

## New Benefit for Virginia's 375,000 Forest Landowners\*

By: John Campbell, Virginia Department of Forestry

Forest landowners in Virginia will have greater access to state and federal programs and assistance as well as expanded market opportunities for their products now that an agreement has been signed that recognizes forest management plans – prepared under the auspices of three different agencies – equally.

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDof); the Virginia office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Virginia Tree Farm Committee have executed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will improve efficiency; lead to greater participation in the agencies' programs and financial incentives; promote private forestry service providers, and enhance product marketability through the forest certification process.

"This memorandum of understanding will be a tremendous boost to Virginia's forest landowners," said State Forester of Virginia Carl Garrison. "No longer will a landowner have to get separate forest management plans for the same tract in order to participate in the many programs, services and assistance offered by the state and federal governments. In addition, as demand increases for certified wood products, having the American Tree Farm System's 'seal of approval' means that more markets will be available for the various forest products these landowners are providing."

Jack Bricker, NRCS State Conservationist, said, "NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to forestry landowners through its Farm Bill programs and staff. Forestry resource concerns are one of several priorities in Virginia that NRCS funds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). In addition to funding conservation practices that address conservation needs on forest lands, EQIP also provides funding to landowners to develop Forest Management Plans. These plans are developed for landowners by private consulting foresters called Technical Service Providers. EQIP funding pays for about 75% of the cost of developing these plans. This MOU will result in more effective and more coordinated program delivery and better customer service."

John Matel, communications chair for the Virginia Tree Farm Committee, said, "The Virginia Tree Farm Committee is happy to be working with the Virginia Department of Forestry and the Virginia office of the Natural Resource Conservation Service to help conserve and protect the forests of the Commonwealth. Since 1941, the American Tree Farm System has been helping landowners in Virginia protect our state's wildlife, soil and water resources while sustainably producing wood and other forest products. Recognizing how our work fits into the bigger picture and having our certification programs recognized by others gives those of us on the Tree Farm Committee great satisfaction. Working together, we can make our forests more productive and keep our environment cleaner and greener. This agreement is a strong step in that direction."

Now that the MOU is in place, a forest management plan prepared under any of the programs will meet the plan requirement for the others. However, a landowner with a forest management plan simply has to "opt in" to enter any of the other programs – just having a plan does not automatically enroll him or her in another program.

This MOU will benefit all Virginians, not just forest landowners, as managed forests offer enhanced ecosystem services, such as clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and aesthetic values.

The agreement was signed July 7th by Virginia Tree Farm Committee Chairman Rob Wait, NRCS' Jack Bricker and VDof's Carl Garrison.

*The Virginia Department of Forestry protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. Headquartered in Charlottesville, the Agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide service to citizens of the Commonwealth. VDof is an equal opportunity provider.*

*With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 144,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide more than \$27.5 Billion annually in benefits to the Commonwealth.*

**John Campbell is the Director, Public Information Division; john.campbell@dof.virginia.gov 434/977-6555**

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*Pictured (from left to right): Rob Wait, Virginia Tree Farm Committee Chair, Carl Garrison, Virginia State Forester, and Jack Bricker, NRCS State Conservationist, sign the Memorandum of Understanding.*

## VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE

Fall 2010



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# VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE

Events, news, and information promoting the stewardship of Virginia's forest resources.

## VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Jennifer L. Gagnon, Editor

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## Planning for Your Forest's Future

By: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech, Dean Cumbia and Todd Groh, Virginia Department of Forestry

If you own woodlands and are receiving this newsletter, you have already taken the first step towards becoming a responsible steward by educating yourself about woodland management. But have you taken the next step and had a multi-resource forest management plan written? If not, are you ready to? In case you are not aware of the benefits of planning your forest management activities, here is a short list. A well-written multi-resource forest management plan:

- Provides a roadmap to help landowners achieve their objectives through well-managed, sustainable forestry practices;
- Can meet forest management planning elements required to become certified as a Tree Farm and meets management plan requirements for Forest Use Value taxation;
- Potentially increases the landowner's ranking for inclusion in the Environmental Quality Incentive and Conservation Stewardship Programs;
- Meets a prerequisite for applying for the riparian forest buffer tax credit;
- Meets requirement for participation in the Tomorrow Woods Program in Southeast Virginia;
- Provides a required element for placing the land under a conservation easement which may result in tax advantages;
- Potentially helps to meet sustainability requirements necessary to participate in ecosystem services markets; and
- Potentially outlines and meets the requirements necessary for participating in markets for renewable energy/biomass.

