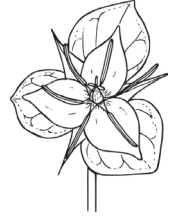


VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE






Events, News, and Information Promoting the Stewardship of Virginia's Forest Resources



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Generation NEXT: Legacy Planning for Forest and Farm Owners

by Karen Snape, Virginia Tech

Fifteen years ago, Mike Santucci, Virginia Department of Forestry, and Adam Downing, Virginia Cooperative Extension, recognized the need to reach Virginia's woodland owners with a palatable approach to legacy planning. Legacy planning is planning for the future of your woodland after your death. It means working out the legal and financial estate plan to pass on your woodland, and also working with your heirs to pass on knowledge and a love of the land. Two-thirds of Virginia's forests are owned by individuals and families, and that land is most at risk of being subdivided and converted out of forest cover at the time of generational transition. That makes legacy planning an important topic for all Virginians who care about our forests.

Today, DOF and VCE, along with many other collaborators, continue to meet this educational need through the Generation NEXT Program. Legacy planning and the first eight years of the Generation NEXT Program were highlighted in the 2017 Winter issue of *Virginia Forests* magazine. In this article, we will share the progress and resources developed in our second eight years.

All of the resources of the Generation NEXT Program are available on our website: <https://sites.google.com/vt.edu/generationnext/home>. This website includes resources, links to our partners, the schedule of workshops, and contact information for the Generation NEXT team. The newest feature is a "notify me" button to subscribe to receive information about upcoming workshops and webinars.

Our flagship publication, *Legacy Planning: A Guide for Virginia Landowners*, was released in 2019. This 56-page Guide, including nine worksheets and six case studies, lays out the nine steps of successful legacy planning:

1. Begin the process and commit to moving forward.
2. Determine your family assets.
3. Write down long-term goals for your land.
4. Hold a family meeting.
5. Gather or create essential documents.
6. Establish your legacy planning team.
7. Determine the legal, financial, and conservation tools available to help you meet your goals.
8. Provide opportunities for your family to learn about and enjoy your woodlands.
9. Revisit your plan on a regular basis and adapt as your land, assets, and family change.

The Guide is available at our workshops, from our website in pdf and digital formats, and by mail.

Another resource is our curated list of attorneys. An important piece of legacy planning is estate planning: putting in place the wills, trusts, and/or corporate ownership structures needed to pass land to designated heirs. To do this, landowners need the services of an attorney, but not all attorneys are familiar with the value and challenges of owning, bequeathing, and inheriting rural land. The Virginia Farm and Forestland Legacy Planning Attorney List contains almost 50 lawyers with self-reported experience in estate planning for owners of rural land. The list is dynamic, with an online survey and rolling consideration.

—Generation NEXT, continued on page 3.

Events Calendar

For the most complete listing of natural resource education events, visit the online events calendar at <https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu>

SCHEDULED EVENTS - APRIL-JULY 2025

DATE	LOCATION / DETAILS	EVENT DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
April 12	Montpelier Station 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM \$18	Majestic Trees of Montpelier Tour Specimens include trees that were alive during the Madison period and some of their younger but still massive neighbors planted as late as the 1900's.	https://www.montpelier.org/
May 7-9	Roanoke Times and fees vary	Virginia Forestry Summit Join natural resources professionals and landowners for this annual networking and education event.	forestrysummit.com
May 9	Roanoke 12:30 - 4:30 PM \$30*	An Urban Forestry Tour of the Star City of the South Join us to visit the Fishburn Mansion, Virginia Western's arboretum, and Sherwood Memorial Park.	Jennifer Gagnon jgagnon@vt.edu 540-231-6391
May 13	Virtual 6:30 - 8:30 PM \$10/family	Generation NEXT Deep Dive: The Family Factor Discussions about what happens to family forestland when mom and dad die are difficult. Our experts share tips on how to make these conversations go smoothly.	Karen Snape ksnape@vt.edu 540-231-6494
May 15 & 22	Abingdon 6:00 - 9:00 PM \$20*/person additional family members \$15* each	Protecting Family Land: Legacy Planning for Farm and Forest Owners Learn strategies for passing your forest and farmland on to your heirs in ways that save you money and keep the land intact and in rural use.	Karen Snape ksnape@vt.edu 540-231-6494
May 20	Colonial Heights 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM \$75*	16th Annual Vegetation Management Workshop This workshop for natural resource professionals and landowners covers land and weed management tips from a variety of professionals. Continuing education credits will be offered.	Brendan Schnell 804-356-6547 https://2025Nutrien-SolVMW.eventbrite.com
May 30-31	Abingdon •5/30 7:15 AM - 6:00 PM •5/31 7:15 AM - 1:00 PM •\$60*/person •\$120*/couple	Southwest Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat A program for those new to active woodland management. A combination of classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities will be used to teach concepts of sustainable woodland management. On-site lodging is available for an additional \$30/person/night.	Bill Worrell bworrell@vt.edu 276-889-8056
July 16-17 or July 30-31	Raphine Providence Forge All day \$25	Teaching Trees for Teachers A 2-day training for middle and high school teachers who wish to incorporate forestry into a science or agriculture curriculum. The workshop focuses on local forest ecology, management, and products, and includes real-world, field-based activities for students.	Ellen Powell ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov 434-987-0475

