

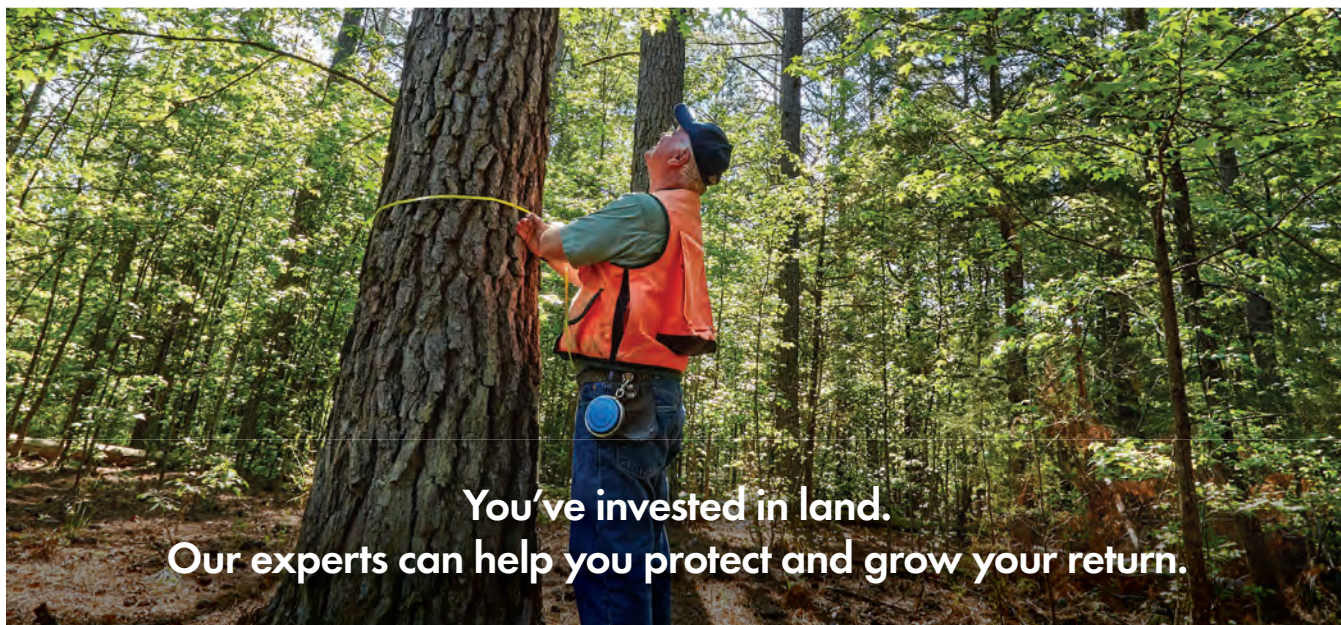
# Virginia Forests

WINTER 2022

## Images & Reflections

2021 PHOTO CONTEST





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## Virginia Forests

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Winter 2022

Volume LXXVII, Number 4

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## IMAGES & REFLECTIONS

### 6 VFA's 2021 Photo Contest Winners

*Briana Chambers, Adam K. Downing, Chris Harris, Jacob Hakizimana, Joshua Housman, Nicole Jehle, Kimberly D. Miller, Dawn Peters, Fred Schatzki, Tanya Sollien, Zoë D. Sumrall, and Owen Wiggans*



### VIRGINIA FLORA

*First Place, Dawn Peters*

I initially encountered this Chinquapin tree, aka Allegheny Chestnut, while on an early September walk near Carter's Bridge in Albemarle County. Two weeks later the Chinquapins opened. I marveled at the contrast between the spiky burs and smooth pearl-like nut. Seldom without a camera, I photographed the image.

Later while researching the Chinquapin tree, I happened upon a historical reference by Captain John Smith, that may be the first documented record of the Chinquapin. In 1612 he wrote, "The Indians have a small fruit growing on little trees, husked like a chestnut, but the fruit most like a very small acorn. This they call Checkinquamins, which they esteem a great daintie."

While Chinquapin nuts are edible, they are difficult to harvest due to sharp burs on the husks and voracious competition from several species of wildlife including woodpeckers, bluejays, squirrels, rabbits, chipmunks, white-tailed deer, turkeys and black bears. In addition to being a valuable food source, the Chinquapin tree provides a larval host for butterflies and a shrubby thicket for habitat cover.

Last but not least, the artistic value of the Chinquapin is manifest!

## FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue VFA showcases the winners of our 2021 photo contest. We had a large number of submissions this year with nearly 80 photos judged, making for stiff competition to select winners in six categories, including: Virginia Landscapes, Virginia Flora, Virginia Fauna, Forest Recreation, New Forests, and Working Forests and Industry. We are grateful to all who participated.

As *Virginia Forests* magazine editor, I was one of five individuals invited to participate in the blind judging designed for the contest. Judges also included Anne Beals, chairperson of VFA's Magazine Committee; Duane Berger, professional photographer residing in Ashland, Va.; Kevin Divins, award-winning amateur photographer and Virginia Master Naturalist; and Cory Swift-Turner, public information specialist with Virginia Department of Forestry. I would like to thank them for the careful attention and consideration they gave in reviewing and scoring the technical and artistic merits of each photo submission. Our deliberation over the entries was insightful, educational and fun!

Congratulations to all those who are featured in the magazine. There is no prize awarded outside of this publication, so every entry starts with the photographer's desire to capture a meaningful view of their world and show their connection to Virginia's forests and natural resources. We are honored to be able to share these images and reflections with our readers for their enjoyment and inspiration.

