



EDWIN REMSBERG



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A Quarterly Newsletter Providing Comprehensive News and Information for the Maryland Forest Industry and the Landowners that support sustainable forestry practices.

The CrossCut

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A message from Joe Hinson, President

Do your homework!

In nearly half a century of dealing with complex natural resource issues, one thing I've learned is that they are complicated. I've dealt with some real doozies. Back in my Idaho days, we rewrote the implementation of the nonpoint source pollution section of the federal Clean Water Act, putting in the Idaho code. This was after seven years of negotiation, legislation, and litigation. But we were successful, and it's still part of the law, and apparently, it's working fine. We also worked through complicated Section 9 agreements under the Endangered Species Act, including "candidate conservation agreements with assurances." This led to the only time in history that enough private landowners agreed to conservation practices sufficient to prevent the listing of a candidate species, the Southern Idaho ground squirrel. I'm sure you've heard of it. All these were complicated in their own right and required much work to understand the law and our options.

Even the most straightforward and seemingly simple issues are invariably more complicated than they appear. Take, for example, the concept of credits for renewable energy in Maryland. Sounds simple enough, right? Use wood or another renewable resource to generate energy and get marketable credits for doing so as part of the state's strategy to move away from fossil fuels. But as Gene Corso says, "Not so fast, my friends." Once you get into the details, it gets a little trickier, and getting to the point where we're now ready to implement the concept across the state has taken a lot of "homework."

First, there was the need to untangle the legal argument that the only way to get credit for biomass use was to burn it in combination with animal manure. On its face, this is a ridiculous assertion, contrary to the intent of the law and at odds with the actual statutory authorization for biomass credits. Fortunately, the Public Service Commission agreed. A more complex question is how to accurately measure thermal energy from biomass processes and record it in a way that meets standards for marketing the credits.

Continued on page 8



Beth Hill and Danny Sines attended tours led by the Maryland Clean Energy Center to New Hampshire and Vermont



Salinity
Affected
Lands in
Transition

SAVE THE DATE FOR SALT CONFERENCE

Save the date for SALT (Salinity-Affected Land In Transition), a conference focused on saltwater intrusion and sea level rise in coastal agroecosystems, which will be held June 11 and 12, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, MD.

It will feature expert speakers in the fields of saltwater intrusion and sea level rise, coastal farming, ghost forests, adaptation solutions and mitigation strategies. It will also feature networking opportunities and a poster competition.

This conference highlights research being conducted by the University of Maryland, the University of Delaware and George Washington University scientists on the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and the Delmarva region. The partners have been researching the extent and economic impact of saltwater intrusion in the region and developing potential mitigation strategies for land affected by saltwater intrusion. The Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology has been partnering with researchers from these institutions on outreach and stakeholder engagement for the project.

Register at: <https://app.certain.com/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x3405162abcd>

Online registration will close at 11:59 PM ET on Monday, June 3, 2024.



The Game of Logging Training

The Game of Logging chainsaw safety workshops will be held April 5th and 6th at Seth Demonstration Forest in Easton, MD.

Session 1 will be on Friday followed by session 2 on Saturday. More information on the material covered in each session can be found here: gameoflogging.com/training.php

Those who attended session 1 in July of last year are encouraged to attend session 2 this spring.



Our work with Junior Achievement is exposing children from across the Eastern Shore to the forestry profession. They'll learn to pace, measure trees, calculate values and appreciate working farms and forests. This picture sure does make us smile! If you'd like to join in on the fun, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities. Check out the link: easternshoreja.volunteerhub.com/vv2/



This upcoming Women's Month, Director|Writer|Producer Cheryle Franceschi is wrapping up post-production and preparing to release and distribute her fourth original documentary titled, "Food, Fiber, & The Female Farmer." A look at the intersection of female leaders and agricultural practitioners.

Official Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/891268984>




"FOOD, FIBER, & THE FEMALE FARMER" captures the ways women are preserving and sustaining our food sheds and agricultural spaces. Authentic stories right from the field. A shepherd tends to her spinning flock of sheep with a no waste approach woven into the documentary's' tapestry.

