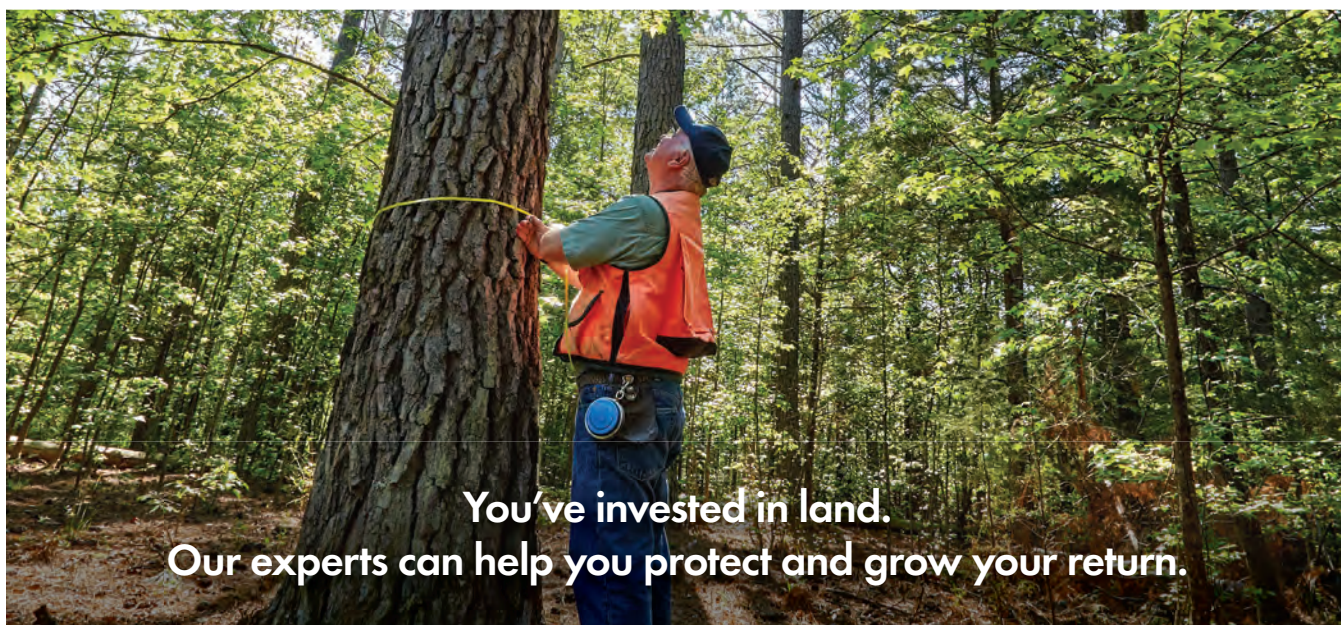


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Volume LXXVIII, Number 2

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Virginia Tech and College of Natural Resources and Environment alumni showed up in force at the Virginia Forestry Summit in Blacksburg. Hokies in attendance took time after the opening session to pose for a photo.
(PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH)

2022 VIRGINIA FORESTRY SUMMIT

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by Lesha Berkel

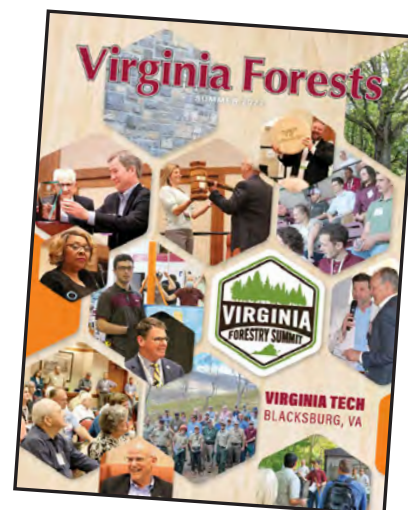
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- Joel Cathey Recognized with VFA Distinguished Service Award
- Dr. David Wm. Smith Celebrated for Lifetime Contributions to Forestry
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All in a Lifetime's Work

When I decided to offer a day's work as an item for the Silent Auction at the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit, I wasn't sure what to expect. The possibilities were endless with a community as broad and diverse as ours. Admittedly, I kept a watchful eye on the bid sheet as the week progressed. I came to appreciate the good-natured ribbing of bargain basement bids for my highly skilled (read: questionable) services.



Corey Connors

At least I think it was good-natured.

Once the auction concluded, I was delighted to learn two things. First, the winning bid for my services finished in the middle of the pack, ahead of most inanimate objects that were available for purchase. Most, but not all. Second, I learned that I would be joining Bill and Stephanie Osl for a day at Oakland Farm in scenic Cumberland County. As part of the largest segment of VFA's membership, I looked forward to spending a day with honest-to-goodness landowners to learn what made them tick and to gain a first-hand account of the challenges they face as forest stakeholders. And as cattle farmers, I'd get to see some cows, too!

I first met Bill shortly after Governor Northam appointed him to serve on the Virginia Board of Forestry. I came to know both he and Stephanie a little better when the Cumberland County Board of Supervisors placed forest land use taxation on the proverbial chopping block late last year. In an impressive bit of grassroots organizing, they turned out what seemed like every forest landowner in the county to speak publicly against repeal. While unsuccessful in the short term, that experience provided the initial momentum needed to pass the new Forest Sustainability Fund that will support the adoption of forest land use taxation across the Commonwealth.

On a crisp 85-degree morning, I laced up my work boots, donned jeans and long sleeves (but foolishly NOT bug spray and/or tick repellent) and headed out west. Upon arriving at the farm, it was apparent that both Bill and Stephanie had been at it for a while. Into a pickup we jumped, chipper in tow and chainsaws in the bed, to clean up damage to one of their beautiful hardwood stands. The farm had experienced

two storms: a heavy winter snow and a late spring storm with 80+ MPH winds that wreaked havoc on some exceptionally large poplars, gums, and oaks.

For the next couple of hours, the sounds of chainsaws and the chipper roared as we systematically dismantled the trees that had been felled by the storms. My assignment was to use one of the smaller chainsaws to remove some of the larger branches and limbs from the trunk for chipping. At one point, I saw a limb moving magically towards the chipper before I looked up to realize there was a tough little guy dragging it. We had been joined by the Osl's 7-year-old grandson Caleb, who when asked what his favorite hobbies were replied, "Work. I love working."

I immediately began recruiting him into the wonderful profession of forestry.