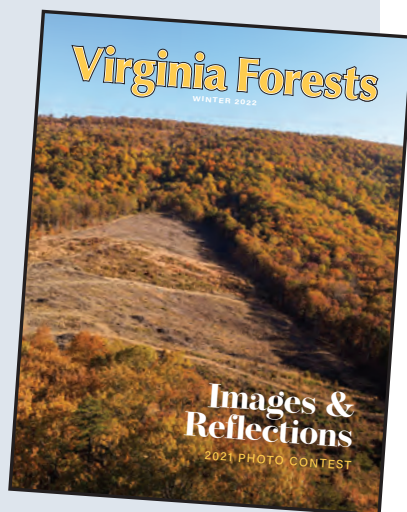
—Lesha Berkel

### ON THE COVER:

#### NEW FORESTS

*First Place, Zoë Sumrall*

Devil's Backbone State Forest (DBSF), located in Shenandoah County, is owned and managed by the Virginia Department of Forestry to achieve multiple-use benefits, including watershed protection, forest management, wildlife habitat, forest recreation, education, and research activities. A stand consisting of Virginia (*Pinus virginiana*), Table Mountain (*Pinus pungens*), and pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) was clear-cut at the DBSF in 2019 and divided into four research plots. Two of these plots are being managed for natural regeneration, and two plots are being converted to shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*); the conversion plots were site-prep sprayed in 2020 and planted with shortleaf pine in 2021.



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## Mean More to More People



Corey Connors

**O**ften, trade associations suffer from a misnomer that all nonprofit organizations should, by nature, be completely reactive and painstakingly deliberate in conducting their business. That may well be true for a handful of well-known and well-established charitable organizations that have engendered good will universally, those precious few groups that have

received unyielding support that endures over prolonged periods of time. There's nothing wrong with that thinking for those types of groups.

But the other 99.99% of nonprofit organizations in the world must work hard to earn the support of their stakeholders. They must work even harder, every year, to grow that support. Against a steady current of complacency, successful organizations must embrace an entrepreneurial spirit and act nimbly to demonstrate value to current and potential members. The programs and services they offer must be both relevant and unique. Metaphorically, it is the difference between keeping a boulder from rolling down the mountain and putting forth the effort to roll it to the top.

VFA has spent the last two years in pseudo-quarantine (and some actual quarantine) stabilizing internal functions to establish a foundation for growth. This work was necessary and hard. Whether through the meticulous consideration of operational best practices or improving the transparency of our functional resources, the infrastructure through which VFA delivers value is stronger than ever. While not necessarily inspirational for external audiences, VFA's metaphorical boulder is stationary.

Now we begin the real fight against gravity.

In my last column, I described the VFA Board's strategic efforts as they pertained to revitalization of our advocacy function. Those investments, both by our volunteer leadership and subsequently by our members through our new Advocacy Fund, have already paid big dividends. Next quarter, I hope to share details of legislative achievements that VFA has proactively scored on behalf of Virginia's forestry community during the 2022 General Assembly session (though you should check out President Shallenberger's column for a sneak preview). But there are

additional elements of VFA's issue-based strategic plan that are just as important to share:

### OBJECTIVE

**Provide meaningful opportunities for volunteers to advance Virginia's forestry community through direct engagement with VFA programs and services.**

Volunteer leadership is the lifeblood of any successful organization. Associations are reliant on volunteers to lend perspective and to provide the insight necessary to ensure that an association's programs and services are genuinely valued by members. Unfortunately, when a committee or council lacks a well-defined purpose and nothing gets accomplished, volunteers disengage and are left with a sour taste towards an organization. Taking time away from family and from work to serve without clear outcomes becomes tedious, meaningless, and easy to avoid.

In the coming months, VFA will convene a task group of select Board, Advisory Council, and other VFA members to improve our existing volunteer leadership structure. The goal is to create opportunities for meaningful engagement, wherein the time that a volunteer spends away from other priorities is valued, efficient, and produces actual results. Just as important, it is hoped that this structure would help current leaders more easily identify the next generation of servant leaders from our terrific community.

### OBJECTIVE

**Bridge the divide between rural and urban Virginia to broaden understanding of forest resources as a driver of ecological, economic, and social prosperity that benefits all Virginians.**

While an audacious objective, the urban-rural divide is an issue that is front of mind for many throughout our community. I have lost count of the number of times a conversation with a member has landed on the subject. There are many examples in Virginia and across the country in recent years that speak to an underlying disconnect between urban and rural America. Obviously VFA does not exist to solve all the world's problems. But we can certainly do a better job of building bridges by communicating our great story.

Our goals under this objective are simple and two-fold. First, we will look to work with experts in our membership



that have experience in public relations to help us refine our collateral and online presence. The goal would be to increase free media exposure of VFA and its members while also increasing our visibility on existing communications platforms (newsletter, website, social media). Second, we will engage more intentionally in the evolving discussion about urban forestry in the Commonwealth. This is another policy area on which I hope to report progress at the end of this General Assembly session.

#### OBJECTIVE

**Advantage VFA member businesses over non-member competitors by equipping them with tools to overcome challenges in an increasingly challenging business climate.**

This objective speaks to how the best trade organizations distinguish themselves amongst peers. Not through

disparagement of those other groups, but by better understanding the needs of a community then taking the requisite action to meet those needs. As your Board can attest, I am fond of saying that running a successful trade association is not rocket science ... and that if it were, I couldn't do it. Fundamentally, it is as simple as: "ask, understand, do."

In the coming year, we will "ask" both members and non-member stakeholders if our current programs and services are meeting the Virginia forestry community's greatest needs. We will review your feedback to "understand" what keeps you up at night. Finally, we will utilize that feedback to "do," refining VFA's existing programs to better meet those needs while examining new programming in which we hope you will find greater value. This is what it means to be a mission-driven, member-centric organization.

Enough with words. Time for action. 🌱

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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

# Advocacy New Initiatives in 2022

A new year has begun, and change is in the air. Therefore, it seems appropriate to mention some of the many new things that are on the horizon for 2022. In November, Virginia citizens voted a full slate of Republicans into office: Governor Glenn Youngkin; Winsome Sears, the first female, African American Lieutenant Governor; and Jason Miyares, Attorney General. Along with a Republican sweep of these offices, many more key political appointments in state government are in transition or have been made, including Virginia's new Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matthew Lohr. As a result, there are new dynamics in state government and the 2022 General Assembly.



Scott Shallenberger

VFA is now fully staffed, with each staff member settled into their respective roles and fully engaged in their areas of expertise. Over the past two years, foundations for financial stability and future revenue growth have been laid by Executive Director Corey Connors and our Board of Directors. A chart of accounts has been established to track revenues and costs so that mid-year course corrections, if needed, can be easily made. VFA's foundations are strong and are ready to be built upon.

**The groundwork has been laid and a strategic course charted for VFA to assume a leadership role in the discussion of forestry and the environment in Virginia.**

Last year VFA's Strategic Plan was updated to address the organization's priorities for the next two years. Goals were established, and an action plan was put in place to achieve those objectives. Flowing from this strategic plan was a vision to enhance VFA's influence and advocacy for Virginia's forestry and forest products community. The VFA Board created a new VFA Advocacy Fund to complement our VAForestPAC which already provides contributions to candidates in public office. VFA's new Advocacy Fund was created to solicit contributions from individuals and corporations to support a comprehensive government affairs program focusing on education and lobbying.

One of the first bold steps VFA took was to retain a prominent lobbying firm, Advantus Strategies, to assist us in the current General Assembly. VFA's plan is to be proactive and, to use a football analogy, to keep our offense out on the field. It's time to stop always being reactive and give the defense a rest. The groundwork has been laid and a strategic course charted for VFA to assume a leadership role in the discussion of forestry and the environment in Virginia. During the current General Assembly, VFA led the charge

*—continued on page 28*







# Images & Reflections



## **VIRGINIA LANDSCAPES**

*First Place, Fred Schatzki*

Thunderstorms have captured my interest for as long as I can remember. Bolts of lightning, towering clouds, torrential downpours, they all speak to the power and fury that develops when a little heat, a little moisture, and some convective lifting works its magic on our atmosphere. This drone shot, taken in Louisa County, shows three distinct storm cells moving across Albemarle County. The falling rain, the setting sun glinting off towering clouds, sunbeams piercing the sky, all combine to show the power and majesty of our Virginia weather.





## VIRGINIA LANDSCAPES

*Second Place, Kimberly D. Miller*

Sunrise at Leesylvania State Park, Prince William County near the boat ramp.

## VIRGINIA LANDSCAPES

*Third Place, Nicole Jehle*

A small stream meandering through grey rocks and into the lush forest in Shenandoah National Park.







## VIRGINIA FLORA

*Third Place, Tanya Sollien*

This impressive vibrant yellow-orange mushroom was spotted growing on a stump in Bluefield, Virginia. It's nearly dinner plate size, and its magnificent colors were quite a shock. Having never seen such a specimen, I did some research and discovered a plethora of information about this mushroom. This fungus, *laetiporus sulphureus*, is commonly referred to as "Chicken of the Woods" because many people seem to think it tastes like, of course, "chicken." Despite the numerous recipes available for preparing this mushroom, caution must be taken to make certain it is harvested correctly, prepared properly, and cooked thoroughly.

## VIRGINIA FLORA

*Second Place, Fred Schatzki*

Common, ordinary things, seen from a different perspective, give new insight into the wonders that surround us every day. The Common Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), bane of groundskeepers everywhere, is really quite an amazing plant. Their leaves make excellent salad greens, tea made from the leaves serves as a diuretic, and yellow dyes can be obtained from the flowers. Shot from directly overhead with a macro lens and tripod, this perspective on what many consider a weed shows us that nature's grandeur can be found in the most ordinary of places.

## VIRGINIA FAUNA

*Second Place, Joshua Housman*

Brown Thrashers, sometimes called a Brown Thrush or Fox-colored Thrush, are one of my favorite kinds of birds to see locally. Something about their color, pattern and bright yellow eyes draws my attention more than other birds. Brown Thrashers can be 9.3-12 in. (23.5-30.5cm) long and weigh 2.2-3.1 oz. (61-89g). Male Brown Thrashers sing more songs than any other bird in North America. They can sing more than 1,100 different songs. It's always a joy to see them hopping around on the ground and flying from branch to branch in the forest. This particular picture was taken in my backyard. I had my camera and was taking pictures of birds that were coming to the bush. It came to the bush and started screaming at a Brown-headed Cowbird, who was also in the



bush, so I quickly snapped a picture. Brown Thrashers are aggressive nest defenders. They will chase off snakes, cats, dogs and even people if they feel their nest is threatened. They've even been known to draw blood. They can be seen year-round in southeastern Virginia and in northern and western Virginia during the breeding season. They migrate short distances and at night. Photography has become a wonderful passion of mine. It has truly opened my eyes to the beauty and complexity of nature.



## VIRGINIA FAUNA

*First Place, Fred Schatzki*

The Ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) is Virginia's smallest avian species, weighing in around 3.8 grams. These amazing creatures migrate vast distances, commonly flying in excess of 1,500 miles to overwinter in Mexico and Central America. Many fly 900 miles non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico to reach the Yucatan Peninsula. Fiercely territorial, males defend sources of nectar with stunning feats of aerial acrobatics. I caught this female coming into a hover near a feeder in the back yard; wings swept forward to stop motion and tail fanned for stability. Photographing hummingbirds requires patience, long lenses, and fast shutter speeds; anyone who has tried will tell you they're often gone before you can get the shot.



## VIRGINIA FAUNA

*Third Place, Briana Chambers –  
Scavenged Scavenger*

I took this picture on one of my nature walks. At first, I wanted to take a photo that showed nature's beauty so that I could show my love for it. Then I saw something on the side of the trail, a raccoon's skull. I had no idea why, but the skull drew me in. Maybe it was the fact that plants, trees, and birds were all around me alive, and right in front of me was a skull of a dead animal surrounded by decaying leaves. It made me realize something: people tend to always look for the beauty in nature and focus on it so much so that we tend to ignore the ugly that exists on the sidelines. However, that ugly, the death, is what fuels and helps the beauty of nature grow, and to ignore it is like ignoring the artist behind the painting. So, I wanted this photo to be the ugly—the artist in full view, no longer on the sidelines—so that maybe, just maybe, others are encouraged to look for the ugly.

## FOREST RECREATION

*Second Place, Owen Wiggans*

My sister looking out for bird species while on a walk one sunny afternoon at Yorktown Battlefields, Yorktown, Va.