Presented By:

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Executive Director's Message

Beth Hill, beth@mdforests.org

Let's Start Celebrating Our Work!

Dear MFA Members and Sponsors,

As we transition into the vibrant season of spring, I wanted to take a moment to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our members for your unwavering dedication to the preservation and enhancement of Maryland's working forests. Your commitment to sustainable forestry practices and advocacy for our natural landscapes are truly commendable, and it is with great pride that I serve as your Executive Director.



Vancouver, WA

Over the past few months, our association has continued to make significant strides in our mission to promote the responsible management of forests across the state. From speaking at educational workshops to rallying allies on policy initiatives, collaborating with partners on educational projects, and exploring new market opportunities, our days have been busy serving you! These collective efforts will make a lasting impact on the health and vitality of Maryland's precious woodlands.

As the Industry Representative on the Maryland Tree Farm Committee, I was recently afforded the opportunity to travel to Vancouver, WA, for the AFF Annual Conference. Sure, time away exploring a new place is always exciting, but it's the connections with the people that make it worthwhile. There was a lot of discussion on carbon markets, with thoughts ranging across the board. I still have a lot of questions and concerns. As members, I'd like to hear your thoughts! I also gained knowledge of several policy changes occurring in other states that we could benefit from here in Maryland. As expected, I gained a few more forestry friends from across the country that I'll be able to call on for their expertise. One message that I walked away with from a communications workshop was we, as the forest community, need to start "celebrating our work instead of defending it after the fact." That hit home and has generated a lot of ideas!

As we look ahead, there are many exciting opportunities for our association to continue making a difference. From expanding our outreach efforts to implementing innovative conservation initiatives, I am confident that together, we can achieve even greater success in the days to come. In the coming weeks, we look forward to announcing the Logger of the Year and planning a celebration. Stay tuned for details... I hope to see you there!

Warm Regards,
Beth



AFF Annual Conference in Vancouver, WA

Upcoming Events

FRAMING THE FUTURE WEBINAR SERIES

Every third Thursday of the
month

1:00pm

More information:
www.marylandforestryfoundation.org/webinar-blogs-publications/webinar-series/

MARYLAND ARBOR DAY

April 3

GAME OF LOGGING CHAINSAW SAFETY WORKSHOPS

April 5-6

Seth Demonstration Forest
in Easton, MD

www.gameoflogging.com/training.php

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS TRAINING

April 11th: Cumberland
April 25th: Leonardtown
May 9th: Westminster

Contact John Hooven at
(410) 827-8056 ext 125 or
jhooven@umd.edu

ALC DC FLY-IN:

April 17 - 19, 2024

Washington, DC

SPRING TURKEY SEASON 2024

April 18-May 23



THE TROUBLE WITH OAKS

By: John Hooven, Forest Stewardship Educator,
University of Maryland Extension

If you are familiar with Maryland, you may know that the white oak is our state tree. In fact, the Wye Oak at Wye Oak State Park was Maryland's most famous tree, and a white oak. The white oak, *Quercus alba*, has several distinguishing characteristics of note. The tree, in the open landscape, can be a majestic specimen of remarkable size and spread. The tree's acorns are a favorite of many wildlife species. The wood of the tree is a tight grain, excellent for barrel making and, at one time, a favorite for ship building and railroad ties due to its resistance to rot. An interesting side note, the USS Constitution, affectionately known also as "Old Ironsides", is made from white oak. The United States Navy still, to this day, maintains a white oak dominated forest in Indiana to provide trees for repairs to the ship as needed.

Not to be outdone, red oak trees are also a popular and a favorite tree. Red oaks are not suitable for shipbuilding or barrel making for liquids, however, as the grain tends to be porous. But red oak is still an excellent wood for furniture and finishing. Red oaks tend to grow faster than white oaks which make them a popular choice for the landscape and planting in the forest. In the genus *Quercus*, there are about 500 known species and even some hybrids between species.