We were at it for about three hours before the rising heat and humidity compelled us to call it a morning. Earlier, Bill had shared that they had a tree company come out to perform some clean-up after the winter storm. But since the more recent spring storm, the Osl's have been heading out for a couple of hours each morning before the heat of the day sets in to continue their recovery efforts. Judging by the number of areas that had sustained similar damage, there are many similar mornings ahead.



Corey, Bill and Caleb.



Storm damage.

For me, it was a clear illustration of the considerable time and financial costs borne by landowners in actively maintaining their property. It also served as a reminder of the risks associated for those depending on timber for future income. Landowners are often counseled to view their land as an investment account. But what other investment account is directly susceptible to tornados, hurricanes, and blizzards?

A tour of their 667-acres and the historical accounts Stephanie shared about their property spoke to the visceral connection that the Osl's have to their land. From their well-crafted, mid-18th century home with gorgeous wood trusses, to trails cut neatly through the woods, to the bench they built with wood from their land to observe migrating birds, to the beach and swimming hole they created along the Willis River for their children and grandchildren to enjoy...their forest land was clearly about more than an investment on future income for them—for a multitude of reasons.

A subtle reminder that every landowner has their reasons, however different, for owning forest land. Usually for more than one reason.

You would think that such a deep connection would form over decades spent in a rural area. Alas, Bill and Stephanie spent most of their adult lives in central New Jersey. Bill commuted to the city where he worked as a vice president and corporate officer of a large telecommunications company while Stephanie was a registered nurse. It was in their retirement planning, as peers and friends were

moving south to Florida, the Carolinas, and the hammock, that they happened upon this unique property and opportunity. They made a lifestyle choice for themselves and their family that they believed would leave them far more fulfilled.

Which begged the question, “What did you know about cattle farming and forestry?” Told that was the same question their daughter asked of them upon raising the idea of purchasing a farm in the first place, he replied to me as he did to his daughter 20+ years before: “We’ll learn it.” And with the help of Virginia Tech and Cooperative Extension, they did. Quite well, in fact.

Yet another reminder about the importance of education during a lifetime of learning, as well as the importance of not only land grant institutions and Extension but also associations like VFA in providing those opportunities for individuals at all stages of their experience.

In the late afternoon, just ahead of another summer thunderstorm, Bill showed me his setup for his Alaskan Mill. He demonstrated how he sawed large diameter boards



Alaskan Mill.

that would replace cattle fencing he had installed more than 20 years ago. As he finished cutting his first board from what had to be a 28-inch diameter white oak, Bill rhetorically asked how great it was to not have to run to the store to buy boards. They already had everything they needed to do the job right in their backyard.

How great, indeed.

As dark gray clouds rolled in, the leased breeding bull delivered to Oakland earlier in the day made sounds in the distance suggesting that the Osl's were already getting their money's worth. Whether they got their money's worth from purchasing my services at the Silent Auction is still in question. Nevertheless, I was truly grateful for the experience and came away a little wiser on what might keep Bill, Stephanie, and perhaps many of VFA's landowner members awake at night. 🌿



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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

Practical Tools for Daily Advocacy

Hello VFA family, and welcome to summer! It was so amazing to see so many of you at the Virginia Forestry Summit in May. Virginia Tech could not have been a more perfect location and gracious host. The speakers were amazing, but the networking and fellowship are always my favorite parts. If you weren't able to join us this year, go ahead and mark those calendars for 2023 when we'll be in Williamsburg!

For those who don't know me, I am a non-traditional forester (I have a finance degree) from Tennessee. So people may be asking, How does someone with that background find herself as the President of the Virginia Forestry Association? The short answer to that is divine intervention and a former manager who invited me to a VFA Summit over a decade ago.

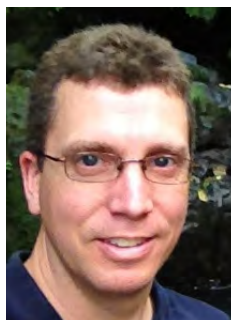
Reflecting on my journey got me thinking about advocacy. You've been hearing a lot about VFA's focus on advocacy lately with our new Advocacy Fund and retaining a consultant who's helping us with the General Assembly.

—continued on page 28

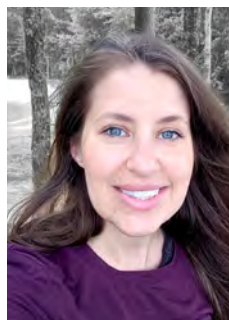


Stephanie Grubb

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WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

by Lesha Berkel

Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE) welcomed more than 200 forestry professionals, landowners, and educators as it celebrated the college's 30-year anniversary at the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit held at the Skelton Conference Center in Blacksburg, Va. This year's Forestry Summit was presented by IFCO Seedlings and coordinated by the Virginia Forestry Association, Virginia Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters, and Virginia Division of the Society of American Foresters on May 3-5, 2022.

Paul Winistorfer, Dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment, and Jay Sullivan, Head of the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, pulled together faculty support, Extension specialists, and

research teams—along with some special guests from VT athletics—to showcase forestry programs and energize the crowd around a call for collaboration to ensure that forestry remains strong into the future. “As a forestry community, we are better together,” Dean Winistorfer said in his welcome address to attendees.

Virginia Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry Matt Lohr opened the Summit to share goals from the Youngkin administration related to forestry and agricultural industries. His remarks helped set the stage for the first discussion on the “State of the Wood Industry,” where panelists Chris Brown (Enviva), Tom Inman (Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc.),

and Marshall Thomas (F&W Forestry) provided perspectives on many important aspects of forestry today, including issues related to labor, transportation, supply/demand, as well as challenges for generational transfer and developing carbon markets. Three concurrent breakout sessions on Tuesday afternoon gave attendees more information on carbon markets, opportunities for forest business expansion, and hiring non-foresters who have skills and interests that can help forestry businesses succeed.



Paul Winistorfer welcomed attendees to the campus of Virginia Tech at the start of the 2022 Forestry Summit.



Matt Lohr, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry, remarked on the administration's goals and efforts to support those industries across the Commonwealth.



Brent Pry, Head Football Coach at Virginia Tech, joined the group at the Welcome Reception.



(l. to r.) Speakers Robert Crockett and Senator Frank Ruff were introduced by Kyle Shreeve (Virginia Agribusiness Council).



(l. to r.) Paul Winistorfer, Tom Inman, Marshall Thomas, and Chris Brown.



Above (l. to r.) Christina Hager (Dominion Energy), Stephanie Grubb (International Paper Co.) and Jesse Bander (Virginia Dept. of Forestry) led "Hiring the Non-Forester Forester." Andrew Miller (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute) presented a session on trucking safety.



