



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2015

A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE FORESTER

WEST VIRGINIA'S HARDWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY, which had improved dramatically since the crash of 2008, peaked in 2014 and, in 2015, again experienced declining prices. Red oak, of which West Virginia has an abundance, was one of the hardest hit species. The majority of this decline can be attributed to lower demand by China and clearly illustrates the impact this foreign market can have on the state's hardwood lumber exports.

A lack of loggers has been an issue with which the state's forest products industry has been dealing for quite a while. In 2015, we saw modest improvement in the number of loggers working in West Virginia and we expect this trend to continue through 2016. This growth is at the expense of jobs in the natural gas and coal industries. As energy prices declined and demand for natural gas and coal waned, laborers migrated from those industries to logging.

According to the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis, West Virginia has 93 billion board feet of standing timber. This is the highest level reported for the state since the inception of the inventory and analysis program. Also interesting to note, despite mortality rate being nearly equal to harvest, the total inventory continues to grow. Invasive species such as the emerald ash borer and hemlock woolly adelgid greatly influence mortality rate and, in fact, are changing the composition of our forest. The West Virginia Division of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service and other partners are monitoring this trend very closely.

Our agency's involvement with federal partners continues to grow. The Natural Resource Conservation Service provides funding for five shared positions and reimburses the Division of Forestry for technical service providers. Through this partnership, the Division of Forestry has provided nearly \$500,000 annually to private forestland owners participating in the Environmental Quality Incentive program (EQIP). EQIP compliments the U.S. Forest Service's Stewardship program, which provides cost-share assistance for forest management plans. These plans have the same standard as Tree Farm program plans and they qualify landowners to have their forests certified by the Sustainable Forest Initiative. Coordination of these federal programs was put in place by the Joint Forestry Team, which consists of chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Association of State Foresters and National Association of Conservation Districts.

For the first time in the Division of Forestry's history, Clements State Tree Nursery showed a profit, ending its selling season \$9,000 in the black. This is a great accomplishment considering many nurseries across the northeastern United States have closed. These closures are a concern the Northeast Area Association of State Foresters will be addressing in cooperation with the Reforestation, Nurseries & Genetics Resources board. This initiative will develop

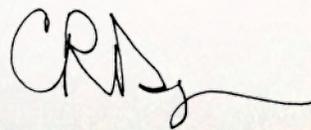
a standard for geographic seed source movement, preservation of germ plasma for species threatened by invasive species, and sustainability of nursery operations.

As Director/State Forester, I was honored to be invited to participate in several notable events held in West Virginia in 2015. I welcomed the Association of Consulting Foresters to their national meeting in Wheeling and served on a panel that discussed harvest regulation. The northeast group of the National Association of Conservation Districts held its annual meeting at Canaan Valley Resort State Park. I made two presentations to that group, one about a national Best Management Practices study done by the National Association of State Foresters, and a second presentation on how conservation districts can partner with their state forestry agencies. I also had the opportunity to partner with the U.S. Forest Service to host a Congressional tour for the House and Senate Natural Resources and Agriculture Commission to demonstrate how Stewardship funds are used by private forestland owners in West Virginia.

