

Catawba Farm Opportunity for Stream Restoration in the Upper James Catawba, Virginia April 2008

Catawba Farm Background

Catawba Farm is a 400 acre tract containing forest and farmland in the Upper James River Basin (see image next page, tract is shaded green). Catawba Creek (shown in blue) traverses Catawba Farm for approximately 1.3 miles. There are also two tributaries (again, shown in blue), over 0.5 miles in combined length, which feed the main stem of Catawba Creek. Catawba Farm is just upstream of a tunnel that diverts some water from Catawba Creek into Carvins Cove, a reservoir providing drinking water for the City and County of Roanoke. Bill Bennett, Stream Restoration Biologist for the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), made a site visit to the farm and suggested the stream length on Catawba Farm is in need of restoration.

Catawba Farm is currently owned by Commonwealth of Virginia and managed by the College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech. Currently there is no active funding for projects on Catawba Farm and it has remained unused by the College for a number of years. Catawba Farm is located in a very scenic rural agricultural area and in the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail. The surrounding area is under intense development pressure given its close proximity to I-81, the City of Roanoke, and Blacksburg. In 2005, Catawba Farm was ranked the 11th most endangered historic site in Virginia by the Virginia Antiquities Preservation Association. There is concern among residents in Catawba, faculty at Virginia Tech, and other stakeholders that because the College of Natural Resources is not actively using the farm it may be sold for development.

Catawba Landcare - Supports Stream Restoration

Catawba Landcare, an active landowner-led group interested in sustainable and productive land management, has partnered with the DGIF and has been actively promoting stream restoration and enhancement projects in Catawba Landcare's region. This region includes not only Catawba Farm, but also the headwaters for two watersheds: Catawba Creek in the Upper James and the North Fork in the Upper Roanoke. This partnership has been effective, and as a result, there has been 2,965 linear feet of stream and riparian buffer restored in 2007 with 7500 linear feet proposed for 2008. Our success is largely attributed to the landowner network (landowners talking to landowners) supported by Catawba Landcare. To date, all of the restoration work has been done in the North Fork watershed using cost-share funds from the Landowner Incentive Program. We have also received a number of inquiries from landowners interested in stream restoration and enhancement in the Catawba Creek watershed. Unfortunately the Landowner Incentive Program is not active in this watershed, only in the Upper Roanoke watershed. By demonstrating interest and leveraging other restoration activities in Catawba Creek watershed we may be able to get Landowner Incentive Program funds appropriated for this portion of the Upper James. A restoration project at Catawba Farm along with the current interest from landowners would serve this purpose.

Catawba Landcare – Supports Catawba Farm

Catawba Landcare is also playing a leadership role at Catawba Farm. They have helped organize an advisory board comprised of landowners, Catawba Landcare, Virginia Tech, Western Virginia Land Trust, Western Virginia Water Authority, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Department of Forestry, Blue Ridge Forest Cooperative, and others. These stakeholders are all interested in keeping Catawba Farm in open space and in sustainable agricultural and forestry production. In addition, the advisory board envisions the farm being used by the community and by the University and other stakeholders for research, education, training, and as a demonstration site for sustainable land and water management. Implementing management practices to reduce erosion and improve water quality on the farm is the logical first step, and would also serve to increase visibility and to garner greater support for the Catawba Farm and for stream restoration in the Upper James watershed.

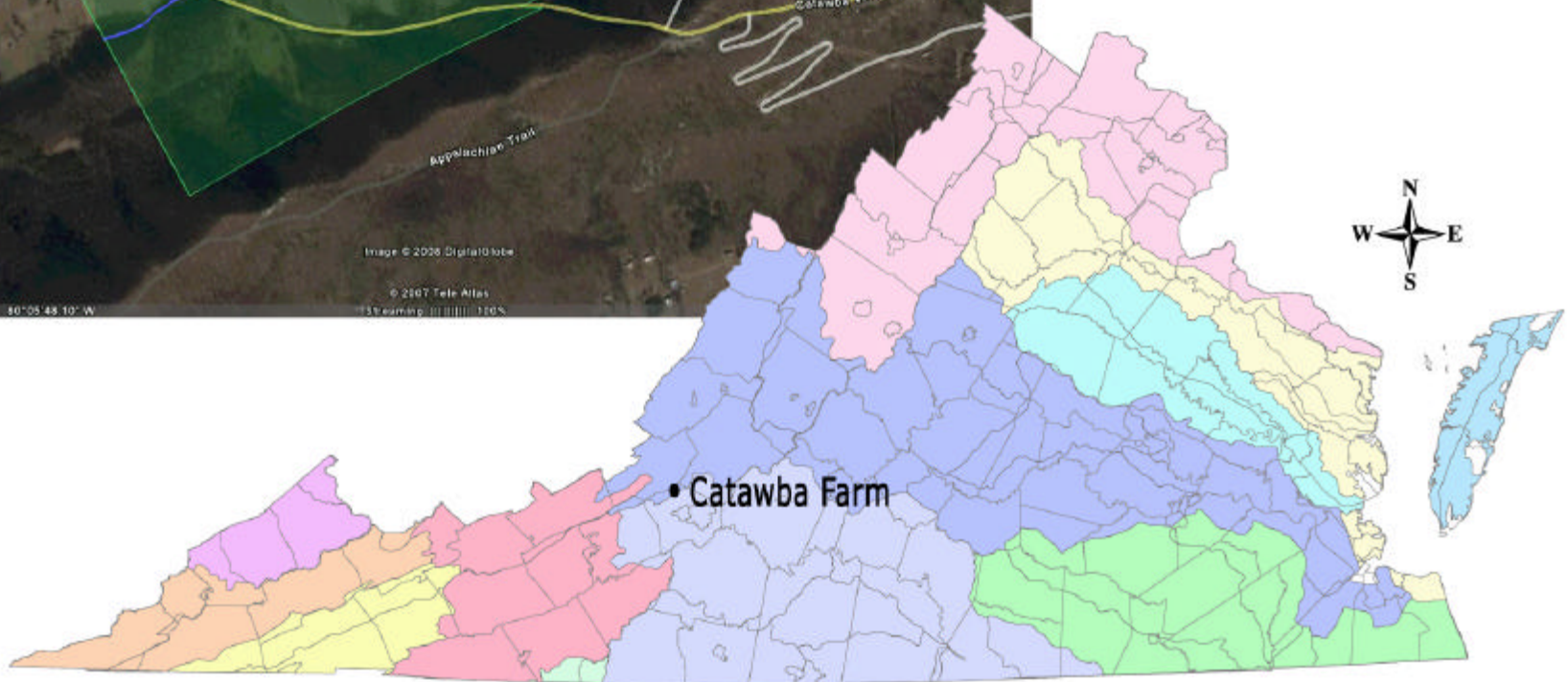
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Catawba Farm



Virginia Watersheds

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Big Sandy |  New |
|  Chowan |  PeeDee |
|  Clinch |  Potomac |
|  Eastern Shore |  Rappahannock |
|  Holston |  Roanoke |
|  James |  York |



0 15 30 60 90 120 Miles