Above (l. to r.) Sabina Dhungana (Virginia Dept. of Forestry), Stephen Versen (VDACS), and Emily Moore (Virginia Economic Development Partnership) provided information on opportunities for business expansion and funding. Andrew Richard (ACRE Investment Mgmt) discussed carbon market options.



Students from Virginia Tech CNRE learned about career opportunities in forestry during the Welcome Reception at Lane Stadium. (l. to r.) Moderator John Freeman (Virginia Tech), Virginia State Forester Rob Farrell, Stephanie Grubb, Christina Hager, and Don Bright offered practical advice and shared their experiences with the group.

A Welcome Reception at Lane Stadium was sponsored by International Paper Co. that offered great food and drinks as well as a special program designed to give VT's current forestry students a chance to connect and hear from a diverse group of forestry professionals including State Forester Rob Farrell, VFA President Stephanie Grubb (International Paper Co.), Christina Hager (Dominion Energy)

and Don Bright (Meherrin Forest Products). Virginia Tech's head football coach Brent Pry was a featured guest and supported the "team spirit" of our event. More opportunities for networking continued throughout the Summit with breaks sponsored by másLabor held each day of the event.

To start the second day, Executive Director Corey Connors led a meeting for VFA members and then served as host and moderator for a conversation

with Virginia Senator Frank Ruff, who was a chief patron for the new Forest Sustainability Fund during this year's General Assembly. Ruff provided candid insights from his business and political career and offered perspectives on today's challenges and opportunities for forestry and wood products industries, especially within rural Virginia communities.

A trio of breakout sessions focused on hardwood markets, housing



Corey Connors displays a VT-branded bourbon barrel head during the Forestry Summit's Live Auction. A Silent Auction, along with a raffle for a Virginia Tech football autographed by Coach Pry, raised a record amount in support of the Virginia Forestry Advocacy Fund.



Whit Babcock, Virginia Tech Athletic Director.



Flight photo taken inside Virginia Tech's drone cage.



(l. to r.) Don Bright (Meherrin Forest Products), Sabina Dhungana (Virginia Dept. of Forestry), Emily Moore (VEDP), Ken Morgan (Morgan Lumber Co.), and Brian Bond (Virginia Tech) discussed Virginia's hardwood market. Timothy Shively (Virginia Tech doctoral student) shared information on new ways to treat invasives and controlling pest disease.



Ken Morgan, president of the Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation (VFEF), recognized top contributors who helped VFEF fund youth programs in support of forestry and natural resources education.



Urs Buehlmann (Virginia Tech) discussed forest products industry and housing markets in his presentation. Paige Williams and Alison Ritz (FREC graduate students at Virginia Tech) presented "Geospatial Technology Tools for Forest Management." Chris Isaacson (Alabama Forestry Association) shared information on successful workforce development programs in the South.



markets, and geospatial technology for forest management. Drone demonstrations let attendees participate in hands-on test flights. During lunch, Robert Crockett of Advantus Strategies reviewed advocacy work conducted during the 2022 General Assembly on behalf of VFA before groups gathered for afternoon tours.

The Annual Awards Banquet capped the second day of the Summit, celebrating those who have made

significant achievement and impact in the forestry community over the past year. (Read more starting on page 10.)

The final morning of the Summit began with three concurrent sessions that included information on new ways to combat invasives and pest disease, developing a workforce for the future, and technology to improve truck driver safety, before attendees were invited to come together for the closing session.

Dr. Mamie Parker (pictured above) closed the Summit with her message, "Finding Passion, Inspiration, and Excellence in Forestry," that told the story of her journey to become the first African American Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director and the first African American Senior Executive Service member in the organization's 135-year history. Her uplifting remarks, with plenty of audience participation, served as an inspiring send-off for all. 🌿



Landowners Gather for Special Post-Summit Educational Program and Tours

The Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program, part of Virginia Cooperative Extension at Virginia Tech, held a Landowner Extravaganza following the conclusion of the Forestry Summit. The Extravaganza included a special visit by the "Hokie Bird" during lunch.

Presenters and tour leaders included (l. to r.) Adam Downing, VFLEP coordinator Jennifer Gagnon, Brian Bond, Bill Worrell, Karen Snape, Neil Clark and Jason Fisher.

Matt Dowdy Named VFA Outstanding Member of the Year



Matt Dowdy with Jay Phaup, who presented him with VFA's Outstanding Member of the Year award.

Matt Dowdy of Dowdy's Forest & Land Management received VFA's 2022 Outstanding Member of the Year Award during the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit in Blacksburg, Va. The award recognizes an individual for their outstanding contributions in the area of conservation, utilization and enhancement of Virginia's forest resources. It is given to honor a Virginia Forestry Association member who has gone "above and beyond" their normal duties and responsibilities to render service to, and promote the interests of, Virginia forestry, and/or has fostered greater public awareness and understanding of the forests of the Commonwealth and the contributions that our forests make to all Virginia citizens.

A 1992 graduate of Virginia Tech, Matt started Dowdy's Forest & Land Management in 2007. He has served multiple terms on the VFA Board of Directors and continues to be heavily involved on the *Virginia Forests* Magazine Editorial Committee, where he authors an entertaining and thought-provoking "Tailgate Talk" every quarter. Matt is an active member of the Association of Consulting Foresters, serving as Chair of the Virginia Chapter in 2018 and 2019, and has also served as Chair of the Skyline Chapter of the Society of American Foresters.

Beyond his association service, Dowdy is a proud supporter of Log a Load for Kids, a non-profit, grass-roots fundraising organization supporting local Children's Miracle Network Hospitals throughout Virginia and the United States. He has dedicated countless hours to youth forestry education across the Commonwealth, organizing a two-day professional development program for Virginia middle and high school science teachers to gain exposure to forestry and land management called Teaching Trees. The program is a two-day, hands-on class on forestry that includes tours of logging jobs, demonstrations of silvicultural practices, and paper making.

A 2016 story from *Charlottesville Tomorrow* most aptly captures Dowdy's passion for forestry education: "I love the forest. Trees are my life, I pretty much think about trees every day," Dowdy said. "I want to show that we want to keep [forests] sustainable and keep them managed so future generations can enjoy them and get the products or enjoy the trees." 🌲

Joel Cathey Recognized with VFA Distinguished Service Award

Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) recognized Joel Cathey with its 2022 Distinguished Service Award during the Virginia Forestry Summit in Blacksburg, Va. VFA's Distinguished Service Award gives public recognition to individuals, groups, associations, and/or companies and corporations 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.

