

# FORESTRY

## Forestry Short Course – Conservation Strategies



The goal of this project was to provide quality training in how to conserve working landscapes in rural counties for professional natural resource planners, county planners, and public officials. The RC&D Forestry Committee selected the speakers, and provided a meeting facility as well as the lunch. Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative created the

curriculum and provided the notebooks for the class. The Middle Peninsula Land Trust and the Northern Neck Land Trust served on the planning committee. There were 73 participants who attended the class. A high level of success was indicated by the evaluations of the participants.

The cadre of instructors included:

- Bob Bloxom – Va. Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry
- Niki Rovner – Assistant Secretary of Natural Resources
- Melvin Atkins – Va. Beach Ag Preservation
- Ann Duff – Smurfit Stone
- John Barber – RC&D Forestry Committee
- Bill Latane – Farm Bureau
- Milton Herd – Professional Planner
- Rebecca McCoy – Accountant
- Jonah Fogel – Community Viability.

Funding for this project was provided for by grants from NOAA Coastal Management and the Virginia Department of Forestry and Cooperative Extension – Community viability.

## Project Learning Tree

A small, enthusiastic group of educators representing kindergarten to adult education attended training at George Washington’s Birthplace National



Monument on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Karen Cox of Virginia Cooperative Extension and John Magruder of Three Rivers Forestry and Consulting joined Steve Davis and Charlene Talcott of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to lead an exploration of two tremendous teaching resources: Project Learning Tree and Your Backyard Classroom. The workshop, educational resources, and lunch were free thanks to a

donation from Smurfit Stone Container Corporation.

## Value of Forestry Presentations to County Planning Commissions

In partnership with the Virginia Department of Forestry and local industry, Tidewater RC&D coordinated presentations to nine planning commissions in the area. The presentations showed that forestry continues to be a billion dollar industry in the region and contributes to the overall economy while providing many environmental benefits.

The conclusion of the presentations focused on the cost of services required by different land uses. Basically for every dollar of revenue paid to the county the forest land needs only \$ .31 in services. Residential land use has a cost of services of \$ 1.34 for every dollar of revenue paid to the county. The result is that forest land generates net income for the county while residential land is a net loss.

The RC&D Forestry Committee will continue this project next year by offering presentations to middle schools as a part of their SOLs on economics. Partners on this project include the county foresters with the Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Cooperative Extension Forester and representatives from forestry businesses including consultants and industry representatives. Funding for the brochure was provided through a grant with the Virginia Department of Forestry. The balance of the project is to modify the presentations to be county specific and to coordinate people to make the presentations in each county.



## Riparian Buffer Promotion

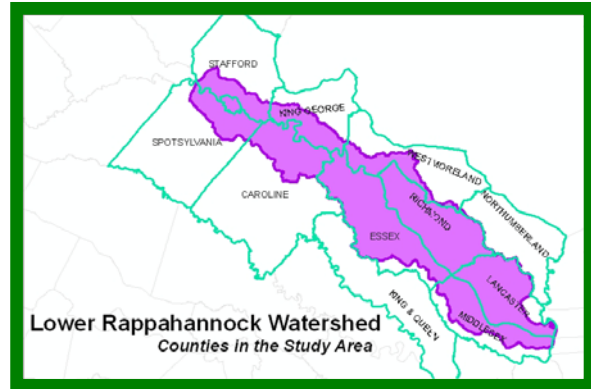
Anna Cahoon, the RC&D Forester, partnered with Lucy Mallinak of the Virginia Department of Forestry to sponsor a training workshop for natural resource professionals on



the value and use of riparian buffers for protecting the environment. Representatives from the Virginia Department of Forestry, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the local counties attended. Ms. Mallinak demonstrated a GIS tool that she helped developed which identified where specific buffers are needed within the Lower Rappahannock Watershed area. The program used county tax maps to identify landowners who would



benefit from installing riparian buffers. The tax maps were overlaid onto high quality aerial photos and then a set of criteria helped determine areas that could use buffers that are not currently in place. Using the data from this program, the number of acres of riparian buffers in each sub watershed of the Lower Rappahannock River that needs buffers can be calculated and information programs can be targeted to the landowners. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program was stressed as a tool that land owners can use to offset the expense of a buffer. This was a partnership project with all funds being provided by partnering agencies. Lucy Mallinak's position as Lower Rappahannock Watershed Initiative Coordinator was grant funded through the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Forestry.