Then, what is the trouble with oaks? Oaks tend to be more problematic with regard to regeneration in the natural environment. As previously pointed out, white oaks tend to grow at a slower rate than red oaks. Therefore, competition between white oaks and red oaks can be dominated by the faster growing red oaks. Deer also love to browse oak seedlings, and as you know, we have a lot of pressure from deer browse in the region. Oaks also can take a long time to start producing acorns, as little as 20, but as much as 30 to 50 years depending on species. Another consideration can be that of exploitation. Oaks, both white and red types, are highly versatile. Where high quality oaks are growing of mature and merchantable size, there can be demand for their harvest. But where these oaks are now growing, their site history was likely complicated, and the oaks tended to become the dominant overstory tree. That is, many sites now that support oaks were not necessarily managed to grow oaks.

To understand the complexity of the oak forests, we need to go back in time. Today's oak forests exist on lands that were previously exploited for other purposes. In fact, in many cases, the lands were once farms that succeeded with



Leaves of another native oak, water oak, Quercus nigra



White oak, *Quercus alba*, in decline at Adkins Arboretum, Tuckahoe State Park, Ridgely, removed since this photo was taken in May, 2023.

oak growth in the open but abandoned fields. In other cases, the oaks grew in the absence of other trees that were harvested for their particular use. For example, many forest stands of white pine were harvested as there was demand for their wood around the turn of the 19th century. As a result, these areas were repopulated with hardwoods, in some cases, oaks. Still, in other areas where oaks dominate today, the forests were clearcut and harvested at short intervals (30-40 years) for the making of charcoal that was utilized by early industrial furnaces. Under these circumstances, some of the oaks would have regenerated as coppice growth. Fire was also more prevalent in these areas as well in the eastern half of the country where indigenous tribes had higher populations. Oak is a fire adapted species that can withstand low intensity fires that native people would set to manage the forests.

Add seedling mortality, pressure from weevils/leafhoppers, etc. and the picture becomes clearer. In fact, only one in 10,000 acorns actually become a tree. We have changed the way we manage forests as well, using less fire in the landscape and not fostering conditions that would be beneficial for oak regeneration. Our region is being studied for oak decline, a complex of diseases and issues that are resulting in higher mortality of oak trees in general. With spongy moth (formerly gypsy moth), that love oaks as caterpillars, having occasional outbreaks with defoliation, hotter and drier summers, increase in invasive species, oak anthracnose, bacterial leaf scorch,

do the oaks even have a chance? The short answer is, yes; however, we need to intervene. As forest managers and woodland owners, we need to give the oaks better odds for regeneration and survival. For more information, check out the presentation this article inspired on The Trouble with Oaks on YouTube here: [youtube.com/watch?v=fUMCPsdRySs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUMCPsdRySs)

InventWood Brings New Headquarters to Frederick County

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County is poised to become a leading center for cellulose material innovation with the launch of InventWood’s new headquarters. Today County Executive Jessica Fitzwater announces the arrival of InventWood®, an innovator of advanced cellulose materials, which has leased and is fitting out an 88,971-square-foot facility on Jefferson Station Court with production, research and development, and commercial capabilities.



InventWood specializes in innovating and producing advanced cellulose-based materials, offering a portfolio of high-performance and sustainable alternatives to conventional carbon-intensive materials. Its first technology to market, MettleWood®, is an extremely strong and durable 100% wood material that outperforms steel by being 50% stronger, six times lighter, and lower cost. It also demonstrates exceptional resistance to fire, moisture, fungus, and termites and will be produced from sustainably sourced wood from the region. MettleWood has gained recognition in widely read publications such as Scientific American, Motor Trend, and Nature magazines for its potential to revolutionize a wide range of products, including in the construction, transportation, and consumer electronics industries.

Founded in 2016 as a faculty-led spin-off from the University of Maryland, InventWood was announced as the recipient of a \$20 million federal award from the Department of Energy last year. InventWood is actively scaling up its commercialization and production capabilities, producing over 1,000,000 square feet of MettleWood boards and veneers annually starting in early 2025.

“InventWood’s establishment in Frederick County is a milestone toward our commitment to innovation and sustainability,” County Executive Fitzwater said. “This move highlights our emerging status as an advanced manufacturing and green technology hub. We are enthusiastic about the partnership’s positive impact on our community and look forward to seeing how we can use this innovative product in our community.”