Joel began his forestry career with Chesapeake Corporation in 1980, moving to Keysville, Va. after earning his degree in forestry from NC State University. In 2000, he began work as a forester for Ontario Hardwood, a hardwood



Ken Morgan presented Joel Cathey with VFA's Distinguished Service Award during the Virginia Forestry Summit in May.

Dr. David Wm. Smith Celebrated for Lifetime Contributions to Forestry in Virginia

The Crown Award is presented from the Virginia Department of Forestry to recognize individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to forestry in Virginia through their personal or corporate generosity. Dr. David Wm. Smith was the first recipient to be selected for this recognition by Virginia State Forester Rob Farrell.

Farrell believes that having an impact that spreads through the community is a common aspect of every Crown Award recipient, and those contributions are widely felt. “I think of ripples spreading across a pond,” he said.

He noted that as a teacher Dr. Smith exemplifies someone who causes ripples to spread, and he started by teaching a new group of students each year, imparting underlying theory and basic knowledge, and sharing his passion for the subject. Specifically, as forestry professor, those first impacts spread further as students impart that knowledge and passion to private landowners, forest managers and the public during their careers. These ripples spread across the landscape and into the future—just as the forest grows, Farrell noted in his award presentation.

After retirement, Dr. Smith continued to be engaged in his community, connecting and interacting with students who are learning through their own practice. He has become a lifetime mentor, increasing his students’ impacts even further by raising the level of professionalism in the field.

Dr. Smith served as President of the Society of American Foresters and was an appointee on Virginia’s Board of Forestry for 15 years. “The ripples from this kind of service spread beyond our reckoning, across the landscape and far into the future,” Farrell said. “The impact of someone like Dr. Smith is beyond measure.” 🌲



Virginia State Forester Rob Farrell honored Dr. David Wm. Smith with the Crown Award from the Virginia Department of Forestry during the Virginia Forestry Summit Awards Banquet in Blacksburg, Va. Dr. Smith is the Shelton H. Short Jr. Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech.

sawmill in Keysville. He served for several years on the VFA Board of Directors, becoming President of the organization in 2007. He served two terms on the Virginia Board of Forestry from 2012-2019, and he currently serves on the board of directors for Forestry Mutual Insurance Co.

For many years, Joel has continued to support youth forestry education. Prior to the COVID pandemic, he regularly hosted local groups from St. Catherine and St. Christopher schools to teach them about the importance of the forest resource to the Commonwealth. From 2012 through 2020, students would visit a timber harvesting site, a sawmill, and see a dry kiln in operation. Additionally, he organized tours of a local Tree Farm for students from the Fuqua School to educate them on the benefits of forestry.

Cathey extends his knowledge to all ages. He was integral to the development of the award-winning Generation NEXT program, a collaboration between Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Department of Forestry that is designed to help family forestland owners make informed and intentional decisions regarding passing their land forward to the next generation. He also led a workshop for 140 participants in conjunction with the SHARP Logger certification program, which provides training for loggers and foresters on the principles of sustainable forestry, environmental protection, and workplace safety.

In presenting the award, Ken Morgan of Morgan Lumber in Red Oak, Va. shared, “[Joel] has accomplished much and positively impacted many aspects of our forestry community over the past four decades.” 🌲

VIRGINIA LOGGER MERIT AWARD WINNERS

The Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) recognized three recipients of its Logger Merit Award during the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit in Blacksburg, Va. VFA's Logger Merit Award recognizes and honors the performance of outstanding logger(s) in the Commonwealth. Winners are chosen based on a written evaluation of the total logging operation. Recipients of the Logger Merit Award represent the "best-of-the-best," and exemplify the highest professional standards, as they serve as effective, positive public role models for the entire logging industry.

JOE ROSS J&J Logging

J&J Logging, based in Henderson, N.C. was founded in the 1970s, and Ross continues to run his business to this day. He operates a clear-cutting and chip harvesting operation with 11 crew members, three full-time truck drivers, and four shop employees. J&J Logging produces between 80-100 loads per week.

Ross was a founding member of the Carolina Loggers Association, Inc., and remains an active board member. In addition to being a member of VFA, he is also a member of the NC Forestry Association and the Virginia Loggers Association. Previously certified as a Pro-Logger in North Carolina, Ross now maintains a SHARP Logger certification as most of his operations are Virginia-based.

He is an avid supporter of Log a Load for Kids, a non-profit, grassroots fundraising organization supporting local Children's Miracle Network Hospitals throughout the United States. Ross also is a supporter and donor to the Little Man Foundation, a non-profit created after the death of his grandson Joseph who died from SMA in 2006, that benefits Duke Children's Hospital.

Highly regarded across the country, J&J Logging has been featured in several industry publications, including the June 1999 edition of *Timber Harvesting Magazine*, the September 2013 edition of *Southern Logging Times*, the *Forestry Review* in September 2014, and the *AgCarolina Farm Credit* publication in May 2007.



Joe Ross (center) pictured with his family at the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit Award Banquet where he received a Virginia Logger Merit Award.

In nominating Ross for VFA's Logger Merit Award, Richard Griffin, a consulting forester from Kenbridge, Va., shared, "Joe Ross can be counted on to always do an excellent logging job. This makes my landowners happy and often cuts down on the cost of reforestation."

ANDREW "ANDY" BYLER Blue Mountain Forest Products LLC

Andy Byler founded Blue Mountain Forest Products LLC, based in Shippensburg, Penn., in 2011. While his operation has harvested timber in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia, Blue Mountain has worked exclusively in the six counties that make up the northwest corner of Virginia for the past two years.

Byler is highly regarded for producing high quality timber harvests, leaving seed trees throughout

the sites that he harvests to improve the potential to reforest with quality timber species. Byler's operation is a model for Best Management Practices that protect the environment by using bridges and mats in areas with potential water quality complications, installing culverts where needed, keeping his haul roads open for maximum daylight, and spending the extra money for stone to keep his jobs from becoming sloppy and muddy. When finishing each section of his jobs, he takes the extra steps necessary to avoid soil erosion.

Byler is adamant to abide by forest regulations and has a reputation for terrific silvicultural work, going above and beyond at every jobsite. He continually strives to improve each site for both future economic development and wildfire prevention by ensuring all skid roads remain open and accessible. He increases overall ecological functions along with increasing species

diversity and diversity of trees sizes and ages.

In nominating Byler for VFA's Logger Merit Award, Leo Eby of Eby's Sawmill in Clearville, Penn. shared, "Andy has demonstrated an extraordinary work ethic combined with exceptional knowledge and practical skill in timber harvest selection in order to obtain healthy results."

