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## Video Newsletter

Scan this QR code with your phone camera to watch a video of someone reading the newsletter.



## Virginia Logging Business Economic Sustainability Survey

*Article by Rebecca Barkman, Virginia Tech*

Logging businesses are confronted with many operational challenges and issues that can make operating sustainably, producing a profit, and obtaining long-term economic viability seem unattainable. Although other industries have similar operational challenges, the logging industry is somewhat unique in that businesses have minimal influence over delivered prices or the cost of stumpage, so changes in input costs, such as fuel or parts, can have large impacts on businesses' economic sustainability.

The Virginia logging business economic sustainability survey was conducted from May to July of 2023 and focused on full-time logging businesses operating in Virginia. The overall objective was to evaluate the challenges and issues related to economic sustainability of logging businesses in Virginia. Results indicate that the average logging business owner is 55 years old. They have managed their business for 27 years, the current value of their equipment is over \$802,000 (excluding on-road trucks), have three on-road trucks, and six full-time employees. Logging businesses also reported harvesting an average of 872 tons/week.

The overall number one challenge was fuel costs for in-woods harvesting equipment followed by fuel costs for trucks, and then harvesting equipment repair and maintenance costs. These results indicate that inflation has impacted logging businesses. Additional results from the survey show that many businesses in the industry are struggling. Only 33% of logging businesses reported that they were profitable in the past year. While a small percentage (26%) of business owners indicated that their outlook on their business was economically sustainable.

To add to the level of concern, 56% of logging businesses would not encourage their child to enter the logging or forest industry. This is concerning not only because logging employment rates have been decreasing for several years, but because 60% of logging business owners who are in business right now are descendants of logging families. These challenges are not unique to Virginia and are part of a nationwide trend, much of which is driven by market changes and the economy. However, the survey results indicate that Virginia logging businesses are facing many challenges that impact the economic sustainability of their businesses.

## How Many Credits Do I Need? How Can I Check My Credits?

Everyone with current SHARP status is now on an 8-credit, 2-year renewal cycle. If your SHARP logger status expired on 1/1/2024, then you might still need to earn 12 total credits. Everyone must take the required SHARP Logger Update Class in every renewal cycle. **The number of CE credits you still need is printed above your name on the mailing label.** If the label says "Update Needed" then you have not attended the required SHARP Logger Update Class and need the Update before you can renew. **Even if you have more than enough credits, you must take the Update.** The label will also show your renewal date. If it says your credits are due by 1/1/2024 then your SHARP logger status has expired and you must earn the required CE credits by the end of this year or you will have to retake the Core Program to become a SHARP Logger again.

You can also check your credits, Update status, and renewal date on the website ([www.SharpLogger.vt.edu](http://www.SharpLogger.vt.edu)), by typing your last name (only) in the "check credits" box at the top of the page. If your record does not come up, either your SHARP status is expired or there is an error. Contact the SHARP Logger Program at 540-231-6494 or [SharpLogger@vt.edu](mailto:SharpLogger@vt.edu).

## Upcoming Continuing Education (CE) classes

### SHARP Logger Update Class (2 CE Credits)

The SHARP Logger Update Class includes a BMP refresher, a logging safety refresher, and other topics that impact logging businesses. The training meets the "SHARP Logger Update Class" Continuing Education requirement. SHARP loggers must attend at least one of these required classes during each renewal period. Shortened to 2 hours & **2 CE credits**. This class will be offered at the following locations:

**New Kent:** July 19

**Colonial Heights:** November 8

**Williamsburg:** August 10, VLA Annual Meeting

**Martinsville:** December 13

**Castlewood:** August 16

**Courtland:** December 13

**Palmyra:** September 26

### Additional CE Credit Opportunities

**Topic TBD:** New Kent, Castlewood, Palmyra, Courtland. Following the SHARP Logger Update Class. 2 CE credits.

**Legal Issues:** Colonial Heights. Following the SHARP Logger Update Class.

All classes tentative. Check [www.SharpLogger.vt.edu/training.html](http://www.SharpLogger.vt.edu/training.html) or contact the SHARP Logger Program at [SharpLogger@vt.edu](mailto:SharpLogger@vt.edu) or 540-231-6494 for the most up-to-date information.

