A walk in the forest may lead some people to believe that the trees have been there forever. Actually, the forests of Maryland are a resilient and renewable resource that have likely been harvested many times since European settlement. Oftentimes forests have been cleared for agriculture and then regrown back to forest. Today, the forest landscape is being broken up into smaller land parcels with 85 percent of the privately owned parcels only one–to nine–acres in size. The species com­prised the forests then are similar to those growing today but were primarily hardwood. Presently, pine is more common due to planting efforts and the reversion of abandoned farmlands to pine forest.

The early settlers viewed the forest as a dense wilderness that impeded their agricultural way of life and harbored dangerous animals and disease. Timber had little economic value, and woodland was cleared indiscriminately to make way for tobacco and other crops. Poor agricultural practices caused soil erosion that silted up what had previously been deep-water harbors of the Chesapeake Bay.

Colonization (and forest clearing) was focused around the Chesapeake-Tidewater region until about 1732. Then Lord Baltimore opened the West to settlement, primarily to establish Maryland’s claim to disputed lands claimed by neighboring Virginia. As settlements expanded, demands for fuelwood, structures, and fences were met by more forest clearing.

The first industrial exploitation of forest resources began in the early 1700s. Iron was in short supply in the colonies, and large forested areas were clearcut to produce charcoal to fuel iron furnaces. The first iron furnace in Maryland, the Principio Furnace, was built in 1719 and it consumed 10,000 acres of forest during its 100 years in operation. Government grants encouraged the construction of many more furnaces around the state, the last furnace operating until 1889.

Steam Power: The invention of the steam engine in the early 19th century opened the way for large-scale exploitation of the forest. Steam engines and narrow gauge railroads allowed the harvest and transport of forest products from previously inaccessible areas to industrial centers.

Unfortunately, the harvesting exploited the forest for its economic value, with little concern for future regeneration. More damaging than the harvesting were the large wildfires ignited by steam engines that affected future regeneration.

The Conservation Movement Begins: Public concern over exploitation of the forest and wildfires that followed sparked a national conservation movement in the late 1800s that resulted in the formation of the National Park and Forest System and most state forestry agencies. In 1906 the Maryland State Board of Forestry was organized, primarily to control wildfires. The first inventory of the state’s forests was completed in 1916 by Fred Besley, the first state forester, and the first state nursery was established in 1914. Schools of forestry were established around the nation to train
foresters and sponsor research on how the forest could be managed to ensure adequate regeneration and meet other needs of a growing nation. Forest management services were first offered to Maryland woodland owners in the 1950s. Clearing for agriculture reached its peak in the mid 1800s. Various episodes of land abandonment occurred after the Civil War and the Depression, with many fields reverting to pine and hardwood forest. By the early 1900s, most of Maryland’s forests were cutover and just beginning to re-grow. Many of our present-day forests were established from this and agricultural abandonment and regrowth.

Today’s Challenges: Our present-day forests are bearing the pressure of population expansion and resulting development. There have been great strides taken to preserve and conserve Maryland’s forests. However, the parcelization or subdividing of the landscape into smaller pieces continues. Change is affecting every aspect of forests. Many forest landowners in Maryland are struggling to plan for the future of their family lands in the face of reduced timber values and increased regulation. But with change comes opportunity. New markets for sustainable forest products and environmental services offer new opportunities for landowners, as citizens statewide begin to recognize the public values of private forests. It will take smart and inclusive planning, strategic public and private investment, and leadership at all levels to prepare Maryland’s landowners, communities, forestry professionals, and forest industry to succeed and thrive in this new world, and your input is important!

Regional Listening Sessions will play a direct role in setting public policy that will affect your future. What kinds of technical support, educational opportunities, and cost share programs do you need to help you manage your forest land and market forest products in a changing world? Local and state leaders are faced with tough choices over how to spend scarce resources, and needs to hear from you. The listening sessions are tailored to give you the opportunity to express your concerns and needs. All listening session will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the locations to the right. For further information, contact:

Ms. Nancy Nunn
Coordinator, Development
Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc.
Phone: 410-827-8056, ext. 128 / nnunn@umd.edu
or visit the Center’s website: www.agroecol.umd.edu

Private woodland owners need current resources to make informed decisions that affect the future of their woodland, whether it is large or small. We hope you follow Adapting to the Smaller Woodlot, which continues in our summer edition of Branching Out. 

