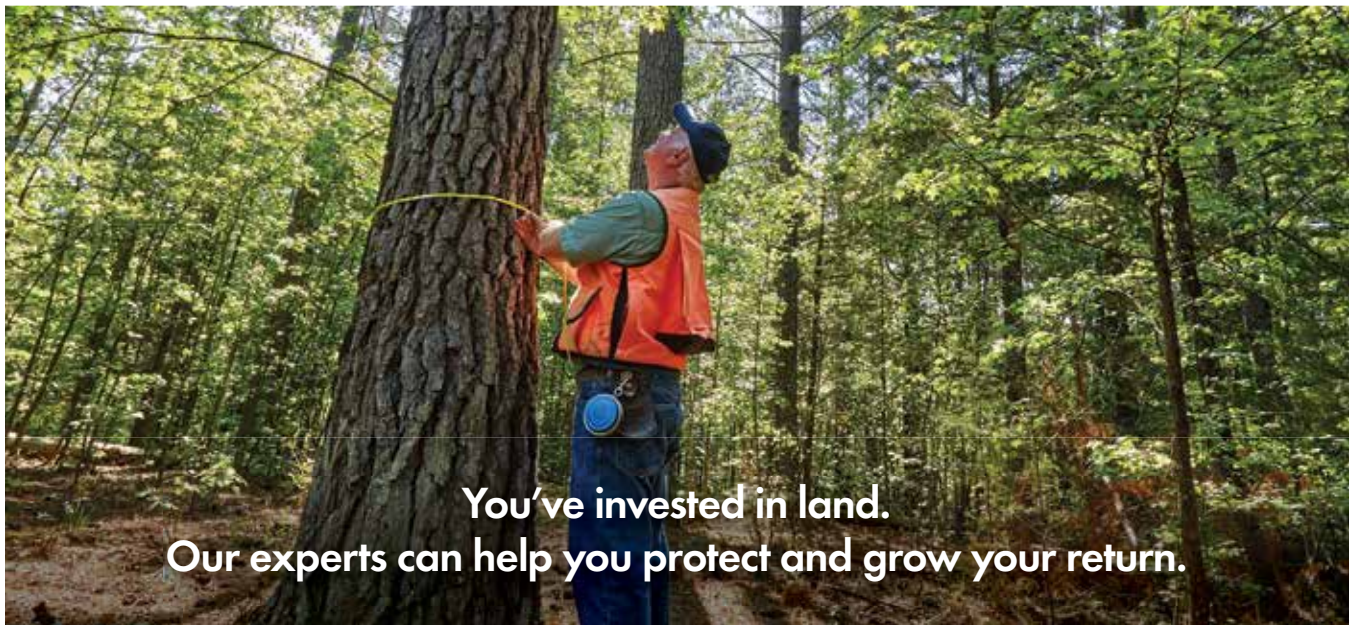


Virginia Forests

FALL 2021

Our Changing Landscape Energy, Hardwoods and New Markets

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Volume LXXVII, Number 3

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The Hotel Madison in Harrisonburg, Va., was the site of the 2021 Virginia Forestry Summit.

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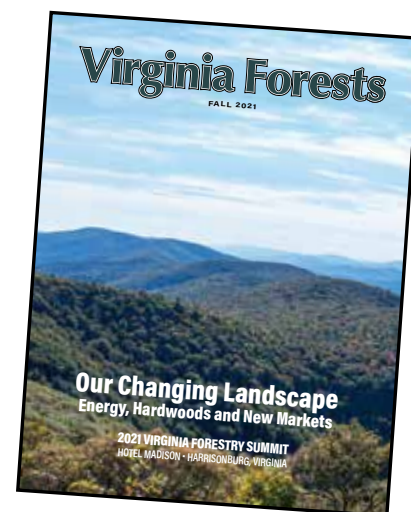
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ON THE COVER: View from Reddish Knob in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, a tour stop during the Virginia Forestry Summit.
(PHOTO BY FRED SCHATZKI)

TO THE EDITOR

I very much enjoyed reading Matt Dowdy's Summer 2021 *Virginia Forests* Tailgate Talk article, "Land: They Aren't Making Any More of It." He provided sage advice on important points to consider before purchasing a parcel of land. One of these criteria was location. He went on to list the three most important characteristics associated with real estate, namely, "location, location, location."

This reminded me of a question I would pose to my real estate students at VCU and in my Appraisal Institute seminars based on my book, *Land Valuation Adjustment Procedures and Assignments*. In response to the question, "What are the three most important considerations in acquiring real estate?" Invariably the answer was "location, location, location." I then would offer another perspective by stating, "No, it is location, timing, and management."

These investment criteria apply to all classes of real estate, including timberland. Not to be overlooked are soil quality and productivity, distance to forest product mill(s), timber species and age, logging conditions, present and forecast pulpwood timber prices, and conversion potential of the tract to more valuable nontimber uses.

—James H. Boykin, Ph.D. (Richmond, Va.)

VFA MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

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Cited as a top membership benefit, VFA's membership directory is an invaluable resource for Virginia's forestry community and remains our most popular and useful tool for advertisers, partners, and members. We encourage you to act today as premium positions are going quickly and space is limited. A rate sheet and submission form are available upon request. You may also submit your ad online and pay via credit card.

Our members use this directory to reach out to you! All members are encouraged to take a moment in the next couple of weeks to access your online profile and be sure your contact information is correct. You can do this by logging into your account at www.vaforestry.org and accessing your member profile. Let us know if you have any trouble accessing your profile or if you need any help updating your information.

Thank you for your continued support of VFA and the 2022 VFA Membership Directory! For any questions or to request advertising rates, please contact Anne Taylor at ataylor@vaforestry.org or by phone at (804) 278-8733.



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Let's Do the Big Things



Corey Connors

How wonderful was it to reconnect at the Summit in Harrisonburg a few weeks ago? By all accounts, attendees were overjoyed at the opportunity to see their friends and colleagues after being deprived of their company for far too long. The Summit also represented the first chance for many to meet your VFA staff team, to shake hands and share

hugs, and to listen to everyone's stories about what is going on in and around the woods.

One of the big takeaways from the Summit was the message shared by our incredible keynote speaker Bruce Vincent. A third-generation logger from Libby, Montana, Bruce shared his family and community's story of growing antagonism towards forestry, and how it shut down his business and other natural resource businesses in his area.

He described how he answered the call to educate the American consumer on what we do, how we do it, and how best to assume a leadership role in the discussion over our environment.

Bruce's inspirational call to action was clear: GET ENGAGED! "Be a ripple...and together we will make a wave that will save the last best places AND the last best people."

On the evening of Tuesday, November 2, an opportunity presented itself. To be clear, the election of Glenn Youngkin, Winsome Sears, Jason Miyares, and 52 Republican members to the House of Delegates (pending recounts) has been interpreted by some as cause to celebrate and relax. But the opposite is true. Now is a time to rise from our reflexive crouch to become vigilant in our advocacy. To be proactive. To lead. To do so, we have our work cut out for us. Consider:

- Though Governor-elect Youngkin's victory may eventually curtail the most aggressive regulatory advances aimed at Virginia's business community, there are still



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several outstanding measures in the works that could and will be enacted prior to his taking office.