NATHAN HARKER Pittsylvania Forest Products

A 2003 graduate of Virginia Tech, Harker first worked as a forester for Smith Mountain Land & Lumber in Huddleston, Va. Nearly four years later, he started Staunton River Timber, a wood dealership in which he remains invested. In 2009, responding to a need for loggers to harvest small acreage tracts and select cutting of valuable grade timber, he partnered with a former classmate to found Pittsylvania Forest Products.

Pittsylvania Forest Products specialized in site sensitive logging on small acreage tracts. At the beginning, all felling was done by hand by Harker and his partner. Eventually, strategic equipment purchases served as an invaluable part of their light impact operation. Among early jobs was the harvesting of white ash trees in low lying, poor access area devastated by the Emerald Ash Borer. Pittsylvania provided services by salvaging timber others could not using a conventional large-scale approach.

As the reputation of Pittsylvania Forest Products grew, the company also grew to become the conventional logging operation it is today. Currently, Pittsylvania Forest Products has seven employees.

Pittsylvania carries between 60-75 loads per week, providing logs to



Nathan Harker with his wife, Emilee.

a wide range of buyers throughout central and southwest Virginia.

In nominating Harker for VFA's Logger Merit Award, Stephen Holt of Georgia Pacific LLC in Brookneal, Va. shared, "Over the course of his career, Nathan has committed to doing the right thing for the landowner in all aspects of his business." 🌿

Society of American Foresters Recognizes Two Members at Forestry Summit

On behalf of the Society of American Foresters (SAF), David Powell presented awards to two individuals during the 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit in May.

Pictured here, David Powell (left) with Greg Sheerer and Tom Davidson (far right), who each received an SAF Fellow award recognizing their extraordinary contributions to forestry through volunteer activities, sustained leadership, and advancement of the forestry profession.



Brooks Forest Products Center & Radford CLT Building Site



The Department of Sustainable Biomaterials' research facility allows students opportunities to design and build innovative and sustainable products, buildings, packaging, and other materials while minimizing waste.



Sailesh Adhikari shows the group model designs of CLT to be tested in the lab.

Stadium Woods & Lane Stadium

The rare old-growth urban forest near Lane Stadium on the campus of Virginia Tech covers approximately 11.5 acres. It contains over 250 large trees, including dozens of white oak trees that have been estimated by scientists to be over 300 years old.



Hardwood: George Washington & Jefferson National Forest



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Save the Date

APRIL 26-28, 2023

We invite you to join us at the Williamsburg Lodge
Williamsburg, Va.

Registration will open in February 2023 at the Virginia Forestry Summit website
www.forestrysummit.com

The image features a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent entrance, likely the Williamsburg Lodge. A large, stylized logo for the Virginia Forestry Summit is overlaid on the left side of the image. The logo is a shield shape with a green border, containing a silhouette of a forest and the text "VIRGINIA FORESTRY SUMMIT". The background is a photograph of the lodge at dusk or dawn, with warm lighting and trees in the foreground.

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What I Learned at the Forestry Summit

Continuing Education is a requirement of the Association of Consulting Foresters, and this is one of the many reasons I attended the annual Forestry Summit. My first activity was the ACF summer meeting with 12 of our 28 Virginia members attending. Even though we are competitors, it is a great chance to network and discuss how to better serve our landowner clients. During the Summit, I learned and noted some interesting things.

The forestry community is concerned about the loss of forest acres to solar farms. There are 51 utility-scale solar projects in Virginia totaling approximately 32,000 acres. Most of these were constructed on cleared forest land. These solar farms have lifespans of 15 to 20 years.

All our costs are going up. One reason is it now costs about \$26,000 to ship a container from China to the west coast of the U.S.

Virginia's Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative now has funding to cost-share hardwood improvement projects, thanks to Virginia's General Assembly. Talk to your Area Forester if you are interested in an assessment. Additionally, there may be a state tax credit for expenses not reimbursed by cost-share, though details are still to be worked out.

When presenting Dr. David Wm. Smith with his well-deserved Crown Award, State Forester Rob Farrell asked Smith's former students to stand. Over half the room stood and applauded.

Some of us toured sites where the U.S. Forest Service is contracting Crop Tree Release to benefit hardwood stands and doing other good hardwood management. We were startled by a low-level flight of U.S. Navy fighters as they came by just over the mountain top. Better one of ours than one of theirs. 🌲

Bob Warring is a member of the Association of Consulting Foresters in Scottsville Va.



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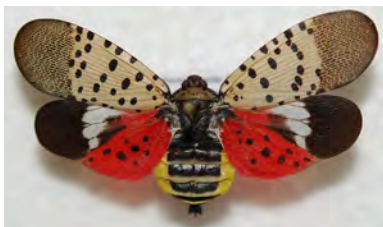
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More Invasive Species Moving Across Virginia

by Scott Barrett, Ph.D.

SHARP Logger Program Coordinator and Extension Specialist, Forest Operations,
Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation

Two more invasive insect species are moving across Virginia, and they have the potential to impact logging operations. Fire ants, or more specifically, the Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) is becoming established in Virginia's southern tier of counties and is moving northward. Meanwhile, the Spotted lanternfly (SLF) is established in the northern portions of Virginia and is moving south. Both of these insects have a quarantine associated with them through the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), and both can potentially be spread through forest harvesting operations.



Spotted lanternfly.

PHOTO BY LAWRENCE BARRINGER, PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BUGWOOD.ORG

The existing Spotted lanternfly quarantine area which previously covered only a few counties in northern Virginia was extended beginning in July 2022. The Spotted lanternfly quarantine area now also includes Buena Vista, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Lynchburg, Manassas, Staunton, Waynesboro, and the counties of Albemarle, Carroll, Page, Prince William, Rockingham, Rockbridge, Shenandoah and Wythe. Quarantine area maps and additional information about the Spotted lanternfly can be found on the VDACS website at: <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-spotted-lanternfly.shtml>. This website also has more details on the quarantine and

permit information, which can impact harvesting operations. Logs are regulated under the SLF quarantine and businesses operating in the quarantine area are required to have a permit and inspect all regulated articles (including logs and many other items) before moving them out of the quarantine area. If you are planning to harvest logs in one of these quarantine areas and move them out of the quarantine area, then you will need to complete the SLF permit training course, inspect logs and other items before they are transported out of the quarantine area, and follow recommendations from VDACS regarding the SLF permit.