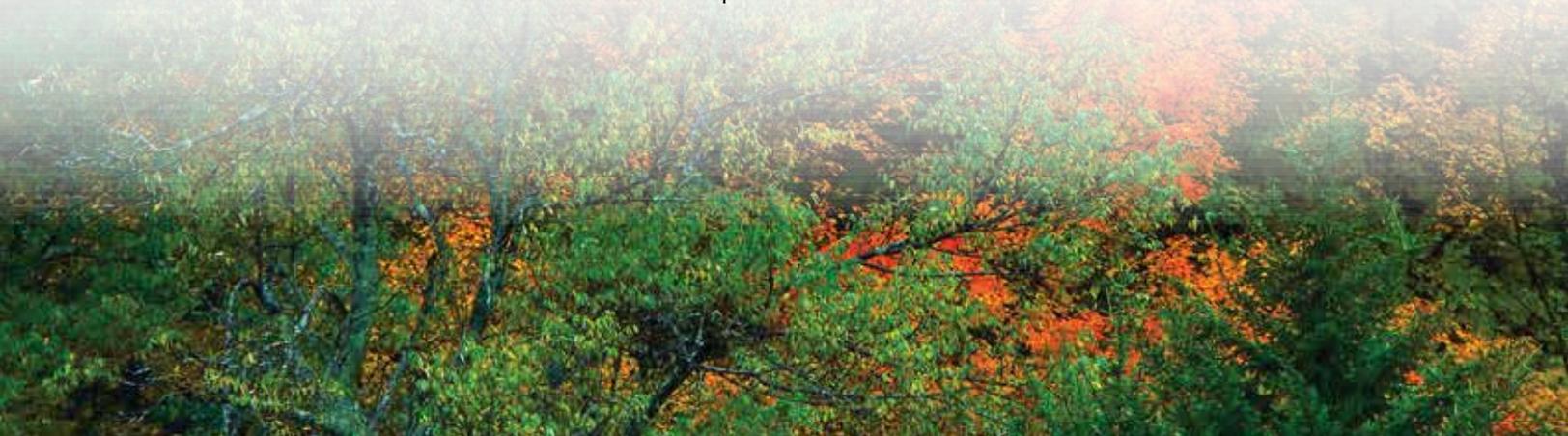
In addition, it was a pleasure to participate in the West Virginia University Teachers' Workshop and to serve on the university's Advisory Board and Visiting Committee. The teachers' workshop presented the opportunity to instruct teachers in the different aspects of forestry and its impact on the state's economy. As a member of the West Virginia University School of Natural Resources Advisory Committee and the WVU Davis College Visiting Committee, I provided input on work being done to overcome the challenges regarding organization structure of the college and the need for a new forestry building.

I would also like to note that the Division of Forestry, along with all other state agencies, went through the process of converting its accounting system to WVOASIS and payroll to Kronos. This was no small task and we continue to be challenged by the Kronos system.

After two years as president of the National Association of State Foresters, I began to shift my involvement with the Executive Committee toward serving in another capacity. I currently am a member of the Legislative Committee and President of the National Association of State Foresters Foundation. I look forward to 2017 when West Virginia will host the National Association of State Foresters annual meeting.



Randy Dye
Director/State Forester



FIRE PROTECTION

The West Virginia Division of Forestry (WVDOP) is responsible for protecting nearly 12 million acres of forestland in West Virginia from damage and destruction due to wildfires. In order to reduce the number of wildfires and acreage burned, the WVDOP's Fire Protection program is divided into three primary areas: prevention, preparedness and suppression.

Fire Prevention

The WVDOP uses Smokey Bear and his message, "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires/Wildfires," to provide wildfire prevention education to the citizens of West Virginia. Forestry personnel spread the message through contacts with schools, civic organizations and group programs as well as newspaper articles and radio programs. In Fiscal Year 2015 (FY 2015), the WVDOP presented wildfire prevention messages to:

- 414 schools/16,067 students
- 82 groups/52,036 individuals
- 26 camps/1,133 campers
- 70 news articles and radio/TV programs
- 366 wildfire exhibits

Numerous Smokey Bear Wildfire Danger signs are in place throughout West Virginia to serve as reminders to be careful with fire. These signs warn citizens of the potential risk of a wildfire occurring or spreading due to dry weather conditions.

The WVDOP assists forest landowners and people living within woodland home developments reduce the risk of damage due to wildfires. The Firewise West Virginia program provides assistance to homeowners and woodland developments to create passable access for emergency vehicles and defensible space between forestland and houses or other structures to minimize potential property damage. In FY 2015, the WVDOP provided assistance to 71 communities.

Preparedness Program

Fire foresters in the WVDOP's Fire Protection group continually make preparations to safely and effectively suppress a wildfire when one occurs. These foresters increase the wildfire suppression capability of the WVDOP by taking advanced training, maintaining equipment and training volunteers. Suppression assistance from volunteer fire departments (VFDs), local fire wardens, local fire crews, the National Guard and prison inmates is essential to the WVDOP's fire suppression efforts. These volunteers are trained in safe and effective wildfire suppression techniques and equipped with firefighting equipment and personal protective gear acquired by the WVDOP. In FY 2015, WVDOP personnel trained 704 volunteers. The WVDOP also maintains a statewide radio system for communication and firefighter safety during wildfire incidents. A statewide system of weather stations is maintained to assist with the prediction of potential fire danger and fire behavior. The WVDOP participates in the Fire Fighter Property (FFP) program in order to acquire equipment from the Department of Defense for West Virginia fire departments. The FFP program allows fire departments to acquire and eventually own certain types of excess federal equipment at no cost. In FY 2015, the WVDOP acquired nearly \$1.5 million in various types of equipment and vehicles for VFDs.