- Though a business executive himself, Governor-elect Youngkin is not particularly familiar with the vital role that forestry and forest products businesses play in Virginia's economy. Advancing forestry and natural resource priorities will require significant education for the new Administration.
- The same can be said for newly elected Delegates. According to the Virginia Public Access Project, more than 220 individuals have cycled through the House of Delegates over the last 20 years. That is turnover sufficient to completely change out every Delegate in the house *twice over* in the span of a 40-something's young career. The need to educate policymakers in both the executive and legislative branches is vital.
- The Redistricting Commission's failure to adopt new statewide election maps means that the Virginia Supreme Court is likely to do so. It is possible that the Court may order a new election under the new maps in November 2022, setting up three consecutive years for elections in the Virginia House of Delegates.

Bruce Vincent encouraged Summit attendees to build a line item into their business plan that dedicates one hour a week to activism. He recommended that those 52 hours per year could be spent doing many things: creating industry leadership programs, giving tours, engaging with local media, improving your social media presence, or participating in school-based educational programs like Project Learning Tree. There is no doubt that these ideas and those 52 hours a year can make a difference.

But it was also clear to your VFA Board of Directors that your association needed to do a better job of facilitating those opportunities while expanding the scope of our community's influence in Richmond and across the Commonwealth. Not everybody has 52 hours a year to dedicate to these efforts, nor is everyone in our community comfortable speaking in a public forum or engaging on Twitter. At its strategic planning session in September, and in the weeks since, your Board has been hard at work establishing the framework for everyone in our community to make a difference in standing up for Virginia's forestry community.

First, the Board has made a considerable investment in hiring a prominent lobbying firm to significantly enhance VFA's advocacy capacity and influence. For the 2022 General Assembly session, VFA has contracted with Advantus Strategies, a well-respected consulting firm with specific experience in forestry and natural resource matters, general business, and manufacturing issues. Headed by

former Westvaco Director of Government Affairs Robert Crockett (a Summit speaker on our solar panel), the Advantus team has delivered countless legislative and regulatory victories on behalf of their Fortune 500, county, and nonprofit clients for more than 20 years.

Next, after receiving a generous contribution of \$10,000 from an anonymous VFA member to significantly bolster our government relations efforts, the VFA Board established the VFA Advocacy Fund by resolution at its November meeting. An advocacy fund is a tool that trade associations use to solicit individual and corporate contributions to financially support government affairs education efforts and lobbying contracts. The new Advocacy Fund is intended to complement VAForestPAC, which by law is limited to providing contributions to candidates for public office and covering administrative costs of the fund. Stay tuned for more details on how you can support this exciting new initiative.

Finally, the Board has adopted a strategic plan that calls for the development and implementation of a full-service government relations program. In addition to creating and convening an Advocacy Committee as part of a realigned volunteer leadership structure, VFA will also expand our government relations function by creating new opportunities for stakeholder participation in events, tours, and advocacy campaigns.

VFA's objective is two-fold. Our first goal is to do a better job of mobilizing Virginia's forestry and forest products community by equipping them with the tools and platforms necessary to educate the next generation of policymakers on what we do, how we do it, and to assume a leadership role in Virginia's discussion on our environment. Does that sound familiar?

The second goal is more ambitious. Government relations programs that are solely reactive often leave an association neglectful of emergent issues and far behind on the leadership curve. By maintaining a baseline of reactivity for key activities that affect its members, while focusing new resources upon the expansion of its proactive endeavors, VFA can establish a best-in-class advocacy outfit from which members can realize actual, positive benefits. The ability to react to negatives remains important, but it's proactivity that inspires. What does that mean?

Would you like to see all counties and municipalities in the Commonwealth adopt land use valuation and taxation for forest land under the Virginia Land Use Assessment Law?

Would you like to see wood biomass appropriately recognized as a key component of Virginia meeting its ambitious renewable energy goals?

—continued on page 28.



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The Virginia Forestry Association, chartered in 1943, is a not-for-profit, non-governmental, privately-supported association of forest landowners, wood product industries and businesses, loggers, foresters, forest use groups, and conservation-minded citizens. New board members are elected annually by mail ballot to all VFA members. To ensure a balanced geographical representation, the state is divided into five areas and one "at large" category. Any VFA member may be a candidate for the board.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Honoring Leaders in Forestry

One of the highlights of the Virginia Forestry Summit occurs during our annual Awards Banquet, when we have the opportunity to celebrate VFA members who have made special and significant contributions to our association and to the forestry community. It was my pleasure to be able to honor those individuals personally, and to express my gratitude for their continued service and dedication.

Recent times have been a challenge for many, creating uncertainty in a community like ours that thrives on normal routines. They say that adversity doesn't build character, it reveals it, and truer words have not been spoken about VFA's Past President John Gee. He delivered steady leadership at a moment when we most needed it, and I have continued to be grateful for his support and friendship. Although the passing of the gavel took place virtually last spring, I believe it was a fitting tribute to hoist it again at the banquet to acknowledge his service.

The VFA Distinguished Service award is an important recognition of members who make a significant, continuing and lasting contribution to the conservation of Virginia's forest resources and/or the enhancement of Virginia's forest-based community, and Preston Willson was most deserving of this award. His leadership of the Holiday Lake 4-H Center has been exemplary, and his efforts have helped provide natural resources education to tens of thousands of school children during his 45-year tenure.

John Magruder was recognized with VFA's Outstanding Member of the Year. John's service to the forestry community has been exemplary over the years and continues today. He has served on virtually every committee within the VFA and continues to be a leader of our association. He is currently the chair of the VAForestPAC committee and a member of the VFEF Board of Directors. During the search and transition to fill the opening for VFA's Executive Director after Paul Howe's retirement in 2019, John stepped up and gave countless hours of his time overseeing operations of VFA to ensure a smooth start for our new Executive Director Corey Connors.

I am pleased to be able to congratulate all those who were honored at the 2021 Virginia Forestry Summit. You can read more about all the award winners in this issue beginning on page 10.

I am also pleased to announce that the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit is now set for May 3-6 in Blacksburg, Va. Look for details coming soon! 🌲



Scott Shallenberger and his wife Debbie at the Virginia Forestry Summit in September.



Our Changing Landscape: Energy, Hardwoods and New Markets

THE VIRGINIA FORESTRY SUMMIT returned to a long-awaited, in-person gathering on September 28-October 1, 2021 in Harrisonburg with the generous support of IFCO Seedlings as a presenting sponsor. The Virginia Forestry Association, the Association of Consulting Foresters Virginia Chapter, and the Society of American Foresters Virginia Division coordinated the event that brought together

more than 150 members and friends for presentations, panel discussions, educational sessions, and tours. Receptions, networking breaks and meals also provided attendees the opportunity to connect with friends and colleagues.

The Summit theme, *Our Changing Landscape: Energy, Hardwoods and New Markets*, highlighted several of the most pressing issues in forestry today, including: the expansion of solar development across the Commonwealth, carbon markets, new markets for wood fiber, and labor challenges. A dynamic line-up of speakers, along with robust audience participation during question-and-answer sessions, kept audiences engaged and informed throughout the event.

