebrate National Invasive Species Awareness Week \(Feb. 26 – March 3\)](#)
 - b. [The Blue Ridge PRISM](#)
 - c. [Plant Invaders of MidAtlantic Natural Areas](#)
 - d. [Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health](#)

- July 2 – September 9
- [Syllabus](#)
- Registration opens May 1

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

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2. **Crop tree release (CTR) to improve hardwood forests.** Over 80% of Virginia's forests are hardwoods. CTR is a tool that can be used by landowners to improve the growth and survival of individual trees in their hardwoods forests. Financial assistance is available to woodland owners who want to implement this and other hardwood management practices. To learn more:
 - a. [Virginia's Hardwood Initiative](#)
3. **Timber sale.** If your management plan calls for a timber sale, the first step is to hire a consulting forester. Your forester will conduct a timber cruise to determine the volume and approximate value of your forest (and you can learn more about how this is done by attending our timber cruise workshop May 10th - see below for details). They will then put the sale out for bid. Be prepared - the harvest may take several years, depending on markets, weather, and other conditions. Learn more:
 - a. [So You Want to Sell Timber](#)
 - b. [How to Sell Timber](#) (webinar)
 - c. [Timber Selling Tips](#)
 - d. [Working with a Consulting Forester](#)

With many of these activities, the timeline can be flexible. If you can't sell your timber in a scheduled year, the trees will continue to grow and put on value until you can. Other activities, like replating a harvested pine plantation, should be implemented as soon as possible.

If you don't know how to get started with an activity, reach out to your [Virginia Department of Forestry area forester](#). They can help you find the resources you need to begin. And as always, we have educational opportunities for you to learn more about active forest management.

Other News

American chestnut update

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

“When will blight-resistant chestnuts be commercially available?” is among the most common questions I receive. The Darling 58 American chestnut, a genetically modified tree, was, until recently, thought to be the solution to restoring this iconic species. However, poor seedling performance and a significant error in identifying propagation materials has resulted in the American Chestnut Foundation terminating this line of research. Traditional crossbreeding research will continue. You can learn more from the [American Chestnut Foundation](#).

An opportunity for you to contribute to the Virginia Gray Fox Project

Gray fox populations across North America have been declining over the last two decades. There are no published studies on gray fox population status in Virginia (VA), but researchers, biologists, naturalists, hunters, and trappers from the state have noted, anecdotally, a decline in sightings, vocalizations, and camera trap photos over the last decade.

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources is funding the Virginia Gray Fox Project, which is being conducted by Dr. Marcella Kelly and PhD student Victoria Monette of Virginia Tech. The primary goal of this project is to map the current distribution of gray fox across the state of Virginia and to assess the evidence for decline using past, historical camera trapping from around the state. To accomplish this, we will conduct a state-wide camera trapping survey. To conduct such a large-scale survey, we are hoping to enlist the help of volunteers that have *existing* trail cameras on their own property and are willing to set the cameras according to specific protocols to standardize data collection. The camera survey will cover the state over the course of 3 years. For the 2024 field season (spring, summer, and fall) we are focusing on the Appalachian Mountain region.

If interested in assisting with the Gray Fox Project, please email Victoria Monette at

vmonette@vt.edu or leave a voicemail with Dr. Kelly at 540-231-1734.

Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program Events Calendar

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](#)

- March 8 - The Hardwood Initiative
- March 15 - Professional Forestry Assistance
- [Watch archived on our YouTube Channel](#)

2024 Woodland Steward Webinar Series: Focus on Silvopasture

This free webinar series will teach you how to establish, manage, and fund silvopasture systems. Established producers will share their experiences.

- Virtual
- 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. EST
- Free
- March 5 - Silvopasture Producers Share Their Experiences and Answer Questions

Legacy Planning Workshops

Learn how to pass your land, and your legacy, to future generations while keeping it intact, in forest, and in family.

- **Generation NEXT Land Transition Planning**
 - March 1
 - 9 - 12:00
 - [Rappahannock Church of Christ, Warsaw](#)
 - \$25/family
- **Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Workshop: Land Conservation Tools Deep Dive**
 - Virtual

- March 7
- 6:30 – 8:30
- \$10/family – includes a copy of the award-winning book: Legacy Planning: A Guide for Virginia Landowners
- Register [by mail](#)
- Register [online](#)

Landowner Retreats

Landowner Retreats are co-hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Retreats provide information on hardwood and pine forest management, legacy planning, management planning, and more. They combine classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities to teach concepts of sustainable woodland and wildlife management.

- Beyond the Basics Advanced Retreat
 - March 22-23
 - [Holiday Lake 4 H Educational Center](#), Appomattox
 - [Agenda](#)
 - Register [online](#)
 - Register [by mail](#)
 - Onsite lodging is full
 - **Basic knowledge of woodland management is required**
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - May 3-4
 - [Southwest Virginia 4 H Educational Center](#), Abingdon
 - Registration opens March 4th
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - September 20-21
 - [New Kent Forestry Center](#), Providence Forge
 - Registration opens July

A Tour of Urban Wood in Hooville

Take a walk on the urban side and learn how trees and wood are used in an urban setting. Tour the tallest mass timber building on the east coast, the Apex Plaza, visit the most majestic trees on the UVA Grounds, and learn about UVA Sawmilling.

- April 25

- 12 – 4:30
- \$25/person, includes lunch and transportation
- Register [online](#)

Virginia Forestry Summit

Join landowners and natural resource professionals from across Virginia for this educational and networking event.

- April 23-25
- [Boar's Head Resort](#), Charlottesville
- Register [online](#)

Timber Cruising for Woodland Owners

Hiring a professional forester is the best way to ensure an accurate accounting of your timber volume and value. And it's also important for you to understand where those numbers come from. This hands-on class will teach you why and how timber cruises are conducted.

- May 10
- McCormick Farm, Raphine
- \$45/person – includes lunch, angle gauge, and Biltmore stick
- Registration opens mid-March

Visit the Blue Ridge PRISM website for programs on nonnative invasives

And from our friends at the University of Maryland Extension:

The Woods in Your Backyard Online Course

This course promotes the stewardship of small parcels of land for the personal enjoyment of the owners and improved environmental quality for society. If you own 1 to 10 acres in the Eastern United States that is forested or has unmowed natural areas, this course is for you. It is for you if you have a mowed lawn area that you want to turn into a woodland. It is also for you if you are a land manager or part of a group

that manages natural areas, such as a preserve or a community woodland.

- April 8 – June 17
- \$95
- Register [online](#)

All the best!

Jennifer

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