Changing Woodland Series:
Adapting to the Smaller Woodlot
Some Upcoming Topics
- Changes in the ownership of private forests
- Forest inventory & health assessment
- Ecological impacts—forest, water and wildlife
- Forest stewardship planning
- Management techniques
- Protecting small woodlands from development
- Changes in harvesting equipment

Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009

The Maryland legislature just passed the Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009. The Act establishes in law a framework for declaring and building upon the quantifiable benefits of sustainably managing privately and publicly owned forests. A more thorough analysis will be provided in the next issue. A copy of Senate Bill 549 can be found at:

http://mlis.state.md.us/2009rs/bills/sb/sb0549t.pdf
The Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center (MREDC) is now the place for the agricultural and natural resources community to go for valuable information thanks to the creation of a new website: www.mredc.umd.edu. The website was formally introduced at the Maryland Ag Commission meeting on February 11.

MREDC was established by the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) to serve these communities through programming and support. The need for such an effort was identified through a series of statewide listening sessions and documented in a Maryland Agriculture Commission report to the Governor. Specifically, MREDC’s mission is to:

1. Serve as a portal for educational and outreach resources in marketing and business development planning;
2. Assist entrepreneurs in agriculture and natural resources enterprises in developing new marketing plans and opportunities;
3. Serve as a launching pad to a wide variety of web-based university, community, and professional resources for developing profitable, sustainable businesses;
4. Provide new and next-generation farmers with access to training, mentoring and business development resources; and
5. Provide continuing education and networking opportunities for agricultural support agency personnel, Extension staff, and agricultural economic development specialists statewide.

The website contains podcasts, video presentations, webinars and other resources, including regional contacts and supporting agencies that will enable Extension faculty to expand their programming resources. “Our hope is that our faculty will contribute their expertise, publicize events, post interactive presentations, and otherwise use this website to assist their clients with such issues as entrepreneurship, business development, alternative enterprises, and intergenerational transfer of businesses,” says regional Extension marketing specialist Ginger Myers.

**Seasonal Checklist**

- Check trails and roads for erosion
- Clean out culverts
- Check tree shelters to be sure they are properly in place
- Cut firewood for the next heating season
- Watch for invasive shrubs
- Plant trees
- Check last year’s plantings for excess competition and control with spray or mowing if necessary
- Check for snow and ice damage
- Enjoy spring!

**Just released!**

The next Maryland Woodland Stewards training is scheduled for September 17—20, 2009. To apply or nominate someone else for this program, please contact Nevin Dawson by email (ndawson@umd.edu) or by phone (410-827-8056 x125).

Learn more by visiting: http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu/Education/MWS.html

September 17—20
Camp Pecometh
Centreville, MD

Maryland Woodland Stewards
Forestry and Wildlife Education
Whether or not you use the internet, you’ve probably heard terms such as e-learning, correspondence course, webinars, podcasts, etc. What is all this referring to? We like to call it Distance Learning—learning right where you are. No commute, no classrooms, sometimes free of charge, and no chances of being late!

In this issue of Branching Out, we’ve included many distance learning opportunities we think are valuable (and some of these opportunities don’t necessarily require a computer).

So...Happy learning—right where you are!

### Master Logger

The Maryland/Delaware Master Logger program offers four core courses by using pre-recorded Adobe Connect webinars. You can use a high speed internet connection to access the Adobe Connect webinars over the internet, or view offline using a CD-ROM that is mailed to you. In either case, there is a video component included on DVD also mailed directly to you. For more information about Master Logger courses, contact the program coordinator, Nevin Dawson (ndawson@umd.edu).

### Enterprise Development

Find online podcasts, videos and pre-recorded webinars on the Distance Learning page at Maryland Cooperative Extension’s latest resource, the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center (MREDC). See the complete article about MREDC on page three of this newsletter.

http://www.mredc.umd.edu/rootdistance.html

### NRAES Resources

Like to read? The Natural Resources, Agriculture and Engineering Service (NRAES) publishes many manuals and practical guides for self-directed learning. There are many categories of books including Natural Resources and Forestry and Home and Garden. NRAES is located in Ithaca, NY, and coordinates the publishing efforts for 11 land grant universities including the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension. Visit NRAES online at: http://www.nraes.org/

### General Forestry Course

Find archived natural resource webinars. For more information, call the Forest Service at 410-260-8531 or visit: http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/carbon/webcasts/

### Webinar Portal

The Southern Forestry and Natural Resources Webinar Portal, a service of the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Office, North Carolina State University’s Extension Forest Resources, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and other participating land-grant universities in the South, serves as a launching point for current and archived natural resource webinars.

http://www.forestrywebinars.com

### INFO CHIPS

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**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:**

www.naturalresources.umd.edu