President’s Message: Wood & Wildlife — Together Again

Maybe I’m showing my age, but when I was in school the foresters and the wildlife majors “grew up” together. We shared many of the same classes, the same building, had professors common and even partied together. Like two close cousins. Consequently, we shared a common philosophy that timber and game were twin crops and that, basically, good timber management was also good wildlife management.

Biologically, such a close relationship made a lot of sense. Most wildlife thrives or at least needs at one stage of life or another the brushy young growth that inevitably follows timber harvests. Such areas are a rich source of insects, berries, browse and hiding cover. Quail, turkey, pheasants, rabbits, songbirds and small mammals all benefit. Out west, hunters and wildlife biologists quickly discovered that without either fire or logging, elk herds declined sharply. In short, disturbance is good for many, perhaps even most, species and there is nothing like logging to mimic natural disturbance like fire (it’s just that logging can be a bit more controlled).

Continued on page 11
Maryland Hunters Harvest nearly 80,000 Deer during 2019-2020 Season

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources reported that deer hunters harvested 79,457 deer during the combined archery, firearms, and muzzleloader seasons, from Sept. 6, 2019 through Jan. 31, 2020.

The statewide harvest included 29,233 antlered and 46,777 antlerless white-tailed deer, plus 1,552 antlered and 1,895 antlerless sika deer. The harvest was 3% higher than the 2018-2019 total of 77,382 deer.

Hunters harvested more than 5,000 deer on Sundays. Hunting deer on Sunday is only permitted during certain weeks in 20 of Maryland’s 23 counties.

Many factors affect the annual deer harvest, including weather, the amount of natural food available to deer, and the economy as it relates to recreational time available.

“We are pleased with the results of this year’s overall deer harvest,” Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Paul Peditto said. “Maryland’s deer population remains very healthy, and deer hunters continue to play the most critical role in the management of this important species.”

The harvest in deer management Region A (Western Maryland) decreased 12%, from 9,705 deer last year to 8,534 this year. Poor weather conditions on key hunting days contributed to the region’s harvest decline. Hunters in Region B — the remainder of the state — harvested 70,923 deer, up 5% from 67,677 deer harvested last year.

Forest Owners May Benefit from Income Tax Modification Program

Forest landowners in Maryland can increase the financial returns on their forest stewardship efforts by minimizing property, income, and estate taxes. Resources are available at dnr.maryland.gov. As we wind through tax season, MFA wanted to highlight the income tax modification program for eligible landowners.

What is it?
The Maryland Income Tax Modification for Reforestation and Timber Stand Improvement Program provides a financial incentive for forest landowners to manage their forest land by allowing them to deduct double the cost of reforestation and timber stand improvement from their federal adjusted gross income for Maryland income tax purposes.

Who qualifies?
Participants must own or lease between 3 to 1,000 acres of forest land capable of growing more than 20 cubic feet of wood per acre per year, which is available for the primary purpose of growing and harvesting trees. Christmas tree and ornamental tree operations are not eligible. Only forest management practices installed on 3 to 1,000 acres may receive the tax modification in any one year.

How does it work?
This program allows eligible participants to deduct double the cost of reforestation and timber stand improvement practices, less any cost-share assistance received through other programs (WIP, EQIP, etc.). This is reported on the Maryland tax return as a subtraction from the federal adjusted gross income. Practices receiving the modification must remain in effect for at least 15 years. Periodic inspections will occur. If they are not maintained, the tax savings must be repaid.

How many people participate?
Approximately 30-50 landowners participate annually.

How can I learn more?
Visit dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programapps/tax.aspx for details on the program as well as the required documents (DNR 393) and instructions. Taxpayer information, forest management practices and supplemental practices, as well as financial cost calculations are required as well as forester certification. A Professional Forester must sign, date and affix professional seal to form DNR 393 in order to process the Maryland Income Tax Modification.

