



TREE Cookies Etc.

Winter 2015
Volume 8, Issue 1



tree cookie (trē' kookē) n. a cross sectional slice of a trunk or branch. The concentric rings tell not only the age of that part of the tree, but also a story about the environmental conditions, history, and dynamics of that tree, in that place.

TREE Cookies Etc. n. 1. a free electronic newsletter dedicated to tell the story of forest stewardship, tree care, and natural resource management. 2. to help people make best decisions regarding the resources entrusted to them.

Calendar

- February 2&3
[Forest Health Conf.](#)
Staunton, VA
- February 23
Chainsaw Safety for Weekend Warriors
Culpeper, VA
Free! Call Culpeper
VCE 540-727-3435
- March 14
[Landowners Woods & Wildlife Conference](#)
Culpeper, VA
- March - May
[Woodland Options for Landowners](#)
12 weeks online

Dear Reader,

I had hoped to get this newsletter out before the end of 2014, but alas... Thankfully, there is truth to the saying "there is always next year." The danger with this, of course, is that the goal gets pushed ahead year after year. I personally find this is more likely to happen with goals that are high in importance and lower in urgency. Perhaps you can relate?

Those of you who own woodland certainly can relate. Except for a forest fire, there is little urgency to, say work on the invasive plants today, instead of tomorrow or figure out how you are going to pass the land and the ethic onto the next generation. I think these kinds of things are best accomplished in the regular pattern of living.

For me, I'm going to consider each day how I can move the needle just a little on the most important things in my life. By the end of this year, I hope to see that it was filled with small efforts that have added up to something significant.

*Best For the New Year,!
Adam*

Get the Buffer Bug!

By: Judy Okay, Ph.D. Okay Consulting

Riparian forest buffers are not something you would put or find on a wish list of gifts to give or receive. Yet, we should all want them. What are they? They are bands of trees along the banks of streams, rivers and other water features. You may have seen newly installed forest buffers looking like tan, blue or green plastic posts along a stream on farmland. These shelters are temporary components mainly to protect the young trees from wildlife damage. As the trees grow out of these tubes and mature they protect the stream from surface runoff likely carrying with it various pollutants. The runoff may contain fertilizer, manure, pet waste, petroleum products, road salt, eroded soil, or other pollutants. But wait... there's more!

Continued on Page 3



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Have you seen *Sus scrofa*?

If so, was a good one or bad one?. *Sus scrofa* is the Latin name for a pig. While hog farming has been part of our Commonwealth’s history for hundreds of years, we’ve got a new problem with some pigs “gone wild” in some places.

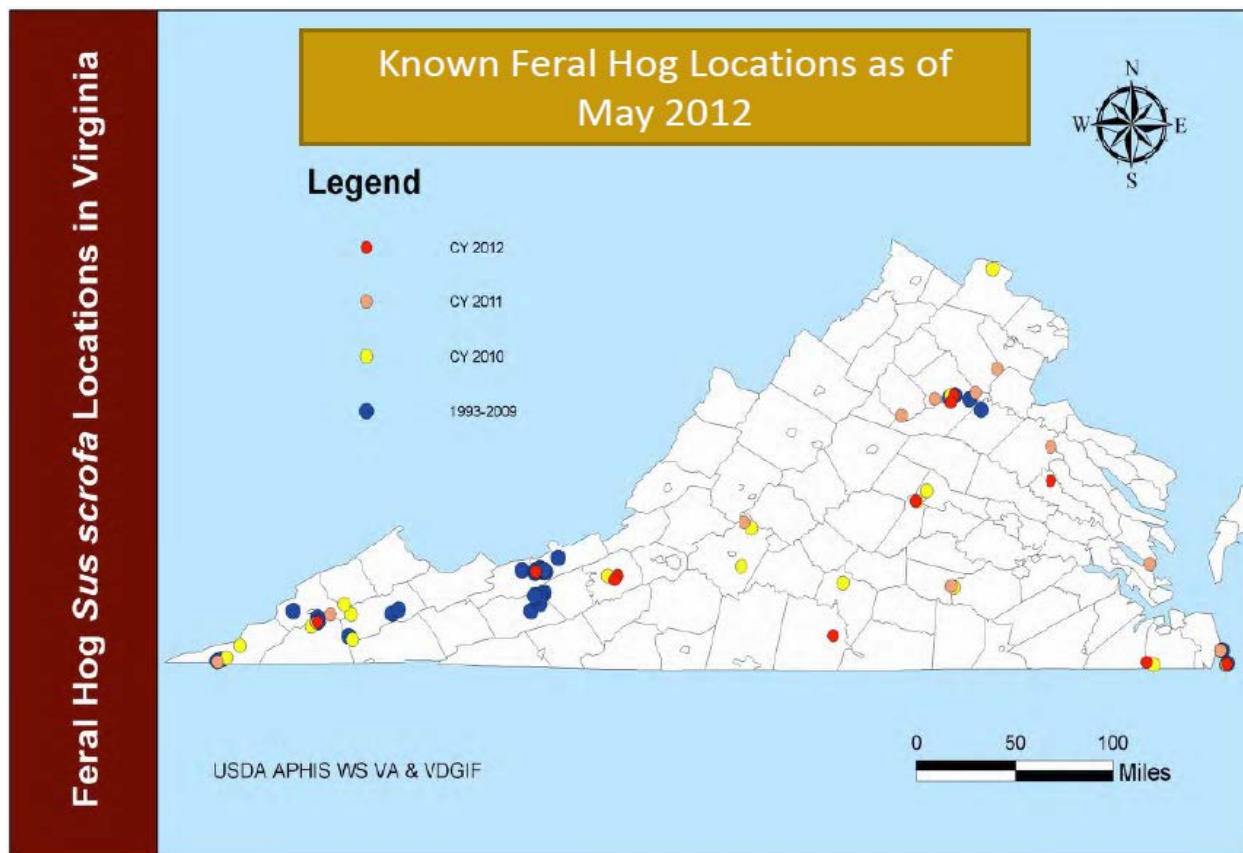
According to the Virginia Department of Forestry; “Virginia is on the front lines of the northward spread of feral hogs in the eastern United States. Feral hogs are detrimental to natural habitats and endangered native plant and animal species. Once established, they are nearly impossible to eradicate. Adult feral hogs have no natural predators aside from humans and exhibit very high reproductive potential. A population can triple in size in 14—16 months. Seventy percent of a population must be removed each year to stabilize growth.”

