

Syllabus

2012 On-Line Woodland Options for Landowners

Please read this entire syllabus; if you have any questions, contact the course instructor

Overview:

Woodland Options for Landowners is designed to familiarize and connect landowners with their forests, and to help them develop specific management plans for their properties. Our mission is for you to develop goals and objectives for your land, to gain practical knowledge of basic forest management principles, and to learn how to apply that information to reach your goals. During this course, you will be introduced to the concepts of defining goals, land stewardship and sustainability, property deeds and boundary lines, maps, photos, and soil surveys, forest ecology and management, tree identification, management options, sources of assistance, and planning.

Registration:

Online registration for the 2012 semester of Woodland Options for Landowners begins January 2, 2012. The course registration web page is located on the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program website at: <http://www.cnre.vt.edu/forestupdate>. To register for Woodland Options, simply visit the above website and click the link to “On-Line Registration”. After registering for the course, you will be assigned a personal identification (PID) and password by email. **Please contact the course instructor if you do not receive this information within one week of registering.** You will then use your PID and password every time you want to log on to the Woodland Options course website which is located at: <https://scholar.vt.edu/portal>. You will also receive a registration confirmation and welcome email from the course instructor.

Background Required:

None. Woodland Options for Landowners is an introductory level overview of basic forest management principles and techniques. This course is designed for private forest landowners of any acreage and is not intended for landowners who have substantial experience in working

alone or with natural resource professionals in the management of their forests. Nevertheless, veteran landowners are welcome to enroll and may take the course as a refresher on basic forest management. If you do not feel this course is right for you, but have specific forest management questions, please direct them to the course instructor.

Educational Objectives:

By completing this course you will:

1. Develop a clear vision of your goals for managing your property;
2. Understand the social, economic, and biologic limits to your management goals;
3. Know the location of your property boundary lines;
4. Know how to read a topographic map, aerial photograph, and soil survey and understand their applications to forest management on your property;
5. Visualize the effects of different silvicultural systems (and know what silvicultural systems are);
6. Know the common tree species and basic forest cover types on your property;
7. Identify specific management units on your property;
8. Develop a plan of action for each management unit on your property;
9. Know and contact your local and regional natural resource management assistance agencies.

Required Text and Materials:

No additional text, materials, or costs are required to complete the basic assignments. The basic assignments can be completed entirely online and do not require a visit to your forest property. Basic assignments consist of an online reading assignment and a review quiz. However, most modules have an associated advanced assignment that you are strongly encouraged to complete if possible. All worksheets and field sheets needed to complete the advanced assignments are located on the course website. However, to complete the advanced assignments, you will also need some additional materials and equipment. The following additional materials and recent average costs are listed by course module in which the equipment is needed (note: some equipment is needed for more than one advanced assignment, but is only listed for the first assignment needed).

Module 1: dendrology (tree identification) field guide (\$10-25); A basic dendrology guide is included with your registration packet; however, we strongly suggest that you obtain a comprehensive guide for all eastern tree species. Suggested dendrology guides are:

- [A Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs: Northeastern and North-central United States and Southeastern and South-central Canada \(Peterson Field Guides\)](#) by George A. Petrides and Roger Tory Peterson (Paperback - Sep 6, 1973). From \$13.
- [A Field Guide to Eastern Trees \(Peterson Field Guides\)](#) by George A. Petrides, Janet Wehr, and Roger Tory Peterson (Paperback - Jul 15, 1998). From \$14.
- [Trees and Shrubs of Virginia](#) by Oscar W. Gupton and Fred C. Swope (Paperback – September 2007). Used available from \$4 - \$20.
- The Virginia Tech Dendrology pages are a great source of free information on tree identification. <http://www.cnre.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/main.htm>

Module 2: 35 mm or digital camera (\$10-\$200).

Module 3: compass with **adjustable declination setting** (\$30-100) – look for adjustable declination setting in the description of the product; 100' or longer fiberglass measuring tape (\$25-40).

Module 4: topographic quadrangle map (free to \$7); aerial photograph (free to \$60 depending on size); soil survey (available on-line for free). For the purposes of this class, the imagery you can find on Google Earth is sufficient (and free). However, if you want larger, high quality print images, ordering information is provided with the pre-course materials. You will need to order these resources no later than the first week of class.

Module 5: (no additional materials required)

Module 6: (no additional materials required)

Many of the above items can be located at a local hunting outfitter, camping supply store, or discount retailer. The following are suggested mail/internet sources for natural resource management supplies:

- **Bailey's (SE Division):** Home Office / Western Division P.O. Box 550 / 44650 Highway 101 Laytonville, CA 95454; phone: 1-800/322-4539; website: <http://www.baileysonline.com/>
- **Ben Meadows Company:** phone: 1800/241-6401; website: <http://www.benmeadows.com/>

• **Construction Safety Products:** 359 Mt. Zion Rd., Shreveport, LA 71106; phone: 1800/592-6940; website: <http://www.cspforestry.com/>

• **Forestry Suppliers, Inc.:** phone: 1-800/647-5368; website: <http://www.forestry-suppliers.com/>

In addition, incidental funds will be needed for costs such as writing instruments, clipboard and paper, photocopies, and travel to and from your property.