Josh Cable, CEO of InventWood, commented, “The engagement and support from Frederick County have been crucial as we continue to grow and expand to meet the increasing demand for our materials. This expansion represents our focus on local manufacturing and job creation to achieve our goals of pioneering a sustainable future with high-performing, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable cellulose materials.”

For more information about InventWood® and MettleWood®, visit www.inventwood.com.

Upcoming Events

FORESTRY BOARD SUMMIT

June 10-12
Annapolis, MD

Location and details to be announced

SALT CONFERENCE

June 11-12

Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, MD

Register at: app.certain.com/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x3405162abcd

NATURAL RESOURCES CAREERS CAMP

July 21-27

Hickory Environmental Education Center
Accident, Maryland

The application can be found at: www.marylandforestryfoundation.org/programs/students-educators/nrcc/

ALC ANNUAL MEETING

October 2 - 4, 2024
Sonora, California



The MARBIDCO FY 2024 WPIEI Grants Program Summary

MARBIDCO recognizes the importance of the forests products industry from economic, environmental and consumer perspectives, and thus seeks to assist in growing a strong and diversified wood products industry in Maryland. MARBIDCO also has a desire to assist Maryland's forestry businesses with improving operations and efficiency, increasing productivity and employment opportunities, and supporting new markets development. Maryland's forests products industry has experienced some of the same challenges faced by other businesses throughout the mid-Atlantic region caused by the 2008 recession, market challenges, volatile fuel prices and high interest rates. In 2020, the wood products industry in Maryland and neighboring states received a major economic shock when the Verso Papermill in Luke Maryland closed its doors after more than 130 years in operation. There were many direct and indirect job losses, and the negative impact on wood fiber markets was felt statewide. The COVID-19 Pandemic soon followed which exacerbated the economic distress. By helping to sustain and grow a healthy forestry industry, investment now will yield substantial longer-term benefits for Marylanders.

Recognizing this, the Governor and Maryland General Assembly authorized \$500,000 in funding for FY 2024 for MARBIDCO to offer the **Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Incentive Program (WPIEI)**. In addition, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is providing an additional \$100,000 in funding to target projects that focus on producing "value-added wood products".

Eligible applicants could apply for incentive grants for a wide range of equipment and capital asset purchases of specialized forestry and logging equipment and small- and large-scale wood processing equipment. Eligible projects include tangible equipment purchases and facilities improvement costs. MARBIDCO sought applications for projects or purchases that will improve operations and/or efficiency, increase productivity and/or workforce expansion, or aid in the pursuit of new markets. MARBIDCO can match up to 25% of total project cost, with a maximum grant award not to exceed \$50,000 except for value-added projects which could be funded at up to \$100,000.

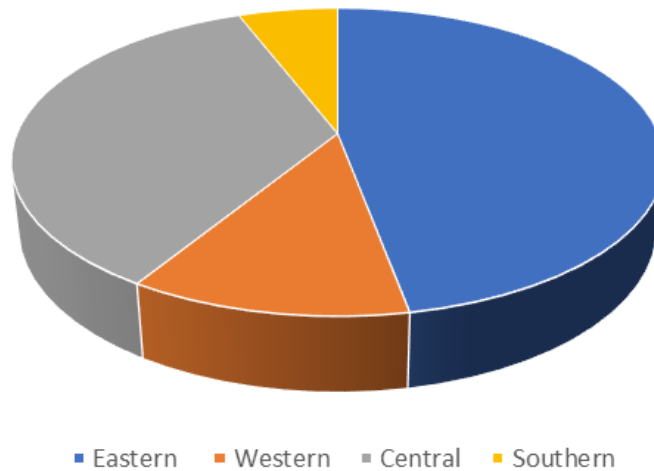
The grant is intended to be a 25% matching grant not to exceed \$50,000. Eligible expenses included: wood processing equipment and facilities, sawmills, dry kilns, skidders, in-woods chippers, primary and secondary wood processing equipment, optimization systems for maximizing fiber yield recovery, shaving and pellet mills, sawdust dryers, and other capital equipment that is designed specifically for use in the forest products industry. Primary and secondary wood processing equipment is used to produce lumber, pilings, logs, firewood, mulch, pellets, shavings, veneers, flour, sawdust, plywood, millwork, CLT, and furniture (using Maryland wood).

