From the Editor...  

Branching Out; Maryland’s Forest Stewardship Educator is part of a cooperative effort of private and public natural resource agencies and organizations. Our main purpose is to provide information and technical advice to people interested in managing forest resources wisely.

If you’re one of the more than 125,000 private landowners that own 90 percent of Maryland’s forests, you’ll find this newsletter a welcome resource. Whether you’re interested in managing for wildlife, forest products, recreation, environmental quality, or a combination of benefits, Branching Out can help.

If you don’t own land, don’t feel left out. The articles workshops, reference materials, and other items included in each issue can help you better understand the elements and application of forest stewardship.

We welcome any thoughts, comments or ideas you may have as you read on.

Landowners Benefit From Stewardship Programs

About 90 percent of Maryland’s forests — 2.2 million acres — is owned by private landowners. While landowners value their properties for a number of reasons, less than 25% have any stated objective for the management of their property. In addition, less than 30% of the timber harvests conducted each year involve a professional forester, and in some cases it shows.

Many landowners assume that after a forest is harvested it is just a matter of time before it grows back to its original condition. Other landowners have little interest in the harvest of timber and want to plant trees and crops or manage for wildlife. Still others think that their property is too small to manage or the best thing to do for the forest is leave it alone.

In the past much forest management assistance for landowners was directed toward management for forest products. However, this has changed and foresters now work with wildlife biologists and ecologists to help landowners manage for a variety of objectives.

Government agencies also realize that well-managed forest properties provides open space that benefits society as a whole and offer tax advantages for those who practice good forest stewardship.

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In Maryland, two established programs provide landowners with professional technical and cost-share assistance. They are the Maryland Tree Farm Program and the Maryland Forest Stewardship Program.

**Q & A: Forest Stewardship and Tree Farm Programs**

**Q:** What’s the difference between the Forest Stewardship Program and SIP?

**A:** The Forest Stewardship Program and Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) are two of several programs authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill. Maryland’s Forest Stewardship Program provides information, education and technical assistance to encourage, assist and recognize private forest landowners who keep their lands and natural resources productive and healthy.

SIP is a cost-share assistance program that encourages private landowners to actively manage their forest resources. What makes SIP stand out among other forestry incentive programs is that a landowner can qualify for assistance by implementing practices that aren’t timber-oriented. Practices such as soil and water quality, fish and wildlife protection, endangered species protection and recreation can be cost-shared, in addition to reforestation and timber stand improvement practices that have been cost-shared in the past.

The principal requirement to qualify for SIP cost-share assistance is a forest stewardship plan developed by a professional resource manager. In many cases this only requires rewriting an existing management plan. Your local Department of Natural Resources Project Forester can prepare this plan for you based on your objectives, or provide you names of other private consultant and industrial foresters that can help.

**Q:** What Practices are Authorized under SIP?

**A:** Landowners who have an approved Forest Stewardship Plan can apply for SIP assistance as long as they are individuals or members of a private group or association with 1 to 1,000 acres of private forestland and they agree to maintain the SIP practice for at least 10 years.

SIP will pay up to 65 percent of the cost of nine following practices:

- **SIP1** - Forest Stewardship Plan Development
- **SIP2** - Reforestation and Afforestation
- **SIP3** - Forest and Agroforest Improvement
- **SIP4** - Windbreaks and Hedgerow Development
- **SIP5** - Soil and Water Protection
- **SIP6** - Riparian and Wetland Protection
- **SIP7** - Fisheries Enhancement Habitat
- **SIP8** - Forest Wildlife Habitat Enhancement
- **SIP9** - Forest Recreation Enhancement

Landowners enrolled in SIP can still qualify for other government incentive programs. For more information on the SIP and other cost-share assistance programs call your local Department of Natural Resource project forester or forest consultant.

**Q:** How does the Forest Stewardship Program differ from the Tree Farm Program?

**A:** Both programs have similar standards and goals that sometimes overlap. A private forest can be both a Tree Farm and a Stewardship Forest.

The Tree Farm System, founded in 1941, is operated and funded privately by the American Forest Foundation and always includes a goal of producing renewable crops of forest products. There are 1,449 tree farmers in Maryland who manage 270,940 acres, or 12 percent of the state’s forest resource.

The Forest Stewardship Program is operated and funded publicly by the U.S. Forest Service and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service: the goals of this program may or may not include producing renewable forest products.

Both programs require a written management plan and the implementation of recommended practices. Tree Farmers are eligible for SIP funds, and can have their land designated a Stewardship Forest.

Confused? Contact us or your local Project Forester with the Department of Natural Resources or a registered professional forester for answers to your questions.
Andersons Property Named Tree Farm of the Year

Carolyn and Howard Anderson have an 80-acre tree farm in Chesapeake Beach that they have managed for 16 years to enhance the productivity of timber and wildlife. By all account their efforts have brought them great personal satisfaction, the recognition of resource professionals, and the 1993 Tree Farmer of the Year Award.

Carolyn is a middle school teacher, and Howard is a food safety officer. According to Howard, their hectic schedules make them look forward to returning to the tree farm as much as possible. “Sometimes when we get tied up in knots at work, we take a walk in the woods to unwind and become human again,” he says.