## Virginia's Hardwood Initiative

*Article by Joseph Rossetti, Virginia Department of Forestry*

Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) is a common term in hardwood forestry. It sounds good and everyone wants improvement. But since stands vary and landowner goals are different from place to place, the way to improve forests varies from place to place. In the most basic terms, improvement helps the stand better meet the landowner's goals. *[continued page 3]*

## Core SHARP Logger Program Schedule

The Core Program consists of classes on Sustainable Forestry, Logging Safety, and Harvest Planning & BMP's. Participants must attend both core sessions to become a SHARP Logger. For more information or to register, please contact the SHARP Logger Program at [sharplogger@vt.edu](mailto:sharplogger@vt.edu) or (540) 231-6494.

Core 1	Core 2	Location
Tuesday, April 30	Tuesday, May 7	St. Paul
Wednesday, June 5	Thursday, June 6	Elkton
Wednesday, Sept. 25	Thursday, Sept. 26	Halifax

**Registration required!** For more information, contact the SHARP Logger Program at: [sharplogger@vt.edu](mailto:sharplogger@vt.edu) or 540-231-6494.

**Check our website at [www.SHARPllogger.vt.edu](http://www.SHARPllogger.vt.edu) for the most up to date listing of classes.**

## Online Continuing Education Logger Training

There are currently 10 one-credit SHARP online trainings available on the SHARP online training webpage at [www.sharplogger.vt.edu/onlinece.html](http://www.sharplogger.vt.edu/onlinece.html). The SHARP Logger Update Class is available under all of the one-credit classes. SHARP loggers can also get CE credit for viewing Mid-Atlantic Logger Training Webinars. MALT webinars are available from West Virginia Cooperative Extension, with a link and instructions for creating a free user account on the SHARP online training webpage.

*(Hardwoods continued)*

In hardwoods we don't improve the forest by *adding* things to it. We improve the forest by controlling things we don't want. After controlling what we don't want, the forest is made up of what we do want and those plants have more growing space. Control can be done by cutting or herbicides. Each method has benefits and drawbacks. Which gets used depends on the landowner goals and costs. Since the primary purpose is to free up growing space in the forest for the plants we want, it doesn't matter which method is used; they'll both do it.

Cutting doesn't kill the root system, so the plants will re-sprout. That's usually okay because the sprouts won't make it back to the canopy. Some landowners want the sprouts for nutritious deer or rabbit browse. Other times we don't want sprouting because of aesthetic concerns or so they don't shade out herbaceous plants and tree seedlings the landowner wants. In those cases, herbicides are used so the trees are killed in place and become snags for wildlife.

The goal of Timber Stand Improvement is to improve growth of trees remaining in the stand and only grow species you want in your forest. With that broad goal, foresters and landowners define it as needed in their forest. In some stands, TSI could be controlling cull trees. In others it's a pre-commercial thinning. Other times it's removing a species from the stand entirely. And still other times it's controlling grape vines. Within each of these styles of TSI is lots of variation, but those are subjects for future newsletters. In the meantime, if you or your landowner/client want to know how to improve the forest, reach out to the local DOF forester.



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## Virginia SHARP Logger Newsletter

Find more information online at [www.SHARPllogger.vt.edu](http://www.SHARPllogger.vt.edu)

### A Safety Short

*Article by Pat Donnelly, [patrick.donnelly1@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:patrick.donnelly1@mail.wvu.edu)*

The air outside the cab was hot and humid. Inside the cab was nice and cool. The loader operator had no intention of letting the poplar logs slide through his grapple, but they did. Handling poplar logs when the bark is coming off can sometimes be the equivalent of handling ice. The driver had no idea the logs were coming and when they hit, they destroyed the cab but luckily nothing happened to him! When the cab was looked at later it was a miracle that he was not hurt! Just remember a driver needs to be out of the cab and in a safe location when the truck is being loaded or unloaded, no matter the weather! Unless, there is a headache rack over the top of the cab.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in these activities, please contact Karen Snape at 540-231-6494/TDD\* during business hours of 8a.m. and 5p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. \*TDD number is (800) 828-1120