MARBIDCO received 24 applications for the FY 2024 WPIEI Program with total requested funds of \$1,154,177. Ultimately, the MARBIDCO Grants Review Committee approved 17 applications, for a total of \$681,241.40 in grant funds to be awarded with final allocation based on budgets submitted with the application. The final approved grants distribution for the **FY 2024 WPIEI Program grants totaled \$681,241.40 for 17 unique forest industry projects**. (This completely exhausts MARBIDCO's available funding for the program for this year as well as using the leftover funds from FY 2023.) The projects enabled by the **FY 2024 WPIEI Program have total projected project costs of \$5,164,044 (which is about a 7.5 to 1 leverage ratio for the grant funding)**. The DNR funds were awarded to supplement the seven value-added applications received, such that it covered approximately 36% of each value-added applicant's total grant amount.

The FY 2024 Projects included funding for the following: 1) Horizontal grinders, 2) sawmills, 3) dry kilns and sheds, 4) feller bunchers, 5) loaders, 6) a palletizer robot, 7) firewood processing equipment, 8) log splitters, and 9) the purchase of portable mill equipment.

The pie chart is showing the geographic distribution of the projects across each major region in the State (with the Eastern Shore having the most funded projects and Southern Maryland the least):

Distribution of Wood Products Industry Equity Grant Incentive Program by Region



FY 2024 WPIEI Grants Awardees

#	Business Name	County	Grant Awarded	Project/Business Type (*Indicates a value-added project)
1	Edrich Lumber, Inc.	Baltimore	\$ 50,000	Wood Mill (*purchase of an Italian dry kiln to expand thermally modified wood products line)
2	Iron Horse Logging, Inc.	Garrett	\$ 50,000	Logging (equipment purchase)
3	Delmarva Lumber, LLC	Wicomico	\$ 50,000	Wood Mill (*construction of a new wood processing facility including the purchase of new equipment)
4	Southern Coastal Forest Products II, LLC	Somerset	\$ 50,000	Wood Mill (*purchase of a grinder to expand the market for animal bedding)
5	Economy Tree Service, Inc.	Queen Anne's	\$ 50,000	Firewood (equipment purchase)
6	CD Miller Services, LLC.	Montgomery	\$ 44,528	Wood Mill (*purchase of a new sawmill, CNC router, and kiln to start larger scale mill operations to expand their market)
7	Paul M. Jones Lumber Company, Inc.	Worcester	\$ 39,500	Wood Mill (equipment purchase)
8	Garman Brothers, Inc.	Anne Arundel	\$ 24,569	Wood Mill (*purchase of a new furniture quality sawmill to expand their market)
9	Wood Ingenuity, LLC	Queen Anne's	\$ 50,000	Wood Mill (equipment purchase)
10	Animal Comfort Group, LLC	Somerset	\$ 20,000	Wood Mill (equipment purchase)
11	Eastern Shore Forest Products, Inc.	Wicomico	\$ 20,000	Wood Mill (equipment purchase)
12	Timber Harvest Inc.	Talbot	\$ 50,000	Logging (equipment purchase)
13	MHGH&S, LLC	Howard	\$ 22,537	Firewood (*purchase of a new dry kiln to speed up processing time and expand their market)
14	Clear View Farms, LLC	Howard	\$ 50,000	Firewood (equipment purchase)
15	Dany, LLC	Harford	\$ 15,445	Wood Mill (*purchase of a sawmill and solar kiln to restart wood processing operations at a closed site)
16	Loveville Timberworks, LLC	St. Mary's	\$ 50,000	Logging (equipment purchase)
17	Generation III Logging, LLC	Garrett	\$ 47,317	Logging (equipment purchase)
		Total	\$ 683,896	



Experience an unforgettable journey into the world of natural resources with the Natural Resources Careers Camp!

