

By: Peter Callan, *Virginia Cooperative Extension*
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Millions of acres of family owned forest land will change hands in the next ten years. Seven million acres of forestland in Virginia alone (70% of the total) are owned by individuals 55 years or older. Twenty-seven percent of Virginia's forest landowners are individuals 65 years or older. Many of these folks intend to pass their land on to younger generations.

On a family level, this intergenerational transfer process is personal, intricate, and emotional while at the same time holds promise to meet family goals beyond wealth inheritance. The transfer of forest land is a sensitive issue in part because many current and/or previous family owners have made significant investments in financial resources and sweat equity to own and maintain the forest land. A perfect estate plan in the legal sense is only part of a successful land transition. Will family values which contributed to the accumulation of financial assets and the successful operation of the forest land over previous generations be transferred to the next generation? The answer to this is important but often answered too late.

Different generations often share different values regarding ownership of the forest land. The older generation may hold favorable memories of family gatherings and the pride of owning and maintaining the property that has become part of the family's values and heritage. Younger generations are less likely to have grown up in an agricultural/land based society. The younger generations may have few, if any, emotional ties to their family's land. Within a family, siblings may hold opposite views on perpetuating ownership and it's not uncommon for adult children to have little interest in the land because live far away and consider maintaining and owning the land a burden. Conversely, there may be children who consider the forest land a family heirloom and are interested in preserving the property for future generations. Effective communication between the generations and siblings is crucial in preserving forestland ownership.

A family meeting is an excellent way for family members to express their feelings towards maintaining ownership of the forest land. To start the process, the older generation must be willing to share their hopes, dreams and management goals for the property. Thoughtful planning of a family meeting will set the tone and standard of future meetings. The following tips are helpful in planning the first meeting:

- The older generation prepares a written agenda that is circulated to family members before the meeting.
- Identify a respected family member to moderate the meeting
- Each family member brings an updated resume to the meeting – personal and professional accomplishments, personal goals for themselves and their immediate family. This helps family members to have an updated view of their siblings as an adult.
- Determine who will record the minutes of the meeting
- Establish that family members will come with open minds and leave the past behind.

To help the meeting succeed, all family members should commit to the following these basic family communication rules:

- Establish and stick to time limits
- Share control over the meeting
- Speak one person at a time
- Avoid interruptions and side conversations
- Participate as equals
- Allow all members have a chance to offer ideas
- Listen with sensitivity, speak with respect for feelings and never use put-downs
- Avoid making assumptions; ask questions to get the facts

If the family is unable to make progress because the family members can not agree on a plan, a trained facilitator, neutral to family dynamics and history, may be brought in to moderate. The facilitator serves to keep the discussion on track and make sure everyone's voice is heard. Likewise, having an outsider present tends to promote better behavior.

Past participants of forest land owner transfer workshops have found that communication between family members is key for developing a forest land transition plan. Family meetings provide a forum for the older generation to share their dreams and wishes to transfer real and personal property to family members.

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Tomorrow Woods Program Part 2: Forest Management and Afforestation Assistance
By: Scott Bachman, *Virginia Department of Forestry*

Landowners in the City of Suffolk and the Counties of Dinwiddie, Prince George, Surry, Sussex, Southampton, and Isle of Wight have a unique opportunity to implement forest management on their lands. The Tomorrow Woods program can help you reach your forest management goals in a shorter period of time than traditionally expected.

This program was developed with three goals in mind: conserving working forest land, enhancing working forest lands, and assisting in the conversion of marginal agricultural lands to productive forests.

Conservation of working forest land has been explained in the companion article, which appeared in the Winter 2010 edition of the Virginia Forest Landowner Update. I will take the next few column inches to describe the remaining tools of the program; forest land enhancement and afforestation of idle lands.

The Tomorrow Woods afforestation program seeks to be a complement to the USDA Farm Bill programs which encourage tree planting on marginal agricultural lands. Occasionally some vacant agricultural acres may not qualify for these lucrative federal programs. The Tomorrow Woods program may be able to provide cost share assistance for those acres.

