

## 2005 Year in Review

This has been a very big year for our organization in many ways. The first would be the amount of funding generated to support the group and increasing our numbers of Biological Woodsmen. We have generated a larger budget than ever and our number of practitioners is growing. It has also been a year of change (beyond the normal changes of aging and having a few more aches and pains paid by the president personally to remain actively practicing restorative forestry through modern horse logging). We elected a completely new Board of Directors with more proven practitioner participation. We are very thankful for the many years of voluntary service of our outgoing board members. They got us started and we wouldn't be here without them.

In January I moved my personal logging operations to Fauquier County, Virginia to partner with Chad Vogel on the completion of his work at Over the Grass Farm forest for Ms. Dielle Flieschman. This region has demographics that better support long term management methods with much private forestland in stable ownership through family trust holdings. It also has the greatest percentage of land in the nation under restricted future use conditions through conservation easements. This is a good setting for the growth and demonstration of our methods as being superior in many ways. We have established a Northern Piedmont office (donated by Jocelyn Sladen) in that region. It's manned by Chad Vogel and me. We established an Administrative Office in southwest Virginia tended by our new Treasurer, Ben Sumner. The other Biological Woodsmen are still working in their home communities.

Our sources of support have expanded in many ways, including horses (6) being donated to the foundation, one of which was a stallion that Chad put to work. We have younger horses (Tong and Tray) that have also come of age and are now working in the woods with us. Our increased funding has come from a grant awarded by the **Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund**, which is money collected by the state of Virginia from the sales of "Friends of the Bay" automobile license plates. We applied and were awarded a matching fund grant from the **USDA/USFS Chesapeake Bay Watershed Small Grants Program**. This grant is administered by the **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**. With this support we have trained more Biological Woodsmen to practice

though our Restorative Forestry Initiative in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. We also have had the best support from private donors ever. This years' Biological Woodsmen's Week was completely funded by a generous private donation from the **Sacharuna Foundation**. I am told that Sacharuna is a native American word for "wild thing of the woods".

Ethan Childs applied and was awarded a Biological Woodsmen's apprenticeship, through an innovative approach of working part time over the course of a year. His service area will be the Charlottesville, Nelson County region. Ian Snider visited for a week in the woods with us. He writes about it later in this edition of Draftworks. I met Ian when conducting a demonstration workshop for Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. We have worked with many educational institutes this year including the Waldorf School from the Chapel Hill, NC region, which introduced us to Paul Riely. He writes about his experience in this edition also. I was a guest lecturer at VPI (Bachelor and Graduate Students) again this year. Ben Harris hosted this class for a field trip to his harvesting site in Giles County, Virginia. Chad Vogel and I hosted the entire Masters of Forestry class from Duke University. Justin Lamountain was our link with Duke and upon his graduation will begin his Biological Woodsmen apprenticeship in January 06.

We continue to find most of the forested resources in a condition of previous high grading and the resulting degraded conditions. We do the best we can to continue to extract the worst first individuals and protect the vigorous tulip poplar regeneration that occurs on most sites. There is always a great deal of timber stand improvement that goes on as part of the harvesting activities. This usually includes cutting literally thousands of black gum, hickory and soft maple saplings, whips and poles. We have actually lightened our removal of maples - when a good specimen is in a good space. Our services were requested for tornado storm salvage in the community. We did salvage work on High Acres Farm for Jackie Mars and on Roland Farm near Thoroughfare Gap in the north end of Fauquier County. Our services expanded into the reforestation of certain sites when the entire forested conditions were devastated by the tornado. We are finding a demand for the services of reforestation in this region, which will require use of a full knowledge of the natural regeneration that occurs in abandoned agricultural land. This work will be a supplement to existing governmental programs that support

reforestation of riparian areas. We will write more about our approach of natural reforestation later. You can bet that it will include the use of a hot backfire and all the skills learned at the Prescribed Burn Manager Course taken by several HHFC practitioners in the past. Our animal powered services in this community included building a timber jump for the Orange County Hunt during ground conditions that were not suitable for mechanized equipment. Meanwhile we have blown engines on loaders, broken standards on trucks and continued to train more young horses and young people. Chad Vogel and his horses were filmed for National Geographic in a documentary of the methods used to harvest beams for Captain John Smiths' river exploration vessel. We traveled to Chestertown, Maryland to promote this event and HHFF. Since my stallion Rudy was working on the logging job we were able to bred four registered Suffolk mares while in the community. Two of these mares were taken to the woods for some logging work while with us. We had some publicity in local and national papers under the bylines of: "Forest Friendly, subtitled: Loggers use horses to take worst trees, leave best" and "Biological Woodsmen – The Future of Forestry"(posted on website). I was a keynote speaker and conducted Restorative Forestry workshops near Athens, Ohio for Rural Action, a NGO that ironically beat us out for the big Ford Grant that was part the start up grant we got started with. My daughter, Chad and I showed our Suffolk Stallion Rudy to win Grand Champion Draft Stallion at "Upperville" the oldest horse show in America. In July, Chad Vogel drove the only Suffolk horses at Horse Progress Days in PA, during the logging equipment demonstration. We promoted HHFF when participating in three agricultural fairs.

We conducted the best Biological Woodsmen's Week ever. We had three days of logging with eight teamsters, from three states, working sixteen horses that harvested over 60 thousand board feet of logs. Over a hundred visitors had guided tours of the harvesting sites each crew managed seperately. Seven teams were in the parade before the International Gold Cup races promoting HHFF the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund License plate program. On Saturday night of BWW, over a hundred people attended a panel discussion of the issues of Community-Based Restorative Forestry at the Airlie House in Warrenton, VA. The panelists were: Gary Anderson, The Forest School Inc., Troy Firth, Firth Maple Products, Wendell Berry, author and myself.