In case one invasive insect wasn't enough, loggers also need to be aware of the Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA). The RIFA quarantine area was expanded in 2019 and includes the following counties in southeastern Virginia: Brunswick, Greensville, Isle of Wight, James City Mecklenburg, Southampton, and York, as well as the cities of Chesapeake, Emporia, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg. Additional individual colonies of RIFA have been detected and eliminated outside of those quarantined counties, and it is anticipated that they will continue to spread further into Virginia. Right now, VDACS is attempting to eliminate spread outside of the quarantined counties.



Red Imported Fire Ant.
PHOTO FROM BUGWOOD.ORG

Areas that are preferred by the RIFA include recent cutovers. Anything which moves soil, or could move the ant

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must be inspected prior to moving it out of the quarantine area. This would include logs that have soil on them or equipment that could have soil on it. For the full list of items that must be inspected and information on options for certifying that articles moved out of the quarantine area are free of RIFA, visit the VDACS website at: <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-fire-ant-suppression-and-eradication.shtml>.

It can be a challenge to add more things to the list of all that you have to keep up with on your logging operations, but complying with these regulations can help to slow the spread of these invasive species. If you have any questions, or need more information, contact VDACS or reach out to us at the SHARP Logger Program, and we can help you get the information you need. 🌿

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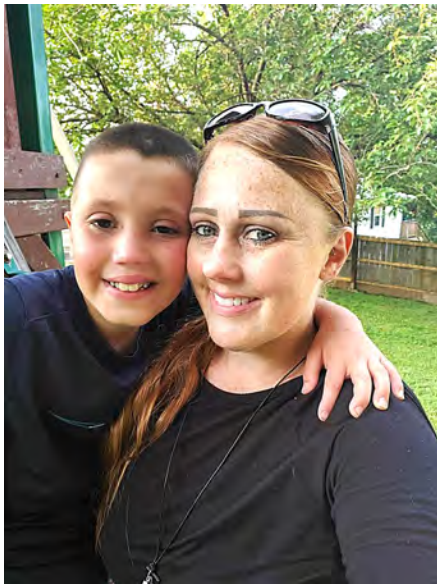


Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation Update

Virginia Youth Receive Scholarships to Attend 4-H Summer Camp

by Cindy Morris, Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center

Late one evening this past May in Scott County Va., a mother came into Kasey Fioramonti's office with rolled coins in a plastic bag. This mother hoped that these coins would cover the deposit for her son to attend 4-H Summer Camp at the Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center. Kasey, Scott County's 4-H Extension Agent, knew that without financial assistance, the child would be unable to attend 4-H



Stephanie Lomas and her son Carlo Lomas from Scott County. Carlo was the recipient of the Preston R. Willson Virginia 4-H Camp Scholarship.

Camp. Unfortunately, as far as Kasey knew, this year's funding for scholarships had been exhausted. A few minutes after leaving the office, the mother's phone rang. To her surprise, it was Kasey on the other end, calling to tell the mom that her son was the recipient of a full scholarship to 4-H Summer Camp. His camp fee had been paid in full!

This is just one of 24 stories across the Commonwealth where youth received full scholarships to

attend 4-H Summer Camp at six (6) 4-H Centers. These 24 camp scholarships were made possible by the Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation (VFEF), in conjunction with the Virginia Forestry Association (VFA), the Virginia Forest Products Association (VFPA), and the Virginia Loggers Association (VLA). Founded in 1943, VFEF is a charitable and educational 501(c)3 organization. The mission of the Foundation is to financially support state-wide youth education promoting



Jack Wagstaff, Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center's Natural Resource Education Coordinator, shows "Cookie" a milk snake to campers during 4-H Summer Camp 2022.

sustainable forests for environmental, social, and economic benefit of all Virginians.

This past summer, VFEF announced its first annual Preston R. Willson Virginia 4-H Camp Scholarships. This scholarship is named after Preston R. Willson, who has spent more than 50 years positively impacting youth through his service in Central and Southside Virginia.

4-H has been around for almost 110 years. The 4-H program believes in the power of young people. Every child has valuable strengths and real influence to improve the world around us. 4-H camping emphasizes "learning by doing." When it comes to providing a child with a life-changing experience, there's nothing quite like 4-H Summer Camp. Summer Camp provides the full benefits of a 4-H experience coupled with the fun



Campers investigate an aquatic ecosystem, collect macroinvertebrates, and determine the health of Holliday Lake and the surrounding creeks during an aquatic ecology class at Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center.

and wonder of camping in the great outdoors and learning about the forest and natural resources surrounding them.


VFEF will begin accepting nominations for the Preston R. Willson Virginia 4-H Summer Camp Scholarships in February for 2023 Summer Camp. VFEF would appreciate your financial support to continue youth programs like this one. Please call (804) 278-8733 or visit www.vfef.net to donate. All gifts are tax-deductible. 🌿



Nottoway County 4-H Summer Campers at Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center. (l. to r.) Jai Ondrean Biviens, Lane Midkiff, Lauren Midkiff (recipient of the Preston R. Willson Virginia 4-H Camp Scholarship), and Sora Watson.



Jack Wagstaff talks about forest ecology with campers during 4-H Summer Camp 2022.



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LANDOWNER EDUCATION

A Bounty of Opportunities for Virginia's Tree Farmers this Fall

by Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech

The Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program (VFLEP) based at Virginia Tech provides science-based educational programs for Virginia's woodland owners. And this fall, programming will be in full swing! All of Virginia's Tree Farmers are invited to attend one (or more) events to learn about managing their woodlands while enjoying the fall foliage in the beautiful Commonwealth.

First, VFLEP is excited to announce that the Tree Farm Tour series will resume this fall. Two tours (that include lunch) are scheduled. The first will provide a rare opportunity for a behind-the-scenes tour of an operating sawmill. Most people do not get the opportunity to see firsthand how their trees are made into solid wood products. The second tour will be of a privately owned Tree Farm in Mecklenburg County.

Second, VFLEP and Virginia Cooperative Extension will host the 46th annual Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours in October. On these day-long tours, you'll visit privately owned properties (including Tree Farms), public



lands, and wood manufacturing facilities to learn about options for sustainably managing your woods and wildlife. The tours provide first-hand exposure to these practices as well as plenty

of time for informal interaction with other landowners and natural resource professionals.

Third, the Generation NEXT team is offering a variety of workshops (both in-person and virtual) to help you plan your forest legacy, while keeping it intact, in forest, and in family ownership as it passes from one generation to the next.