International Paper Company sponsored the Kick-off Reception at Pale Fire Brewing Company on Tuesday evening. The brewery, located near Harrisonburg's Hotel Madison, was a perfect spot for relaxed conversation and drinks along with barbecue catered by Hank's Grille and Catering.

Bruce Vincent opened the Virginia Forestry Summit on Wednesday morning



(l. to r.) Andrew Stewart with IFCO Seedlings, VFA Executive Director Corey Connors, Bruce Vincent, and VFA President Scott Shallenberger.

SUMMIT SCENES



with his keynote address, *With Vision, There is Hope*. A third-generation logger and dedicated advocate for rural resource communities, Vincent urges those within forestry to become leaders in public discourse about their work and the beneficial role they play in protecting environmental resources. With frank discussion of the challenges as well as specific direction for solving these issues, he urged dialogue to “HELP” (Humanize, Empathize and Educate, Lead Locally, and Participate), so that the forestry community can be a trusted partner in engaging and showcasing its beneficial role in environmental initiatives.

Roll Out the Barrel, presented by Darren Whitmer, General Manager of Speyside Bourbon Cooperage, Inc., offered a fascinating look at the long history of barrels and a detailed account of the barrel-making process. He discussed how wood barrels were key for flavoring and coloring the liquids they stored. He noted the specific requirements for classification as bourbon and the 1964 resolution by the U.S. House to designate bourbon as a “distinctive product” of the United States.

Virginia Forestry Association leaders took the stage to conduct a town hall session that took place during lunch. Corey Connors, Executive Director, along with President Scott Shallenberger and Past President John Gee served as panelists. Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation President Ken Morgan acknowledged contributors to VFEF and their support for educational programs and scholarships for youth in forestry.



(l. to r.) Michael Harold and Darren Whitmer with Speyside Bourbon Cooperage with Tom Davidson of Leadership Nature, who introduced and moderated the session.

Four break-out sessions rounded out the first full day of the Virginia Forestry Summit.

Dr. Brian Bond, a professor in the Department of Sustainable Biomaterials at Virginia Tech, explored opportunities and potential barriers in his discussion, *Mass Timber in Virginia*. From manufacturing to quality standardization and codes, he looked at the global trends for mass timber construction, its use in Virginia today, and its potential for the future in the Commonwealth.

Emergence of infectious disease originating from wildlife due to changes in climate and landscape, and the potential for those diseases to infect livestock, pets

Ken Morgan (left) recognized Virginia Forestry Education Foundation contributors.





Dr. Brian Bond



Dr. Luis Escobar



Rachel Harris



Dylan Jenkins

and humans, was presented by Dr. Luis Escobar, assistant professor of disease ecology in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech. His presentation on this timely and relevant topic included research showing how biodiversity correlates to the prevalence of pathogens. He discussed details on prevalent diseases of wildlife in Virginia, including lyme, rabies, mange, and Chronic Wasting Disease and the potential impacts for wildlife resources, ecosystems and public health.

Rachel Harris, a utilization and marketing specialist with Virginia's Department of Forestry, discussed labor shortages. The forestry industry has been affected by a shortage in workforce, along with many business sectors across Virginia. Harris discussed challenges specific to forestry, especially as the demand for skilled labor outpaces supply.

Advances in Carbon Markets was presented by Dylan Jenkins, vice president for portfolio development at Finite Carbon, a North American company that develops and supplies carbon offsets. Jenkins identified participants in both supply and demand and compared aspects of compliance and voluntary markets, especially as they relate to landowners. He also introduced a new initiative of the company, Core Carbon, designed to accommodate small landowners who may want to benefit from carbon offset markets.

A panel discussion on *Solar Development in Virginia* began the second day of the Summit. Panelists included Aaron Berryhill, solar program



(l. to r.) Aaron Berryhill, Narissa Turner, Robert Crockett, Susan Seward and John Magruder, who introduced the session and served as moderator.

manager with Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy); Susan Seward, president of Seward Consulting Inc. and a member of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors; Robert Crockett with Advantus Strategies; and Narissa Turner, climate and clean energy policy manager with Virginia Conservation Network. Brief presentations from each speaker offered diverse perspectives on the future for solar development in the Commonwealth and highlighted the need for engaged conversations on trends and initiatives for renewable energy sources, especially as Virginia looks to meet its goals under the 2019 Clean Economy Act. When asked, many in the audience raised their hands to show that they had already been approached regarding use of their land for solar development projects, and they shared ques-



tions and concerns for panelists' responses in a question/answer session.

Two breakout sessions were held prior to forestry bus tours.

Virginia State Forester Rob Farrell spoke about the Virginia Department of Forestry's (DOF) Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative, a program previously detailed in his article for *Virginia Forests* magazine (Spring 2021). He provided updates that included those DOF foresters trained in hardwood habitat initiative objectives. He listed the roles that landowners may take in the project with an aim to meet goals and practices of the initiative while also meeting participating landowner objectives. Farrell also reviewed the new Hardwood Assessment Tool (HAT) that is designed to collect data that can assist with documentation, guidance and cost share allocation.

As a forest management tool, prescribed burning has many benefits. Kevin Kyle, zone

silviculturalist on the George Washington National Forest with USDA Forest Service, discussed how managed fire encourages understory growth, promotes oak and pine regeneration and enhances wildlife habitat.

Bus tour attendees chose from two different off-site experiences. A visit to the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest offered spectacular vistas and insights on forest management on public lands. Others toured urban wood businesses around Harrisonburg and enjoyed a guided walk around the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum on the campus of James Madison University.

The Virginia Forestry Summit concluded with its annual Awards Banquet sponsored by Speyside Bourbon Stave Mill that celebrated those who made significant accomplishments in leadership within the forestry community during the past year. 🌲



Rob Farrell



Kevin Kyle

VFA Honored for Support of Virginia's Reforestation of Timberlands Program

Rob Farrell, Virginia State Forester, presented a recognition award to Virginia Forestry Association for their unwavering support of the Reforestation of Timberlands Program over the past 50 years. VFA President Scott Shallenberger accepted the recognition on behalf of the association.

(l. to r.) VFA Executive Director Corey Connors, Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer, VFA President Scott Shallenberger, State Forester Rob Farrell, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring, and Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Heidi Hertz.





Preston R. Willson with VFA President Scott Shallenberger, who presented the award.

Preston R. Willson Recognized With VFA Distinguished Service Award

VFA's Distinguished Service award was presented to Preston R. Willson of Holiday Lake 4-H Education Center. Willson has been involved with the Center since it began in 1976. During that time, he has served numerous roles, including Chairman of the Board, Treasurer, and Vice-President. In 1995, Willson joined the 4-H Center staff, and served as interim Center Director on three occasions, eventually becoming the Center's President & CEO.

During his tenure on staff, Willson raised more than \$1.5 million to support the mission of 4-H to provide kids with learning opportunities and mentors to help develop the skills they need to create positive change in their lives and communities.

He also worked to achieve upgrades to facilities and all utilities at the Center. He personally financed a shade pavilion over the archery range that carries his family's name. His work in development continues as Willson is currently raising funds to construct a multi-purpose building, where children, adults, and families can participate and learn in an assortment of life-enhancing programs.