You may also contact your local Department of Natural Resources forester for more information or Daniel Rider at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service, located at 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.
Phone: (410) 260 - 8583
E-mail: daniel.rider@maryland.gov
Executive Director’s Message

On January 16, MFA, along with the Association of Forest Industries, held our second annual Legislative Luncheon at Harry Browne’s in Annapolis. Following the meeting, we held an industry briefing with the House Environmental & Transportation Committee about the importance of sustainable forestry in Maryland. The presentation was indeed a historical event, as it was the first time the forest community has come together in such a forum. There were three panels:

State Government: Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Environmental: Anne Swanson, Chesapeake Bay Commission; Jonathan Kays, University of Maryland Extension Forester; Donnelle Keech, The Nature Conservancy; and Gary Allen, Maryland Forestry Foundation

Industry: Bill Miles, Association of Forest Industries; Beth Hill, Maryland Forests Association; Lin Spicer, Holly Lane Farms; Tommy Johnson, Eastern Shore Forest Products; and Danny Sines and Rusty Leonard, Mountain Loggers Group

Together we successfully displayed the importance of the environmental and economic benefits that working forests have in Maryland. The feedback I received following the briefing was that the legislators were surprised to learn that the industry and environmental groups shared so much common ground. They thought that were people that wanted to save all the trees and people that wanted to cut them all down, which simply isn’t true. The truth is we all want forests to remain forests, and having active markets is essential for retaining woodland.

MFA is planning several bus tours in the coming months that will target educating economic development and local elected officials on “Why Markets Matter.” Stops will include active logging jobs and manufacturing facilities where we will highlight the value we provide to the rural economy.

I thank the Rural Maryland Council for helping to fund these projects that are increasing awareness and understanding of our industry.

Beth Hill, Executive Director MFA

Earth Day at Spocott Windmill & Village

Spocott Windmill joins forces with the Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth (DCPG) to provide a day of environmental and historical celebration on Saturday, April 18, from 10am to 3pm. Watch the mill running (weather permitting) and tour the buildings including the Windmill, Adaline Wheatley House, Castle Haven Schoolhouse, Blacksmith Shop, Country Store and Museum, and the partially renovated 19th Century Doctor’s Office.

There will be an Arbor Day tree giveaway sponsored by the Dorchester County Forestry Board and horseshoe tournament sponsored by the Spocott Windmill Foundation and DCPG.

Any interested groups should call Fred Pomeroy at 410-228-8643. Visit spocottwindmill.org for more details.
Eastern Shore sawmill announces $7M wood pellet operation


SALISBURY, Md. — Eastern Shore Forest Products, a significant buyer in the regional forestry and logging industries, announced recently a $7 million expansion to the multi-state company’s wood pellet operation.

The expansion, which will create 20 to 25 new jobs between its Salisbury and Pocomoke City facilities, should more than make up for revenue the company expects to lose after a Somerset County prison transitions from wood energy to natural gas next year, said Tom Johnson, company owner and CEO.

“It’s actually going to be a higher-value product,” he said. “As far as the economy for the Shore, we’re better off for it.”

The company is in the process of engineering and obtaining permits for the two-phase expansion. Once completed, the company would accept wood chips at its Salisbury facility for grinding and drying before trucking them to Pocomoke City for pelletizing and packaging, Johnson said.

The pellets will be sold into the retail marketplace as animal bedding, cat litter and fuel. The company will manufacture between 30,000 and 50,000 tons of pellets per year, and the new business should preserve the Shore’s forestry efforts, which were partially threatened when the state announced its intention to decommission a wood-burning power plant at Eastern Correctional Institution, a medium-security prison in Westover, Johnson said.

Forest “landowners have to have a market for that. It’s just part of forest management,” he said. “You cannot properly manage a forest without having an outlet for low-grade wood.”

The prison contract helps thin about 1,000 acres of forest across the region each year, according to the Maryland Forestry Association, which represents landowners, loggers and other industry interests. The company, using contractors and its own crews, harvests small-diameter trees with minimal commercial value to shred them into chips, thinning the forest and allowing remaining trees to grow faster, larger and more valuable for use as hardwood. That process provides income for landowners and keeps forests from being developed.

Leaders in the forestry and logging industries began lobbying Gov. Larry Hogan more than a year ago after discovering the state’s plan to replace the 30-year-old wood-burning prison plant with natural gas service, part of a larger pipeline project to bring gas to Somerset County. Eastern Shore Forest Products employs about 15 people to service its contract with the prison, which consumes about 55,000 tons of wood chips each year, about a third of the Shore’s total chip production.

Forestry advocates feared the Shore would lose 50 jobs and $7 million in yearly economic activity without that business, including $300,000 in payments to landowners whose forests are harvested for the chips. In the spring, the state’s forestry and logging industries suffered a much larger blow after the Verso Corp. shuttered its 131-year-old paper mill in Allegany County. The mill’s appetite for low-grade wood supported forestry efforts in the Virginias, Pennsylvania and across Maryland. In response, the state announced last month several studies to redesign and revive Maryland’s forestry and logging industries.

After the state moved forward with its gas pipeline plans, Eastern Shore Forest Products decided to expand its Maryland pellet operation, Johnson said. The company already produces about 50,000 tons of pellets each year at a new facility just north of Houston, Texas. Maryland crews who sell wood to the company could have gone out of business, he said.

“I’m not going to let that happen,” Johnson said. “We knew we had to come up with something.”

The company continues to provide wood chips to the prison, which will transition to natural gas in October 2021, said Daniel Faoro, spokesperson for the Maryland Environmental Service, which is overseeing the project. After that, Eastern Shore Forest Products will likely expand its pellet operation, Johnson said.

“It just so happens that the prison closing is going to free up a bunch of wood,” he said.

The company is scheduled to begin making wood pellets in August, Johnson said.
Natural Resources Careers Camp Accepting Applicants for July 2020

Annual Weeklong Program Offered for Grades 9-12

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources invites high school students with an interest in forestry, fisheries, wildlife, or parks management to participate in a Natural Resources Careers Camp, July 19-25 at the Hickory Environmental Education Center in Garrett County.

A partnership with Allegany College of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources offers high school students an opportunity to learn from industry professionals and develop contacts that could lead to future employment and a career in natural resources.

Students will participate in hands-on classroom and field activities in forestry, wildlife, ecology, fisheries, watershed management, natural resources management, and conservation. They will use Geographic Information System Mapping, Global Positioning Systems, computer simulation, and other field tools used in natural resources careers.

The camp is open to any student who will be entering grades 9 through 12 next year, although space is limited to 42 students. Application deadline is March 31.

Free Seedlings for Kent, Queen Anne’s County

‘Backyard Buffers’ Available to Riparian Homeowners

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is offering free tree seedlings to help improve water quality in targeted Eastern Shore communities.

Landowners in Kent and Queen Anne’s counties who have a creek, drainage ditch, stream, or other waterway on or near their property are eligible for free tree seedlings through the department’s Backyard Buffer program.

Trees planted along waterways help improve water quality by absorbing excess nutrients, reducing sediment, lowering water temperatures, and stabilizing stream banks.

Each “buffer in a bag” contains bare-root, native tree or shrub seedlings suited for planting in moist soil conditions. Homeowners can choose from a small bag of 10 with two of each species and a large bag of 25 with five of each species. The bundle will include eastern redbud, slippery dogwood, persimmon, swamp white oak, and hackberry. Loblolly pine will be bagged separately in quantities of 10 per bag. All seedlings are one year old and about 8 to 10 inches tall.

Tree protection tubes will again be available for purchase on orders in both counties through the Queen Anne’s County Forestry Board. The tree shelters will include a 4-foot tube, bird net, and 5-foot wooden stake. Tree tubes provide a number of beneficial purposes including blocking deer rubbing, discouraging animals from chewing on the seedlings, protecting the seedlings from frost damage, providing markers to identify the trees when mowing, and functioning as small “greenhouses” promoting increased height growth.