Unlike other programs, Tomorrow Woods does not require a cropping history on the lands that will be planted. The minimum acreage for afforestation assistance is 10 acres, with no upper limit. The program will pay 50% of the cost of establishment, up to \$75.00 per acre.

One popular benefit of some federally funded programs has been an annual rental payment for each acre planted to trees. Under the Tomorrow Woods program, the Department of Forestry will also have a mechanism to pay a landowner a rental payment. The payment a landowner will receive is contingent on the status of their land. Conserved lands can receive a one time payment of \$250 per acre (or 10 annual payments of \$35.00 per acre) while non-conserved lands are limited to a \$150 per acre one time payment (or 10 annual payments of \$20.00 per acre).

Those of you without open land to plant also have a place at the Tomorrow Woods table. This program includes a component to improve the growth of existing forests or to enhance the establishment of new forests on harvested lands.

To qualify for these enhancements, a landowner must show a strong commitment to continued good forest management. The test of this commitment is either a conservation easement on the property, or enrollment in an internationally recognized sustainable forestry certification program. Your local Department of Forestry contact can provide you with details on certification programs that you can participate in.



Pre-commercial thinning, such as this one conducted in a young loblolly pine plantation (thinned trees on left; unthinned on right), is an enhancement practice which may be covered by the Tomorrow Woods Program. Photos by: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech.

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* Remember - 4 p.m.. Burn Law is in effect February through April 30. This means no burning within 300 feet of woodland, brushland or fields containing dry grass or other flammable materials before 4 p.m. For more information, visit www.dof.virginia.gov. Please check with your locality for additional burning laws.

* Want to learn more about water quality laws and Best Management Practices in Virginia? Visit: www.sharplogger.vt.edu/onlineCE.html to view two free 30 minute on-line programs covering these two topics. Foresters and SHARP Loggers can earn continuing education credits for viewing the programs.

* The Virginia Forestry Association is your voice in Richmond. Please visit their website to view more: www.vaforestry.org

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EVENTS CALENDAR			For the most complete listing of natural resource education events, visit the on-line events calendar at www.cnr.vt.edu/forestupdate		
Contact	Date	Location	Event	Time	Fee
DCR	April, May & June	Virginia State Parks	A variety of events and activities. For a complete list, visit: www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks	Varies	Varies
JG	March 1	On-line	Registration for On-Line Woodland Options Connect with your forest and draft a management plan during this 12 week class. Begins June 1.	NA	\$25
JF	April 9 April 30	Lynchburg Halifax	Venture Outdoor Program Learn about thinning for forest health and management on small woodlots. See pests that are wreaking havoc on forests in Virginia. Free shiitake logs for each family.	9:00 - 3:30	\$10/person; \$15/couple
BW	April 10	Gate City	Income Opportunities with Botanical Herbs Grow ginseng, goldenseal and more.	8:30 - 3:30	\$20.00
FW	April 15	On-line	Webinar: Hardwood Regeneration Options for Private Woodlands First-time users, please visit the website at least an hour before the program to set up your computer.	12:00 - 1:00	Free
DR	April 16	Abingdon	The Woods in Your Backyard Learn about managing your backyard woodlot and how to create natural areas for wildlife - presented at the Mid-Atlantic Garden Faire.	11:45 - 1:00	Free (Fair admission is \$5.00)
VFA	April 16-18	Wintergreen	Virginia Forestry Association Convention Future Issues Impacting the Forest Supply Chain	All day	Varies
DP	May 12	Green Bay	Forestry & Wildlife Vegetation Management Learn to use herbicides to control exotic invasive species.	8:00 - 4:15	\$25.00
MC	May 12 & 19	Rappahannock	Backyard Woods Workshop Work through a self-assessment manual that uses a common sense approach for managing small acreages, helps users identify goals, and offers guidance to achieve them.	1:30 - 4:30	\$20/person; \$25/couple
MC	May 20 & 27	Warrenton	Backyard Woods Workshops Work through a self-assessment manual that uses a common sense approach for managing small acreages, helps users identify goals, and offers guidance to achieve them.	6:30 - 9:00	\$20/person; \$25/couple
MW	May 21- 22	Richmond	32nd East Coast Sawmill & Logging Equipment Exposition See the newest and most advanced machinery, equipment and technology in the forest products industry.	All day	Before 4/12, free; After, \$10.00
MC	June 1 & 8	Culpeper	Backyard Woods Workshops Work through a self-assessment manual that uses a common sense approach for managing small acreages, helps users identify goals, and offers guidance to achieve them.	6:30 - 9:00	\$20/person; \$25/couple
AC	June 4	Appomattox	Wildlife, Land and Money: Supplemental Income from Wildlife on Your Land	1:00 - 5:00	Free
EP	June 14-19	Appomattox	Holiday Lake Forestry Camp In-the-field natural resource learning experiences for students ages 13-16. Nominations are open through April 9.	All week	\$75
ATFS	July 13-15	Burlington, VT	17th National Tree Farmer Convention Family Forests, Working Woodlands	All day	Varies
SL	Aug. 23 & 30	Warrenton	Focusing on Land Transfer to Generation Next Please see "Virginia's Big Woodland Transfer" in the Winter 2010 edition of the VFLU and page 5 in the current edition.	12:30 - 7:00	\$50

