

Northern District 2009 Forestry & Natural Resources Selected Program Highlights

Enhancing Tree Worker Profitability, Safety and Tree Care Practices

Culpeper, Madison & Orange Counties are home to a concentration of tree workers without certification or formal training. The impact on trees and the tree owners from uncertified tree workers may be negative from the sale of unneeded services and the use of practices that hinders tree health. Furthermore, profitable tree work is very competitive. Tree workers with indicators of professionalism, such as certification, are generally more profitable.

The “Tree Workers Field-day” was launched to build rapport with tree workers in the area. The low-key half day educational event includes demonstrations on proper tree care, safe working methods, and certification discussions. Since 2005, 108 unique individuals have participated in the attended the field day.



As a result of participation in tree worker field-days and certification training, seven tree workers earned the “certified tree worker” status. To achieve this, they demonstrated successful safety practices such as: CPR, First Aid and, Aerial Rescue skills in addition to demonstrating a basic competency in tree id, tree biology, pruning and more. As these skills are applied, injury rates are expected to decrease and proper tree care practices are expected to increase ultimately having a positive affect on the health of the Northern Virginia’s trees as well as the reputation and profitability of tree workers in the region.

Preserving and Passing Virginia’s Forestland to Generation NEXT

Forestland owners 65 years and older own 41% of Virginia’s 10 million acres of private forestland. High land values and taxes force many heirs to sell land to meet financial obligations; a major force behind an annual loss of 27,000 forested acres. Virginia is on the cusp of the largest intergenerational transfer of family forests ever and landowners need to know how to protect their land. A common barrier to estate planning is using planning tools and having confidence in knowing where to start.

To generate awareness of this issue, previous landowner programs have included brief conservation planning sessions and mass media informed the general public. An in-depth 12-hour short-course, *Focusing on Land Transfer to Generation “NEXT”* was delivered as the first of its kind targeting Virginia forestland owners. Program design drew from national curricula and utilized local experts to develop new material and initiate participant planning. The pilot offering recruited 46 individuals representing 24 family units.

Mission Statement:

To enable people to make the best decisions regarding the forests & natural resources, within their realm of influence, resulting in environmentally sustainable management, growth, and quality of life for that person and that community.

Following short-course participation, landowners can better articulate their land transfer goals and have begun planning. Participants indicated the program would increase the likelihood of their property, staying in the family (59%) and staying in woodland (68%). Ninety-eight percent also identified at least one action to do within a year to protect their land. As these landowners execute their plans, over 6800 acres of land is expected to remain forested and family owned.

2009 Summary of Programming Events

Landowner Programs

- 7th Annual Landowners Woods & Wildlife Conference: Manassas
 - January, 129 individuals
- Backyard Woods Workshops: Greene, Nelson, Albemarle, Fluvanna
 - February – April, 140 individuals
- Focusing on Land Transfer to Generation “NEXT”: Albemarle
 - August, 54 individuals
- Forestry & Wildlife Bus Tour: Orange
 - October, 57 individuals

Urban Forestry Programs

- Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtables: Fairfax, Arlington, Herndon
 - February, April, September, 150 individuals
- Urban Stream Restoration Conference: Arlington
 - June, 150 individuals
- NoVa Urban Forestry Conf: Community Forests Grow Community Benefits: Sterling
 - November, 125 individuals
- Tree Workers Field-day: Culpeper
 - September, 50 individuals

Natural Resource Professional Programs

- Bio-energy: Opportunities, Challenges & Connections: Manassas
 - April, 68 individuals
- SHARP Logger, Log Grading and Merchandising: Albemarle
 - April, 50 individuals
- SHARP Logger, Chainsaw Safety: Orange
 - May, 16 individuals
- SHARP Logger, GPS training: May, December
 - Albemarle, Madison, Louisa: 32 individuals
- BCAP (Biomass Crop Assistance Program) for Loggers, informational meeting: December
 - Louisa, 39 individuals

Information Dissemination

- 19 presentations
- 12 newspaper articles
- 4 newsletters/articles
- 3 radio programs
- 2 peer-reviewed articles
- 2 web-based publishing
- 2 demonstrations
- 1 trade magazine article

Youth Programs

- Seedlings for the Bay: Northern District
- Arbor Day programs: Madison Primary School & 4th Grade
- Youth Field-day: Spotsylvania 4th grade
- Eco-Ventures summer day-camp: Orange

Total Contacts = 11,000

External Funding

In-kind = \$1823 Sponsorship = \$8391 Grants = \$12,318 **Total = \$22,532**