

## Northern District 2012 Forestry & Natural Resources Selected Program Highlights

### Private Forests, Public Good

Extension's Northern District is home to 45% of Virginia's 8 million citizens who live in or near the region's 4,708,782 acres of forests, 75% of which are privately owned. While the general public appreciates woodland, most Virginians are oblivious to their public value. A recent independent study commissioned by the Piedmont Environmental Council provides a conservative estimate of the public benefits value of Virginia forestland at \$698/acre. For the Northern District, this translates to value in excess of 3.25 million dollars annually in goods and services.

Historically significant sites, such as James Madison's Montpelier, the Conway Robinson State Forest and the McCormick Farm, provide a unique opportunity to those who may not otherwise develop an understanding and appreciation of forest resources (Munsell, 2009). Professionals and trained volunteers have developed these sites to provide unique learning opportunities for both landowners and the general public with regard to the sustainability and public good of Virginia. Citizens from across the Commonwealth visit these sites primarily for heritage or recreational reasons.

Since 2011, 82 new individuals have been reached with organized field-tours lead by volunteers. Over 100 trained volunteers have contributed 710 hours in development, interpretation and stewardship of these sites, saving **\$15,641** in staff time.

### 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 that cause 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 inter-generational transfer of family forests ever and landowners need to know how to protect their land.

Focusing on Land Transfer to Generation NEXT, a 12-hour in-depth short course engages landowners in successional planning. Course design draws from national curricula and utilized local experts to develop new material. In 4 years, 121 individuals (77 family units) have completed the course.

#### 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 better articulate land transfer goals and have begun planning. Participants indicated the program would increase the likelihood of their property staying in the family (84%) and staying in woodland (74%). Participants estimated an average family savings of **\$625,000** as a result of the program, and follow-up surveys revealed that over three-quarters of the participants had begun forestland transition planning in the six months following the course. As these landowners continue executing their plans, **47,000 acres** of Virginia's forestland are expected to remain sustainable, family-owned, and intact.



*In memoriam: Celia Dollarhide with Mike Santucci, VDOF. Celia was instrumental in launching the Generation NEXT program, sharing her family's multigenerational successional story. Her legacy lives on in the program and on the land.*

**Northern District - Forestry & Natural Resources Program**  
**Annual Summary**  
 January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012

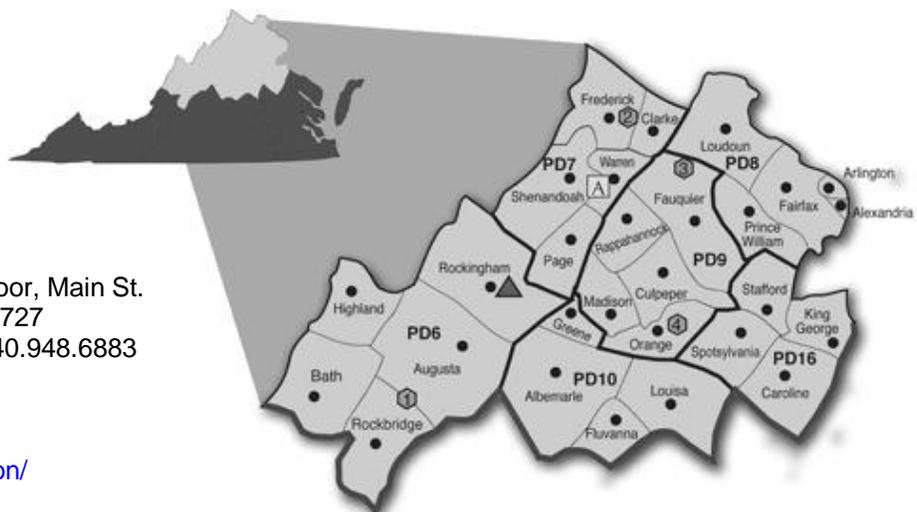
<b>Contacts</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>External Funding</b>
31,347	335	1833	\$38,166

<i>Program Focus Areas</i>					
<i>Urban Forestry &amp; Arboriculture Education</i>	<i>Natural Resource Professional Outreach</i>	<i>4-H/Youth Education</i>	<i>Natural Resources at the Interface</i>	<i>Private Forest Landowner Education</i>	<i>General Public Awareness</i>

**Key Partners:**

County/City Urban Foresters • Forest Products Companies • Forestry For the Bay • Local Conservation Organizations • Municipal Officials • National Park Service • Natural Resources Conservation Service • Northern District County Extension Offices • Piedmont Landowners Association • Private Arborists • Private Consulting Foresters • Private Sector Legal and Financial Professionals • Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute • Soil & Water Conservation Districts • The Montpelier Foundation • Trees Virginia • United States Forest Service • University of Maryland Extension • Virginia Department of Forestry • Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries • Virginia Forestry Association • Virginia Loggers Association • Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives and Old Dominion Electric Cooperative • Virginia Master Naturalists • Virginia Tree Farm Program • VT College of Natural Resources & Environment • VT Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation

**Northern District**



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