All requests must be received by March 20, and pickup will be scheduled in early April. Quantities are limited so reservations will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Additionally, a free workshop on tree buffers will take place March 26 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Price Community Center, 121 Rabbit Hill Road, Church Hill. Landowners will have the opportunity to learn about the Backyard Buffer program and its benefits, tree spacing, species selection, tree planting, deer protection, maintenance, cost-share opportunities, where to purchase bare-root tree seedlings, and more. The workshop is limited to 30 people.

To reserve seedlings or participate in the workshop, contact the Maryland Forest Service Centreville office at 410-819-4120 or email Brittany Haas at brittany.haas@maryland.gov.
Apply for Dick Stanfield Scholarship by Aug. 31

Established in 2012, the Dick Stanfield Scholarship is offered by the Maryland Forests Association in memory and honor of long-time member, Dick Stanfield who was instrumental in starting the Association in 1976. Mr. Stanfield had been president of the Maryland Lumberman’s Association and after it became the Maryland Forests Association he served as vice president of its Central Maryland division, and treasurer from 1987 until his death in 2012.

The Scholarship provides a $500 cash award to an MFA member, child of an MFA member, or employee of Edrich Lumber to continue their education at the college level and is awarded annually. The application, available at mdforests.org, includes short essay and verification of college enrollment. Application deadline is August 31st with awards announced by September 30th.

Leadership Changes at MD-DE Master Logger Program

The Maryland Master Logger Program was formed in 1993, by the Maryland Forest Association, Maryland DNR Forest Service, Maryland Eastern Shore RC&D Council, American Pulpwood Association (later the Forest Resources Association), and Maryland Cooperative Extension, under the direction of the Maryland Forest Association. The program was designed to provide logger training and education for loggers, foresters, forest landowners, and other personnel involved or interested in the timber harvesting business.

In 2002, the state of Delaware joined the program, and the program became known as the Maryland-Delaware Master Logger Program. In 2007, the University of Maryland Extension (UME), began to administer the program under the direction of the MD-DE Master Logger Steering Committee.

Funding for the program is currently provided primarily by assessments of Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) participating companies and grants from Maryland and Delaware Forest Services. Course fees also support program costs. Recent closures such as the Luke Mill and declining markets for forestry products impacts this important program’s funding sources. Now, more than ever, the Master Logger Program needs support from loggers and forest industry professionals.

In 2019, Robert Beale of Loveville Timberworks, LLC in St. Mary’s County took over as chair of the Master Logger Steering Committee, following Anita Simmons who stepped down as chairwoman last year. Anita will continue to serve on the steering committee and assume her former role as Western Regional Coordinator.

Robert is a graduate of the University of Maryland Institute of Applied Agriculture where he studied Agricultural Businesses Management. During his career, he has worked for as a tree climber for a tree care company and as a steel building erector for a local construction company, eventually becoming a site superintendent overseeing large projects including aircraft hangars and military installations. Robert started Loveville Timberworks, LLC in 2005, shortly after he became a MD-DE Master Logger. The business services many local mills, sells firewood wholesale and to the community, and sells pulpwood to West Rock in Virginia. Robert has also completed the Virginia SHARP Logger program.

He said his priorities as chairman of the MD-DE Master Logger program are to update program curriculum and focus on logger safety, best management practices, Department of Transportation regulations, and increased awareness for the amount of paperwork required for logging operators. Robert said he would like more Master Loggers to participate in the steering committee.

In addition, the MD-DE Master Logger program welcomes Taylor Robinson from the University of Maryland who is working with the Master Logger program as well as other University forestry programs.