Instructor:

Your instructor for Woodland Options is Extension forester Jennifer Gagnon. Jennifer is employed by the Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation and coordinates the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program. She received her B.S. in Forest Resource Conservation and Management and her M.S. in Silviculture from the University of Florida. You may contact Jennifer at:

228 Cheatham Hall (0324)

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

Phone: 540/231-6391; jgagnon@vt.edu

Your Teaching Assistance is Paxton Ramsdel. Paxton can be contacted at: pramsdel@vt.edu.

Grades

This course is not for college credit or for a grade. The quizzes at the end of each Module are there for you to assess your understanding of the materials. There is a grade center which will record the results of the quizzes, for your own information.

Office Hours:

Normal office hours (8am-5pm), most weekdays.

Course Announcements:

Each time you enter the course website, you will first see the course announcement page. All announcements will be posted to this page and you should be sure to check for new ones at least once a week. Announcements will include reminders about course assignments and details for ordering materials and will address frequently asked questions from participants.

Mentors:

The purpose of the mentors is to provide participants with a virtual face-to-face support network while completing course content and activities. Participants will interact at least once per module (a minimum of 6 times total through the course) to discuss questions and issues pertinent to the module subject matter. Questions will be posted on the course website's discussion board by the instructor. However, you are also encouraged to ask your own questions, post comments and share experiences. Based on feedback from previous semesters, actively participating on the discussion board will greatly improve your on-line learning experience. Your fellow students and the mentors are wonderful sources of information.

General Outline:

Module 1: Vision, Goals, and Family Resources

- Understanding the limits to management
- Developing a vision and goals for your property
- Family resource inventory
- Dendrology 1

Module 2: Stewardship and Sustainability

- Brief history of forestry and land use in the southeastern United States
- Impacts of decisions on past, current, and future land use
- Understanding land use history on your property
- Dendrology 2

Module 3: Property Deeds and Boundary Lines

- Locating a legal property description for your property
- Your property in the landscape
- Basic compass use and orienteering
- Boundary line identification
- Dendrology 3

Module 4: Maps, Photos, and Soil Surveys

- Tools used to assess forest resources
- Locating and reading a topographic map
- Locating and using an aerial photograph
- Locating and using a soil survey
- Application of maps, photos, and soil surveys to your property
- Dendrology 4

Module 5: Forest Ecology and Management

- Understanding forest soils and site
- Basic forest ecology
- Introduction to silviculture
- Dendrology 5

Module 6: Assistance, Planning, and Options

- Sources of professional management assistance
- Components of the forest management plan
- Assembling your management plan

Weekly Schedule:

Please note: Pre-course content will be available on February 14, 2012. Module 1 material will be available March 5, 2012, Module 2 through Module 6 content will be released sequentially according to the following schedule (March 12, 2012 through May 7, 2012).

Pre-course – February 14

Registration, syllabus, pre-course questionnaire

Collect optional course materials

Week 1 – March 5 – 11

Module 1: Vision, Goals, and Family Resources

Basic Online Assignment

Discussion Board Participation

Review Quiz

Advanced Assignment: Family Resource Inventory

Module 1 Assessment

Week 2 March 12 - 18

Module 2: Stewardship and Sustainability

Basic Online Assignment

Discussion Board Participation

Review Quiz

Advanced Assignment: Land Use History

Module 2 Assessment

Week 3 March 19-25

Module 3: Property Deeds and Boundary Lines

Basic Online Assignment

Discussion Board Participation

Review Quiz

Advanced Assignment: Courthouse Visit, Boundary Line

ID, and Orienteering Exercise

Module 3 Assessment

Week 4 March 26- April 1

Module 3 (continued)

Week 5 April 2 –April 8

Module 4: Maps, Photos, and Soil Surveys

Basic Online Assignment

Discussion Board Participation

Review Quiz

Advanced Assignment: Map, Photo, and Soil Survey

Reading

Module 4 Assessment

Week 6 April 9 - 15

Module 4 (continued)

Week 7 April 16 - 22

Module 5: Forest Ecology and Management

Basic Online Assignment

Discussion Board Participation

Review Quiz

Advanced Assignment: Stand Identification and Soils

Assessment

Module 5 Assessment

Week 8 April 23 - 29

Module 5 (continued)

Week 9 April 30 –May 6

Module 6: Assistance, Planning, and Options

Basic Online Assessment

Discussion Board Participation

Review Quiz

Advanced Assignment: Resource Agency Contact

Module 6 Assessment

Week 10 May 7 - 13

Module 6 (continued)

Post-Course Assessment

Weeks 11 - 12 May 14 - 25

Wrap-up

Field trip(s)/Course completion certificates mailed out