Suppression Program

Wildfire suppression is one of the most important responsibilities of the WVDOP. In FY 2015, WVDOP personnel and volunteers fought 552 wildfires that burned 4,084 acres. These fires caused



In FY 2015, 552 wildfires burned 4,084 acres.

\$1.23 million in damages to the natural resources of West Virginia and more than \$108,700 in personal property loss. The number of fires was significantly below average and the acreage burned was approximately 70 percent below average. These reductions are due primarily to the abnormally wet fall and spring fire seasons. See chart for 10-year averages of numbers of fires and acreage burned since 2001.

10-Year Range	Average Number of Fires per Year	Average Acres Burned per Year
2001-2010	936	23,318
2002-2011	893	20,873
2003-2012	775	12,291
2004-2013	793	13,533
2005-2014	822	14,353
2006-2015	816	13,932

Ninety-nine percent of the acreage burned in FY 2015 was caused by fires set by people or by people's activities. Most wildfires occur in the spring and fall when the forests and grasslands of the state are more susceptible to fire due to dry conditions. Because of the increased fire danger during these two times of the year, outdoor burning is prohibited between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. in the months of March, April, May, October, November and December.

Part of the WVDOP Suppression program involves providing wildfire suppression and disaster assistance to other in-state agencies, and to other states and federal agencies. In FY 2015, the WVDOP sent a 20-person fire crew to Oregon to assist with wildfire suppression. Other WVDOP personnel assisted with fires in Washington and worked as dispatchers out of the Monongahela National Forest office in Elkins. Wildfire investigators and a bloodhound went to North Dakota and California to assist with wildfire cause determinations and investigations.

Investigative Unit

This unit investigates all violations of the West Virginia State Fire Laws as stipulated within West Virginia State Code §20-3, and has authority to enforce violations of West Virginia State Code §19B, the Logging Sediment Control Act of 1992, and violations of the ginseng laws under West Virginia State Code §19-1A.

The investigative unit consists of three uniformed investigators and one administrative supervisor. Two of the investigators also are K-9 handlers and utilize bloodhounds to track suspects in wild land fire arson cases.

During FY 2015, the investigative unit participated in the prosecution of more than 30 violations of fire laws and conducted more than 30 extensive investigations. These investigations ranged from simple debris burning violations to felony arson prosecutions. As a direct result of these investigations, six suspects were arrested and prosecuted, and numerous citations for misdemeanor violations were issued.

Members of this unit also served as instructors for advanced fire investigation training classes for state, county and city agencies within West Virginia.

Although the investigative unit works primarily within West Virginia, other jurisdictions frequently request members travel out of state to assist with incendiary wild land fire investigations and provide advanced wild land fire investigation training. During FY 2015, two investigators/K-9 bloodhound handlers traveled to northern California and North Dakota to assist the Bureau of Indian Affairs in numerous wild land fire investigations. The same investigators traveled to South Carolina and served as instructors at the annual Police Bloodhound Certification School in York County. This school is a nationally recognized leader in law enforcement training and certification of bloodhounds and their handlers. The WVDOF's K-9 bloodhound handlers were requested because of their outstanding dedication and excellence in the field. This marks the fourth consecutive year they have been requested for this prestigious training conference.

The two K-9 bloodhound handlers/investigators also conducted monthly bloodhound training sessions for state, county and city law enforcement agencies that utilize bloodhounds. These training sessions are a vital tool in keeping both handler and K-9 at peak performance levels throughout the year to ensure their continued success.

One forestry investigation unit member continues to serve on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildfire Investigation Advisory Board for the review and update of advanced investigative techniques relating to the FI-210 course.

Due to the exceptional efforts of these investigators and their bloodhounds, the WVDOF continues to be recognized nationwide as a leader in the investigation and prosecution of wild land arsonists.

The investigation unit continues to review, update and enhance policies and procedures to ensure compliance with ever-changing legal requirements.

WATER QUALITY

The Logging Sediment Control Act (LSCA) is the state's set of laws governing water quality as it pertains to forestry activities. The WVDOF is responsible for training and licensing loggers and timber operators in West Virginia, and ensuring that those licensed abide by water quality laws.

Anyone who buys timber or logs for resale or who harvests timber within the state must obtain a timbering license from the WVDOF. All timbering operations must submit a notification to the WVDOF within three days of the start of operations, and have a certified logger present who has been trained by the WVDOF in Best

Management Practices and Safety and Tree Felling and has current First Aid training.