A multi-resource forest management plan will include several key elements that will help the landowner make good decisions about forest management. The plan will include:

- Current forest conditions;
- Recommended practices to enhance or maintain the natural resource benefits;
- A detailed map of the property; and
- A list of natural resource professionals and agencies that can provide further information and/or assistance.

There are several high-quality multi-resource forest management plans available to woodland owners in Virginia. All plans encourage long-term stewardship by assisting landowners to more actively manage their forest and related resources. See sidebar for details.

## Types of Multi-Resource Forest Management Plans

### Forest Stewardship Plans

- Prepared by Virginia Department of Forestry (VDof) or consulting forester
- Cost: \$1.50 per acre; minimum of \$200 per plan (VDof) or varies by consulting forester
- Contact VDof

### Tree Farm Management Plans

- Prepared by a professional consulting or industry forester
- Cost varies by forester
- Contact the Virginia Tree Farm Committee

### Conservation Activity Plan

#### Practice 106 – Forest Management Plan

- Prepared by a professional consulting or industry forester registered as a Technical Service Provider (TSP)
- Cost varies by TSP
- Apply for cost share approval for up to 75% of the cost of preparing the plan
- Contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Useful Resources:

The Virginia Forest Landowner Update website is changing as of December 2010 - please update your bookmarks to: [www.cnre.vt.edu/forestupdate](http://www.cnre.vt.edu/forestupdate). This reflects our new College name: the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

### New 2010-2011 Hunting and Trapping in Virginia - Regulations Available

The 70-page booklet is available free of charge from license sales agents, Regional VDGIF offices and the Richmond Headquarters office. You can access the new regulations booklet on the VDGIF website, [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov).

### Habitat at Home DVD Now Available

The Habitat at Home© DVD features the yards of four homeowners in different parts of the state who have removed invasive plants, reduced their amount of lawn, added water features, and planted flowering perennials and shrubs. Purchase this DVD from the VDGIF website: <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/estore/proddetail.asp?prod=VW254>

## CONTACT OUR SPONSORS AND STATE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCIES:



Virginia Department of Forestry	Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation & Virginia Cooperative Extension	Virginia Forestry Association	Virginia Tree Farm Committee
900 Natural Resources Drive Ste. 800 Charlottesville, VA 22903 434/977-6555 <a href="http://www.dof.virginia.gov">www.dof.virginia.gov</a>	228 Cheatham Hall 0324 Blacksburg, VA 24061 540/231-6391 <a href="http://www.cnre.vt.edu/forestupdate">www.cnre.vt.edu/forestupdate</a>	3808 Augusta Ave Richmond, VA 23230 804/278-8733 <a href="http://www.vaforestry.org">www.vaforestry.org</a>	3808 Augusta Ave Richmond, VA 23230 804/278-8733 <a href="http://www.vaforestry.org/virginia_tree_farm.html">www.vaforestry.org/virginia_tree_farm.html</a>