*meal(s) included

ONGOING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer Basic Training

Available statewide. Dates, times, and fees vary.

People who are curious about nature, enjoy the outdoors, and want to be a part of natural resource management and conservation in Virginia are perfect candidates to become Virginia Master Naturalists.

Visit www.virginiamasternaturalist.org for a chapter near you.

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

Online video series. Every other Friday at 12:15 pm.

Join Virginia Cooperative Extension's Forestry Team for videos about natural resource-related topics.

Connect/find past videos:

- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/c/VirginiaForestLandownerEducationProgram>
- **Facebook live:** www.facebook.com/VFLEP



Families, such as the Epleys, use materials, workshops, and guidance from Virginia's Generation NEXT Program to help them plan for the future of their forest and farmland. Learn more about the Epleys' legacy planning journey in this short video: <https://tinyurl.com/EpleyGenerationNEXT>.

The Generation NEXT Program has also been assisting partners at Virginia State University's Small Farm Outreach Program to provide education on heirs' property. Heirs' property results when a landowner dies without a will or their will is badly written or not properly probated. As a result, all of a person's children or grandchildren (possibly dozens of people) become part owners of the property, with no one having clear title. Without clear title, it is much harder to manage, maintain, and even hold onto a property. Fortunately, the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act offers some protection in Virginia, but resolving the issue is time-consuming and expensive. VSU has created a resource page which is linked on the Generation NEXT website.

The Generation NEXT Program also has some projects for this coming spring. Last spring, we held a successful Conservation Tools Deep Dive webinar, and we are offering a Deep Dive webinar on communication and the family factor this spring. We will also be working on a curated list of financial professionals to complement our attorney list. Finally, we have received grant funding to hold a subsidized legacy planning workshop in far southwest Virginia. Our lineup of workshops is posted on our website and in the events section of this newsletter.

Karen Snape is the Generation NEXT Program Coordinator, ksnape@vt.edu, 540-231-6494.

Article reprinted with permission from the Fall 2024 issue of *Virginia Forests* magazine, a quarterly publication from the Virginia Forestry Association (<https://www.vaforestry.org/>).

Beneficial Ownership Information Reporting Rule Update

by Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech

In the summer of 2024, this newsletter featured a story about the US Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network's (FinCEN) Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) Reporting Rule. This rule requires disclosure of the identity of beneficial owners of small business entities. This rule applies to most businesses (farm, ranch, agricultural operation, woodland) set up as a legal business entity (such as an LLC, LLP, business trust, corporation, etc.) created through the State Corporation Commission, secretary of state, or other similar office.

Visit: <https://www.fincen.gov/boi> to see if you are required to report.

Due to ongoing litigation, over the past few months there have been many changes to reporting deadlines and penalties for not reporting. Despite ongoing litigation, as of the publishing of this newsletter, the reporting requirement is back in place, with a deadline of March 21, 2025. However, FinCEN has stated they will not be penalizing businesses for failing to comply with the March 21st deadline and they will not be taking enforcement action against anyone who fails to comply with the current deadline.