EVENT CONTACTS			
Contact	Name/Affiliation	Phone	e-mail/website
DCR	Department of Conservation & Recreation	804/786-1712	www.dcr.virginia.gov
JG	Jennifer Gagnon	540/231-6391	www.cnr.vt.edu/forestupdate
JF	Jason Fisher	434/476-2147	jasonf@vt.edu
BW	Bill Worrell	276/889-8056	bworrell@vt.edu
FW	Forestry Webinar	NA	www.forestrywebinars.net
DR	David Richert	276/228-2879	david.richert@dof.virginia.gov
VFA	Virginia Forestry Association	804/278-8733	www.vaforestry.org
DP	Doug Pond	804/241-8118	doug.pond@cpsagu.com
MC	Madison County Extension Office	540/948-6881	http://offices.ext.vt.edu/madison
MW	Mike Washko	804/737-5625	info@exporichmond.com
AC	Appomattox County Extension Office	434/352-8244	http://offices.ext.vt.edu/appomattox
EP	Ellen Powell	434/220-9083	ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov
ATFS	American Tree Farm System	202/463-2462	www.treefarmssystem.org
SL	Sandra Lillard	540/948-6881	slillard@vt.edu

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Once a landowner qualifies for the Tomorrow Woods enhancement program, the options open up greatly. Essentially, if you and your forester can imagine it, we may be able to help fund the practice. Typical projects are expected to be fertilization (non-biosolids), mid-rotation release, herbaceous weed control (other than site prep), enhanced site preparation methods and planting with improved genetic material, to name a few.

How much will Tomorrow Woods pay for these enhancements? That again depends on the status of your land. Conserved lands can receive a payment of 75% of the cost of the practice, up to \$75 per acre. Lands under a certification program will be cost shared at a 35% rate, up to \$35 per acre. There is a limit of 50 acres per landowner per year and the project must be maintained for 15 years or until the end of the rotation.

Tomorrow Woods is a new venture for the Department of Forestry. We are excited about the chance to help forest landowners meet their objectives. The Tomorrow Woods program will ensure that healthy working forests are a part of the selected cities and counties for generations to come.

Please contact the author for more information.

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Careful planning can help ensure the long-term goals of the property are met.
Photo by: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech.

Likewise, these meeting enable the younger generation to share their dreams, goals and values with their parents and siblings. All family members should be open and respect other family member's values and goals. When family members share common goals and values for the forest land, a solid foundation is put in place to realize long term goals; even to the point of perpetuating family values, traditions and land ownership for generations to come.

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Editors note: An upcoming "Family Forestland Shortcourse: Focusing on Land Transfer to Generation NEXT" will explore family communication and other land transfer tools such as legal structures and conservation planning. See the calendar in this newsletter for more information.

Adding a Pine Component to Your Property

By: Matt Yancey, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Forest landowners in Virginia have a variety of options and opportunities for managing their land. Many landowners take a hands-off approach and allow hardwoods to grow naturally. Some favor the other extreme and practice highly intensive silviculture, growing pines with frequent thinnings, fertilizer and herbicide treatments. Other landowners choose a path somewhere in the middle, with some active hardwood management, and some acreage devoted to pine management. The nice thing about owning land is that these are the landowners' decisions to make. The decisions made are based on goals and objectives, whether they are for hunting, providing an income, or simply sitting back and enjoying.