FY 2015 Logging Data

- Professional loggers trained1,325
- Logger certifications issued.....1,454
- Timber licenses current1,074
- Logging notifications of harvesting operations2,175
- Acres harvested154,742
- WVDOF complaint and compliance checks8,275

Loggers of Excellence

In FY 2015, 27 companies completed five consecutive years' work in full compliance with the LSCA, qualifying them as West Virginia 5-Year Loggers of Excellence. In addition, 181 companies completed a year's work in full compliance with the state's water quality and sedimentation laws and qualified as 2015 Loggers of Excellence. These companies' achievements will be recognized in February 2016 at the A.B. Brooks Forestry Symposium in Charleston.

MANAGED TIMBERLAND

The Managed Timberland program provides property tax incentives to forest landowners who practice sound forest management. In recent years, the number of nonindustrial landowners has increased. As required, new enrollees are acquiring forest management plans for their properties, ensuring healthy and sustainable forests for future generations.

Program Requirements

- A parcel must be part of a tract with at least 10 contiguous acres of forest.
- The parcel must contain sufficient numbers of commercially valuable species of trees to constitute at least 40 percent normal stocking of forest trees. The trees must be well distributed over the growing site.
- All parcels must have a management plan established within two years of enrollment and be managed pursuant to the established plan.
- Parcels may not have any deed restriction limiting timbering or timber management.

Program Accomplishments

- The 2014 Timber Price Report was completed as part of the annual valuation for the West Virginia Tax Department.

2015 Managed Timberland Data

- Landowners enrolled3,113
- Parcels enrolled 14,069
- Total acres 2,499,661

FOREST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Rural Forestry Assistance

In FY 2015, the WVDOF provided professional forestry assistance to 1,992 landowners. This assistance included forest management planning, tree planting, forest road and recreational development, wildlife habitat enhancement and timber harvests. In addition, 2,580 landowners participated in education programs sponsored by the WVDOF, including workshops, field trips and public meetings.

Program accomplishments for FY 2015 include:

- Forest stand establishment.....130 acres
- Wood fiber production..... 356 acres
- Wildlife enhancement..... 36 acres
- Fire/fuel reduction.....100 acres
- Protection from insects and disease 51 acres

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Practices completed in the past through the WVDOF's Forest Land Enhancement Program are now funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and WVDOF landowner assistance foresters serve as technical service providers for the program. A contribution agreement between the NRCS and the WVDOF enables the WVDOF to employ foresters who are located within NRCS offices in Cross Lanes, Gassaway, Mount Clare, Parkersburg and Romney.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address soil-, water-, and natural resource-related concerns on the landowners' properties. These concerns are addressed in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offers additional incentives to encourage landowners to implement practices that will help reduce sediment and nutrients in the Chesapeake Bay and improve wildlife habitat. In terms of forestry, these programs encourage landowners to convert highly erodible cropland and other environmentally sensitive areas to permanent cover with trees, and to plant trees near streams to establish riparian buffers.

Both programs are administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). NRCS and the WVDOF provide technical assistance to help landowners plan and implement CRP/CREP practices. In FY 2015, 559 acres were planted to establish riparian buffers.

Forest Stewardship Program

The Forest Stewardship program offers technical and financial assistance to private landowners interested in planning and managing their forestland for multiple-use benefits, including wood products, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics and other resource considerations. The program reimburses landowners for 75 percent of the cost to prepare a stewardship plan. These plans list the individual landowner's objectives, contain maps of the property and make forest management recommendations for a 10-year time frame. In FY 2015, 86 stewardship plans were completed for 11,082 acres. Currently 174,823 acres are managed under stewardship plans.

In FY 2015, the WVDOF offered four stewardship training workshops to consulting foresters, natural resource professionals and other foresters from around the state. These four workshops drew 337 participants. In order to prepare forest stewardship plans, foresters are required to attend a minimum of two of these sessions annually. These workshops provide an opportunity to earn continuing education credits that are required for state and national registered forester status. Speakers from academia, experienced field practitioners and researchers provide technical presentations on subjects and issues useful to plan writers. These education workshops are extremely popular within the natural resources community.

A major cooperator on stewardship outreach to forest landowners is the West Virginia University (WVU) Extension Service/Appalachian Hardwood Center of the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Design, Division of Forestry & Natural Resources. Ongoing projects include joint monitoring of the stewardship program, including field visits and landowner interviews and outreach and education involving landowner workshops, newsletters and technical information.