Willson has been instrumental launching and developing the Center's natural resource education (NRE) programs. During the 2019 school year (the most recent in-person programs), over 3,500 students participated in the NRE curriculum. More than 45,000 have participated in NRE since its inception in 1996. Through a variety of special events and other programs offered, a total of 227,000 participants have come to the Holiday Lake 4-H Center since Willson joined the 4-H staff in 1995.

Willson is passionate about being a conservationist and Tree Farmer. In 2006, he placed his homeplace of 149 acres in a conservation easement with Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and in 2017 he received Tree Farm certification on 103 acres. Preston and his wife Janie have lived on the Amelia County property since 1999. 🌲

John Magruder Named VFA Outstanding Member of the Year



John Magruder of Three Rivers Forestry, LLC received the association's 2021 Outstanding Member of the Year Award during the Virginia Forestry Summit awards banquet on Thursday evening.

VFA's Outstanding Member of the Year Award recognizes an individual for outstanding contributions in the area of conservation, utilization and enhancement of Virginia's forest resources, and one who promotes the interests of Virginia forestry, and/or has fostered greater public awareness and understanding of the forests of the Commonwealth.

Magruder's service to the forestry community has been exemplary over the years. He is a Past President of VFA, currently serving as the chair of the Virginia Forest Resources Political Action Committee (VAForestPac) Board of Trustees. He also serves on the board of the Virginia Forestry Education Foundation. Magruder has spent countless volunteer hours supporting the forestry community, and has facilitated and led forestry tours for legislators and their aids, continuing to educate the public about Virginia's forests. Magruder is a lifetime member of VFA, ACF, and SAF.

Magruder's commitment to community doesn't stop there. He has been a leader in the Boy Scouts for over thirty years and is passionate about educating and inspiring our youth. He chairs the Essex County Board of Supervisors.

VFA Past-President John Gee of Ontario Hardwood Inc., said, "John is one of the very few true leaders I have the chance to work with over the years. Those who have had the pleasure of working with him understand his talent and commitment to VFA." 🌲

VFA Logger of the Year Award Winners

VFA's Logger of the Year award recognizes and honors the performance of outstanding loggers in the Commonwealth, and are chosen based on a written evaluation of the total logging operation. Recipients of the Logger of the Year Award represent the "best-of-the-best," and must exemplify the highest professional standards, as they serve as effective positive public role models for the entire logging industry.



Shannon Wisecarver

Shannon Wisecarver, owner of S.W.L.C. Inc., has been in business for over 10 years and harvests timber for companies as well as private landowners across the central piedmont of Virginia. S.W.L.C. Inc. is a family logging operation based out of Rustburg, Va. Wisecarver's uncle, father and two brothers are also employed by the company.

During his career, Wisecarver has not had a single water quality issue because of his attention to detail and his willingness to listen and take time to pre-plan his harvests. Wisecarver ensures that the harvest site is accessed with as little impact as possible to the site, soil and water. S.W.L.C. Inc. spends days away from the jobsite when the weather could potentially leave the site in a compromised position.

Wisecarver's crew strategically fells trees to minimize damage done to Streamside Management Zones. When the job is complete, Wisecarver and his crew do not rush to get to the next job. Instead, they make sure to properly close out the job they are on regardless of the time it takes. Their ability to work on their own equipment and keep costs down allows them to operate in a manner that is not often seen today.

In addition to his attention to detail and high level of care during harvesting jobs, Wisecarver is committed to community and education. Wisecarver has offered his job site for numerous SHARP Logger trainings in addition to other training opportunities. Wisecarver's careful attention to detail, satisfied landowners, and great efforts in protecting the environment through sustainable harvesting techniques make S.W.L.C. Inc. an exemplary logging operation.



Shannon Wisecarver, owner of SWLC, Inc., with his wife Joann.



Tracy D. Martin, Sr.

Tracy D. Martin, Sr. of Martin Logging is a Bath County native, where he continues to operate Martin Logging and resides with Donna, his wife of over 34 years. He founded the business with his father, Dale Martin, in 1997. Tracy Martin's uncle, Ronnie Simmons, has worked for the company for 16 years, and

Tracy's son TJ has worked with Martin Logging part-time for years, beginning full-time in 2020.

The crew can perform any logging prescription from single tree selections to thinnings and clearcuts. Mr. Martin is just as adept at cutting and merchandising mature hardwood sawtimber, thinning planted pine plantations, or clearcutting pulpwood tracts. Often they are working on steep mountainous terrain primarily in Bath, Highland, Alleghany, and Rockbridge counties. Martin Logging primarily cuts for private landowners but also has harvested multiple tracts for the USDA Forest Service. As part of their operations in the past two years they have worked in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to create over 100 acres of Golden-winged Warbler habitat. When local markets became available for biomass, Mr. Martin had a truck modified specifically to haul fuel chips from mountainous tracts that were inaccessible with tractor trailers. This was the first truck with this type of setup to be used in the Allegheny Highlands.

Martin is a member of the Virginia Loggers Association, Virginia Deer Hunters Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ruffed Grouse Society, National Rifle Association, Ducks Unlimited, and National Sporting Clays Association. When Tracy isn't working, he competes in competitive sporting clay shooting and enjoys spending time hunting and enjoying the outdoors with his family. Tracy Martin continues his commitment to his community by supporting Bath County youth athletics, often coaching baseball or basketball teams. Martin Logging previously won VFA's Logger of the Year Award in the year 2000.

Society of American Foresters, Virginia Division Award Winners



(l. to r.) Jason Fisher, Ed Zimmer, Madison West.

Jason Fisher presented the Society of American Foresters (SAF) Virginia Division awards at the banquet on Thursday evening. Ed Zimmer was recognized with a 2021 SAF Merit Award.

Madison West received the 2021 Young Forester Leadership award that recognizes outstanding leadership by a young forestry professional in the development and promotion of an individual program or project, or for a sustained leadership role benefiting the practice of forestry and SAF.



TOUR TAKES

The National Forest tour group enjoyed an afternoon on Reddish Knob to learn about management practices on public forestlands.



Four stops were included on the Urban Wood tour, including a walk through the nearby Edith J. Carrier Arboretum; a visit to two small businesses, Rocktown Urban Wood and Knoched VA, that utilize a variety of woods for specialty furnishings and decor; and a slab saw demonstration and refreshments courtesy of Harrisonburg's Urban Wood Program.

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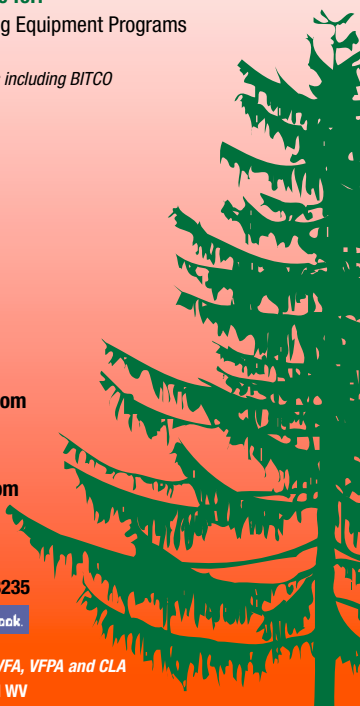
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The 2021 Virginia Forestry Summit provided just such an opportunity. While the 2020 Forestry Summit had a great online program and wonderful speakers, it didn't have that one critical aspect: in-person fellowship. When the announcement came that this year's event would be in-person, I think we all breathed a sigh of relief. We would finally be able to see old friends and make new friends; interact with our fellow foresters, loggers, and landowners; and continue down the path of returning to normalcy.