FinCEN has announced that no later than March 21st, it will again extend the reporting deadline while it works to revise existing reporting requirements later this year.

If you decide to report, it is free and does not require a credit card number. If you are on a website that asks for payment, it is a scam. Do not enter your credit card number. If you've already made a payment, please contact your credit card company immediately.

The only official website for BOI reporting is <http://www.fincen.gov/boi>. You can also use this website to keep up to date on this developing situation.

Jennifer Gagnon is an Extension Project Associate in the Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation; jgagnon@vt.edu; 540-231-6391.

You Ain't From Around Here!

Two-horned Trapa: A Wingless Devil That Can Fly

by Kevin Heffernan and A. G. Sweany, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage

Two-horned trapa (*Trapa bispinosa*) is an invasive aquatic plant that poses a significant threat to waterways in the United States. First identified in Pohick Bay, Virginia, in 2014, it was initially mistaken for the highly invasive Eurasian water chestnut (*Trapa natans*). While similar in appearance and growth patterns, two-horned trapa produces two-horned seed pods, unlike the four-horned pods of the Eurasian water chestnut. The discovery of this new introduction prompted concern due to the potential for two-horned trapa to spread rapidly and undo the extensive and costly efforts to eradicate Eurasian water chestnut from the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Life History and Spread

An annual aquatic plant with submerged stems and roots, two-horned trapa thrives in freshwater environments with slow-moving or still water, such as tidal rivers, streams, ponds, reservoirs, lakes, and wetlands. The plant's roots anchor it to the mud in waters up to 12 feet deep. It has fan-shaped leaves with serrated margins that form a rosette. The leaves are green with red undersides and distinct inflated petioles, which allow the leaves to float on the surface of the infested water body. Small, pink, four-petaled flowers emerge from the rosette center, typically starting in June. The plant flowers and produces fruit from June until frost, with seeds that can remain dormant for at least two years.

It is not known how two-horned trapa was introduced but it may have been facilitated by ornamental or edible plant enthusiasts. Although it is not currently known to be sold as a live plant, dried seeds are available on internet sites. The plant has been identified in over 130 water bodies in Virginia and continues to spread. Though most of these sites are in Northern Virginia, (Fairfax, Prince William, Fauquier and Loudoun Counties) four new infested ponds were discovered in Orange County in 2024. The full range now extends into Maryland and as far southwest as Charlotte County, Virginia, where it was first found in 2022. Two-horned trapa may have been present in Virginia for several decades, with some records dating back to 1995. The seeds can cling to waterfowl, animal fur, rope, clothing, and wood, facilitating dispersal to new locations. Canada geese are associated with many infestation sites, thus allowing the seeds of this species to fly.



The two-horned trapa is a nonnative aquatic invasive species that can quickly overtake freshwater environments. Photo by Kevin Heffernan, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage.



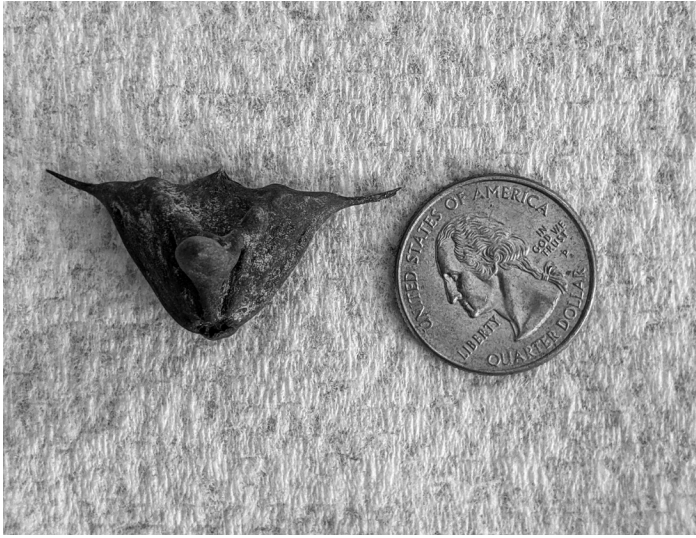
The fan-shaped leaves of the two-horned trapa have serrated margins (edges) and are green on top and red underneath. Photo by Kevin Heffernan, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage.