Joint Chiefs' West Virginia Restoration Venture Project

The West Virginia Restoration Venture project is a new opportunity for Forest Stewardship program participants with properties in watersheds in eastern and central parts of the state. The program is specifically for properties in three priority watersheds - Greenbrier, Cheat and Potomac - which are located near the Monongahela National Forest (MNF). Through this program, WVDOF landowner assistance foresters promote forest stewardship plans and provide technical assistance, including golden-winged warbler habitat enhancement, landowner and stewardship workshops and public outreach efforts. Control of invasive plants and pests is the WVDOF's highest priority for this project at this time, and our foresters are technical service providers using EQIP projects to control aggressive, woody invasive species.

Program accomplishments for FY 2015 include*:

- Requests for assistance.....2,835
- Reconnaissance for plans or to make recommendations. 457
 - Other management plans.....29 plans on 2,560 acres
 - Practice plans..... 66 plans on 4,545.7 acres
- Timber stand improvement.....44 treatments on 739 acres
- Forest road 12 projects, 45,972 feet
- Timber marking.....21 projects on 597 acres
- Water quality contacts 59
- Insect/disease assistance..... 218
- Tree farm re-inspection 16 new and 15 re-inspections

* Activity from Oct. 1, 2014 to Sept. 30, 2015

Big Tree Program

In FY 2015, the WVDOF continued efforts to locate and re-measure trees listed in the Big Tree database. The West Virginia Big Tree register is available at www.wvcommerce.org/BigTrees. Unfortunately, the National Champion Virginia Pine, which grew in Monongalia County, succumbed to old age during FY 2015. Two other national champions, a fanleaf hawthorn in Harrison County and a mountain maple in Pocahontas County, continue to grow in West Virginia.

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy program purchases working forest conservation easements (WFCEs) to extinguish development rights on significant forested properties. WFCEs provide timber, wildlife, recreation, water quality and scenic benefits and at the same time prevent parcelization and development from occurring. In addition, the opportunity to practice forestry and to harvest timber is provided. After WFCEs are acquired, landowners continue to own and manage the land according to their own objectives with their Forest Stewardship Plan.

The first conservation easement, 764 acres along the South Branch of the Potomac River in Hampshire County, was purchased in 2008. In 2010, the second and third conservation easements

were purchased. These easements include 2,500 acres in Morgan County and 144 acres in Hampshire County. The fourth easement, 378 acres in Grant County, was acquired in 2013. The fifth easement, 492 acres in Grant County was acquired in 2014. The sixth and seventh easements, 243 and 82.14 acres respectively (Hampshire County), were acquired in 2015.

Ginseng Program

The WVDOF tracks, weighs and certifies all harvested ginseng before the roots are exported from the state. During the 2014-15 season, the WVDOF certified 9,690 pounds of wild ginseng and registered 43 ginseng dealers.

In 2007, with assistance of the West Virginia Ginseng Grower's Association, the WVDOF established the Ginseng Growers' program. This program establishes areas (makes determinations) where individuals can grow ginseng without threatening the areas' native wild ginseng populations. Since the program's establishment, WVDOF foresters have made 135 determinations. In 2014, there were 83 registered ginseng growers in the state. It is too early in this program's history to see if any significant amounts of artificially propagated ginseng are being harvested. The Ginseng Growers' program also allows ginseng growers to export their ginseng, if, for some reason, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would ever close the season in the state.

Urban and Community Forestry

The Urban and Community Forestry program's objective is to establish long-term tree care programs in municipalities throughout the state to protect and effectively manage the most valuable trees in West Virginia. The program also provides the necessary knowledge and tools to communities to make comprehensive urban forestry management successful. The Urban and Community Forestry program is funded entirely with federal grants; there is no dedicated state support for the Urban and Community Forestry program.

Program Accomplishments:

- Worked with 78 communities and county governments, impacting 544,258 West Virginia citizens.
- Conducted 27 workshops that provided 5,393 training hours covering many components of proper tree care.
- Provided 266 technical assists to communities to foster municipal urban forestry programs.
- Planted 3,757 new trees in communities across the state.
- Completed the final year of a U.S. Forest Service competitive grant for \$246,343 to fund an assessment of urban tree canopy (UTC) of selected counties within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. This project was a partnership among the WVDOF, West Virginia Conservation Agency, the Cacapon Institute, WVDOH and units of local government. Cacapon Institute utilized UTC assessments to identify high priority planting areas and develop land management strategies at county and municipal levels. To date, 6,721 volunteers representing 94 volunteer organizations planted 3,134 trees in high priority areas with Project CommuniTree funds made possible by this federal grant. We are continuing, with separate federal funds, to work with communities to assess current canopy cover, set future canopy cover goals and develop land management strategies. Our goal is to increase public benefits from both urban trees and surrounding forestland within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



The Urban & Community Forestry Program planted 3,757 trees in FY 2015.