Adding a pine component to a land base is a good option to consider, as pines grow faster than hardwoods and produce income in a shorter time frame, as well as provide another wildlife habitat component. Loblolly pine is the most commonly planted species in the south, due to its fast growth rate and straight form. The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) offers several varieties of loblolly pine covering a range of genetic qualities.

A hybrid between loblolly pine and pitch pine has been developed to allow a favorable fast growing pine tree to be planted in colder areas of the state. Shortleaf pine is also a preferred tree to plant for high quality sawtimber and other benefits. The pines mentioned below will be planted at Shenandoah Valley Agriculture Research and Extension Center in 2010 on 14 acres that were clearcut in 2009-2010:

- Pitch x Loblolly Pine (*Pinus rigida* x *Pinus taeda*) – This hybrid combines the cold hardiness of pitch pine with the fast growth of loblolly pine, making it a viable plantation tree on poorer sites in the Appalachian mountains. Work in the U.S. on this hybrid began in 1945 by USDA Forest Service, with prior work starting in Korea.

- Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*) – *P. echinata* is a valuable tree for the sturdy lumber it produces. Shortleaf pine numbers in Virginia have steadily decreased since the 1940's, and there is an effort to bring those numbers back. It is a suitable tree for managing in a mixed hardwood stand, and can be planted throughout Virginia.

- Elite Loblolly (*Pinus taeda*) – VDOF took their top two producing families and combined them into one seedlot. The resulting mix will give folks a 45% gain in productivity over unimproved seedlings. This is the highest producing open pollinated seedlings that can be obtained for planting in Virginia.

- Premium Loblolly (*Pinus taeda*) – The premium loblolly pine is a combination of VDOF's 3rd and 4th fastest growers, with a yield around 35% greater than unimproved.

- 2nd Generation Loblolly (*Pinus taeda*) – This is a random mix of all the remaining seed collected from VDOF's second generation orchard. They yield around 20% better than unimproved seedlings.

These pines will be planted in one acre blocks, using three spacings: 8' x 10' (544 trees per acre (TPA) 12' by 12' (302 TPA), and 6' x 10' (726 TPA)). The 8' x 10' spacing is the general spacing recommended by VDOF Area Foresters, for optimal pulpwood and sawtimber production, allowing for occasional thinning within the rotation. These foresters also recommend the 12' x 12' spacing for landowners interested in wildlife habitat. The seedlings will be arranged so that visitors can see the difference between the growth of each species and variety. Interspersed within these blocks will be three unplanted areas, which will be allowed to regenerate naturally in hardwoods. A large block of hardwoods is reserved on the northern end of this planted area. These hardwoods add to the landscape diversity of the area, a direct benefit to wildlife. The interspersed developing hardwood stands will also demonstrate the difference in growth potential of pines versus hardwoods.

Pine planting is eligible for cost share payments to private landowners through VDOF's Reforestation of Timberlands Program (RT). Rates vary depending upon the species planted, and there is financial assistance for site preparation for planting, as well as future release of the pine seedlings from competing vegetation. Lands protected under a conservation easement are eligible for additional funds too.

The total cost of this planting project, without cost share assistance, is \$1,435. This project would be eligible for RT Practices 1 and 3 (Practice 1: planting loblolly or Virginia pine at \$25/acre; Practice 3: planting shortleaf, pitch-loblolly, white, or longleaf pine at \$60/acre). With cost share assistance (state owned lands are not eligible), the total cost would be \$1,045. The RT Program is paid for by the state forest products tax paid by forest industry, with matching funds from the Virginia General Fund. Landowners who participate in federal or state cost share programs will receive IRS Form 1099-G, representing Certain Government Payments. RT is among programs that allow landowners to exclude a portion of the payment from gross income. Determining this excludable amount is cause for another article entirely (stay tuned!).

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Shortleaf pine commonly occurs as a component of mixed hardwood stands. Photo by: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech.