



# FORESTRY IN VIRGINIA: A Conversation with State Forester Carl Garrison

*(Front row, left to right): Virginia State Forester Carl Garrison and Dr. John Scrivani, Virginia Department of Forestry's former director of resource information, are leading a delegation of forestry officials from China on a tour of our American Chestnut research forest*



NEWS FROM GEORGIA-PACIFIC FOR FOREST OWNERS AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

## FAMILY FORESTS

SPRING/SUMMER 2010

### Editor's Note:

The next several issues of *Family Forests* will highlight forestry in various states.

Virginia has an impressive 15.7 million acres of forestland. Of that, roughly 80 percent is privately-owned.

Virginia's State Forester Carl Garrison and his Department of Forestry team are working to make sure the state's forestland is as productive as possible. They hope to provide greater incentives for landowners to keep their property in forests.

As part of these efforts, the department developed a forest land conservation division that has set aside 24,000 acres, mostly through conservation easements. Easements can provide significant tax benefits to landowners.

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## FORESTRY IN VIRGINIA

The department is also working to establish reciprocity between Virginia's Tree Farm program and the USDA Forest Stewardship plans as a way to help the state's privately-owned forests become certified.

"We are branding our forests as Virginia's Steward Forests," said Carl. "This effort goes hand-in-hand with certification and sustainability, ensuring that Virginia's forests are marketable for the future." And marketability is important - both domestically because of the rise in offshore resources competing with American products, and globally because Virginia is the country's number four hardwood exporter. "We have resources here and we should use them here," he continued.

The department is also exploring ecosystem services markets, including carbon sequestration, to assist with the developing market-based system rather than a subsidy-based system. As part of this effort, it is working with corporations on their responsibilities related to forests. These include credits for planting trees to replace those cut for power lines, retail/commercial building and other land uses. "We are helping them understand what footprint they are leaving," said Carl.

"We continue to build relationships with the Virginia Forestry Association, Virginia Loggers Association, Virginia Forest Products Association, Farm Bureau and the Agribusiness Council, as well as county and municipal governments, demonstrating



*(Left to right): Virginia's first Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Robert Virginia State Forester Carl Garrison and Virginia Forestry Association Executive Vice President Paul Howe observe a conservation education program*

that we want to be part of the land-use planning process," said Carl. In addition, the state is leveraging its influence by participating in such organizations as the Southern Group of State Foresters and the National Association of State Foresters to help set state, regional and national policies regarding forestry.

The state has also elevated the importance of forestry by adding a cabinet position - the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry - allowing the Department of Forestry to more easily share its perspective with regard to issues that affect Virginia's private landowners.

As an outreach, the department recently created two forest

## HARDWOOD MANAGEMENT: Setting the Stage for Success

Hardwood stands can be among the most interesting and difficult pieces of land to manage for timber production. But they can also be some of the most rewarding.

According to Dr. Thomas Fox, professor of forestry at Virginia Tech, a landowner who is ready to manage a hardwood stand for timber production should consider a few things:

- Define management objectives. These include timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation and alternative uses.
- Evaluate your forest, looking both at its existing quality, as well as its potential.
- Determine site quality and the species best suited to the site. Higher quality sites with more available water and nutrients grow taller, straighter trees.
- Know your soil types. Deeper soils are more productive. Once you determine your soil types, decide what species will grow best. A productive hardwood stand can be managed for multiple species, including pine as well as hardwoods.

"There are many ways a landowner can manage hardwood forests, depending on his objectives," said Dr. Fox. One approach is to identify a small number of high quality trees in the forest and employ crop tree management. Lower quality trees around the desired crop trees are removed so the selected trees have room to grow. The result is improved growth in the higher quality trees that can provide a nice return on the investment. Lower quality trees can be used for firewood or other products.

"If all the trees in a section of the stand are mature or the existing stand has been damaged or is of low quality, it may be better to create a new, more vigorous forest," said Dr. Fox. New trees will grow very rapidly as sunlight reaches the forest floor. These areas can be small "patch cuts" that range from one acre to several acres in size. Creating openings adjacent to more mature stands may also improve wildlife habitat. Many species such as quail, turkey, deer and songbirds prefer to spend some time in these open areas. A mixture of habitat types in the

forest, from young seedlings to mature trees, will generally improve wildlife populations.

"To decrease the visual impact of harvesting, leave a few trees scattered across the area," continued Dr. Fox. "This allows enough light to enter the forest so that new seedlings grow rapidly and may provide another tree crop in a few years."

"It's also important to understand the markets for timber in your area," explained Dr. Fox. "The value of a tree varies dramatically among different species; however, high quality trees can always be used more easily than lower quality trees." High quality timber is also more economically feasible to transport across a longer distance than pulpwood. A state, county or private forester is knowledgeable about markets in your area.

"Every time a landowner harvests timber, he has the opportunity to improve the forest," said Dr. Fox. "If he

conservation centers where school children and teachers can learn about forest management's important impacts on society.

One of the department's most recent accomplishments is the development of an award-winning web-based forest resource system. It provides real-time data about the state's forests and is accessible to every agency employee.

"We envision using our database down the road to monitor where we are losing acreage and for identifying environmentally and ecologically critical areas," explained Carl. "I see it as a tool for keeping more land in forests.

"Through these efforts, we are influencing the decisions made about forestry in the Southeast," he concluded.

### STATE FORESTER CARL GARRISON

Carl Garrison has served as Virginia's State Forester since November 2004. Prior to his appointment, Carl was a regional forester for the Virginia Department of Forestry, responsible for 22 counties in the North Central and Northwestern regions. He has also worked in private industry as a consulting forester. Carl received his B.S. in Forestry and Wildlife Management from Virginia Tech. He is a Certified Forester, chairman of the Southern Group of State Foresters, an active member of the Society of American Foresters (SAF), and served as chairperson for the Virginia Division of SAF. He is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys many sports, including waterfowl hunting. A native of Richmond, Va., he is married and has one son.

chooses to remove lower quality trees and leave stronger, more valuable trees, then the quality of the forest improves. Selecting quality trees will result in higher quality timber in a shorter period of time and the best financial return."

Special thanks to Dr. Thomas Fox, professor of forestry, Virginia Tech, for his contributions to this article.

*Resources: The Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Forestry Association, The American Tree Farm System, Virginia Cooperative Extension. For landowners in other states, contact your local and state forestry associations, as well as the cooperative extension service and other government agencies that cover your area.*



Courtesy of Brian Lockhart, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

## SPOTLIGHT ON INVASIVE SPECIES: GYPSY MOTH



Courtesy of USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org

The gypsy moth is often considered "an experiment gone horribly wrong." It was a French scientist in the late 1800s who brought it here to start a silkworm industry. However, when the insect escaped, the damage began.

Gypsy moth eggs are typically laid on tree branches and trunks, but may be found in any sheltered location. The eggs can travel a number of ways, including by wind for up to a mile, and longer distances when people unknowingly transport them on cars or other items.

The moth larvae, or caterpillars, emerge in early spring, usually coinciding with the budding of trees. The caterpillar feasts on trees, primarily oaks, but also maple, elm, birch, poplar and alder trees. As it grows, it also attacks evergreens like pines and spruces.

Tree damage can range from light to complete defoliation. Although most trees can survive a moderate defoliation and grow back, continued attacks can weaken a tree and leave it vulnerable to other insects or disease.

### Managing Gypsy Moth:

According to Georgia-Pacific Wildlife Biologist Bobby Maddrey, although it can be costly for landowners to treat for gypsy moths, the Slow-the-Spread project - part of the USDA Forest Service's national strategy to manage the gypsy moth - provides help on a broad level by implementing integrated pest management strategies. Project methods include: mating disruption using BTK, a bacteria found in soils formulated as an insecticide; and using the naturally occurring gypsy moth virus.

### What you can do to minimize damage on your property:

- Burn or soak egg masses in water or kerosene to prevent spreading;
- Place banding on infested trees so caterpillars cannot climb them;
- Set traps to capture the male gypsy moths; and
- Apply insecticides for heavy infestation.

For more information, visit [www.gmsts.org](http://www.gmsts.org). Sources: USDA Forest Service Insect and Disease Leaflet 162, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, [www.gmsts.org](http://www.gmsts.org), [www.treehelp.com](http://www.treehelp.com).

# AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM PROVIDES CERTIFICATION OPTION FOR LANDOWNERS

Many family forest landowners are already "tree farmers," but did you know that this affiliation can satisfy forest land certification requirements?

The American Tree Farm System (ATFS), a unit of the American Forest Foundation (AFF), provides a third-party certification option for private landowners. Through Tree Farm, a landowner can enroll from 10 to 10,000 acres in the program by having their land inspected by a Tree Farm inspector, providing a current management plan, demonstrating active forest management and participating in outreach activities that promote sustainable forestry. By following AFF Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification, a landowner's property can become certified under the Tree Farm system.

**Why would a family forest owner want to be certified?** "ATFS certification gives landowners access to certified markets," explained Liz Sandler, director of AFF. "ATFS is globally recognized by



the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), the world's largest forest certification organization. In addition, Tree Farm wood is accepted as certified fiber in SFI and PEFC chain of custody labeling. "Forest certification also opens doors for landowners to emerging markets, such as carbon trading and other ecosystem services.

ATFS' partnership with government agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, allows streamlined access to government cost-share programs," said Liz.

"Certification assures the public and businesses that the products they sell and buy are from certified forests that are managed in a sustainable manner," continued Liz. "Governments and companies around the globe are seeking sourcing from certified forests."

If you would like more information about certification through the American Tree Farm System in your state, contact:

ATFS at 1111 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20036, 202-463-2462, or log on to [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org).

## THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for your participation in our recent *Family Forests* newsletter survey. We listened and are working to incorporate your ideas into future editions.

Some of your feedback included:

- More than 98 percent of survey respondents find value in the *Family Forests* newsletter
- Majority of respondents read the publication every time they receive it and find the format easy to read
- Topics of interest include future trends in forestry and application issues such as site preparation and herbicide use, harvesting, etc.

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