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EVENTS CALENDAR			For the most complete listing of natural resource education events, visit the on-line events calendar at <a href="http://www.cnr.vt.edu/forestupdate">www.cnr.vt.edu/forestupdate</a>		
Contact	Date	Location	Event	Time	Fee
DCR	Oct., Nov. & Dec.	Virginia State Parks	<b>A variety of events and activities.</b> For a complete list, visit: <a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks">www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks</a> .	Varies	Varies
ES	Oct. 2	Leesburg	<b>Women Exploring Loudoun Outdoors</b> For women 14 and older. Learn archery, kayaking, fly fishing, orienteering, and many more outdoor skills.	7 - 6:30	\$50*
TF	Oct. 2	Charlottesville	<b>Tufton Fern Walk</b> Walk along Henderson Creek; learn about native plants.	9:30 -11:30	\$10
BRP	Oct. 14-16	Roanoke	<b>Imagining the Blue Ridge Parkway for the 21st Century: Sustaining Communities, Environments, and Economies</b> A symposium open to all citizens. Acclaimed authors Richard Louv and Peter Jenkins are keynote speakers.	All day	\$195*
AD	Oct. 15	Northwest Virginia	<b>34th Annual Fall Forestry &amp; Wildlife Field Tour</b> Join us for a different look at forestry & wildlife management from where it begins in the soils and how they change with elevation, aspect, forest types and geology. We will begin the day in the Piedmont of Virginia and end in the Shenandoah Valley - a geologic transect over the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains.	8:30 - 4:15	\$45*
NM	Oct. 22 -24	Appomattox	<b>Basic Wilderness Survival and Outdoor Living Skills Weekend</b> Learn the basics of woodland survival and advance your outdoor skills. Register by Oct. 8.	All week-end	\$175**
BW	Oct. 29	Southwest Virginia	<b>34th Annual Fall Forestry &amp; Wildlife Field Tour</b> This tour will focus on natural resource management challenges and opportunities in SW Virginia, including oak regeneration, restoring mine sites, protecting water quality, wildlife, and harvesting timber on steep slopes.	8:30 -	\$25*
JF	Oct. 30-31	Green Bay	<b>3rd Annual Landowner Weekend Retreat: Managing Value in your Forest</b> Join fellow landowners and natural resource professionals for a weekend in the woods. Learn about forest management, estate planning, tree identification and more!	All day Sat. - 12 Sun.	*
NC	Nov. 10	Eastern Virginia	<b>34th Annual Fall Forestry &amp; Wildlife Field Tour</b> On this tour of Eastern Virginia, we will explore both traditional and non-traditional types of forest management in hardwood and pine forests.	8:30 -	\$25*

\*includes meal(s)

\*\*includes meal(s) and lodging

EVENT CONTACTS			
Contact	Name/Affiliation	Phone	e-mail/website
DCR	Department of Conservation & Recreation	804/786-1712	<a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov">www.dcr.virginia.gov</a>
ES	Elizabeth Siegert	703/939-4089	<a href="http://www.loudouniwa.org">http://www.loudouniwa.org</a>
TF	Tufton Farm	434/984-9822	<a href="http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html">http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html</a>
BRP	Blue Ridge Parkway 75	828/271-4779	<a href="http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/brp21">www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/brp21</a>
AD	Adam Downing	540/948-6881	<a href="mailto:adowning@vt.edu">adowning@vt.edu</a>
NM	Nate Mahanes	434/248-5444	<a href="mailto:nmahanes@vt.edu">nmahanes@vt.edu</a>
BW	Bill Worrell	276/889-8056	<a href="mailto:bworrell@vt.edu">bworrell@vt.edu</a>
JF	Jason Fisher	434/476-2147	<a href="mailto:jasonf@vt.edu">jasonf@vt.edu</a>
NC	Neil Clark	757/653-2572	<a href="mailto:southeast@vt.edu">southeast@vt.edu</a>

## Thousand Cankers Disease: A Red Alert for Walnut\*

**By: Skip Morglia, NRCS and David Boyt, Missouri Walnut Council**

The chestnut tree is gone, we've lost most of our elm, ash, and many of our butternut trees, and now we stand to lose our walnut trees as well. Just two years ago (2008), researchers discovered that a sudden decline in black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) in Colorado was due to a combination of the walnut twig beetle and previously unknown fungus which infested the trees by hundreds of thousands, causing cankers and cutting off the flow of nutrients. With a mortality rate near 100%, what is the prognosis if the disease moves into black walnut's native range? According to Whitney Cranshaw, professor of Bioagriculture Science and Pest Management at the University of Colorado, "Based on the patterns seen in the West, such a colonization could very possibly develop into an uncontrollable outbreak. This may ultimately have the potential to destroy black walnut in its native range." He continues, "... it is critically important that fresh cut logs from walnut harvested in the western states never be allowed to move outside the area where thousand cankers currently is present. Movement of a single log with live beetles can be the initial source of an outbreak that could ultimately devastate black walnut in uninfested areas."

The beetles are tiny—about 1/16 inch (smaller than a grain of rice), but they make up for their size with numbers. Researchers have found as many as 20,000 beetles in a four-foot section of a small walnut log! By themselves, the beetles cause only minor damage to the walnut trees. The fungus they bring with them infects the tunnels, killing the cambium layer of the tree, and cutting off the food supply. The tree literally starves to death. The dead cambium forms cankers, which gives the disease its name. The fungus is so deadly to black walnut trees, that it has been named *Geosmithia morbida*.