## FOREST RECREATION

*First Place, Adam Downing – Of Knees, Swamps and Boys*

Just a few years ago, it seems, my son was “knee high” and now he’s nearly as tall as me. Here, among the cypress knees in a bottomland forest swamp it can look the same in every direction and easy to get lost. We had a good guide and could just enjoy the float. As I ponder his future, I pray that I and others will serve as dependable guides through the swamps and obstacles of life and that he will notice the beauty as he goes. Keep smiling son, even when you may feel lost and seek wisdom from your creator and from those who have gone before.

## FOREST RECREATION

*Third Place, Jacob Hakizimana*

I shot this photo on a hike up in the Shenandoah Mountains. I was walking along the trail and saw the composition potential at that moment. I love when you can capture a natural moment in a photo; the image is authentic. The way she is looking ahead at the path and how the light (coming from the left) gives her a clear highlight on her sweater and hair, specifically stood out to me. Not only that, but the path ahead and the surroundings give you a feel of the environment and a clear direction to look to. It was an unexpected marvel for sure.

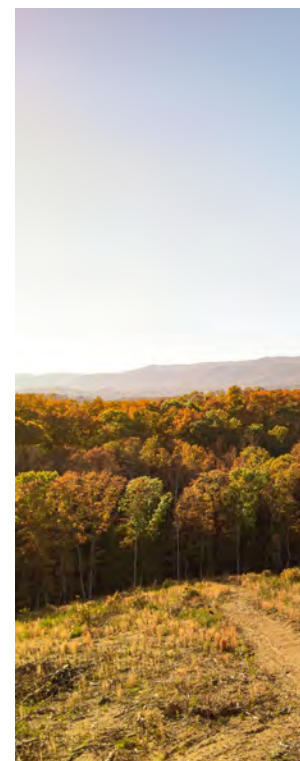






## WORKING FORESTS & INDUSTRY

*Second Place, Chris Harris*



Saturday is the favorite day of the week for most working folks, but occasionally Saturdays are a little different for loggers. Monday through Friday crew members and truck drivers typically leave their homes by 4:4:30 a.m. and don't get back until after most folks have already eaten supper. They work hard all week, and Saturday is a welcomed day of rest and relaxation with their families ... except when it's not! When mills are running low on wood and open on Saturdays loggers step up to get them that needed wood, using the opportunity to earn an extra day of bonus wages for their own families.

This picture came from one such Saturday in Dinwiddie County on June 19, 2021 at 6:33 a.m. The first round of trucks had already been loaded and were headed to the mill as the sun rose above Pinecrest Job 3. The loader operator is processing the wood being dropped off by a skidder and preparing it so that he can load the trucks quickly when they return. I love how the silhouette of the operator is framed by the cab, and the sun is framed by the loader grapple and boom. It reminds me of the work ethic, dedication, teamwork, and the passion these guys in the woods and on the roads share.





## WORKING FORESTS & INDUSTRY

*First Place, Fred Schatzki*

As a consulting forester with American Forest Management, I have fantastic opportunities to combine my love for photography with my duties in managing client lands. Drones have revolutionized harvest inspections; in a matter of minutes a site can be flown to determine logging progress and to identify areas requiring closer “boots on the ground” evaluation. Shot while inspecting an NIPF timber sale in Louisa County, I was struck by the symmetry of these 80- to 90-foot long bunches of mature pine, staged for skidder pickup. The herringbone layout draws one’s eye and creates a static reference to a dynamic operation.



## WORKING FORESTS & INDUSTRY

*Third Place, Zoë Sumrall*

Devil’s Backbone State Forest (DBSF), located in Shenandoah County, is owned and managed by the Virginia Department of Forestry to achieve multiple-use benefits, including watershed protection, forest management, wildlife habitat, forest recreation, education, and research activities. This view overlooks the uppermost natural regeneration plot within the research area. In the background is the George Washington National Forest and Paddy Mountain, with Paddy Gap slightly revealing the ridge of Great North Mountain to its west.





## NEW FORESTS

*Second Place, Fred Schatzki*

Captured here is a restoration effort in Fairfax County for the Northern Hardpan Basic Oak-Hickory forest, a globally rare natural community. Occurring on shrink-swell soils, this forest type experiences ponded water during wet periods and extremely low soil moisture during droughts. This highly variable moisture regime leads to stunted, open-canopy trees with a diverse herbaceous community in the sunlit forest floor. I was struck by the afternoon sun, ranks of tree shelters, and cerulean skies and thought it made a fine example of the work being done in the Commonwealth to restore imperiled forest types.



## NEW FORESTS

*Third Place, Jacob Hakizimana*

This is my favorite submission. My friend Solan and I decided to stage and shoot photos during a fall community service project. While raking leaves, Solan thought of this idea to symbolize autumn by raking the “falling leaves” It was our way of helping our community, and we wanted to photograph that. After the day was over we agreed to joint ownership of each photo and this one turned out better than I could have imagined.





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## VIRGINIA CHAPTER ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING FORESTERS

### Visual Communication

**H**umanity has been dreaming of and developing new forms of communication since time immemorial. Early on, we discovered that something as simple as an image can convey vast amounts of information, often information that's very difficult to express any other way. Cave paintings were one of the earliest forms of non-verbal communication, pre-dating modern times by 64,000 years. Throughout history artists have used their skill and imagination to convey information: Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel, Da Vinci and Mona Lisa, Van Gogh and The Starry Night, all give the viewer an immediate recognition (if not understanding!) of the artist's message.

Along about 1822 a Frenchman named Nicéphore Niepce created the first photo etching. Louis Daguerre later developed an improved process using silver halides leading to modern versions of film. Today photography, literally "drawing with light," is dominated by digital cameras with their electronic sensors, but the basic concept of affixing an image to a static medium is unchanged.