As consultants, ACF foresters generally don't gather in large groups; we often meet with a single landowner or their immediate family. We like to say, "Foresters invented

social distancing." Even in these small groups we are still polishing our social skills and passing along recommendations and prescriptions to guide our clients and their properties to beneficial, profitable forest management. But for the past 18 months, something has been missing. Maybe that favorite country restaurant was closed down, or perhaps we endured too many Zoom meetings watching folks in their jammies corral misbehaving pets. It all became so tiresome. And then it was announced, we would be having the 2021 Virginia Forestry Summit, live and in person, in beautiful Harrisonburg! Finally, back to normal! And so, we listened in person, engaged in the valuable back-and-forth of Q&A sessions, took a field tour, got together with friends for some food and drink, and saw things with our own eyes instead of through the confines of a computer screen.

While we may have invented social distancing, that doesn't mean we like it all the time (or even some of the time!), and getting back to the in-person Summit has allowed us to recognize how important it is to be social. 🌲

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THE LOGROLL

Notes & News for Loggers

Logging Businesses Play an Important Role with Employment in Virginia's Rural Economy

by Scott Barrett, Ph.D.

SHARP Logger Program Coordinator
Extension Specialist, Forest Operations,

Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation

It was great to be in person at the Virginia Forestry Summit in Harrisonburg earlier this fall. Attending meetings and getting to socialize with our colleagues and friends is one of the things I really missed with all of the cancellations due to the pandemic. I am hopeful that we are now on track to continue with face-to-face meetings, and I am definitely looking forward to having our next Summit in Blacksburg in May of 2022.

For me, one of the most memorable presentations of the 2021 Forestry Summit was Bruce Vincent's keynote, *With Vision, There is Hope*. I thought this was an excellent presentation that really challenged us to look at how we handle natural resource conflicts. His message highlighted the fact that in the past we have not always had the best strategy when it comes to getting the message out about our working forests and the rural communities and businesses that depend on utilization of the natural resources to provide goods and services for society. As populations of our state and our nation become increasingly urbanized and there seems to be an increasing disconnect between urban and rural populations, it is more important now than ever to be able to articulate that vision of hope.

Forest management, utilization, and the production of renewable forest products are key pieces of the vision of hope and the story we tell about the contribution of forests to our society. Forests, as well as harvesting and utilization

Working forests provide employment in rural areas that need jobs, and they do this while providing renewable building materials and other consumer products that are often used in urban areas.

of our forests, have a key role in the sustainable future of our country and rural economies. The logging businesses that sustainably harvest and transport raw materials to mills are a key part of this industry.

As I recently worked with our Virginia logger survey data, some of the data stood out as an important compo-

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nent for telling the story of our working forest landscapes. Working forests provide employment in rural areas that need jobs, and they do this while providing renewable building materials and other consumer products that are often used in urban areas.

Logging businesses tend to be small, family-owned businesses, but there are a lot of them. Collectively they have a big impact in our rural economies. Our most recent logger survey showed that, on average, a logging business has almost five full-time employees. This varied by region with the most employees per business in the Coastal Plain (9.3) followed by the Piedmont (4.4) and the Mountains (2.3). If we make some assumptions based on the number of businesses that responded to our survey (over 250) and our response rate to that survey, which was about 42 percent, we can estimate how many people are directly employed by logging businesses in Virginia. Based on that estimate there are over 2,900 full-time employees of logging businesses in our Commonwealth. Keep in mind that often doesn't count the owner who is generally working in the woods as well.

That doesn't include all of the independent contractors and other businesses indirectly supported by logging operations. It also doesn't include all of the employees at the sawmills, paper mills, and other forest products manufacturing facilities. Together, this supply chain has an even greater impact on Virginia's rural economy. And this is all a part of a sustainable and renewable industry where we continue to grow more wood than we are harvesting. That is one of the many pieces of the success story of forest management that we need to do a better job of telling.

I hope that Bruce's ideas and vision can be a motivation to all of us that we need to be more involved and we need to come together and clearly articulate a vision of hope in the management of our natural resources. The forest industry has a key role to play in a sustainable future. The jobs created, products produced, and healthy managed forests are an important part of the story of sustainable forest management that happens every day across Virginia by our landowners, loggers, mills and others involved in the forest industry. 🌲



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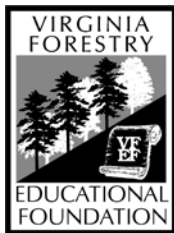
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Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation Update

How VFEF Benefits DSLCC's Forestry Management Technology Program

by Scott Reigel and Billy Newman, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College's (DSLCC) Forest Management Technology program originated in 1969 from a Virginia Division of Forestry employee suggestion to the college's president, who at that time was a graduate forester himself. In the face of doubters, the program's teaching regime has proven to be a success, providing 52 years worth of field-ready


forest management technicians working all over the U.S. and around the world.

Since 2010, the DSLCC Forest Management Technology Associate of Applied Sciences (AAS) degree carries the honor of being the only Society of American Foresters Accredited FMT AAS degree in the Commonwealth of Virginia and one of only 24 SAF-accredited programs in the United States. DSLCC collaborated with Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources and Environment in student activities, classroom experiences, field labs, transfer degrees, professional organization discussion panels, marketing, and recruiting in order to truly elevate Virginia's natural resource scene in the Appalachians and as a worldwide leader in forestry education.

Virginia Forestry Education Foundation's (VFEF) mission is to financially support state-wide youth education promoting sustainable forests for the environmental, social and economic benefit of all Virginians. As of 2017, the DSLCC Forestry Program students have been blessed by VFEF's eager philanthropy. Scholarships and tuition assistance offsets the cost for first- and second-year students in both Forest Management Technology and our new FMT with Specialization



Students at DSLCC participate in on-site reforestation.



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Hands-on training is an important part of the forestry program at DSLCC.

in Arboriculture and Community Forestry AAS degrees.

The purchase of Nikon Forestry Pro Laser Hypsometers and additional GPS/Microsoft Office Mobile OS field handhelds resulted in adequate equipment for each student in a course. Additional technology education in tuition offset costs for the FAA Part 107 Unmanned Aircraft Systems pilot's exam preparations course for students in our forestry program. These examples are only a few benefits VFEF funding has provided.

Regardless of program size, natural resource higher education is often administratively plagued by extensive program costs. Philanthropic missions like VFEF are vital in maintaining opportunities for student learning that are important to forest resource health and productivity around the world. As mentioned, VFEF's financial dedication to DSLCC's forestry program has promoted student knowledge, expanded the classroom environment, and advanced technology experiences for natural resource students today and yet to come. The VFEF mission statement is true within the DSLCC forestry program, and our appreciation is easy to boast on a daily basis!



