



## Audrey Zink-Sharp

Professor and Interim Head  
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Audrey Zink-Sharp was appointed interim head of the **Department of Wood Science and Forest Products** at Virginia Tech in July 2009. She has been on the faculty since 1992, rising through the academic ranks to professor in 2005, serving as assistant department head (2006-08), and associate department head (2008-09). As associate department head, she prepared a department graduate student policy and procedures manual, restructured undergraduate student advising, guided undergraduate curriculum revision, and managed operations within the department. As interim head, she serves as undergraduate and graduate student coordinator and works on refining curriculum, increasing undergraduate enrollment and retention, enhancing environmental health and safety, and establishing a reciprocal mentoring program.

Zink-Sharp serves as director of the Sustainable Engineered Materials Institute (SEMI). In this role, she works diligently to ensure continuity of funding and to foster an environment in which collaboration is easily accomplished. She has also emphasized that SEMI funding be used to facilitate research projects of many colleagues and students.

She has served as associate editor of the journal *Wood and Fiber Science*, was selected to represent the United States as delegate to the European Society of Wood Mechanics, and elected president of the Society of Wood Science and Technology (SWST). She was elected to the rank of Fellow in SWST in 2010 and the International Academy of Wood Science in 2009.

Microscopic wood anatomy and the impact on properties and utilization are the focus of Zink-Sharp's research and instruction program. She transformed what began as a traditional wood structure-property research program into an innovative effort in quantitative wood anatomy and micro-engineering. The video-microscopy technique she developed is capable of measuring material deformation that is essentially invisible with other techniques. She teaches undergraduate and graduate classes that provide fundamental knowledge of wood structure and properties, and offers workshops both on- and off-campus for youth, educators, and forest products industry professionals.

Zink-Sharp is the creator and director of Wood Magic at Virginia Tech, a youth education program that assists educators with teaching children about environmental science, particularly wood science and forestry. Just over 10,500 youth and 343 educators have participated in either on-campus or traveling programs to date. Additional outcomes of Wood Magic have been a design model for distance education delivery and two State 4-H Leader Guides in Wood Science. She won the first College of Natural Resources Outreach Award for Excellence in 2004.

She earned a Ph.D. in wood products engineering from The State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse in 1992, and an M.S. and B.S. in wood science from Colorado State University. She is a native of Sturgis, S.D., and a graduate of Brown High School in Sturgis. Zink-Sharp and her husband, Jon C. Sharp, live in Blacksburg, Va., with their cat, Cleo.

## COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences • Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation • Geography • Wood Science and Forest Products •
  - College of Natural Resources National Capital Region • Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium •
- Center for Environmental Applications of Remote Sensing • Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management •
  - Center for Unit Load Design • Conservation Management Institute • Forest Modeling Research Cooperative •
  - Forest Nutrition Cooperative • Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Center • Horseshoe Crab Research Center •
- Industrial Forestry Operations Research Cooperative • National Marine Fisheries Service Recruiting, Training, and Research Unit •
  - National Science Foundation Center for Advanced Forestry Systems • Sloan Foundation Forest Industries Center •
- Sustainable Engineered Materials Institute • USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service National Agroforestry Center •
  - USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station: Center for Aquatic Technology Transfer, Center for Forest Watershed Research, Utilization of Southern Forest Resources Research Work Unit • USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center •
- USGS Virginia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit • Virginia Water Resources Research Center • Wood-Based Composites Center •