What does this mean for us as members of the forestry community in general and consulting foresters in particular? It means we can express ourselves more accurately and concisely than we would ever be able to do through words or speech. We can show the public what we do. We can help them understand how important forestry is for them and the lives they lead. We can show our clients the results of that thinning job, or how that prescribed burn improves the forest, or the growth of those pine trees they planted last year. Furthermore, we can do it with exceptionally advanced yet universally available technology we all carry in our pockets, the common smartphone. Sometimes the message we want to convey is "isn't that pretty?" (you'll see many fine examples in the pages you're reading right now!). Sometimes it is the result of our work, but the powerful tool of visual communication through photography crosses all concepts, all cultures, all boundaries, and brings us together in a shared understanding. 🌲

*The Executive Committee of the Virginia Chapter ACF*



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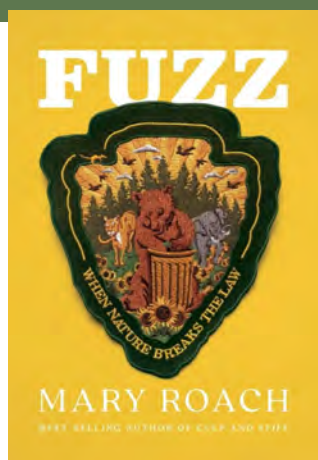
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# FUZZ

## When Nature Breaks the Law

by Mary Roach

Reviewed by David Anderton,  
Magazine Editorial Committee

**W**hen I first decided to review *Fuzz – When Nature Breaks the Law*, I was uncertain what this book was all about. After opening the first page and seeing other titles by the author, I had a bit of a clue. These titles include: *Gulp – Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*; *Stiff – The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*, and several others. Quirky was the descriptor that came to mind.

Roach does take each topic seriously and obviously puts in the time doing extensive research and conducting one-on-one interviews with experts in the field. In the case of this book, that means interviews in academic and office settings, as well as, out in the literal fields (and forests) where the “crimes” take place. Crimes (the commission of a forbidden act or the failure to act as

commanded by public law), of course are not technically committed by non-humans. That does not stop humans from hiring individuals to address and try and to rectify situations where there is conflict (“crimes”) between humans and the rest of the natural world.

These situations run the gamut from bears that terrorize campgrounds and occasionally kill humans, “widow maker” trees that sometimes fall on the unsuspecting national park visitor, or elephants that from time-to-time stomp a farmer in India, to monkeys that steal cell phones to trade with humans for food and all varieties of other human aggravators like mice, rats, raccoons, sea gulls, and the list goes on.

The chapters focus on well documented specific instances of “crimes,” the background leading up

to the incident, the various individuals hired to address that and other similar situations, and the multiple attempts to bring “justice” to those situations. As you can imagine, these “crimes” take place where the wildland-urban interface is active. Most are just the result of plants and animals doing what they do best—trying to survive, but things go awry when encounters with humans do not end well for the humans. The individuals hired to find solutions to these situations are caught between their understanding and benevolence towards the perpetrators and the need to protect human life and property. The lengths to which these individuals go to find a satisfactory conclusion are what this book is all about. And the range of tolerance afforded the “criminals” and benign “sentencing” assigned in some societies compared to others is heartening.

The book is often humorous, and the documentation of the lengths that humans go to in order to fix a problem that they created in the first place sometimes gives you pause. It’s an easy read and not preachy or prescriptive, but I think the author hopes it may shine a light on how we humans evaluate our place and interactions with the non-human world. 🌲

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# THE LOGROLL

## Notes & News for Loggers

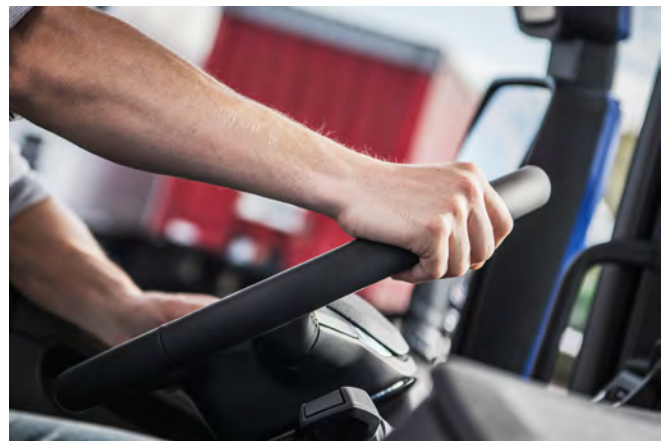
### New Driver Training Requirements and Other Updates

by Scott Barrett, Ph.D.

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

**A** new driver training requirement is now in place. As of February 7, 2022, any new Commercial Driver's License (CDL) applicant must complete an approved Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) program. This new driver training program includes information on basic commercial vehicle operation, safety procedures, advanced operating procedures, vehicle systems and reporting malfunctions, as well as other non-driving activities. This requirement applies to new drivers or drivers who want to add an additional endorsement to their license, such as adding a hazardous material endorsement, or if they want to upgrade their CDL, such as from Class A to Class B. Before they can take the DMV road skill test, prospective CDL drivers must now complete the ELDT as well as the behind the wheel training that was previously required. There are a limited number of exemptions to the ELDT requirement that can be found on the Virginia DMV website (<https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#eldt.asp>). Additional information is also available on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) website (<https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license/entry-level-driver-training-eldt>).

Qualified and safe truck drivers are essential to the forest industry. In order to facilitate driver training for those involved in the forest industry, TEAM Safe Trucking ([www.TEAMsafetrucking.com](http://www.TEAMsafetrucking.com)) developed a forest industry specific ELDT program. This program was developed and reviewed by professionals that are familiar with the forest industry, and the training adds additional focus to some of the challenges and issues specific to trucking for the forest industry. The training is offered online and can be accessed through a computer or mobile device with an internet connection. Training modules can be completed at any time and can be self-paced. After completing all required modules, the training site provides verification that the



prospective CDL driver has completed the ELDT requirement. Through a partnership with Greif, Weyerhaeuser, Virginia Forestry Association, Virginia Loggers Association, and the SHARP Logger Program, prospective CDL drivers in the forest industry can complete the TEAM Safe Trucking ELDT at no cost. If you know of new drivers that would like to use the TEAM Safe trucking ELDT they can contact Scott Barrett with the SHARP Logger Program or Anne Taylor at VFA to find out more details on registration for the training program.

