



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

## Real Forestry for Real Estate

### Benefits to Real Estate Professionals and the Citizens of Virginia

The ultimate goal of this program is to put information about sustainable forest management in the hands of new forest landowners. However, we feel there are also benefits for real estate professionals to learn about forestry in Virginia.

Being able to read a piece of land can help real estate professionals make the property more appealing to a potential client. For example, being able to share the history of the property may make it come alive and allow the client to attach emotional values to it. Being able to identify common flowering trees and shrubs may make a piece of property seem more appealing, even if it is being viewed outside of the flowering season. Additionally, knowing if there are trees which provide good fall color and/or which may be good timber trees may increase the apparent value of the land to a client. If the client is interested in timber production, the ability to state whether the site is highly productive and if good timber trees are present may help enhance the land's value.

When looking to buy a piece of property, clients may have many concerns, especially those who have not owned forestland before. Some of these concerns may be about the cost of owning and managing a piece of property. For example, high property taxes may discourage a purchase. Or, if land needs to be reforested. Fortunately, in Virginia, there are numerous cost-share programs available to landowners to assist them with these issues. Real Forestry for Real Estate will provide real estate professionals with information about these programs.

In these classes we provide real estate professionals with a set of tools to help them read a piece of property. Being able to share more than just the basics (i.e., acreage, location, taxes) with a potential buyer may help increase interest, quell concerns, and make a sale.

- **Land use history**

Many rural lands in Virginia have a long and interesting history. There are usually numerous clues which can be used to piece together past land-uses. In this section we will talk about these clues and how to interpret them.

- **Income opportunities, assistance available**

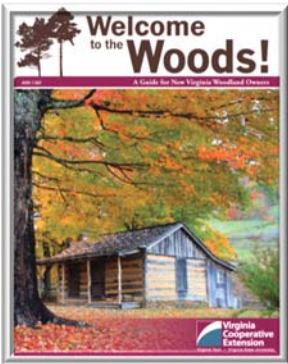
Potential land buyers may have concerns about the long-term costs associated with owning land. These costs may include property taxes and management expenses. In Virginia, there are numerous state and federal programs available, which can assist landowners with these expenses. A list of these programs along with contact information and a brief discussion of each will be covered.

- **Basic Tree ID**

Being able to point out common tree species may increase the appeal of a piece of land. For example, knowing a property has a lot of blooming trees such as redbud and dogwood may increase interest, even if a sale is occurring when these species are not blooming. Also, knowing if valuable timber species are present may increase interest. This section will provide resources for tree identification, a basic introduction to tree ID, and cover some of the more common/valuable species.

- **Site quality determination**

An understanding of the potential of a piece of property (i.e, if it's a good site for timber, agriculture, etc.) may be useful. The Web Soil Survey is a fast and easy way to find out basic site quality information. We will cover the use of this tool, what information can be used, and also some on-the-ground indicators of site quality.



- **Welcome to the Woods! A Guide for New Virginia Woodland Owners**  
This guide was designed specifically for the Real Forestry for Real Estate program. It covers the top ten things new woodland owners should know. Real estate professionals can obtain copies of this guide, free of charge, from the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program, to distribute to their clients who are buying forestland. Participants in the Real Forestry for Real Estate program will also receive a copy of the guide for their own reference.

As real estate professionals share these resources with their clients, awareness of forests and forestry in Virginia will increase. Our hope is that the Welcome to the Woods! publication will provide the information necessary to motivate the recipients to implement active forest management on their land. Active forest management creates healthy, vigorous forests, protects water quality, and enhances the habitats of threatened and endangered species. Things everyone in Virginia benefits from.