Agnes Kedmenecz is the Program Coordinator for the MD-DE Master Logger Program. In 2019, 22 new people became MD-DE Master Loggers. This type of growth is important and MFA encourages loggers to participate in this valuable training program. The Master Logger program is very accessible with online, correspondence and face-to-face learning opportunities. To learn more, please visit extension.umd.edu/masterlogger
2020 Maryland Arbor Day Poster Contest Winners Announced

The judging is complete for the annual fifth-grade Arbor Day poster contest sponsored by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Three schools in Maryland that are home to the top winners will benefit with tree plantings this spring. The poster contest is judged annually by a panel of forestry experts and special guest judge, Maryland First Lady Yumi Hogan.

Lola Lugard of Sykesville, Carroll County was awarded First Place, and her school will receive 15 trees for planting.

Second Place, with a prize of 10 trees, was awarded to Angela Webb of Easton, Talbot County. Third Place honors went to Annelie Kolbe of Hancock, Washington County. Her school will receive five trees.

“Every year I look forward to this annual tradition, which shines light on the artistic talent and environmental passion of young Marylanders across our state,” said First Lady Yumi Hogan, who is an accomplished artist and adjunct professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

The posters were created using varied artistic techniques, including colored pencils, crayons, markers and paint, all illustrating this year’s contest theme, “Trees are Terrific… in All Four Seasons!”

The Maryland Forest Service accepted hundreds of entries for the 2020 Arbor Day Poster Contest. Posters are initially judged on a county level and the winners are submitted to the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee to compete at the statewide level.

The Arbor Day poster contest is hosted by the department’s Tree-Mendous Maryland Program. All winning poster entries are posted online.

Photos (Right): Winning poster by fifth-grade student Lola Lugard of Sykesville in Carroll County (top). The posters are initially judged at the county level and winners are submitted to the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee for statewide competition. First Lady, Yumi Hogan serves as a judge for the final contest, pictured (bottom) with Maryland DNR Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio and the top three winning entries from Carroll County (first place), Talbot County (second place) and Washington County (third place).

Contact the Maryland Forests Association

As of January 1, 2019, the Maryland Forest Association announced its new Executive Director, Beth Hill and new contact information for the organization:

Address: P. O. Box 332, Linkwood, Maryland 21835
Phone: (410) 463 - 1755
Email: info@mdforests.org

Our Mission

The mission of the Maryland Forests Association is to conserve and enhance forests in Maryland by:

- Increasing awareness of the diverse, public benefits of forests;
- Supporting the sustainable use of forest resources;
- Promoting economic opportunities for forest landowners; and,
- Maintaining a viable local forest products industry.
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- Log loader contest
- 1 entry fee, 2-day admission
- Pre-expo workshops

Visit ExpoRichmond.com to register before April 17, 2020 to receive the special rate of $10. After April 17th, admission is $20 per person.

Spouses and children under 18 are admitted with paying adults.

An educational course on Wood Anatomy ($100) will be held off-site on Thursday, April 30. For more information or to register, visit exporichmond.com or https://www.sim.sbio.vt.edu/?page_id=2616

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Your Membership Matters!
The Maryland Forests Association relies on the support of our members and sponsors to fund our organization and allow us to be the voice for Maryland forestry. Please help make 2020 another successful year for membership!

We are counting on you to renew your membership and ask that you invite your friends, family and colleagues to join us as a collective voice for Maryland forestry. Last year, your contributions helped us boost our scholarship, career camp, and general funds. Help us exceed our 2020 goals and consider a contribution in addition to your membership renewal.

We are working harder than ever to serve you better and represent Maryland’s forestry industry. We cannot do this work without your support. Please look out for membership renewal letters and you can also renew online at mdforests.org. Thank you!

Your Support Makes a Difference!
2020 Membership Rates:
• Student – $10
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• Natural Resources Professional – $60
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• Businesses/Agencies/Organizations – $150
• Sawmill – $300

* Insurance fees must be paid directly to the insurance company, MFA processes membership only.

Sponsor Membership Rates
MFA offers three levels of Annual Sponsorship, starting at $600. Each level provides an membership with MFA plus additional advertising benefits.

