

CATAWBA FARM
*A Community Farm Center - Based in Landcare Principles
Offering Opportunities for Education, Training, and Research*



Overview of Catawba Farm
May 2008

The College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech administers a 400+ acre farm near Catawba, VA. The College of Natural Resources conducts research in areas important to the management of natural resources throughout the nation and the world. We educate the next generation of natural resource managers and researchers, and we also reach out to the public to transfer knowledge and instigate positive change for society. Our plan is to integrate the Catawba Farm as a tool to support all of these activities to address potential research, education, and engagement activities at the farm, and propose a financial, governance, and staffing strategy. The primary goal of the farm is to establish a productive, sustainable, and self-supporting enterprise that serves as a model for the future farms of Virginia and the mid-Atlantic region and supports the rural economic development goals of the residents of the Catawba region. To accomplish this will require a whole farm plan that integrates agriculture, forestry, tourism and recreation, and water quality protection. The farm will provide educational opportunities for college and K-12 students, and an outdoor laboratory and classroom for students and landowners interested in sustainable farming. The farm will be available as a research and demonstration site for new and emerging land-based products such as biomass energy, organic vegetables and pasture-based meat, agritourism, agroforestry, and nontimber forest products. The buildings, roads, and other infrastructure at the farm will be renovated where needed to provide the research and teaching infrastructure. Nonessential or hazardous buildings will be removed.

The funding plan includes the establishment of the farm as a conservation property for natural and historic resources and the development of a stream mitigation bank. The farm is envisioned as a working farm that produces an income stream from products, services, training, and special events in collaboration with the community. Grants and contracts will be pursued to establish research and education projects. Building renovations and equipment purchases will be accomplished through grant funds and fund raising activities. The development of the farm will be overseen by a self-appointed advisory board of faculty from multiple colleges at VT, multiple universities in the area, community members, and others with a vested interest in the farm. The College of Natural Resources will serve as the administrative unit charged with employing the farm coordinator and handling administrative issues.



Catawba Civic League

 **VirginiaTech**
Invent the Future

Catawba Hospital

Roanoke Sierra Club

For more information contact Christy Gabbard, Landcare Coordinator for the Conservation Management Institute at VT by phone at (540) 357 3744, or by email at cgunnels@vt.edu.

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Catawba Farm
Showcase Non-Traditional Land Management Practices

Current Vision

1. Working Farm
 - i. Forest
 - ii. Agriculture
 - iii. Biomass
 - iv. Water management
2. Research Center
 - i. Quantify Ecosystem services
 - ii. Economics value-added products
 - iii. Compare non-traditional and traditional ag practices
3. Education and Training
 - i. Land-based Learning Center – landowners, agencies, businesses, etc.
 1. Long Courses
 2. Short Courses
 - ii. Landowners
 - iii. Catawba Hospital patients – job skill training
 - iv. Intern programs
4. Business Development
 - i. Whole farm planning
 - ii. Marketing
 - iii. Business plans
 - iv. Community regional networks
5. Environmental Education (K-12)
 - i. Place-based learning center
 - ii. Meaningful watershed experience
6. Tourism and Recreation
 - i. AT / Catawba connecting Trail
 - ii. Greenway extension
 - iii. Farm-based learning center
 - iv. Festivals & Events
 1. Kite Flying tournament
 2. Antique Farm Equipment Show
 3. Horseback riding tournaments

Governing/Advisory Group

1. Advisory Board
 - a. Virginia Tech
 - b. Community Groups
 - c. Economic Development Interests
 - d. Agencies
 - e. Non-profits
 - f. Others?
2. Responsibilities
 - a. Creating and Promoting Vision
 - b. Stakeholder Identification
 - c. Advising & Support
 - d. Planning
 - e. Fund Raising

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