- Utilized a U.S. Forest Service grant to partner with WVU Division of Forestry to recruit and employ an urban forestry intern. Katy Trupo, from WVU's Urban Forestry program, returned as our intern and spent the summer experiencing the field of urban forestry through a range of diverse activities. This partnership also allowed us to further the objectives set forth in Issue 6 of the West Virginia Forest Assessment and Strategy: Sustainability of Urban Forests. Most importantly, we were able to offer Ms. Trupo permanent employment as an urban forester, which she accepted.
- Helped 15 municipalities receive national recognition for their urban forestry programs through the Tree City USA award program. These municipalities include Bath, Bluefield, Elkins, Follansbee, Harpers Ferry, Hinton, Huntington, Lewisburg, Morgantown, Parkersburg, Ronceverte, Shepherdstown, Summersville, Vienna and Williamstown.
- Provided 940 trees to 10 communities and volunteer groups for planting on public property through the Mountaineer Treeways program. Eighty volunteers leveraged almost \$1,900 to plant and care for these trees.
- Administered \$42,986 in Demonstration City grants with pass-through federal funds to promote sustained tree care in Harpers Ferry (two grants), Summersville and Vienna (two grants). This program will result in the establishment of an outdoor classroom, the implementation of multiple management plan objectives, maintenance of many high-value trees and the planting of at least 50 new trees.
- Conducted UTC assessments and inventories as well as tree planting opportunities in the eight West Virginia counties within the Potomac Watershed through the Chesapeake Bay Community Grant program. This program is made possible by federal Chesapeake Bay funds. Urban Forestry staff is working with our Chesapeake Bay forester and other vital partners to provide technical assistance to these communities.

Clements State Tree Nursery

Clements State Tree Nursery is the only state-operated bare-root seedling nursery in West Virginia, producing both hardwood and conifer seedlings. In FY 2015, the nursery sold 557,000 seedlings, a 15 percent increase over sales in FY 2014.

The majority of the nursery's hardwood seedlings are sold to mine land reclamation contractors in West Virginia and Ohio. The nursery has the facility, land and irrigation capacity to double and even triple seedling production. Coal companies and mine reclamation contractors are encouraged to purchase West Virginia-grown seedlings because trees grown from local seed sources are better adapted to the local environment and have a better chance of growing and thriving than seedlings purchased from out-of-state contractors and nurseries.

In addition to mine reclamation, our seedlings are used for cost-share program plantings, wildlife habitat, erosion control, reforestation projects and Christmas tree production. The nursery maintains four seed orchards: American chestnut, Allegheny chinquapin, white pine and tulip poplar. Seed from our orchards is genetically improved to grow faster and produce higher quality timber than seed collected in the wild. Clements staff purchases only high-quality seed resulting in better germination and uniformity in seedbeds. This, combined with a successful herbicide program, allows the nursery to operate more efficiently. Utilizing inmates from nearby Lakin Correctional Center to weed and process seedlings contributes to a decrease in labor costs.

The WVDOF has seedbed space to grow 1- or 2-year-old seedlings and can increase production if any state, federal or private entities are interested in contracting the nursery to do so. Lower negotiated pricing is possible when ordering large quantities of seedlings a year or more in advance.

Seedlings may be purchased online September through April at www.wvcommerce.org/ClementsNurseryStore.

State Forests

Program Accomplishments

- **Cabwaylingo State Forest**
 - Half of the original Tick Ridge timber (158,591 board feet) was sold to Proffitt Logging for \$29,400. The harvest is complete.
 - Turkey Creek timber (674,857 board feet) was sold to Jim C Hamer Company for \$101,601. Harvesting operations should start in spring of 2016.
 - Personnel mowed roads, trails and wildlife openings to maintain access and keep down woody and other undesirable vegetation. Two newly constructed food plots totaling 5 acres were planted in legumes for wildlife. These were constructed as part of the Tick Ridge harvest area.
- **Calvin Price State Forest**
 - Harvesting operations continue as upgrades to the haul road system have been completed on the Yellow Gate timber. Two new wildlife openings have been created as part of road daylighting.
 - The Burr Valley harvest is nearing completion and will result in access to the western two-thirds of the forest where there currently is no road system.
- **Camp Creek State Forest**
 - Blue Jay Ridge harvesting operations are complete. Several wildlife habitat projects were conducted during this harvest, including expansion of existing wildlife openings, creation of new wildlife openings and establishment of an oak savanna.
- **Coopers Rock State Forest**
 - Forks of Scott Run/Pisgah project timber marking is nearly complete. Ten kiosks have been installed as part of the trailhead kiosk project funded by a Recreational Trails program grant. The three interpretive signs associated with this project have been delivered, but not yet installed.