After the first year of infection, some of the foliage in the upper branches turns yellow at the tips and thins out. By the time these symptoms appear, the disease has progressed to the point where the tree cannot be saved. As the disease progresses, larger branches die. The tree dies within three years of the first visible symptoms. Once infected, there is no effective treatment. Mortality rate is nearly 100%.

In July, 2010, the USDA announced confirmation of the thousand cankers disease in Knoxville, TN—the first occurrence in the native range of black walnut. Although other states quickly imposed bans on importing walnut from Tennessee, researchers estimate that the disease has been in the area for eight years. It is impossible to know how far it has spread in that time, and in which direction.

There are steps you can take to help stop the spread of this disease to black walnut's native range. Do not sell or transport walnut logs, slabs, or firewood (any walnut with bark attached) from areas of known or suspected infestation into unaffected areas. Kiln dry walnut lumber, however, poses no threat. If you suspect that you have walnut trees that are affected, call your area forester, or the USDA. Do not send out a sample without specific instructions, as the beetle can chew its way through plastic and cardboard packaging.



*The walnut twig beetles eat through the cambium layer of the stem and branches, blocking the flow of nutrients. Photo by: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University.*



*Dead walnut twig showing the exit holes of the mature walnut twig beetle. Photo by: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University.*

**David Boyt is the Managing Editor of Sawmill & Woodlot Magazine; [dboyt@netins.net](mailto:dboyt@netins.net) 417/455-2698. \*This is an edited version of an article that appeared in the March, 2010 issue of Sawmill & Woodlot Management magazine. Reprinted with permission from the author.**

## [Planning cont. from page 1](#)

As discussed in the article "New Benefits for Virginia's 375,000 Forest Landowners" on page 5 of this newsletter, as of July 7, 2010, these plans are interchangeable when it comes to meeting the plan requirement for Cost Share Programs, becoming certified under the American Tree Farm System, or enrolling in the Forest Stewardship Program. Check with your forester for other things you may need to do to get into each of these programs.

Before you contact a forester for assistance, you may want to sit down with your family and discuss your goals for owning your woodlands. A goal is the big picture or general statement about how you and your family want your land to look in the future. An example of a goal might be: provide quality habitat for game and non-game wildlife species.

Once your goals are set, your forester can help you determine your objectives. Objectives are courses of action that refine goals into workable tasks and often include a timeline. An example of an objective might be: cut 2-3 cords of firewood a year to improve forest health.

Links to examples and blank worksheets to help you work through the goal setting process, and more information and templates for each of these management plan types are available in the Newsletter section of the Virginia Forest Landowner Education website ([www.cnr.vt.edu/forestupdate](http://www.cnr.vt.edu/forestupdate)).

Lists of consulting foresters who work in Virginia and VDOF area foresters are available at the VDOF website ([www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)) or call the Central Office at 434/977-6555.

The Virginia Tree Farm Committee can be contacted at [http://www.vaforestry.org/virginia\\_tree\\_farm.htm](http://www.vaforestry.org/virginia_tree_farm.htm) or contact the Committee Chair, Rob Wait, at 804/798-7134.

Find your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office at <http://www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/> or call the state office at 804/287-1691.

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## Elk Restoration Update

**By: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech**

The Summer 2010 edition of the Virginia Forest Landowner Update included a story on the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries' (VDGIF) Elk Restoration plan. The initial recommendation was to reintroduce elk into Buchanan, Dickenson and Wise Counties, with a goal of establishing a herd of 1200 animals. On August 17, the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries approved the establishment of a pilot program to reintroduce elk into Buchanan County only. This compromise would introduce 75 elk into the county, with a goal of establishing a herd of 400 animals. As a part of this program, VDGIF will organize a damage response team, which will respond to damage calls within 24 hours.

Currently, elk hunting is permitted in Virginia. However, the Board has requested that elk hunting be prohibited until stocking is completed, with a resumption of hunting in Buchanan County within 4 years of the last elk stocking. If this request is approved, the VDGIF's Hunting & Trapping Regulations 2010-2011 manual, which has already been printed, will be incorrect, as it currently states elk hunting is permitted.

Stocking of Rocky Mountain elk will probably not begin until the winter of 2012. Landowners in the county need to be contacted and Rocky Mountain elk for stocking need to be located. This pilot program will cost Virginia approximately \$3 million over the next 12 years. This revised plan is available for public comment at: [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov).



*A professional forester can help you reach your land ownership goals.*