There are two other upcoming events to put on your calendar. Virginia Tech is looking forward to hosting the Forestry Summit in Blacksburg from May 3-5. We are planning a great meeting with a lot of involvement from Virginia Tech faculty to showcase the university's forestry-related programs. The East Coast Sawmill and Logging Equipment Exposition—EXPO Richmond 2022—will be held May 20-21, 2022. We will have our SHARP Logger booth at the EXPO again this year. We plan to offer continuing education credits for attendance and also plan to offer the required SHARP Logger update in person at the EXPO. We hope to see you at these events. 🌲





## Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation Update

# A Partnership for Youth and Nature VFEF and Holiday Lake 4-H Education Center

by Preston R. Willson



**F**or 25 years, Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center has been providing Natural Resource Education (NRE) programs to thousands of area youth. The 4-H Center's area includes 17 counties in Central/Southside Virginia as well as the cities of Charlottesville and Lynchburg. Since 1996 students from public, private, and at-home schools have participated in their NRE programs held at the Center and in their schools as well as through virtual learning during COVID-19. The Center's mission is to "improve the quality of life through educating youth and adults in a natural setting," which they have been doing for 80 years.

The 4-H Center, with grant assistance from outside sources over the years, has employed a Natural Resource Education (NRE) Coordinator. Since COVID-19, many of these outside funding sources have disappeared (due to other funding focuses), and there was concern about how the Center would be able to continue this essential program. Hence, they looked to Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation (VFEF) for partnership that would align with the foundation's mission to "support youth education promoting sustainable forests for the environmental, social, and economic benefit of all Virginians" and help the 4-H Center continue its Natural Resource Education program.

Today, VFEF is providing the necessary funding to continue and maintain a Natural Resource Education NRE Coordinator position for year-round education at Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center. The coordinator is responsible for providing daily hands-on educational activities related to natural resources management. The primary goal of the NRE program is to provide positive youth development in an outdoor setting, and Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center's location in the Appomattox/Buckingham State Forest lends itself perfectly to the goal of educating youth about the value and sustainability of our natural resources.






Forests cover about one-third of the earth's land area and are essential to the health of our environment. Teaching youth holistically about the environment and how forests influence the environment's soil, water retention and erosion, floods, animal life, and human life is essential to promoting sustainable forests.

All of the 4-H Center's NRE curricula are correlated with the Virginia Standards of Learning on natural sciences, life sciences, life-skill development, and leadership development. The NRE program places emphasis on developing awareness and appreciation of the natural environment by



providing opportunities to develop basic scientific analysis methods and observational skills in each subject area. The Center teaches stewardship, increases awareness of current environmental issues, and assists teachers and other educators in conducting NRE-based programs.

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](http://www.vfef.net).



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# TREE FARM ASSESSMENT

## Virginia's Landscape Management Plan

by Terry Godwin, Virginia Tree Farm Foundation Board of Directors

**A** Landscape Management Plan (LMP) is a credible, third-party-approved forest management plan written for an entire region instead of an individual parcel of land. In Virginia the new LMP will cover the forestland east of Hwy. 29 all the way to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic. If Hwy. 29 runs through a county, the entire county is covered under this LMP. We hope to expand the LMP to cover the entire state in the coming year.

The purpose of the LMP is to reduce barriers to certification for forest landowners. The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) has recognized that the cost of a management plan can be a barrier to some landowners, and the hope is that the LMP will help. A traditional individual forest management plan can take a forester days or even weeks to prepare when plans are needed for large woodlands or multiple tracts. With Virginia's LMP, landowners still receive a customized plan of action and guidance from their forester about how to manage their forests, but the time and paperwork required to produce this plan are significantly reduced.

The LMP considers the entire forest ecosystem across a region and prioritizes conservation needs such as wildlife habitat, species biodiversity, and clean water supply. It pulls from geospatial databases and the latest research and scientific data from local, state, and federal agencies. This approach offers a cost-effective mechanism for coordi-



nating landscape-scale conservation priorities, by consolidating multiple landowner efforts toward larger conservation goals.

The first LMP was developed in 2018 by American Forest Foundation in partnership with multiple agencies, academic institutions, conservation organizations, associations, and industry stakeholders. The original version included 16 counties covering the northern third of Florida. Today the Florida LMP includes the entire state. The LMP for Alabama was launched in 2019, and additional LMPs were completed in 2020 in Arkansas, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina.

The Virginia LMP will be hosted on the Virginia Tree Farm Foundation web site at [vtff.org](http://vtff.org). Landowners, with assistance from an ATFS-certified forester/inspector, can use the LMP as a foundation for a management plan. The forester will then meet with the landowner and walk the property. This meeting will also help determine the landowners' goals and collect stand-level data for the new management plan. The forester can then document the different forest stands, develop a map, and set out a plan of action based on landowner objectives.

The Virginia Tree Farm Foundation has a goal of having the LMP available on the website for use in early 2022. We will also work towards training inspectors to use the LMP. It is a goal to get the remainder of the Commonwealth under the LMP as funding becomes available. 🌲




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# RESOURCE REVIEW

## Lohr Appointed Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Governor Glenn Youngkin appointed Matthew J. Lohr as Virginia's 5th Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry.

"I'm honored to serve on Governor Youngkin's cabinet as Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, representing two of the Commonwealth's top three largest private industries. I have been passionate about agriculture my entire life and enjoying advocating for it, whether it's through my work on the family farm, my seat in the House of Delegates, or as a state and federal official," said Secretary Lohr. "I am excited to join Governor Youngkin in imple-



menting his vision to grow these industries, create new jobs, expand foreign and domestic export markets, encourage

sustainable land management, and improve access to broadband, especially in rural areas of the Commonwealth."

Secretary Lohr was raised on a Virginia century family farm in the Shenandoah Valley. As a fifth-generation farmer, he continues to work for the betterment of the agricultural industry and rural America. He developed his passion for public service and agricultural policy while serving as both a state and national Future Farmers of America officer before graduating from Virginia Tech with a B.S. degree in agricultural education.

