

CATS Membership Meeting via Zoom, March 30, 2022, 9:30-11:00 am

Attendance: 49

Speaker: Adam Downing, Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Agent serving Virginia Cooperative Extension's Northern District. Mr. Downing presented on "Managing Backyard Woodlots."

As the natural world becomes more fragmented than ever into small, privately-held lots, the number of people who own and care for small forests is increasing. Over half of all of the landowners in Virginia own plots of 10 acres or less. "The Woods in Your Backyard," a partnership Mr. Downing plays a key role in advancing, provides education to landowners interested in learning more about maintaining the health of their woodlots. 10 acres is an arbitrary cutoff; really, anyone not categorized as a large landowner may benefit from the ideas and information contained in the booklet and series of webinars (through Penn State extension).

Even smaller acreages are essential for the health of the wildlife, water, and plants located on and around them. Teaching landowners how to care for their property to allow a "fully functioning system" involves obtaining the owner's objectives and then identifying the knowledge they will need to carry out those objectives. Small forest stewards may need to understand the constraints they face due to the site's particular characteristics. They need information about the harm invasive species can cause and how to rid their property of those invasives. Information about the needs of various types of wildlife will dictate some of what landowners do with their holdings. And, of course, how human actions impact the health of our water is also essential information for backyard woodlot owners.

Similarly, courses can offer ideas for projects landowners may want to pursue, such as thinning their woods for firewood, growing ginseng or other medicinal plants on the forest floor, cultivating shitake or other mushrooms, cutting walking trails, or planting for seasonal color. Additional topics of interest to folks looking to actively manage their woods for the benefit of the environment (and themselves) might include fire safety, identifying hazardous trees, creating a view, and forest succession.

Business Meeting:

Announcements:

President Robin Hanes:

Robin asked the membership to contact her if anyone has a pickup truck to help occasionally.

The CATS ad in C'ville Weekly features a stunning Redbud. It belongs to Carolyn Burgess.

Tree sale preparations are going well. Unlike during the past two years of the pandemic, this sale will be open to the public and returns CATS to its mission of educating the public. Since outreach is the goal, Robin asked that CATS members kindly refrain from purchasing the full allotted number of trees CATS allows the public until the public sale slows.

Robin detailed the Arbor Day celebrations CATS is hosting or participating in:

April 25th Teaching at Clark Elementary School

April 26th Tree planting at Clark

April 29th Gather at Sojourner Church at 10:00 am to honor an American Elm, one of CATS' notable trees; gather at 5:00 at Mint Springs Park in Crozet and hike to see a Boundary Tree of note (Northern Red Oak)

Librarian Anne Benham:

Anne demonstrated for the membership how to access and use the new online catalog. Although the CATS collection is small (about 100 volumes), the material is high quality and diverse. Anne invited members to donate additional books if the spirit moves them, but please no duplicates or books about anything other than trees. The membership is urged to use the collection, and Anne detailed the check-out policy and reviewed the library's location. She also said that she would be happy to receive book reviews.

Member Marjie Giuliano:

Marjie called for volunteers for the Arbor Day happenings at Clark Elementary on April 25th. Also, "Kidvention" is happening on April 16 from 9:30-1 at the Pavilion -- CATS will have a presence there if anyone would like to help or stop by the table.

Treasurer's Report: Michelle Cormier

Michelle announced that a new PayPal button has been added to the website. Members may pay their dues using this button. There is an option to add the 91-cent processing fee PayPal charges. The hope is that members will choose to cover that fee.

CATS currently has a prudent reserve of \$19,000 set aside.

Bank balances as of today:

\$25,734 savings account

\$11,000 checking account

Outflows this year only total \$2,600 to date.

Robin thanked Mary for implementing the PayPal button.

Education: Tim Maywalt and Mary Spear

David Haskell will be the speaker at next month's membership meeting (April 27).

The working group putting together the training class for the fall is making progress.

Last night was this month's Tree Basics class about planting. It attracted approximately 40 attendees.

Tree Basics for April will be on invasives.

Emily's spring tree ID class is scheduled for April 19th with a corresponding tree walk on April 23.

The tree walks at the Stokes property are all sold out. More may be added later.

A workshop to train tree walk leaders is being developed.

The Education Committee taught a class for the Piedmont Master Gardeners training class.

Also, CATS taught a class for the Girl Scouts at Azalea Park.

Communications: Penny Kaiserlian and Libby Gretz

The ad in C'ville Weekly has worked to get people to the tree walks.

There will be two more notices via email about the tree sale.

Penny thanked Anne Benham for her hard work.

Libby thanked the members who have paid so far and said that the PayPal button on the website is being used by folks to pay their dues. Of about 162 members, 128 have paid their membership fees so far in 2022.

Projects Committee: Kathy Nepote

March saw many pruning projects completed. Most of the tree planting is finished for this season but will resume in the fall.

There are two potting parties coming up at the nursery, and some dates for invasives control. As always, the membership should check TIF.

CATS has a new project site in Esmont.

This year, Kendra and her team planted about 28 trees in the 10th and Page neighborhood.

Finally, Projects is working with the Piedmont Master Gardeners to beautify new houses constructed by Habitat for Humanity.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Brill