- **Greenbrier State Forest**

- Laurel Branch harvesting operations are nearing completion. This project is being harvested by J. J. Martin for Allegheny Wood Products. Part of this operation is creating much needed habitat for the golden-winged warbler, a species of concern.

- **Kumbrabow State Forest**

- Morgan Camp Run timber harvesting operations are progressing. A 40-acre regeneration harvest, which will release native red spruce seedlings and create early successional habitat for golden-winged warbler, is nearly complete.
- Trout Run Road Maintenance timber (569,837 board feet) was sold to Buckhannon River Timber for \$113,425. Harvesting operations are progressing.

- **Seneca State Forest**

- Rich Patch I Salvage timber (450,233 board feet) was sold to Collins Hardwood Company for \$77,400. Harvesting operations are scheduled to begin in early 2016. A regeneration cut implemented as part of this project will provide important early successional habitat for wildlife.
- Rich Patch II Salvage timber (302,316 board feet) was sold to Jim C Hamer Company for \$30,124. Two new wildlife openings will be created as part of this project. Harvesting operations have started.

- **TOTAL Board Feet Harvested = 2,029,700**

(of the 2,155,824 BF sold)

- **TOTAL Funds Collected = \$733,365.62**

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In FY 2015, the WVDOF reached hundreds of thousands of people through conservation/environmental education activities, including Project Learning Tree (PLT), the Chesapeake Bay Program, Cooperative Weed and Pest Management Area, and Smokey Bear. Through these specialized educational programs and the WVDOF's core programs — fire protection, forest stewardship and water quality — the agency continues to increase its public presence.

Project Learning Tree

PLT is an environmental education program designed for educators who work with students in grades preK-12. The WVDOF, along with its partner the West Virginia Forestry Association (WVFA), continues to maintain the integrity of this important program.

In FY 2015, PLT facilitators trained 368 early childhood, preK-8 and secondary educators. A special focus has been placed on reaching out to educators in West Virginia's southern coalfields, a need identified in the WVDOF's Forestry Resources Assessment. WVDOF and WVFA obtained a PLT Model Program Initiative grant to help achieve WVPLT's and the WVDOF's mutual goals for conservation education in that part of the state. WVPLT targeted school teachers in Cabell, Kanawha and Logan counties and was able to work with the Lincoln County Board of Education to schedule an educator training for 2016. In addition, pre-service education students at Marshall University asked WVPLT to deliver a program for their Methods class to show how they can use the program's hands-on activities in their future classrooms. WVPLT also is in the early stages of a partnership with Glenville State College's education program.

Another new venture starting in FY 2015 was a partnership with The Summit: Bechtel Scout Reserve. The Summit is home to the national and international Boy Scouts Jamborees. WVPLT will assist The Summit establish an educational program to complement the facility's new sustainable tree house. Additionally, WVPLT will help expand programs that local schools can use when visiting The Summit.

WVPLT coordinated several workshops with the state's Project WET and Project WILD programs. These workshops are well received.

Cooperative Weed and Pest Management Area

Through its education committee, the CWPMA provided multiple activities for students within Grant, Hardy and Pendleton counties to learn about the dangers of invasive plants, insects and diseases. Events included "Discovery Day" at Seneca Rocks Visitor Center and four days of in-class Citizen Science work. More than 100 Petersburg Elementary fifth-graders learned what an invasive species is, how to identify it and how to use GPS. In the field, these students pulled more than 4,600 pounds of garlic mustard to help prevent the spread of this invasive plant.

The Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary, home to more than 3,600 species of plants, fish and animals. For more than 300 years the Bay and its tributaries have sustained the region's economy and defined its traditions and culture. Because eight counties in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle are part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the WVDOF makes a special effort to encourage protection, education and public support of the Bay in this area. Outreach activities like

tree plantings focus on the importance of water quality and are essential to the future of the Bay. In FY 2015, WVDOF-conducted activities trained more than 500 people in proper tree planting and maintenance techniques in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

General Education Programs

In addition to their "regular" duties, WVDOF professional foresters play a key role in educating the citizens of the state about the importance of forests and forest management. In FY 2015, foresters made face-to-face contact with more than 120,000 people, and, with participation in events like the Mountain State Forest Festival, made indirect contact with an estimated 200,000 more.