For more information about DSLCC and student referrals, contact Scott Reigel, instructor and program head, at rreigel@dslcc.edu or Billy Newman, associate professor and program head, at bnewman@dslcc.edu.

Help VFEF invest in the future of our young people across Virginia! Your tax-deductible contribution will help educate future generations of Virginians. Make an investment today for the future of our industry. For more information or to contribute to VFEF visit www.vfef.net. 🌲



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TREE FARM ASSESSMENT

A Reflection of Good Forest Management

by Glen Worrell, Virginia Tree Farm Foundation President



The Virginia Tree Farm Certification Program is under a Group Certificate that includes North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. Each year, two or three states are selected for assessment by an independent third-party certification firm. The American Forest Foundation, parent of the Tree Farm Program, hired PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct the 2021 assessment.

For the 2021 assessment, Virginia was selected along with Texas and Arkansas. Within each selected state, a number of Tree Farms are chosen based on the total number of Tree Farms in the program. At the beginning of 2021, there were 771 individual Tree Farm properties covering 203,191 acres in Virginia.

Nineteen Virginia Tree Farms, covering 5,450 acres, were selected to represent the Virginia portion of the 2021 assessment for the Southern Group Certificate. Additional Tree Farms were selected in Texas and Arkansas.

During a normal assessment, the selected Tree Farmers would provide documentation for the assessor who would visit the properties and meet with the landowner and forester. The purpose of this field inspection is for the assessor to ensure the observations on the ground are congruent with the paper documentation. This is an excellent time for Virginia Tree Farmers to show off their good management work.

But what has been normal over the past two years? As with many things, the in-person field interviews were dropped due to COVID concerns. As a result, all documentation was submitted electronically, and landowners were interviewed by phone.

The collection of the documentation was coordinated by Virginia's Regional Tree Farm chairs in concert with the landowners' managing foresters (consultant, industry, or

Dept. of Forestry). Once the documentation was collected, it was submitted to the assessor for review.

The selected landowners were then interviewed by the assessor. It was during the interview process that the assessor was able to interact with the landowners and learn more about their property and their passion for Tree Farming. The assessor's job is to make sure the Virginia program follows the Tree Farm Standards. During the assessment, the assessor is looking for three things: 1) Non-Conformances; 2) Opportunities for Improvement; and 3) Good Management Practices.

So how did the assessment fare for Virginia? Overall, I was pleased with the 2021 assessment results.

The Non-Conformances are items that the VTFF and the landowner need to address to ensure program compliance. Virginia (along with Texas and Arkansas) received a few non-conformances related to specific items that needed to be addressed in the management plan. These include plans not addressing Threatened & Endangered Species, and Forests of Recognized Importance, among others. These items are easily addressed by updating management plans to them. Non-Conformances items must be addressed before the program is re-certified.

Opportunities for Improvement are comments provided by the assessor to the VTFF to consider. They are not required to be addressed, but are discussed by the Board of Directors to consider implementing in the Virginia program. These include further documentation on items such as contracts for activities on landowner's forestlands and documentation from outside sources regarding Threatened and Endangered Species and Forests of Recognized Importance.

The third item we received from the assessor is Good Management Practices (GMP). This is where the assessor observes a practice either by VTFF or the landowner that

goes above and beyond the normal practices or standards. We like to see these! For the Virginia assessment, we received a total of 16 GMPs. A few of the GMPs observed the good work the VTFF has been doing over the past four years with training for inspectors and outreach for landowners. However, the most satisfying GMPs we received were reflections on the landowners themselves.

The assessor commented about Tree Farmer's outreach with fellow landowners, local groups, and members of other organizations, including Boy Scouts, Wounded Warriors, colleges, and universities. This reflected well on the Virginia program and its members. It shows that not only are they practicing good forestry, but they are also opening their property to demonstrate sustainable forestry practices to their friends and neighbors.

I would like to thank our landowners that participated in the assessment, their foresters, and our regional chairs for their persistence and hard work during the assessment. I would also like to thank Nancy Godwin, VTFF administrator, for being chief "cat herder." I also want to thank the Foundation's Board of Directors for their guidance and leadership over the past four years. We all should be proud of our Virginia Tree Farm Program. 🌲



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RESOURCE REVIEW

Reforestation of Timberlands Program—50 Years Strong!

The Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Program is turning fifty years old in 2021. This program, managed by the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), is a good example of what can be done when people come together for a common goal.

More than fifty years ago, Virginia looked a lot different than it does today. Although forests were still prevalent across the state, many more trees—especially pines—were being harvested to meet the great need for wood and wood products. Trees were being cut quicker than they could grow back. Timber industry leaders came together with Virginia's General Assembly to revise the forest products tax paid by forest industry, with a goal of developing a funding source that could encourage landowners to plant pines on their recently harvested forestlands. The General Assembly agreed to match the industry's taxes, and the Reforestation of Timberlands Program was born.

After fifty years, the RT Program is still going strong, assisting landowners



with a portion of their pine reforestation costs. Practices covered by the program include site preparation, planting fast-growing pine seedlings, and “releasing” pine plantations from weed competition. The RT incentive rates for landowners have varied over the years, but on average, RT has reimbursed between thirty and forty percent of a landowner's reforestation costs.

Visit the VDOF website at dof.virginia.gov and see information under “Forest Management and Health” to learn more about the program. To celebrate the 50th anniversary, VDOF also created a [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) video entitled, *Helping Grow Pines for 50 Years*.

Disaster Reforestation Act Supports Forest Landowners Following Natural Disasters

U.S. Senators Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA) and Raphael Warnock (D-GA) introduced legislation to help America's landowners recover from the loss of timber after natural disasters. The Disaster Reforestation Act amends and makes improvements to the tax code to allow forest owners to deduct the value of their timber prior to the loss caused by a natural disaster.

This bill sets forth a special rule for the tax deduction for casualty losses of uncut timber (including pre-merchantable timber). It provides that in losses of any uncut timber from fire, storm, insects, invasive species, drought, or other casualty, or from theft, the basis for determining the amount of the deduction for such loss shall not be less than the excess of the value of such timber determined immediately before such loss was sustained, over the salvage value of such timber.

To be eligible for the casualty loss deduction, the uncut timber subject to the loss must be reforested not later than

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Resource Review

the close of the five-year period beginning on the date of the loss.

A similar bill was introduced in the House of Representatives earlier this year.

The Disaster Reforestation Act is supported by Virginia Forestry Association along with a number of organizations and forestry associations across the United States.

New State Forest Dedicated in Charlotte County

Charlotte State Forest was dedicated in November 2021, opening the first publicly-accessible state land in Charlotte County, according to a release from Governor Northam's office. The 5,004 acre property is Virginia's 26th state forest in the Commonwealth. The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) will sustainably manage the forest under Sustainable Forestry Initiative and American Tree Farm Standards, conserving key habitat areas and providing new public access to outdoor recreation activities.