Jennifer Gagnon (left) welcomed landowners to the Landowner Extravaganza held in May at the conclusion of the Virginia Forestry Summit. Landowners and presenters gathered outside the Skelton Conference Center for lunch and presentations prior to the afternoon program and tours.




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If none of these are to your liking, consider joining VFLEP virtually every other Friday for the video series, “Fifteen Minutes in the Forest.” These videos cover all aspects of woodland and wildlife management and include a live question and answer session afterwards.

The Virginia Tree Farm Foundation’s new website is at www.tff.org, or you can contact the Foundation at admin@vtff.org. You can find the Virginia Tree Farm Foundation

and VFLEP on these Facebook pages: <https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaTreeFarmFoundation> and <https://www.facebook.com/VFLEP>.

To learn more and register for any of the programs listed below, visit the VFLEP website at <https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu> or contact Jennifer Gagnon, 540-231-6391; jgagnon@vt.edu. As always, thank you Tree Farmers for being stewards of your forestland! 🌲

UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF PROGRAMS

Tree Farm Tours

- October 6 – Franklin Lumber, Franklin
- October 21 – Wright Forestry LLC, Mecklenburg County

Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours

- October 7 – Powhatan County
- October 14 – Bourbon Tour, Smyth & Washington Counties
- October 28 – Louisa County

Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Workshops

- September 7, 8, 14 & 15 – Virtual
- October 27 – Matthews State Forest, Galax
- November 2 – New Kent Forestry Center

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest Video Series

Ways to watch, include:

- Facebook Live (<http://www.facebook.com/VFLEP>)
- ZOOM (<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/97509089739>)
- YouTube Premier (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1-yMjBfIHoct6wzXX8sFUA>)

Upcoming Programs

- September 9 – Healthy Hunting
- September 23 – Digital Mapping & GPS
- October 7 – Silvo-poultry Update
- October 21 – Golden-winged Warbler
- November 4 – Autumn Leaf Color

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RESOURCE REVIEW

Two VFA Members to Serve on Virginia Board of Forestry

Gov. Glenn Youngkin appointed VFA members Ervin Bielmeyer of Bielmeyer Forestry & Wood and Clark Diehl III of CHIPS Inc. to the Virginia Board of Forestry for three-year terms. Bielmeyer has been appointed to an at-large seat, while Diehl will represent the pine lumber industry.

According to the Virginia Dept. of Forestry, the Virginia Board of Forestry “is an advisory board established for the purpose of advising the Governor and the Department of Forestry on the state of the forest resources within the Commonwealth and the management of forest resources. The Board encourages persons, agencies, organizations and industries to implement development programs for forest resource management and counsel them in such development. In addition, the Board recommends plans for improving the state system of forest protection, management and replacement, and shall prepare an annual report on the progress and conditions of state forestry work.”

VFA congratulates Ervin and Clark on their appointment!

Hardwood Management Tax Credit Signed into Law

Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed HB1319 in August that will provide landowners with a nonrefundable individual income tax credit for expenses incurred for the implementation of beneficial hardwood management practices. The credit would be equal to the eligible expenditures up to \$1,000 and goes into effect on January 1, 2023.

HB1319 defines “eligible expenditures” as direct expenses incurred by a taxpayer related to implementing beneficial hardwood management practices pursuant to best practices to be developed by the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). To claim the credit, landowners will be required to submit a forest management plan to VDOF for review. After approval of the plan and implementation of eligible practices, the Department would certify the forest management plan contains beneficial management practices as eligible for the credit.

There will be an annual credit cap of \$1 million, and VDOF will allocate credits on a first-come, first-served basis. Importantly, this tax credit does not impede the ability of a landowner to participate in VDOF’s Hardwood Habitat Incentive Program. Landowners would still be permitted to claim credit for any remaining financial liability after a hardwood habitat cost share.

Coupled with the new Forest Sustainability Fund to support the adoption/retention of forest land use taxation across the Commonwealth, the 2022 session of the Virginia General Assembly was an unprecedented success for Virginia’s forest landowners. This was made possible our community’s support of VFA’s new Advocacy Fund.

Gloucester County Confirmed as Latest Site of Emerald Ash Borer

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) has confirmed the presence of the emerald ash borer (EAB), an invasive tree-killing insect, in Gloucester County. Since it was first identified in Virginia in 2008, this destructive forest

pest—one of the worst to ever invade the U.S.—has destroyed millions of ash trees. EAB has now been documented in nearly every county across the Commonwealth.

This small, metallic-green beetle specifically targets ash trees. However, some other tree species are also susceptible to EAB damage. Signs of an EAB infestation include thinning tree canopy, small holes on the bark shaped like the letter “D,” epicormic branching (sprouts from the trunk or limbs), and serpentine markings under the tree bark.

“Contact VDOF or a certified arborist for monitoring information, treatment options and other steps you can take to keep ash trees healthy,” said Eastern Region Area Forester Lisa Deaton.

Prior to Gloucester, King and Queen County was added to the map of confirmed areas in 2019. Middlesex and Matthews counties, as well as several locations on the Eastern Coast of Virginia remain undocumented for EAB, although its presence is suspected.

Early identification is key; once a tree loses just 30 percent of its leaf canopy, it’s very likely to die. For more information about reporting EAB, and a comprehensive ash tree management guide, visit the VDOF website. Seen presence of the emerald ash borer? Report it at dof.virginia.gov.

New Study Shows Threats and Opportunities for Virginia’s Coastal Forests

The Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) and the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) released a joint study of the benefits and threats facing Virginia’s coastal forests in the

Resource Review



Coastal forest at York River, Va. (gicinc.org)

study, “Resilient Coastal Forests of Virginia, Overcoming Challenges and Implementing Strategies for a Better Future.” Funded by the USDA Forest Service’s Southern Region, the GIC and VDOF assisted coastal counties and cities with mapping their coastal forests, modeling benefits and evaluating threats they face along with strategies to mitigate or reverse impacts.

The study looks at threats facing forests in an area that includes six of Virginia’s coastal counties, six towns and two cities, totaling 237,501 acres of coastal forestland. Within the study area, 127,939 acres (54%) of coastal

forests are at moderate to high risk from three or more threats. For example, more than 21,000 acres of forests within the study are at high risk from wildfire. While wildfire is a natural event, stressed forests that are weakened by pests or salt are more susceptible to wildfire, allowing fires to burn stronger and cause far more damage, permanently killing trees in some cases. Rising water levels have further exacerbated this by causing a proliferation of the invasive phragmites grass, a potent wildfire fuel source.