For the past two years, Secretary Lohr has served as the Chief of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. He previously served in the Virginia House of Delegates, from 2006-2010, before being appointed as Commissioner of VDACS. He has also served as Director of the Farm Credit Knowledge Center, taught middle school agri-science, operated his own leadership development company, and currently serves as President of Valley Pike Farm, Inc., his family's farming operation.

## Howell is State Executive Director for USDA FSA in Virginia

The Biden Administration recently appointed Dr. Ronald Howell, Jr. as the new State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Virginia Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Howell comes to this new position with more than 12 years of professional experience in higher education, state, and federal government. In summer 2018, he began his tenure as the Director of Operations and

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## Resource Review



Dr. Ronald J. Howell, Jr.

Management in the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University. In this capacity, he oversees day-to-day operations of the College and the university's Randolph Farm. He also carries an administrative appointment in the Department of Agriculture and serves as a faculty instructor, teaching courses in agriculture education and mechanization.

Previously, Dr. Howell served as the Special Assistant/Advisor for Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives to the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, in the Office of Virginia Governors McAuliffe and Northam, respectively. Across the Commonwealth, he worked to strengthen outreach efforts as well as minority and limited resourced producers' participation in USDA and state-based agricultural and conservation programs. Additionally, he provided recommendations for

the Virginia Farm Business Development Program (VFBD) and the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Program.

As SED, Dr. Howell will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of FSA programs to agricultural producers in Virginia. These commodity, conservation, credit, and disaster assistance programs ensure a safe, affordable, abundant, and nutritious food, fiber, and fuel supply for consumers.

### 2022 Camp Woods & Wildlife Applications Open

Teens are invited to apply now for the 2022 Camp Woods & Wildlife, formerly known as Holiday Lake Forestry Camp. The 74th annual camp will be held June 20-24 at Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center near Appomattox. This action-packed camp is hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry, with support and cooperation from other conservation agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals.

"Camp Woods & Wildlife is a unique, field-based learning experience that introduces campers to natural resource careers," said Camp Coordinator Ellen Powell. "Our natural classroom is the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest."

—continued on page 25



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- Education on forestry issues and topics affecting members during the annual Virginia Forestry Summit.
- Connection to members with similar interests, policy makers, and industry leaders through VFA's annual membership directory and networking opportunities at VFA events.
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- Support of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® and Virginia SFI Implementation Committee, the Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation, the American Tree Farm System and Virginia Tree Farm Foundation, Log-A-Load for Kids, and Project Learning Tree.

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for forestry in Virginia.**



## Resource Review

—continued from page 23

Classes cover topics such as wildlife habitat, tree identification, forest ecology, responsible timber harvesting, reforestation, mapping, and environmental protection. Campers also take part in exploratory classes, natural resource presentations, and a Lumberjack Field Day.

Applicants must be Virginia residents 13-16 years old with good academic standing, have an interest in natural resources, and must not have attended this camp before.

Financial sponsorship is generously provided by forest industries, conservation agencies, associations and individuals. As a result, every camper selected to attend receives a scholarship and pays only \$85 to attend the week-long residential camp.

Interested students should visit the Camp Woods & Wildlife page (<https://dof.virginia.gov/education-and-recreation/youth-education/camp-woods-wildlife/>) for an application. A non-related adult who knows of the student's interest must complete the nominator section and submit the application by April 15.

For more information, please contact Ellen Powell at 434.987.0475 or [ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov).

### Landowner Education: Planning for Generation NEXT



Landowners are invited to join the Generation NEXT Team and experienced conservation, legal, and financial advisors, for a Generation NEXT educational program on May 5 at the Inn at Virginia Tech. The program agenda and registration will be available six weeks prior to the event.

Forests and farmland are valued for multiple reasons such as wildlife, privacy, recreation, timber, hunting, and scenery. The cost of not planning and future tax burdens may put your land's ownership in jeopardy. If you don't plan, the government will plan for you. By researching and planning ahead of time, you can ensure your wishes are met and minimize the financial costs and emotional challenges while securing your woodland legacy.

Engaging the next generation in the care and enjoyment of your land helps ensure a smooth and successful transition to keep your land intact, in forest and in the family. Legacy planning is the broader effort that not only encompasses the typical estate plan, but also articulates the family goals and ways to involve the next generation.

Virginia's Generation NEXT program, a collaboration between Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Department of Forestry, is an outreach program specifically designed to help family forestland owners make informed and intentional decisions regarding passing their land forward to the next generation. Contact Karen Snape, [ksnape@vt.edu](mailto:ksnape@vt.edu) for more information. 🌿


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# A Season for Reflection

by Matt Dowdy, Magazine Editorial Committee

I'm sitting here in my office gazing out upon the white fallen snow of our second snow storm in 2022, with a third possible snow storm making the First Alert Weather forecast. It is hard to believe that just three weeks ago, we were in a dry, warm weather pattern, worried about January mill quotas and a dry spring planting season.

The first storm took me by surprise. Sunday was warm, almost in the 70s. But by Monday morning, the snow was falling sideways in almost whiteout conditions and with 50 mph wind gusts. Just a few hours later, I was sitting in the dark, waiting for our power to come back on. That wait lasted for six days.

During that outage, I had a lot of time to reflect. In my first 20 years as a forester, forest management seemed pretty consistent and predictable. Loblolly pine was managed on a 40-year rotation with two intermediate thinnings prior to a clear-cut. That harvest plan maximized large pine sawtimber, and at the time, mills paid a premium for large trees. The bigger the better. Now? Not so much. Changes in markets and pricing now dictate a desirable loblolly pine sawtimber 12- to 18-inches in diameter, the perfect size for decking boards, but not too big for the mills to handle efficiently. I never thought I'd hear these words from a procurement forester: "That timber is too big. I'm not interested."

There have been other market changes affecting 20-year-old loblolly pine markets. In the past, those plantations were predominantly pulpwood material sold to the paper mills. Over the course of time, additional market changes have affected pricing within those 20-year-old stands. We have experienced new OSB mills, fence post mills, biomass markets, chip-n-saw mills, and several paper mill closures.