"Virginia's state forests are critical to preserving environmental sustainability and a strong economy across the Commonwealth," said Governor Northam. "Charlotte State Forest will conserve wildlife habitats, enhance water quality, provide recreational opportunities for the public and support local economies. We look forward to enjoying this new outdoor asset."

The forest was owned by Governor Thomas B. Stanley, who served from 1954 to 1958, and the Stanley Land and Lumber Corporation prior to The Conservation Fund's purchase in 2019. It was used to provide shortleaf and Virginia pine, as well as white oak and hickory, to local mills for furniture.

"As Virginia's third largest industry, forestry plays an essential role in Virginia's economy," said Secretary

of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring. "Close collaboration between the Virginia Department of Forestry, The Conservation Fund, the Stanley family, and other public and private partners made this important acquisition possible and will ensure that it is sustainably managed for current and future generations."

"This property is a very special place. Its legacy of sustainable management for both timber and wildlife habitat, combined with its important water resources have made it an important location here in Charlotte County," said State Forester Rob Farrell.

"Ensuring the integrity of large forested landscapes and keeping them in sustainable management is one of the most important conservation strategies today," said The Conservation Fund Virginia State Director Heather Richards. "By continuing the legacy of three generations of the Stanley family



Chatham High School students (l. to r.) Jordan Elliott (first place), Austin Elliott (second place), Holden Mills (third place) and Cole Oakes (fourth place) earned awards in the senior division at the Pittsylvania Federation Forestry Contest at Fairy Stone State Park.

PHOTO BY NEIL CLARRIDGE/STAR/TRIBUNE.

and the Stanley Land and Lumber Corporation and creating Virginia's newest State Forest, we are safeguarding the forest's ability to provide vital climate, economic and ecological benefits for generations to come."

To acquire the forestland from The Conservation Fund, VDOF leveraged federal, state and private funding through the USDA Forest Legacy Program, the federal Land and Water

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for forestry in Virginia.**

Resource Review

Conservation Fund, agency mitigation funds, and additional Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside grant funding.

30 Project Grants Awarded from Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) grants totalling \$7.5 million will fund 30 conservation projects and protect 8,000 acres of land across the Commonwealth.

Private land trusts, local governments and state agencies will use the VLCF grants to acquire and protect significant lands in the following categories: farmland, forestry, historic resources, natural areas, and parks and open space. One project by The Virginia Outdoors Foundation received \$350,000 in grant money for Pierces Lowgrounds for an open space easement to protect 2,860 acres of forest and farmland. The grant selection process incorporates ConserveVirginia, the commonwealth's innovative land conservation strategy that is based on "smart map" technology.

"The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation grants program helps protect our most important natural resources and provide more access to the great outdoors for everyone to enjoy," said Gov. Ralph Northam. "Through ConserveVirginia, we're making sure we prioritize protecting lands that bring the most benefit, addressing historic inequalities, and widening our public land program into new areas. Each one of these grants is an opportunity to protect public space in our local communities."

This was the third round of awards approved by the VLCF board in 2021. A total of \$3.4 million in grants was approved Feb. 5 and another \$4.8 million was approved on June 10.

Historically Black Recreation Area Reopened in National Forests

Governor Ralph Northam recently announced the reopening of Green Pastures Recreation Area in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The Commonwealth will work with the U.S. Forest Service to restore and manage Green Pastures as a satellite of nearby Douthat State Park.

This area was one of the few federal outdoor recreational areas throughout the country that was set aside exclusively for African Americans during the segregation era in the 20th century.

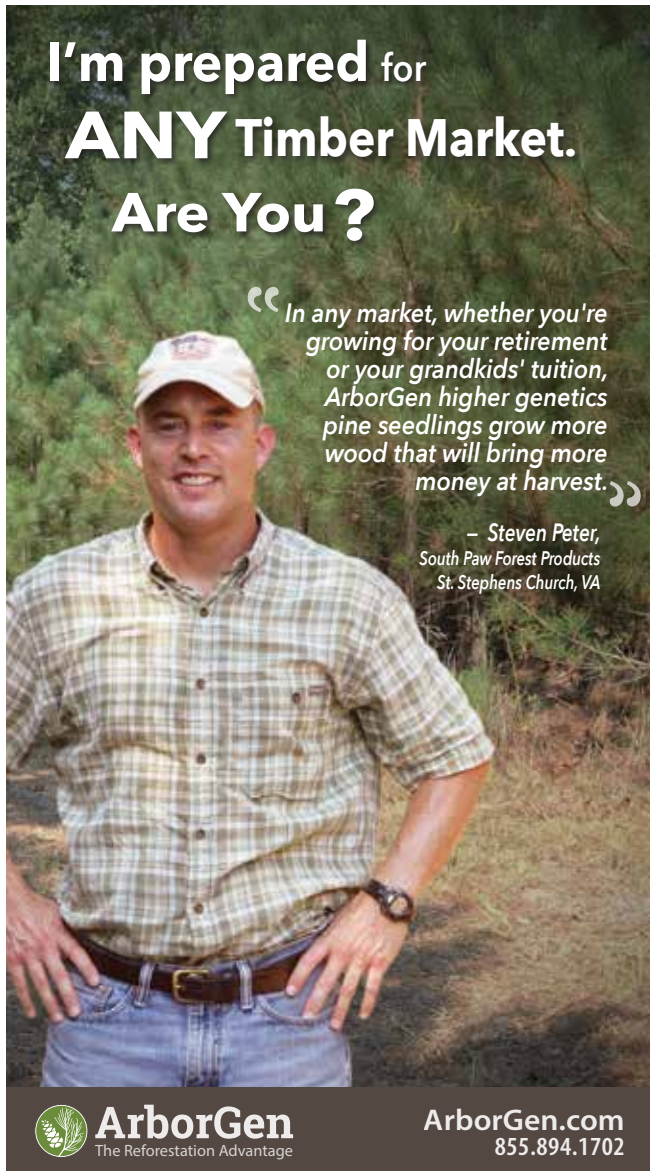
An historic Shared Stewardship agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and USDA will serve to coordinate a response to the increasing ecological challenges and natural resource concerns throughout Virginia that include reducing wildfire risk and taking action against threats to forest and ecosystem health.

The Civilian Conservation Corps began building Green Pastures in the Alleghany Highlands in 1938. From 1940 to

1950, the U.S. Forest Service operated the area as a segregated site for African Americans. In 1963, the Forest Service changed the park's name to Longdale Recreation Area. Under the new Historic Property Lease between the Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Green Pastures will now be known by its historic name.

State and federal agencies will align their priorities for the surrounding George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, as well as other Virginia forests, under this Shared Stewardship Agreement.


