

FACULTY AND STAFF

M. Chad Bolding, PhD

Assistant Professor
Forest Operations/Engineering
bolding@vt.edu; 540-231-6924

W. Mike Aust, PhD

Professor
Forest Soils and Hydrology
waust@vt.edu; 540-231-4523

Scott M. Barrett, MS

Extension Associate and
SHARP Logger Program Coordinator
sbarrett@vt.edu; 540-231-6494

E. Tal Roberts, BS

Harvesting Research Technician
talr@vt.edu; 540-231-6083



Forest Operations and Business Research Cooperative at Virginia Tech

M. Chad Bolding, PhD
Assistant Professor, Forest Operations/Engineering
228 Cheatham Hall; Virginia Tech
Dept. Forest Resources and Environmental Cons.
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Office phone: 540-231-6924
E-mail: bolding@vt.edu



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In 1973, the Virginia Tech Industrial Forest Operations (IFO) program was initiated as a cooperative research effort among forest industry, equipment manufacturers, and Virginia Tech to further undergraduate and graduate education programs. Research and teaching were designed to prepare foresters for careers in wood procurement, working with independent contractors, and overseeing the operational aspects of forest industries. Faculty and students regularly cooperate with forest industry personnel in the selection of research focus areas and projects. The program has recently evolved with a name change to **Forest Operations and Business (FOB)** to better reflect students' and employers' needs in a changing forest industry.

Based in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech, the Forest Operations and Business Research Cooperative taps a broad range of university and industry resources that collaboratively address forest industry needs.

RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS

The cooperative works in four major research areas related to forest management activities including:

1. Evaluating operations with regard to safety, productivity, planning, and logistics;
2. Creating tools to improve the efficiency and profitability of forest operations;
3. Analyzing forest business issues such as supply chain management/biomass utilization; and
4. Evaluating the environmental impacts of forest operations.



CURRENT RESEARCH

- ◆ Virginia's woody biomass market: opportunities and implications;
- ◆ A comparison of forestry BMPs used to control water movement and soil erosion on bladed and overland skid trails;
- ◆ Harvesting costs, site impacts, and product quality when utilizing woody biomass; and
- ◆ Closure BMPs for forest road stream crossings and their effect on water quality.

CONTRIBUTING

Cooperators contribute a modest stipend to provide critical support for ongoing operations. Three annual contribution levels are available:

- ◆ **Supporter (<\$5,000)**
- ◆ **Associate (\$5,000-\$10,000)**
- ◆ **Charter (>\$10,000)**

Funds are primarily used to supplement graduate student assistantships, purchase research equipment, or support research travel. Funds are also used to match and leverage larger outside funding sources.

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MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AND BENEFITS

The FOB Coop offers three levels of membership and corresponding benefits. Each level requires a progressively larger annual contribution with a corresponding increased benefit. All financial support to the Coop is considered a charitable donation as checks are made payable to the Virginia Tech Foundation. Annual dues allow Coop participants to be members of the Virginia Tech Industrial Affiliates Program. The following is an overview of membership levels and benefits. Each level also receives benefits specified for lower levels.

Supporter (<\$5,000/year)

- ◆ Company is listed as a member of the FOB Coop and co-sponsor on outputs such as publications and presentations
- ◆ Funding supports ongoing project expenditures
- ◆ 3-year minimum commitment required

Associate (\$5,000-\$10,000/year)

- ◆ Company logo and name listed as a co-sponsor on all research projects, outputs, publications, and presentations
- ◆ Funding supports ongoing project expenditures
- ◆ Yearly mailing of a Coop report and copies of all yearly outputs
- ◆ 2-year minimum commitment required

Charter (>\$10,000/year)

- ◆ Yearly site visit to present research program and discuss potential projects
- ◆ Funding supports ongoing project expenditures
- ◆ Funding also supports a company specific project depending on level of support:
 - ◆ \$10,000-\$25,000/yr – Small-scale company specific pilot study of mutual agreement
 - ◆ \$25,000-\$40,000/yr – Graduate student project performed by a Master of Forestry (MF) non-thesis student
 - ◆ >\$40,000/yr – Graduate student project performed by a Master of Science (MS) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student depending on funding level
- ◆ 1-year minimum commitment required

CONTRIBUTING

Please make checks payable to the “Virginia Tech Foundation” and indicate the “Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation” in the memo section. Please mail your check to:

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