The Andersons efforts include activities that have promoted sound forest stewardship and a concern for the future. They selectively harvested mature trees on 60 acres of land and recently thinned 15 acres of young yellow-poplar for improved timber growth and forest health. The Andersons have improved wildlife habitat and timber values by planting more than 6 acres of loblolly pine, red oak, black walnut, and other hardwoods. They have installed 17 bluebird houses and 4 bat and owl boxes, and, have completed various wildlife food and cover planting.

Their efforts paid off last year when more than 30 bluebirds hatched on the farm. According to Carolyn, “It’s been a real thrill to see.”

The Andersons share the credit for being named Tree Farm of the Year with farm manager, Therman Stepney, who manages the daily activities of the ongoing livestock operations. Howard notes, “The neighbors around us have also been very supportive of our efforts. I think everyone likes having a tree farm next door.”

The Outstanding Tree Farmer Contest is sponsored each year by the Maryland Tree Farm Program, part of the American Tree Farm System, a nationwide organization that recognizes private woodland owners for quality forest management on their properties. The Maryland Tree Farm program includes 1,450 private woodland owners who manage more than 270,000 acres.

Many people think that a tree farm is straight rows of trees. In reality, tree farms include a diversity of woodlands of every shape and form. The Andersons tree farm is an excellent example of the success the program can inspire. For more information on how your woodland can be designated a tree farm, contact the Maryland Tree Farm Committee at P.O. Box 300, Pocomoke City, MD 21851.

Maryland Landowners Engage in ‘Covert’ Activity

Maryland woodland owners and dwellers are better off today than they were three years ago, thanks to a natural resources program of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service and the Ruffed Grouse Society. The Coverts Project, named for thickets that shelter wildlife, is teaching woodland owners how good forest management practices improve wildlife habitat and other forest benefits.

A key element of the Coverts Project is its reliance on training volunteers called “covert cooperators”. The goal of the program is to develop a statewide network of trained woodlot owners and managers who can help educate Marylanders about good forest and wildlife management.

Each spring, the Coverts Project seeks 30 woodland owners and managers who have an interest in forests, wildlife and conservation. Participants attend a four-day workshop held in the fall and learn where, how and why forests grow; how to enhance tree growth and provide for the needs of various wildlife species; and whom to contact for help in putting this knowledge to work. A wealth of reference materials helps answer their questions and those of others.

In return for the free training, cooperators serve for one year as spokespersons or advocates of wise forest and wildlife conservation in their communities. Some cooperators give public tours of their properties. Others speak at meetings of local civic organizations. Many work one-on-one with neighboring landowners or friends. The idea of “Neighbor Helping Neighbor” is key to the success of the Coverts Project.

The 80 volunteers trained so far have improved 1,565 acres of their own properties and shared forest and wildlife information with an estimated 8,300 people. If you would like to apply for participation in the fall workshop, contact: Coverts Project, Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756, or call (301) 791-2298. Applications will be accepted until June 15, 1993.
Posting Law Eases Burden on Landowners

The process of posting private lands against trespassing has been a sore point for many landowners. Until recently, the land had to be posted with signs at intervals that could be seen by approaching persons. This became an expensive and time-consuming activity since many signs were destroyed or damaged by trespassers.

A law passed by the Maryland legislature a few years ago makes posting much easier and cheaper by allowing the use of vertical strips of oil-based blue paint, as an alternative to signs. Article 27, Section 576-576A states the paint marks must be at least 2 inches in width and 8 inches in length, and centered from 3 to 6 feet from the ground or water surface.

Although the distance between signs is not stated, the Department of Natural Resources Police recommend that they be close enough that an observer standing in front of one mark, would be able to see the paint marks off to each side.

Gypsy Moth on the Move South: Southern Pine Beetle Outbreaks

While defoliation over much of the state is at a 10-year low, landowners on the Eastern Shore and parts of Southern Maryland may expect defoliation this spring, as gypsy moths move south into these areas for the first time.

Several southern pine beetle outbreaks have been reported on public and private lands on the eastern shore. Contact your local forester to have your woods examined for insect and disease problems.

New Resources

Preserving Family Lands: Essential Tax Strategies for the Landowner - easy-to-understand book alerts landowners to the nature and extent of potential tax and land-saving problems facing them and their families with possible solutions. Cost is $8.95 plus $2 postage, with quantity discounts available. Send check payable to Preserving Family Lands to: Preserving Family Lands, P.O. Box 2242, Boston, MA 02107.


Paulownia Production and Cultivation - 13-minute video explains all aspects of paulownia culture. Send check for $20 payable to Univ. of Kentucky, to: Mark Elov, Ag Communications Services, University of Kentucky, Rm. 141 Scovel Hall, Lexington, KY 40546-00643.

Upcoming Forestry Events...

JUNE 12-13 Annual Western Maryland Loggers and Forestry Field Day and Equipment Show. Garrett County Fairgrounds. Many activities and exhibits, family fun. For more information, call (301) 334-9451.

JUNE 15 Final date for applications for Coverts Project fall workshop. Contact your local extension office or call (301) 791-2298 for more information.

JULY 5-9 Youth Natural Resources Camp at Horne Point, sponsored by the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service 4-H. Two youth selected from each county. Contact your local 4-H extension agent by May 31.

JULY 25-29 Forestry/Conservation and Natural Resources Week sponsored by the Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy Districts and Maryland Department of Natural Resources. To apply contact your local Forestry Board through your county Project Forester.

Want to be added to the mailing list? Deleted? Change of address? Write the editor!