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## Providing Knowledge at the Click of a Mouse: Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library

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## Providing Knowledge at the Click of a Mouse: Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library

### Abstract

North Carolina State University Forestry Extension developed The Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library (DRL) to help Extension county agents overcome a lack of training in forestry and natural resources. DRL is a Web-based, distance learning and information resource project that incorporates synchronized multimedia and the World Wide Web to provide up-to-date research-based information on forestry and natural resources. DRL is the result of collaboration between researchers and Extension faculty to provide a time- and space-independent model for information exchange between the university and Extension agents.

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### Introduction

Cooperative Extension Service county agents serve as the front-line educators and information resources for the citizens of their states. Many of these agents are tasked with multiple areas of responsibilities, often outside their traditional area of education.

For example, in North Carolina, Extension agents on average have four areas of responsibility, of which forestry is one. Only one percent of the North Carolina Extension county agents have a degree, BS or MS, in forest management (Bardon, 2001). Juxtaposing the dearth of professional training in forest and natural resource management at the county level with the demands on the field faculty's time underscores the importance of developing an information and continuing education resources that will meet the agents' educational and information needs.

North Carolina State University Forestry Extension recognized the potential of the electronic communication medium, primarily Internet delivery, as a possible solution to the county agents' educational and information needs. Forestry Extension has developed the "Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library (DRL)" <<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/desktop/>>, a Web-based, distance learning and information resource project to meet the needs of Extension.

### What Is the Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library (DRL)?

DRL is a time- and space-independent model for information exchange between the university and Extension county agents. It is the result of collaboration between researchers and Extension faculty based on a needs assessment of the Extension agents (Bardon, 2001). The project is a Web-based resource incorporating synchronized multimedia and the World Wide Web to provide up-to-date research-based information on forestry and natural resources (Figure 1).

### Figure 1.

The Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library Home Page

**Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library**

An online resource for those interested in forestry and other related natural resource topics.

Subject matter presentations, resource links, and publications are available on:

- [Hardwoods](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [Pines](#)
- [Management Issues](#)
- [Tax Issues](#)
- [Tree Improvement](#)
- [Urban Forestry](#)
- [Water Quality](#)



RealPlayer is required to utilize portions of this resource. You can download the free player from



This page was last modified on Tuesday, 23-Jul-2002 14:21:56 EDT

DRL's Web site was developed and designed to be simple and user-friendly. Currently, DRL covers eight major categories (modules) in which a wealth of information is provided:

- Hardwoods
- Management Issues
- Marketing
- Pines
- Tax Issues
- Tree Improvement
- Urban Forestry
- Water Quality

DRL also provides access to Extension specialists for those needing further assistance or information.

### DRL's Module Design

Module design was kept simple. Each module has a similar page layout (Figure 2), listing presentation topics and their length and links to publications and information resources from North Carolina State University, other universities, state and federal agencies, and private agencies. This allows the user to become familiar with the site, retrieving information in a rapid and efficient manner.

**Figure 2.**

The Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library Module Page Layout

**Hardwood Management**

Approximately 67 percent of North Carolina's forest land consists of hardwood or mixed pine-hardwood. Benefits from hardwood forests include watershed protection, wildlife, timber, recreation, and aesthetics. Increased demand for hardwood, due to tighter controls on federal lands and the hardwood exports, has increased the need for management of existing hardwood stands.

This chapter provides resources and information on southern hardwood management for the professional natural resource manager, as well as, those just beginning to learn about hardwood management.

**Presentations**

RealPlayer is required to utilize video portion of this resource. You can download the free player from

**Slide Presentations** (length in minutes)

- [Crop Tree Management \(w/audio\)](#) (5:03)
- [Silvicultural Systems and Natural Regeneration \(w/audio\)](#) (12:02)

**Video Presentations** (length in minutes)

Emerging Opportunities in the Management of Young, Natural Hardwood Stands  
*A Forestry Issues Forum Teleconference, September 12, 2001*

- [Emerging Opportunities and Perspectives on Natural Hardwood Management](#), Dan Robison, Director, NC State Hardwood Research Cooperative, NC State University, Raleigh, NC (14:15)

Crop Tree Management  
*A Forestry Issues Forum Teleconference, January 9, 2002*

- [What Makes A Crop Tree Valuable](#), Joe Denig, Wood Products Extension Specialist, NC Cooperative Extension Service, Raleigh, NC (38:30)
- [Crop Tree Management: Is It Economically Feasible?](#), Rick Hamilton, Extension Forestry Specialist, NC Cooperative Extension Service, Raleigh, NC (51:29)

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**Publications and Information Resources**

<p><b>North Carolina State University Extension Forestry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Crop Tree Management in North Carolina</a> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Managing for Hardwood</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Southern Regional Extension Forestry Links</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Regenerating Northern Red Oak on High Quality Sites</a> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Southern Hardwood Management Manual</a> </li> </ul>
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Presentations are developed either as slide presentations or video presentations that can be viewed with RealPlayer. (Visit <http://www.real.com/> to download RealPlayer for free.) Slide presentations were developed by synchronizing audio, captured by computer, and computer generated slide presentations. Slide presentations are limited to no more than 20 minutes in length. Limiting the presentation length requires the presenter to get right to the point and allows users, who may have a limited amount of time, to refresh and enhance their level of knowledge.

Presentation design is kept simple so the user focuses on the information presented, not on the

slide layout. Video presentations are live presentations captured using RealProducer Plus software. Video presentations, which are not limited in length, can last from 20 minutes to approximately 90 minutes, allowing for more in-depth information than slide presentations afford. Video presentations require more time to download than slide presentations do and can be saved and viewed at a time more convenient to the user.

### **DRL's Benefits**

The DRL benefits the user in several ways. Benefits include:

- A resource of current science-based information on numerous forestry and natural resources topics.
- A portal to various sources of forestry and natural resource information.
- Access to both on-line video and print media.
- Access to forestry and natural resource information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Access to specialists for assistance with follow-up information or other resources.

The DRL benefits the university in several ways. Benefits include:

- A training resource for county Extension agents.
- A portal for disseminating research-based information.
- A communication link between county Extension agents and specialists.
- Opportunity for collaboration between research faculty and Extension faculty.

### **Summary**

The DRL is a Web-based, distance learning and information resource project developed out of a need for continuing education of Extension agents. DRL provides an important Internet venue for facilitating the transfer of research-based information on forestry and natural resource management. To visit the Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library, just visit <<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/desktop/>>.

### **References**

Bardon, R. E. (2001). Evaluation of forestry programming: Leading to recommendations for improvement. *Journal of Extension* [On-line], 39(3). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2001june/rb3.html>

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