Ecological and Economic Impacts

Two-horned trapa poses significant ecological and economic threats. It forms dense floating mats that can block up to 95% of light penetration into the water, reduces dissolved oxygen levels, harms submerged aquatic vegetation, and outcompetes native plants. The dense mats also negatively impact foraging habitat for waterfowl. Furthermore, infestations can diminish recreational, fishing, aesthetic, and boating experience. The sharp "horned" seed pods can also cause injury to people and animals.

–Trapa, continued on page 5.

Trapa, continued from page 4



Two-horned trapa may flower and fruit from June until frost. The seed pod is large (1.5-2 inches) with two opposing horns. Photo by Kevin Heffernan, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage.

The economic costs associated with managing two-horned trapa infestations are substantial. Control efforts, including hand removal and herbicide application, are time-consuming and expensive. For instance, one 7.5-acre site required nearly \$1,500 in herbicide treatment. Hand removal of the plant is labor-intensive and must be repeated over several years to achieve effectiveness. The potential spread of two-horned trapa into larger water bodies, such as the Potomac River, could lead to even greater significant economic impacts.

Control and Management Strategies

Control methods for two-horned trapa include manual removal and chemical treatments. Hand removal is effective in smaller water bodies or areas where the infestation is easily accessible, but it must be thorough and repeated for several years. Chemical treatments using flumioxazin and imazamox have shown promising results, and a combination of diquat and flumioxazin is also reported to be effective. Biological control agents, such as the water lily leaf beetle, are being researched for their potential to control two-horned trapa. However, further study is needed to ensure host specificity and minimize impacts on native species.

Effective management of two-horned trapa requires a coordinated effort that includes early detection, rapid response, public education, and ongoing monitoring and control.

Resources

Sweany, A.G., and Kevin Heffernan. 2022. Management Plan for Two-horned Trapa (*Trapa bispinosa*). Natural Heritage Technical Report 22-15. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage. Richmond, Virginia. 13 pp. plus appendix.

DCR. 2022. Invasive Plant Alert: Two-horned Trapa, Two-horned Water Chestnut (*Trapa bispinosa* var. *iinumai*) Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage. Richmond, VA.

4 PM Burning Law

Virginia's 4 PM Burning Law is in effect from February 15 through April 30 each year. The law bans open-air burning prior to 4:00 PM if the fire is within 300 feet of the woods or dry grass which could carry fire to the woods. Open-air burning means any outdoor fire that is not covered and/or contained within non-flammable barriers and the smoke from the fire does not pass through a chimney.

Burning is allowed between 4:00 PM and midnight as long as you take proper precautions and attend the fire at all times. Violation of the 4 PM Burning Law is a Class 3 misdemeanor with a fine of not more than \$500.

Some localities may have more restrictive regulations on outdoor burning so check with your locality before starting any outdoor burning.

Reason for the 4 PM Burning Law

Debris burning is the number one cause of wildfires, closely followed by intentionally set fires. The 4 PM Burning Law was adopted during the 1940s to reduce the number of wildfires occurring in the late winter and early spring, when Virginia traditionally sees an increased number of fires.

Fires are more likely during late winter and early spring because winds are usually elevated, the relative humidity is lower, and the fuels on the forest floor are extremely dry, having cured all winter in the sun. After 4:00 PM, winds usually calm down and the relative humidity levels rise, both of which reduce the potential for a debris fire or any outdoor open-air fire to escape.

For more information on what does not qualify as an open-air fire and exemptions to the law, visit: www.dof.virginia.gov.

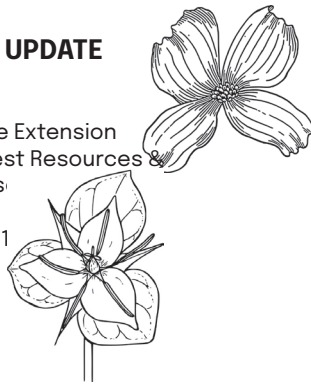
This information was adapted from the Virginia Department of Forestry's website.

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Spring 2025



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Department of Forest Resources &
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