This week-long adventure, nestled in the scenic mountains of Garrett County, MD, is designed for high school students seeking to explore exciting career paths and college opportunities in the realm of natural resources. Camp will be held Sunday, July 21 to Saturday, July 27 at the Hickory Environmental Education Center in Accident. Space is limited to 42 NRCC students, so don't miss out on this incredible opportunity. *Students must be currently enrolled in, going into, or recently graduated from high school.*

Apply at: marylandforestryfoundation.org/programs/students-educators/nrcc/nrcc-student-application/

President's Message Continued...

That kept a team of engineers gainfully employed for the better part of a year, but they, too, were successful.

So now, just over a year past the Public Service Commission's landmark decision, the homework is done, and we're ready for prime time. Renewable energy credits for biomass create new markets for landowners, loggers, and mills, not to mention the myriad of potential applications for agricultural operations. On behalf of MFA, last year, Beth and Danny Sines participated in tours led by the Maryland Clean Energy Center to New Hampshire and Vermont to see how they effectively use thermal heat from wood to heat schools, universities, factories, offices, and apartment complexes. When wood fuels are sourced from locally well-managed forests and used to directly displace fossil fuels in high-efficiency applications, they can be an excellent long-term carbon reduction strategy for

Maryland, just like in Vermont! The tours have generated genuine interest, and we continue to build momentum by working alongside other valuable partners, such as the Maryland Forest Service and the Greater Cumberland Committee.

Doing the homework on issues like this is the job of the Maryland Forest Association. The truth is, as individual members, you have little time and perhaps not the full understanding of the complexity of issues that are an inevitable part of business. That's our job. We do it collectively on the part of everybody. Hopefully, that's our value to you.

But I can't help wishing that I had someone to do my homework for me when I was a kid.



VERMONT IS LEADING THE WAY WITH RENEWABLE AND LOCAL WOOD HEAT- A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW WOOD FROM MANAGED FORESTS COULD BE UTILIZED IN MARYLAND



WOOD ENERGY FACTS

- When you heat with fossil fuels, 78 cents of every dollar leaves the region. When you heat with locally sourced wood fuels, the opposite is true, retaining wealth locally, creating jobs, and keeping forests as forests.
- 1 in 3 Vermont students attend a school heated with wood.
- 38% of Vermont homes heat in full or in part with wood.
- 24% of Vermont's thermal energy is generated by wood.



WOOD ENERGY GOALS

- Vermont Clean Energy Plan = 90% Renewable Energy by 2050
- Obtaining 35% of Vermont's thermal energy needs from wood heat by 2030, through increased adoption of automated wood heating systems.
- Meeting the goal will: Displace 40 millions gallons of fossil fuel annually and save Vermonters \$120,000,000.00/year

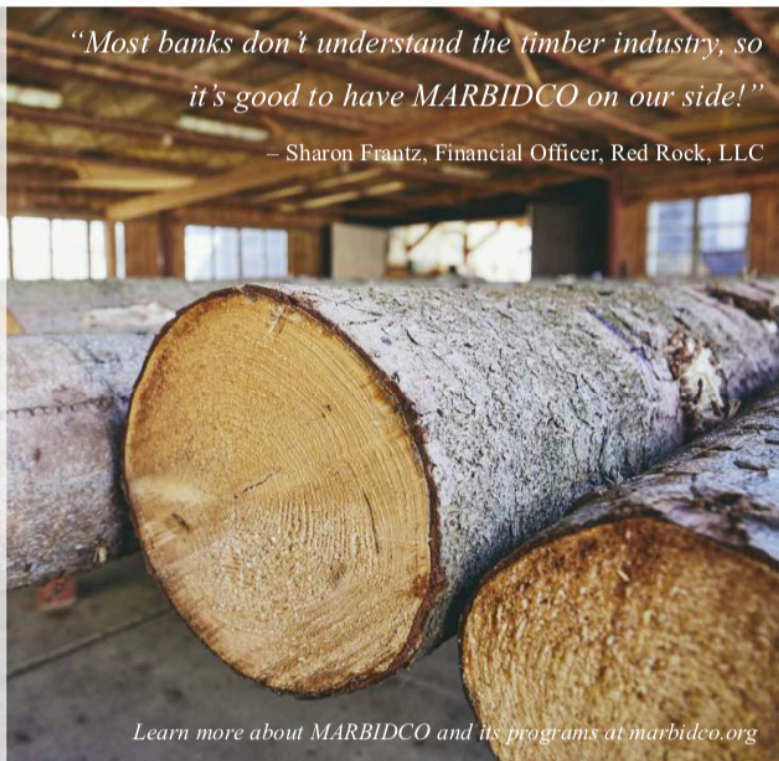


MARBIDCO
growing rural ventures™

The Maryland Agriculture & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) provides targeted financial services to Maryland's farm, forestry, and seafood businesses to achieve profitability and sustainability.

