Overview of the Virginia SHARP Logger Program

The Virginia **SHARP** (**S**ustainable **H**arvesting **A**nd **R**esource **P**rofessional) Logger program offers training to loggers, foresters, and others throughout the state. Training courses focus on the principles of sustainable forestry, environmental protection, and workplace safety. The Virginia SHARP Logger program began in 1996 as part of the nationwide Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®). More information on SFI® can be found at www.sfiprogram.org or www.virginiasfi.org. Originally coordinated through the Virginia Forestry Association www.vaforestry.org , in 2002 the SHARP Logger program became a Virginia Tech Forestry Extension program with a full time SHARP Logger Program coordinator as an Extension Associate in the Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation. The program continues to receive support from Virginia's forest industry through the Virginia SFI® Implementation Committee.
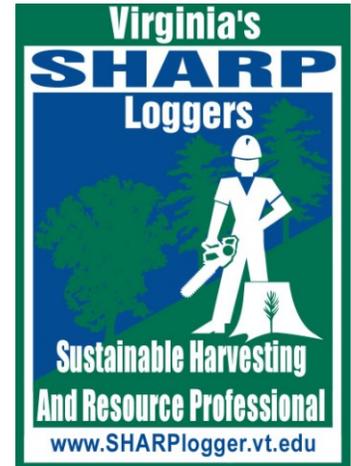
In order to become a Virginia SHARP Logger, participants must complete the Core SHARP Logger program which consists of three 6-hour training sessions. They include:

a. *Sustainable Forestry* - Includes discussion of sustainable forestry principles, forest management, and a forest ecology/silviculture field exercise.
b. *Logging Safety* - Topics include an overview of OSHA logging safety standards; logging equipment safety; log truck safety and regulatory requirements; and chainsaw safety.
c. *Harvest Planning and Best Management Practices (BMPs)* - An overview of harvest planning, including the use of topographic maps and other planning tools, is followed by a field exercise where participants develop and critique individual timber harvest plans. Representatives from the Virginia Department of Forestry discuss Virginia's Silvicultural Water Quality Law and BMPs to protect water quality.

After completing the core program, to maintain current SHARP Logger status, SHARP Loggers must earn 12 hours worth of Continuing Education (CE) credit every three years. CE classes are offered on a wide variety of topics and are scheduled throughout the year across the state. Classes often include speakers from forest industry, insurance companies, the Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Tech, and other agencies and organizations. SHARP Logger classes are offered at no charge to participants. Many SHARP Logger programs are coordinated by the District Forestry and Natural Resources Extension agents across the state.

Since the program began, over 3000 individuals have completed the core program to become SHARP Loggers. These logging businesses represent the vast majority of logging production capacity in the state.

For additional information about the program, contact Scott Barrett, SHARP Logger Program Coordinator

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