On the other hand, Virginia’s coastal forests are providing crucial

benefits. The study found that forests within the study area are capturing nearly 800,000 tons of carbon annually while storing more than 32 million tons—a key strategy for slowing climate change. They are also capturing 2.5 billion gallons of stormwater for every two-inch rainfall event while supporting 330 species of terrestrial vertebrates, 10 federally or state-listed threatened or endangered species, and providing more than \$10 million worth of wood products. These are just some of the many benefits coastal forests provide.

To learn more about this study, the benefits coastal forests provide, the threats they are facing and actions we can take, visit GIC’s website at <http://www.gicinc.org>.

Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours Planned for October

Join landowners, natural resource professionals, and other outdoor lovers in October for day-long tours that explore a variety of sustainable forestry and wildlife management practices. Tours visit private, public, and industry-owned lands. Lunch and travel between stops allow for plenty of fellowship and opportunities to learn from other participants and natural resource professionals. Register for tours and find other upcoming programs for landowners at the Virginia Landowner Education Program website: <https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu/eventscalendar.html>. 🌲



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Thirty Years

by Matt Dowdy, Magazine Editorial Committee

Back in 1992, I graduated from Virginia Tech and became a Forestry Consultant. Returning to Virginia Tech in May 2022 for the Forestry Summit brought back a lot of memories and also highlighted a lot of change that I've seen throughout my career. It also got me thinking about why I became a forester.

As a kid, I was always outside. I was either hunting, fishing, hiking or playing sports such as football. During my junior year of high school, my guidance counselor called me to her office. I thought, "Oh boy, what have I done this time?" As I sat down, she handed me a piece of paper. I could read the words "Forestry Camp" in large letters across the top, and I was intrigued. She said, "This memo just came across my desk, and I immediately thought of you."

At this point, I had no idea what I wanted to do in my life. I had taken a computer programming class in 10th grade. Basic programming was not difficult for me, and my teacher was strongly encouraging me to pursue the computer field. Computers were okay, but I just didn't want an office job. I wanted to work outside. Before this, the only career that interested me that worked outside was carpentry.

My guidance counselor and I worked through the requirements. I had to write an essay describing why I wanted to go to Forestry Camp. Only two students from each county in Maryland were to be selected to attend the camp, so I wrote my essay

and eagerly waited to hear back. Fortunately, I was selected and sponsored to attend by PEPCO (Potomac Edison Power Company).

Forestry Camp in 1987 was basically a career camp. We were introduced to forestry basics such as tree ID, forest measurements, timber stand improvement, silviculture, forest ecology, park management/recreation, stream management, fisheries, soil conservation, wildlife management, tree planting, forest insects/disease, the Chesapeake Bay Initiative, and fire protection.

Forest product introductions included paper and lumber industries and Christmas tree production. Every day highlighted a different career path. I learned that a Forester worked in the woods, and there was a high demand for these jobs. We had foresters, wildlife managers and fisheries biologists come to the camp to teach us about their careers. We even got a chance to tour the Westvaco mill at Luke, Md. and a local sawmill.

I left Forestry Camp knowing that I was to become a forester. I applied to Virginia Tech sight unseen, knowing only that they were in Virginia and that I could earn a forestry degree there. (They also offered in-state tuition to Maryland students since Maryland did not have a forestry degree program).

I have always thought that college taught me the alphabet of forestry. I did not learn to make the words and write my story of forestry until I began my career and gained beneficial experience. My first job out of college as a procurement forester lasted only two short months. I was young and inexperienced and expected to know quite a bit more than I had learned in college. Fortunately, my second job hired me as "legs." I was well trained, and my employers were patient with me. My main duties were marking timber and painting boundary lines. I was an extra set of legs. That was it.

As time went by, more and more duties were given to me. I gained my

employer's trust. I had been hired for "about four to six weeks of work." Seven years later, I was given the opportunity to buy in as a full partner. Seven years after that, I was ready to go out on my own and started Dowdy's Forest & Land Management. I had a vision that I'm still living today.

My advice to young forestry students: Be prepared to be a field forester. Straight out of college, you are legs, pure and simple. You are boots on the ground to get things done. Flag boundary lines, mark timber, and cruise timber. Absorb all the information that you can from folks with more experience. You are starting out as a young seedling that needs to grow to be worth more. Be open minded and work hard.

My advice to employers. Don't expect an entry level forestry student to know everything that we take for granted. As foresters, we are equal parts scientists, business people, sales, communicators, educators, surveyors and lawyers. That is too much to expect from anyone just starting out. Be prepared to be patient, and train the right forester for the job.

My career has spanned almost a full sawtimber rotation of loblolly pine. I have been fortunate to have harvested timber that I had planted in my early years. I am forever thankful to my guidance counselor and all of the professionals who donated their time to change the life of one young high school student.

We spend a lot of time planting seedlings and managing the forest in hopes of harvesting our timber. As an industry, we should place the same emphasis on encouraging young students to become foresters and encouraging their growth in our industry. 🌲

Matt Dowdy is a consulting forester and member of VFA's Magazine Editorial Committee. Opinions expressed in the column are solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect the policies or position of Virginia Forestry Association.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 5.

I call that capital 'A' Advocacy. While that is such a vital part of who we are, I also challenge everyone this year to think about lowercase 'a' advocacy.

Daily advocacy or outreach is inviting a fellow landowner to a VFA meeting or, better yet, paying for their annual membership for a year to see what we're all about. It's volunteering to teach a PLT class or educate a Scout Troop on forestry or paper-making. It's joining a committee in VFA and putting all of your various skills to work for our amazing organization. It's taking a church member, neighbor, or family member who is showing an interest in a career in forestry out in the field with you to show them what your job looks like. It's engaging with someone who may be opposed to active forest management and helping them understand all the positives it brings, and how it contributes to keeping forestlands as forests.

No doubt advocacy is important (and can I put in a plug for donating to the PAC or our Advocacy Fund?), but reaching the

next generation, some who may one day be a VFA President, is also vital to our success and continuation. I would challenge each of us this year to do something to help move VFA forward. There are so many great programs and so much great work being done—we should be proud, and shout it from the roof tops!

The next generation is watching, and they are interested. They want to understand how active forest management can reduce the risk of wildfire and increase carbon sequestration. They want to feel good about how they use their resources. What better way than through active involvement in VFA? Just remember if that former boss hadn't invited me to a Summit all those years ago, I wouldn't be here now. My daughter and favorite little forester is already being educated. I hope you will join me this year in a way that appeals to and is comfortable for you.

Have an amazing summer, and we'll chat again in the fall. 🌲



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