Our programs include:

- Maryland Resource-Based Industry Financing Fund
- Maryland Vineyard Planting Loan Fund
- Rural Business Equipment and Working Capital Fund
- Forestry Equipment and Working Capital Loan
- Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture & Remote Setting Shellfish Aquaculture Loan Programs
- Rural Business Energy Efficiency Improvement Fund
- Southern Maryland Agricultural Incentive Funds
- Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program



"Most banks don't understand the timber industry, so it's good to have MARBIDCO on our side!"

– Sharon Frantz, Financial Officer, Red Rock, LLC

Learn more about MARBIDCO and its programs at marbidco.org

Your Membership Matters!

The Maryland Forests Association relies on the support of our members and sponsors to fund our organization and allow us to be the voice for Maryland forestry. **Please help make 2024 another successful year for membership!**

We are counting on you to renew your membership and ask that you invite your friends, family and colleagues to join us as a collective voice for Maryland forestry. Last year, your contributions helped us boost our scholarship, career camp, and general funds. Help us exceed our 2024 goals and consider a contribution in addition to your membership renewal.

We are working harder than ever to serve you better and represent Maryland's forestry industry. We cannot do this work without your support. Please look out for membership renewal letters and you can also renew online at mdforests.org. Thank you!



Your Support Makes a Difference!

2024 Membership Rates:

- Student – \$10
- Forestry Board Member – \$20
- Landowner/General Public – \$35
- Natural Resources Professional – \$60
- Hunting & Recreational Clubs – \$80*
- Businesses/Agencies/Education/Organizations – \$150
- Loggers/Haulers \$250
- Sawmill/Primary & Secondary Wood Product Manufactures – \$350

** Insurance fees must be paid directly to the insurance company, MFA processes membership only.*

Sponsor Membership Rates

MFA offers three levels of Annual Sponsorship, starting at \$600. Each level provides an membership with MFA plus additional advertising benefits.

Visit mdforests.org to learn more.

MD loggers suffer another blow

JONATHAN CRIBBS

PETERSBURG, W.Va. — Loggers and forestry advocates in Maryland lamented last week the abrupt closure of Allegheny Wood Products, one of the largest producers of eastern U.S. hardwoods — another blow to an industry that has struggled over the last several years with mill closures across the region.

The company announced on Feb. 23 that it was immediately shuttering its facilities across West Virginia, which would affect more than 800 employees.

The company worked with loggers and truckers across the region, including Western Maryland, where its absence is expected to be quickly felt, said Joe Hinson, president of the Maryland Forests Association, which represents foresters, landowners and loggers across the state. The closing will likely affect just as many jobs outside the company as it did inside the company, he said.

“A fair amount of wood came from Western Maryland to those mills,” he said. “We’ll feel the pinch. There’s no question about that.”

Company representatives could not be reached for comment, and the company has removed its website and scrubbed its social media channels. No reasons for the shutdown were given.

Allegheny Wood Products was struggling, but former employees have said on social media and in news reports that they had expected its mills to be sold. The closure was so abrupt that a former employee sued the company March 1 claiming Allegheny Wood Products violated federal law when it slashed jobs without 60 days’ notice, as required by the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act — also known as WARN — for companies of more than 100 full-time employees. The lawsuit seeks class-action status.

The forest products industry is bedeviled by federal regulation, foreign competition and environmental challenges across the country, said Scott Dane, executive director of the American Loggers Council, a Washington, D.C.-based trade association.