COMMUNICATIONS

The WVDOF utilizes the Department of Commerce's Marketing and Communications Division for public information and public relations, media and social media management, and publication layout and design.

The WVDOF's Facebook (www.facebook/wvforestry) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/WVForestry>) accounts continue to be popular. Facebook page "likes" more than doubled again this past year from 4,508 to 9,868 thanks in large part to the popularity of fall foliage. In addition to reports on the percentage and location of peak foliage, many WVDOF foresters provided images of fall color as they saw it out in the field. Friends and followers of the pages were encouraged to post their fall foliage images with the hashtag #fallinwv. These pictures and posts were wildly popular. Other popular subjects included the western wildfire suppression crew, wildlife images and, of course, Smokey Bear.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY

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(304) 675-1820

Region 1

Serving the counties of Barbour, Berkeley, Brooke, Grant, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jefferson, Marion, Marshall, Mineral, Monongalia, Morgan, Ohio, Pendleton, Preston, Taylor, Tucker and Wetzell.

Region 1 Headquarters Farmington Office

P.O. Box 40
1106 Railroad Street
Farmington, WV 26571
(304) 825-6983

Region 1

Romney Office

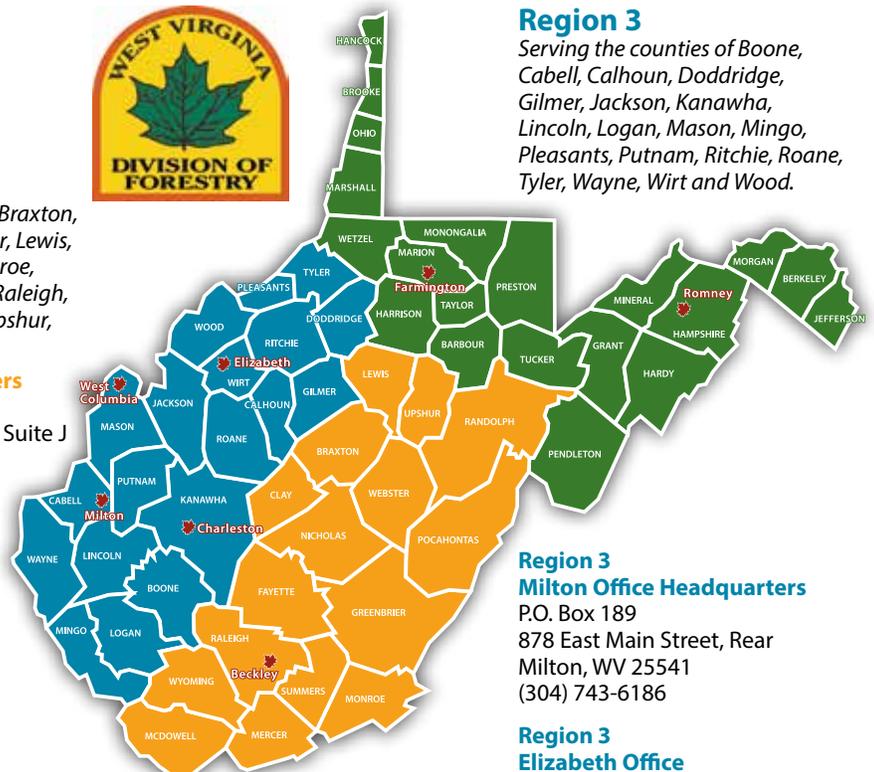
1 Depot Street
Romney, WV 26757
(304) 822-4512

Region 2

Serving the counties of Braxton, Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Lewis, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Randolph, Summers, Upshur, Webster and Wyoming.

Region 2 Headquarters Beckley Office

330 Harper Park Drive, Suite J
Beckley, WV 25801
(304) 256-6775



Region 3

Serving the counties of Boone, Cabell, Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Pleasants, Putnam, Ritchie, Roane, Tyler, Wayne, Wirt and Wood.

Region 3 Milton Office Headquarters

P.O. Box 189
878 East Main Street, Rear
Milton, WV 25541
(304) 743-6186

Region 3 Elizabeth Office

P.O. Box 2
Elizabeth, WV 26143
(304) 275-0261