Additionally, these wild pigs can harbor various parasites which in some cases can be transmitted to livestock and even pets.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com> <Feral Hogs in Virginia>



Photo Credit: VDGIF



Farming... you can do it in the woods too.

It's a good thing that our society has elevated the status of farmers from the "just a farmer" kind of attitude to a recognition of the business savvy and land management skills it takes to successfully cultivate a piece of land to produce food, decorative material, medicines and more.



Goldenseal, *Hydrastis canadensis*

A growing field of interest is Forest Farming. This type of farming uses the forest as the "field" into which is planted crops that benefit from the unique type of environment forests create. You may be familiar with Shitake and Ginseng as forest grown edibles and medicinals respectively. A host of other opportunities exist as well such as Goldenseal, ramps, black cohosh and even wasabi!

If this and other novelties such as walnut syrup and ostrich Fiddlehead ferns interests you, check out the Forest Farming site at: http://www.extension.org/forest_farming

Buffers continued...

In addition to acting as pollution filters, good buffers also provide shade for fish and other aquatic critters, and critical habitat for wildlife. Additionally, buffers do an amazing job of controlling flood waters, reducing soil erosion and more. We depend on clean water for our daily needs. Forest buffers along our water features are the most efficient and economical tools in the box to provide clean water.

The importance of riparian forest buffers has been recognized for many years. Planting more forest buffers in Virginia is a goal promoted by all agriculture and natural resource related agencies and many nonprofit organizations as well. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has a list of "impaired" (i.e. not healthy) streams on their website. You can find out if any streams in your area need help by going to: www.deq.virginia.gov and query "impaired streams". If you have streams in your community listed with sediment or other impairments, more riparian forest buffers may help the situation. Both the Chesapeake Bay and Southern River regions of Virginia have needs for more forest buffers along water features.



A well buffered "Smith Creek" in Shenandoah..
Photo by J. Okay.

This is the time of year when we are reminded to set new goals to improve who we are and what we do. Why not set a goal related to our environment? And perhaps to learn more about water quality and the natural land features that help protect our water? Find out how you can help your community discover the role forest buffers play in keeping your streams clean. There are programs to help landowners plant trees along their streams. For more information on this topic, contact your local office of any of the following agencies: [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#), [Virginia Department of Forestry](#) or your local [Soil and Water Conservation District](#).

Dr. Okay is retired from the Virginia Department of Forestry and works as a consultant to provide ecological solutions for environmental issues. She currently works with the VDOF on their forest buffer initiative. judyannokay@gmail.com





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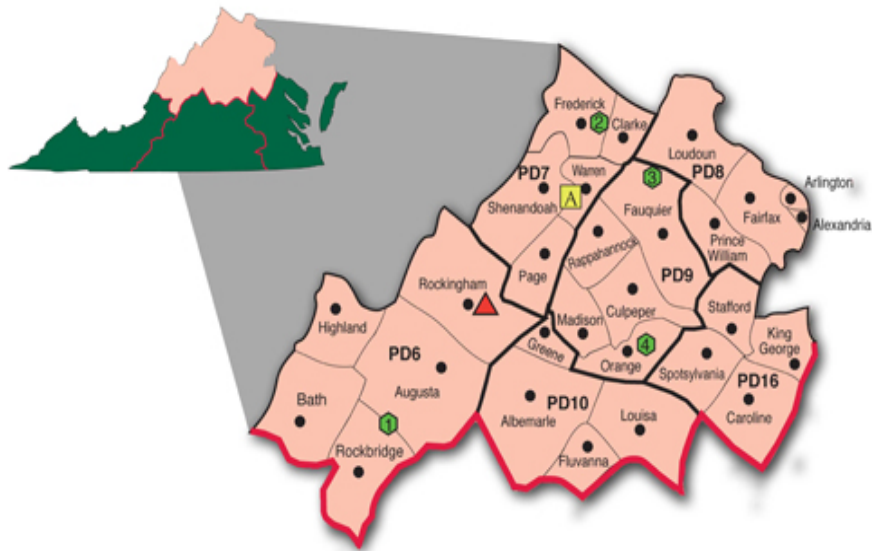
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Date: January 5, 2015

To: Citizens, Landowners, and Natural Resource Professionals

From: Adam K. Downing
Extension Agent, Forestry & Natural Resources
Northern District

Northern District



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