When writing management plans for 20-year-old loblolly pine plantations today, I need to address the following concerns for landowners.

**Location.** Where is the tract located? What is the distance to the closest paper mill? Do I have more

than one paper mill to sell my timber? Do I have alternate markets such as fence posts or chip-n-saw? Is there an available sawtimber market for a future, final clear-cut at age 35? A 20-year-old pine plantation in Culpeper County is managed much differently than one in Brunswick County due to paper mill competition and haul distance to the closest mills.

**Logging accessibility and ground conditions.** Is it wintertime logging located on the side of the road? Pine pulpwood prices have a much greater variability than there seemed to be in the past with prices paid based upon the number of months out of the year that the timber may be harvested. I've seen prices for summertime logging conditions (a three-month harvesting window) as much as half of what a tract with wintertime harvesting conditions (12-month harvesting) would command. A lower-valued summertime tract of pine pulpwood may be best suited for a thinning to grow pine sawtimber. The same timber on the side of the road that could be logged in the winter may generate a high enough price to justify a clear-cut at age 20.

**Rotation.** There is no longer a typical loblolly pine rotation in my management plans. The only constants are the biological factors. Keep your loblolly pine growing at optimal stocking levels between the basal areas of 60- to 120-square feet for maximum growth. Maintain forest health with a live crown ratio of at least one-third total crown height in tree canopy to support healthy growth. Don't grow "lollipop" trees as I like to call them, with all stem and small crowns. We don't manage palm trees in Louisa. All other decisions depend upon market variability and landowner's objectives.

**Markets.** Hardwood markets appear to be more consistent long term; however, they may have substantial variability in the short term. As above, tract location, available sawmill competition and logging accessibility are very important. Hardwood markets are more dependent on the world market and overall economy. For example, a couple of years ago, the tariffs with China caused Red Oak prices to plummet. They have since rebounded since the tariffs loosened up. I also seem to notice hardwood prices loosely follow a two-year cycle. Maybe that's just me, but I think that trend follows available stumpage to the market fairly closely. I, like most consultants, tend to advise my clients to sell when the markets are good and hold when it appears to be low, thus perpetuating this trend. Most timber sales are sold on a two-year harvesting contract. When prices are high, I've seen an over-supply of available hardwood stumpage. Once the stumpage supply becomes saturated, buyers who have purchased a large inventory of stumpage may become less aggressive or more specific on what they bid on. Once they harvest those contracts and get low in inventory, buyers will again become aggressive in pricing.

**Reforestation** is another area where I have seen my recommendations change over time. In the early part of my career, almost every clear-cut was advised to reforest with loblolly pine. With changing loblolly pine markets, I'm now practicing



real forestry again. Evaluating soil quality, watching current timber markets as well as trying to anticipate future timber markets, go hand-in-hand along with my landowner's objectives. For example, I have recommended natural hardwood regeneration on a mature loblolly pine stand that was recently harvested. Portions of the stand had a higher-than-average hardwood component. This recommendation suited the landowner's objective and was silviculturally sound. Recent regeneration inspections showed evidence of diverse, quality hardwood regeneration. Loblolly pine management is focused in holding the forest in a pioneer stage of natural succession. On my property, I recently performed a heavy first thinning (under a basal area of 60) on my 20-year-old loblolly pine plantation. This was prescribed to increase wildlife habitat and diversity. In my long-term plans, I hope to allow portions of this stand to naturally transition to hardwoods.

Some tracts are also just too small in size to manage effectively for intensive forest practices. If I can't effectively manage a 10-acre pine stand today, I see no reason to plant one to manage in 20 years. Those tracts work well with hardwood management that is longer in scope and less intensive.

We have been living in our house for 17 years, and I can't recall being without power for more than two nights. I expected to have power back sooner, and although I had a plan for a two-day power outage, I was not well prepared

for six days. As my wife and I begin to revise our future emergency plans, I will be planning on the unexpected and maintaining a more flexible plan— just like in my forest management plans. Be both flexible and practical in your management decisions. 🌲

*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](mailto: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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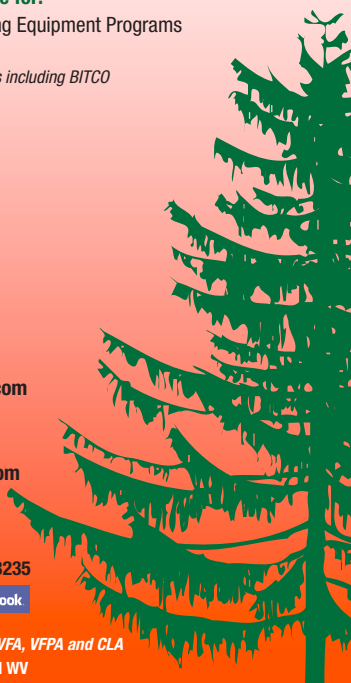
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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 5.**

on the introduction of HB180-SB184 Forest Sustainability Fund, which promotes the adoption and retention of forest land use taxation across the Commonwealth. In addition, VFA is moving forward Hardwood Tax Credit legislation that provides a tax credit for landowners who participate in the Dept. of Forestry's Hardwood Initiative. At the time of writing this column, the outcome of these pieces of legislation is not known, but we are moving towards the goal! In 2022, watch for more opportunities to participate in new events, tours and advocacy.

Another exciting opportunity is fast approaching. The 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit is slated for May 3-5 in Blacksburg, Virginia. The Summit Planning Committee is putting together a slate of great speakers as well as wonderful opportunities for networking with Virginia's forestry community. This year's Forestry Summit is being held for the first time in Blacksburg at The Inn and Skelton Conference Center at Virginia Tech. Look for registration to open in early March and plan to attend.

As you can see, VFA's future is bright, and we are well positioned to be a strong voice for the forestry community in Virginia throughout 2022 and beyond. Partner with us and be an advocate for forestry in our Commonwealth! 🌲

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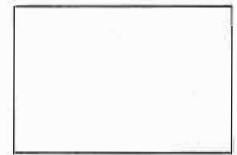
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