"The Virginia Department of Forestry is proud to be among the Southern states who have signed a Shared Stewardship Agreement," said Virginia State Forester Rob Farrell. "We are grateful to our federal partners for their support of Virginia's vision for sustainably managed forests and anticipate future successes together. 🌲"



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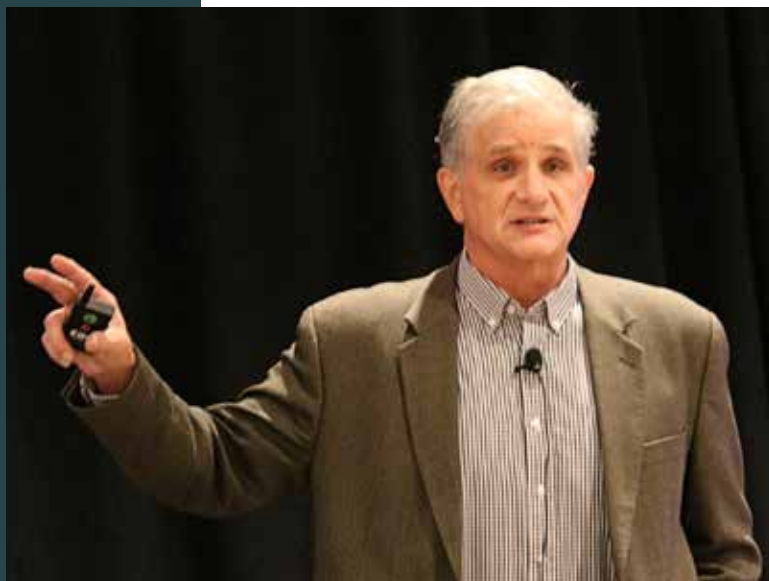
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Three Truths for Virginia Forestry

by Matt Dowdy, Magazine Editorial Committee



Bruce Vincent, keynote speaker at the 2021 Virginia Forestry Summit.

The keynote speaker for the 2021 Virginia Forestry Summit was Bruce Vincent, a logger from Libby, Montana who was heavily involved in the “timber wars” of the early 1990s. I could easily fill a book about what I’ve learned from Bruce’s presentation, but Bruce has already written a book titled *Against the Odds—A Path Forward for Rural America*. I highly recommend this book. It has opened my eyes to many things that are happening today.

Here, I want to focus on Bruce Vincent’s “three truths” that were outlined in his closing remarks:

- 1) Democracy Works, But It is Not a Spectator Sport
- 2) When People Lead, Leaders Follow
- 3) The World is Run by Those Who Show Up

I can summarize my interpretation of these three truths in two words, “Get involved.”

Almost 10 years ago, I received a phone call that the Virginia Committee of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) was interested in scheduling a forestry tour for architects. The committee was looking for a location in Louisa

County to host this tour, and I had a client whose Tree Farm was perfect to showcase a wide variety of both pine and hardwood management.

During the field tour, I was amazed that the architects did not realize that the acres of two-year-old pine seedlings where we stood would grow into the 20-year-old plantation that we could see in the distance. Their view of the forest was static, and they thought once a clear-cut, always a clear-cut.

From this tour, I had an idea to expand this event into a forestry tour for teachers. I did not realize that Bill Worrell and Jon Rocket had already had this idea in Southwestern Virginia. As Skyline Chapter Chair of Society of American Foresters (SAF), I suggested that our chapter create a committee to host our own teacher tour. The idea was well received, and our version, Teaching Trees, was born.

At our Teaching Trees tours, we highlight various aspects of forest management, but the main themes that are introduced at my Louisa Tree Farm include: my goals and ideas as a typical landowner; forest management objectives; basic forest succession as it ties into forest management; forest products created; wildlife habitat; recreation; conservation easements; and active logging job demonstrations. We want to show that a timber harvest does not just happen and is generally a well thought out process with much time and planning involved.

It is important to get boots on the ground to show what we do, not just tell what we do. During a tour with Master Naturalists this past summer, we stood in a one-and-a-half-year-old pine plantation as I explained how the area was site-prep sprayed the previous year and had looked much like winter throughout the previous summer. As I was discussing the young pine trees and early successional habitat, several yellow finches danced across the cutover feeding on seed heads, and butterflies fluttered about the early successional habitat. You could see by the look on the participants’ faces that their opinions about a clear-cut were changing.

Over the past decade, I have become active in the forestry community in various ways including: Virginia Forestry Association, Society of American Foresters, Association of Consulting Foresters, Project Learning Tree, and Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation.

If you are a member of any of these organizations, or any group that is working to show the beneficial impacts of good forestry, I have a few suggestions on how you can become involved and make a difference.

To become active in Virginia Forestry Association: Contribute your time and volunteer. VFA is always looking for members to hold seats on committees. If you are not a member, become a member. If you are a member, gift a membership or include membership packets when dealing with your clients. The landowner category is the largest untapped membership category that will enable us to grow. If each one of us included a VFA membership packet along with our company's promotional items, management plans, and timber contracts, I believe we could substantially increase our reach.

To further the mission of Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation: Make a contribution. Writing checks is easy, your donation is tax deductible, and it only takes a few minutes to drop your gift in the mail. You can also advance youth development with support from VFEF when you create an opportunity and apply for funding. VFEF has grant applications to help you. For instance, our Teaching Trees Program was started by volunteers but has grown with the help of VFEF funding. We reach as many as ten teachers each year, giving them a look at the positive side of forestry. Feedback from our program often mimics the Architect Tour with comments that start, "I never realized ..." How many students do these educators teach and influence? There is no doubt that big impacts can start with small efforts.

To support political advocacy efforts that help the forestry community: Contribute to the VAForestPAC. In today's political climate, you must be present in order to have a voice.

To help Project Learning Tree and Forestry Camps: Spread the word to both teachers and students about the many opportunities we have in the forestry community where youth can participate in fun learning experiences that showcase the importance of forestry and Virginia's natural resources.

To serve the forestry community: Volunteer your time to engage with students, teachers and politicians. Offer your expertise and be willing to speak to anyone who is willing to listen.

One of my favorite movies is *Caddyshack*. There is a famous scene with Chevy Chase advising Danny to "be the ball—make your future" as he hits his golf shot. When Danny hits the ball, it lands in the water, and he asks Chevy, "Where did it go?" Chevy replies, "Right into the

lumberyard," implying that Danny's future as a golfer was bleak. But I think we need to change the public perception so that hitting it to the "lumberyard" is a compliment and the perfect place for a bright future—just like landing your ball on the green.

We all remember the basic fire triangle: fire needs fuel, oxygen, and heat. In our Virginia forest community, our organizations need ideas, volunteers, and donations with a commitment to promote our industry. I encourage you to do as much as you can to help. 🌲

Matt Dowdy is a consulting forester and member of VFA's Magazine Editorial Committee. He is a regular contributor to Tailgate Talk, a column designed to share stories and experiences from within the forestry community.

If you are interested in sharing a story, send your submission to vfa@vaforestry.org. Opinions expressed in the column are solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect the policies or position of Virginia Forestry Association.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE,
continued from page 4.

Would you like to see more resources dedicated to improving the health of Virginia's forest resource, including cost share programs to eradicate invasive species on private property?

Would you like to see more emphasis on economic priorities, such as workforce development solutions that bolster the rural workforce and effect real change for generations to come (as in neighboring Tennessee)?

Would you like to see an expansion of markets for wood fiber in Virginia?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, then you understand the importance of VFA becoming more proactive in its advocacy endeavors. The work necessary to achieve these goals is difficult, but not impossible. It will take considerable time, resources, and a dedicated effort to turn these ideas into reality. But it all begins with a simple notion ...

"Be a ripple." 🌿

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