Visit mdforests.org to learn more.
Reminder to Call Before You Cut

Whatever the reason for harvesting timber, a professional forester is uniquely qualified to assist you with a timber harvest that accomplishes your needs and expectations.

Maryland has more than 2.5 million acres of woodlands, and the majority are owned and managed by private landowners. Many understand that successfully managing their property occasionally means cutting some trees for the overall health of the woods, but may have little knowledge about how best to do so.

Now they have access to a free program that can help them make informed decisions about the timber harvesting process. The “Call Before You Cut” program offers professional assistance to landowners considering timber sales. Landowners can receive complimentary information by visiting callb4ucut.com/maryland and selecting “Request Info,” or by calling 301-432-2767, extension 315.

The Woods in Your Backyard Online Course Starts Mar. 23

Register now for the Woods in Your Backyard online course - Spring 2020

Registration is now open for the Spring session of “The Woods in Your Backyard” online course. Our self-paced, non-credit course runs 10 weeks from March 23rd to June 2nd, 2020

The course will help landowners convert lawn to natural areas and enhance stewardship of existing natural areas. Based on the guide of the same name, the course provides strategies to landowners of small parcels of land (1-10 acres) that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property.

Activities include how to map habitat areas, understand basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choose and implement a few habitat management projects, and how to set a timetable and record your progress.

Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

The course costs $95.00 per person, which includes the 108-page “Woods In Your Backyard” guide, workbook, and a tree identification guide. The course is limited to 25 participants.

Registration closes March 23rd or when class is full.

For more information, go to extension.umd.edu/woodland/woods-your-backyard/online-course. To register through Eventbrite, go to wyib-online-s8.eventbrite.com.

Or contact Andrew Kling, Agent Associate, Woodland Stewardship Education program, University of Maryland Extension Western Maryland Research & Education Center:
Phone: (301) 432-2767 extension 307
Email: akling1@umd.edu.

Woods in Your Backyard Course Overview

Learn why you should manage your land; the basics of tree identification, forestry, and wildlife habitat management; how to choose land management projects to meet your goals; and how to set a timetable and record progress.

The course includes:

• Five thematically-related modules that parallel the printed The Woods in Your Backyard guide
• Activities that can be completed on line via downloadable Portable Document Format (PDF) files, or via the Workbook.
• Quizzes that assess understanding of the topics presented, and short videos that introduce you to fellow woodland owners and illustrate key topics and techniques.
• Examples from three case families that will offer different perspectives on natural area projects.

All course materials are accessible in your Internet browser through Instructure’s Canvas content learning management system. With a paid enrollment, each participant receives a print copy of The Woods in Your Backyard (2nd edition), The Woods in Your Backyard Workbook, and Common Native Trees of Virginia Tree Identification Guide.
President’s Message Continued

Then somewhere along the way, foresters and wildlife biologists seemed to split apart, an unfortunate estrangement, somewhat inexplicable but it happens. Wildlifers became more enthusiastic about conservation biology, ecosystem management, and population dynamics. Both disciplines began to rely more on GIS and image analyses in favor of plain old “boots on the ground”. Granted, new knowledge is good and I’m as thrilled with what I can do in ArcView as anyone, but I still have had this nagging notion that something has been missing…

I’m beginning to believe the two old partners are reconciling, getting back together, largely because I’ve been privileged to play a small part in a number of projects which unashamedly relied on logging to achieve wildlife goals. On the Idlywyld Wildlife Management Area, DNR biologists have recognized that heavy thinning coupled with annual burning is vital to bobwhite quail recovery. I’ve worked with several private timber owners who want to diversify their pine stands to improve their deer and turkey habitat. Heck, the Maryland Forest Service even clearcut a site poorly suited for timber production just to create more habitat for the rare frosted elfin butterfly. All good stuff.

Two old friends getting over something one or the other said or did a long time ago, but now realizing their future relationship means more and is worth a redo. Never should have happened but, hey, we’re human, us foresters and wildlife professional. We can rise above it— and that makes me happy.

Joe Hinson, MFA President

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