### **Passing Land to the Next Generation**

This class was offered to provide education and information to landowners about the legal and personal issues and solutions involved in transferring productive forest and farmland from one generation to the next. It was a pilot to determine the feasibility and interest level in this region to attend a workshop on satellite and computer downlink with Clemson University. The downlink offered the opportunity to have university professors from several universities offering insights into the detailed and difficult challenges of sustaining large tracts of working land when land is inherited by numerous siblings with divergent interests in the land. Nine people registered and showed strong interest in the subject matter.

Partners in the class included Virginia Cooperative Extension Forestry Department at Virginia Tech, Clemson University and Karen Cox, the local Cooperative Extension Forestry Agent. The Northern Neck Planning District Commission provided conference facilities including technical support for a computer. All costs were covered by a registration fee.

### **Forestry and Wildlife Tour**

To educate landowners, natural resource professionals and the public about the need to manage forest land for both production and wildlife habitat, Tidewater RC&D Forestry Committee co-sponsored a forestry and wildlife tour with Virginia Tech. The 50 participants received a more in-depth understanding of forestry in this region by touring West Point Veneer Company, Sandy Point



State Forest, and Romancoke Farm. In addition to traditional forestry practices, the RC&D Forester discussed the opportunities for participation in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program with riparian buffers. Speakers included the director of the Virginia Department of Forestry, Carl Garrison, The Nature Conservancy, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Tech, the

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Forestry Consultants, Jim Vadas and Stan Caruso and others. Virginia Tech Landowners Education Program and the Cooperative Extension Forester are major partners on this project. Due to in-kind donations of services, the registration fees and a small grant from Virginia State University covered the \$ 5,000 cost of this project.

## RESOURCE CONSERVATION

### Gloucester Point Beach Living Shoreline



Gloucester Point Beach, the largest public beach on the Middle Peninsula, was stabilized with vegetation following the devastation brought about by Tropical Storm Ernesto in the fall of 2006. Gloucester County Parks, Recreation and Tourism provided the staff to move the sand back into a dune formation which would protect the shoreline and park from further erosion.

American Beach Grass and *Spartina patens*, two types of beach grass, were planted to help stabilize the 7700 square feet of dunes. Ware Academy teachers and staff volunteered their time and labor in preparing the area prior to the actual planting. Technical guidance on plant selection was provided by NRCS Plant Material Center and VIMS. To help educate the public about the value of a “Living Shoreline”, a sign was installed on the beach for everyone’s benefit.

The Virginia Department of Conservation provided \$ 2800 for this project through the Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Reduction Activities. The balance of the project was completed through in-kind services.

### Expanding Citizen Monitoring Network in Virginia’s Northern

### Neck through Capacity Building

To sustain and expand the existing citizen-volunteer water quality monitoring, eighteen volunteer monitors were recruited and trained and each worked for a different length of time. By working in co-operation with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, a curriculum and manual were developed for a Train-the-Trainer Certification Program which will allow volunteers to run local training sessions to both certify and recertify other volunteers. A test pilot of the course was conducted. The RC&D Watershed Coordinator supported the volunteers with collecting the data, supplying equipment and finding answers for questions. The monitors self-entered the data into the Alliance database which becomes a part of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) database. This data then becomes a part of the report on the status of Virginia Rivers that is submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency. The information about the water monitoring volunteers is posted on the Tidewater RC&D's web site. The total project cost was \$ 92,000 with \$ 40,000 coming from a grant from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. The \$ 52,000 balance was from volunteer labor and in-kind contributions.