“We’re getting mill (closure) announcements on a monthly, if not weekly, basis across the country,” he said. “Much like the other agricultural sectors, the American timber and forest industry is being subjected to death by a thousand cuts.”

The forest products industry’s workforce is half the size it was two decades ago, and despite the country’s abundant natural resources, the United States is the world’s No. 1 importer of softwoods, Dane said. He cited an ongoing effort by the Biden Administration to tighten logging protections of old-growth forests as an example of federal overreach. Environmental advocates support the restrictions, arguing that older trees store large amounts of carbon and are a valuable resource in the fight against cataclysmic climate change.

Western Maryland’s forest products industry still hasn’t recovered from the bombshell closure of a mill owned by the Verso Corp. in Allegany County in 2019. Verso,

Former employees of Allegheny Wood Products process timber at the company’s plant in Beckley, W.Va., in 2016. (Photo courtesy Register-Herald)



an Ohio paper company, cited a shrinking paper market, import competition and the cost of new environmental regulations as reasons for the shutdown. The plant had been an economic driver in the region for more than a century. Its closure shocked regional and state government officials who feared the lost jobs would cripple rural communities around the mill.

Verso’s facility employed nearly 700 people, but officials were just as concerned about the industry of loggers and foresters from Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania who supplied the mill with pulpwood. When the mill closed, many logging operations lost large chunks of their business, as much as 80 percent. Some reportedly closed.

Dane said he expects Allegheny’s closure in West Virginia will have similar repercussions for the region, even if they’re not felt as profoundly in Maryland — and the consequences won’t be purely economic.

“That’s going to trickle down not just to the logging sector, but it’s going to impact the health of the forest as well,” he said.

Allegheny Wood Products was founded in 1973 with one sawmill in Riverton, W.Va. It eventually grew to eight mills in the state.

Source: americanfarm.com/articles/delmarvafarmer/md-logger-suffers-another-blow/

NEW ALC MEMBER REBATE

ALC AND STATE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS GET AN ADDITIONAL \$35 OFF PURCHASES OF \$224 OR MORE.

CUT PROTECTION BOOTS

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HAIX Group

AMERICAN LOGGERS COUNCIL

Thank you to our sponsors!

The MFA thanks all of the companies who engage in sponsorship of the association! Sponsors help keep our educational events affordable and improve the overall structure of the MFA. For more information on sponsorship, visit mdforests.org.

Loblolly Sponsor



Sugar Maple Sponsor



Wye Oak Sponsors



Sycamore Sponsors



Dogwood Sponsors

Easton Timber and Mat, LLC
Horizon Farm Credit
Maryland Department of Agriculture

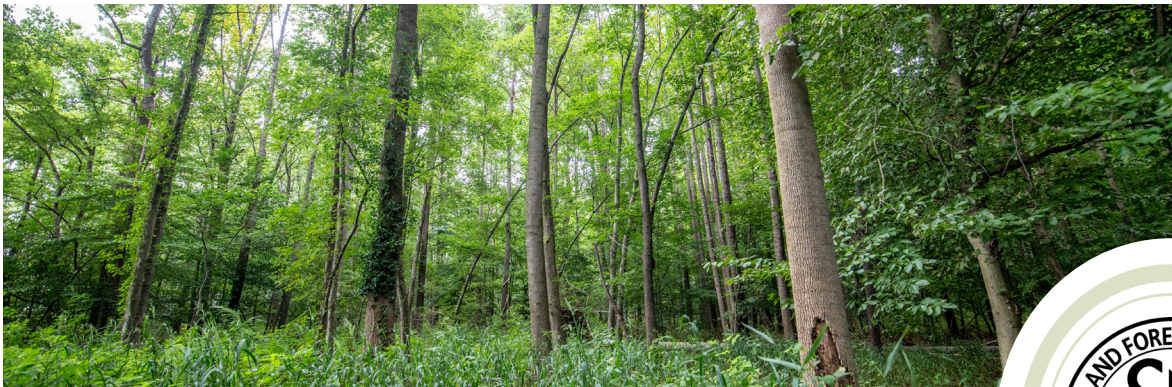
Rural Maryland Council
Timber Harvest, Inc.
Waverly Insurance Group



Maryland Forests Association

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